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Enter Shikari announced as Slam Dunk headline act

British rock band Enter Shikari will headline the 2017 Slam Dunk Festival in Birmingham. The talented four-piece, who are this year celebrating their 10th anniversary, made their first appearance at the festival in 2015 and will be performing 'a very special exclusive UK festival set'.

"Slam Dunk is a festival that we've been attending from the very start," says band member Rou Reynolds. "It's grown into one of the most important festivals in alternative music, and it will be an absolute honour to headline it in 2017. We're going to be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of our debut album, *Take To The Skies*, which feels totally mental in and of itself. The fact that we get to reminisce and relive tracks we recorded so long ago, and which are still held dear by so many, is something I could never have anticipated back then, and it fills me with appreciation for everyone who's supported the band over the years."

Slam Dunk Festival Midlands takes place at the Genting Arena and NEC on 27 May. For tickets, visit theticketfactory.com or call 0844 33 88 222.



Image courtesy of Shrewsbury Winter Festival



Shrewsbury named a top-10 winter destination

Shrewsbury has been included in The Guardian's list of the top-10 UK towns in which to enjoy a winter break. Best known for its medieval castle, impressive array of listed buildings and annual flower show - and for being the birthplace of Charles Darwin - the Shropshire town is this month hosting a two-day winter festival (Quarry Park, 10 - 11 December). The 2016 edition of the event boasts a marquee filled with more than 170 artisan producers, crafts people, designers, florists, quality clothing boutiques and homeware, as well as an abundance of food and drink vendors. Family-fun activities and a giant Christmas carol singalong also feature in the weekend's programme of entertainment.

Celebrating 25 years of Sound Investment...

A concert celebrating the 25th anniversary of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's (BCMG) Sound Investment crowdfunding scheme takes place this month.

The Thomas Adès-conducted event at the city's CBSO Centre, on Saturday 10 December, will feature several Sound Investment pieces and the world premiere of a new work by Francisco Coll. Commenting on the celebrations, BCMG's artistic director, Stephan Meier, said: "Sound Investors share with BCMG a mercurial enjoyment in seeing a new work develop and an inherent sense of adventure. The brilliance of Sound Investment lies in its simplicity. In creating Sound Investment, my predecessors, Simon Clugston and Stephen Newbould, developed a model for engagement and creative fundraising that was way ahead of its time, and which has been admired and replicated in various forms worldwide. Most importantly, it has created an international BCMG family that extends far beyond the concert platform. Our challenge is to continue to stay ahead of the game, something we are very much looking forward to doing."



Thomas Adès



Monster alert! Dippy the Dinosaur heads for Brum

The UK's most famous dinosaur is heading for the Midlands.

The Natural History Museum's (NHM) plaster-of-Paris model of a Diplodocus will spend four months at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG) as part of a nationwide tour. The model, affectionately referred to as Dippy, has been delighting visitors to the NHM since 1905 and has never before been exhibited outside London.

The full skeleton in its displayed pose is an impressive 21.3 metres long, 4.3 metres wide and 4.25 metres high.

Commenting on the exhibit, which arrives at BMAG on 17 May 2018, Dr Ellen McAdam, Director of Birmingham Museums Trust, said: "I remember encountering Dippy on my first visit to London at the age of 11, when I was fascinated equally by fossils and mummies. I'm thrilled that we're now able to bring the most famous dinosaur cast in Britain to Birmingham."

Iconic truck makes Christmas stop-off in Shropshire

The iconic Coca-Cola truck is visiting Telford in Shropshire this month as part of its UK tour. The truck stops off in the town on Wednesday 14 December, providing families with the opportunity to explore a 'magical winter wonderland', and then, after dark, to enjoy a short Christmas animation screened onto the truck.

"Coca-Cola is synonymous with the Christmas season," says Aedamar Howlett, marketing director for Coca-Cola Great Britain, "and it's no secret that our much-loved truck tour marks the unofficial countdown to Christmas."

For more information, visit coca-cola.co.uk/stories/keep-on-truck-ing



Tamworth Castle named Best Small Visitor Attraction

Tamworth Castle has been named the Best Small Visitor Attraction in Staffordshire.

The venue won gold at the NFU Mutual Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism Awards. The castle will now go on to represent the county at the national VisitEngland Awards For Excellence, taking place in the spring.

Commenting on the success, Councillor Joy Goodall, cabinet member for Environment & Culture, said: "Tamworth Castle is an absolute gem, and this gold award is a well-deserved recognition of its value and importance. "The castle now goes on to represent the borough on the national stage next spring, which is also a great accolade. It will boost the profile of Tamworth even further and hopefully attract even more visitors to come and see us."



Stars of stage and screen heading for the Grand Theatre

Three of the UK's best-loved stars of stage and screen are visiting the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in 2017.

Former Coronation Street and Dinner Ladies favourite Shobna Gulati takes top billing in Tanika Gupta's award-winning theatre production of Anita And Me when it visits the theatre from Tuesday 14 to Saturday 18 February...

West End leading lady Marti Webb joins former EastEnder John Partridge and 1980s television

star Adrian Zmed (TJ Hooker) in a new production of La Cage Aux Folles, showing at the venue from Tuesday 27 June to Saturday 1 July...

And Samantha Womack, best known as Ronnie Mitchell in EastEnders, takes top billing in The Addams Family when it tours to the venue from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 October.

For ticket information about the three shows, visit grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 42 92 12.

Don your shades and head for The Hive

Art Squad Anarchy's Anti-Christmas Special art event, taking place at The Hive, Shrewsbury, on 9 December, combines life drawing with costumed models, live music, comedy and cabaret.

Commenting on the event, organiser John Bengé said: "The fun starts at 7pm and lasts well into the evening. So grab a pencil, put on your best Hawaiian shirt and shades, and join us for an evening of anarchy, holiday style!"

First literary festival for Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton is next month hosting its first ever literary festival. The Wolverhampton Original Literature Festival (Wolf) takes place at various venues across the city from 27 to 29 January and features acclaimed authors, musicians, workshops, art and children's events.

Commenting on the new festival, Councillor John Reynolds, cabinet member for City Economy, said: "We've got a diverse literary tradition in Wolverhampton and across the Black Country, and what better way of celebrating it than by hosting our own festival. Already there's a great variety of entertainment during the weekend, with even more authors and events still to be announced."

The festival is a mix of free and ticketed events. For more information, visit wolvesliteraturefestival.com

A 'stormy' summer in prospect as Stafford Castle hosts Shakespeare's Tempest

Stafford Festival Shakespeare's outdoor production for 2017 will be The Tempest.

The show will be presented at Stafford Castle, in a purpose-built auditorium under the stars, from Thursday 22 June until Saturday 8 July.

Shakespeare's final play, The Tempest tells the story of Prospero, the exiled Duke of Milan, who becomes stranded on a largely uninhabited island of music, magic and supernatural spirits.

The Stafford version of the play will be set against the backdrop of the glamour and elegance of the 1930s - the golden age of luxury cruise liners, Hollywood glamour and the dying days of vaudeville.

Early Bird tickets for the production are available until 31 January and save £3 per ticket on selected performances.

For more information, contact the box office on 01785 619080.

First Word

Garrick launches plans for year-long celebration...

Lichfield's Garrick theatre has launched a year-long celebration of one of the city's most famous sons. Actor, producer, dramatist and poet David Garrick was born in Lichfield in 1717. The theatre that now bears his name will spend the forthcoming 12 months marking the 300th anniversary of his birth by staging a series of events across the city. The celebrations were launched recently with the unveiling of a bronze mask of Garrick's face, designed by Lichfield artist Peter Walker. The mask is the first stage of a project which will see the theatre incorporate a large-scale statue of the legendary actor on its outside wall. Commenting on the Garrick300 celebrations, Lichfield Garrick's artistic director, Tim Ford, said: "David was a revolutionary in the theatre world, working as an actor, writer, director, theatre manager and entrepreneur, and was a hugely important person to Lichfield. "We've been working really hard this last year planning some really exciting events and programmes to mark this very special year, and we're thrilled to be

working in partnership with the brilliant Peter Walker on the sculpture project. We're now hoping dedicated theatre audiences will help us to realise this vision, and are asking for contributions towards creating this iconic statue." The mask is currently on display in Lichfield Garrick's upper bar. The theatre will be running a series of fundraising events throughout 2017. If you would like to get involved or find out how to make a donation towards the creation of the Garrick statue, email tim.ford@lichfieldgarrick.com



Autumn nativity at The REP..

Birmingham Repertory Theatre will be getting into the Christmas spirit early next year when it stages the world premiere of *Nativity! The Musical*. Based on the popular UK film franchise and running at The REP from Friday 20 October until Saturday 12 November, the show is written and directed by Debbie Isitt, who also created the movies. "I've always believed that *Nativity!* would make a fantastic stage musical," says Debbie. "It's so full of joy, the children are so sweet and funny and the songs so catchy that it lends itself to being the perfect Christmas musical. Now we've been able to assemble our theatrical dream team, I can't wait to get started on creating an unforgettable stage show." To book tickets for the production, ring 0121 236 4455 or visit Birmingham-rep.co.uk

Robbie at the Ricoh

Pop icon and Midlands man Robbie Williams is making a welcome return to the region as part of a 2017 stadium tour. The Stoke-on-Trent-born superstar will take his Heavy Entertainment Show Tour to Coventry's Ricoh Arena on 13 June, supported by Erasure. Robbie will also make history by being the first solo artist to headline the London Stadium at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, playing the 60,000-seat venue on 23 June.



Disney On Ice celebrates 100 years of magic

Mickey Mouse and a whole host of other famous cartoon characters take to the ice at Birmingham's Genting Arena next year, to celebrate a century of Walt Disney-inspired entertainment.

Disney On Ice: 100 Years Of Magic will feature over 50 characters from the company's long and illustrious history, including Aladdin, Beauty And The Beast, Pinocchio and The Lion King. Frozen's Anna, Elsa and Olaf also feature. Disney On Ice: 100 Years Of Magic shows at the Genting Arena from 12 to 16 April. For tickets, ring 0844 33 88 222 (Calls cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge).



Venues announced for New Art West Midlands 2017

Thirty-one artists from six regional art schools are set to exhibit new work at four leading galleries as part of New Art West Midlands 2017. A launch vehicle for emerging artists, New Art West Midlands will next year use Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, mac birmingham, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Worcester City Art Gallery to display the new work, which includes painting, installation, sculpture, photography, video, animation and digital artworks. The exhibition will show at each of the four venues from 18 February to 14 May. For more information, visit newartwestmidlands.co.uk

Snow White first edition a star attraction at Antiques For Everyone's winter show

A rare first-edition book, recounting the popular fairytale of Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs, looks set to be the star attraction at this month's Antiques For Everyone Winter Fair in Birmingham. Published in 1937 and valued at £28,500, the first edition features a high number of original signatures. Walt Disney himself signed the book, as did 51 of the 64 original illustrators who worked on the classic movie version of Snow White. The book is being exhibited at the event by Paul Foster, of London-based Foster Books. "It's one of those rare books that pop up from time to time that are highly sought after and everyone wants to get hold of," says Paul. "The book has a perfect storm of collectable features, such as it being a first edition, having its original dust jacket and the highly unusual number of signatures. We're expecting a lot of interest at the fair." Antiques For Everyone Winter Fair takes place at the NEC, Birmingham, from 1 to 4 December. For more information, visit antiquesforeveryone.co.uk

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We Are James

Lauren Foster caught up with the band's Saul Davies ahead of their Wolverhampton gig this month

You joined James in 1989. What was it like becoming part of an already-formed group?

I'd never been in a band as such. I'd done little bits and pieces but I hadn't really been in a proper band, so I didn't really have any preconceptions about what it would be like. Also, the band was going through a massive flux at the time. Gavin, the original drummer, left, and Dave, our current drummer, joined at the same time as I did. Shortly after, Mark the keyboard player joined. Then Andy the keyboard player joined, so it was very much in flux - a watershed period for the band, I suppose. Dave is a very different kind of drummer, so it became more muscular and more direct. Gavin was more skittery and odd. I joined at a point where the band was changing from being a very, very indie, very scratchy, low-fi thing to something a little bit more muscular - not that muscular, let's face it, but something a little bit more dreamy. I must've contributed to the process; I was there.

You were discovered by band member Larry Gott at Manchester's Band On The Wall. What did you play on the night to catch his attention?

We laugh about it sometimes, how moments in people's lives define how the rest of their life will be, and how, as you approach that moment in time, you have no idea that that's what's actually happening. I say this to my kids. You've got to try everything because you don't know what the domino effect is going to be. I'd left Manchester by then. I was living in the

south of England, working down there, and I went back up to Manchester for the weekend and went to Band On The Wall. Larry was there, and his mate asked if anyone wanted to get up out of the audience and play something. I had my violin with me. I hadn't wanted to leave it in the car because it could've got nicked. So I ended up on stage, playing. I found myself just getting shoved quite reluctantly onto the stage. I couldn't really hear anything and I didn't really know what I was doing, but it worked out well. I played one note, I think it was a G, and I just played one long note for about a minute, which I thought was quite cool. Larry also thought it was very cool. The thing is, I could play properly, but it's only when you get to the point where you can play really well that you play less. So he obviously thought, 'This guy must be really good because he's chosen to play only one note'. Either I was f**king useless and could only play one note or I was near genius.

And you were offered the job on the spot?

Yeah. I had lots of people come up to me, about eight or nine people, asking whether I wanted to be in a band, and I was like, 'No no no, I don't want to be in a band'. Then Larry was like, 'Do you want to be in a band that's signed to a major record label?', and I was like, 'Yeah, I do actually'. The next morning, I went into a room with Larry, Jim and Tim and we made a racket together. Although it was just a jam, it was also an audition. We were just making noise together, but they

only wanted to work with people who could improvise, who could just get in a room and make a noise that might have some coherence about it, without it being the form of improvisation that commonly people think of. Anybody can do something flash, whether it's football or whether it's music. It's a different language when you get together in a room and communicate through music; when that music is meaningful.

Where was your first gig with James?

Within 10 days of meeting these guys, we were on tour. I know we played Hull University and Newcastle, and the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, which is now a hotel. The Mancs have got no sense of their own history. How can they just turn The Hacienda into flats, the Free Trade Hall into a f**king hotel? The city will come to regret the fact that those landmarks don't exist. They can't even be visited. You can't go to where The Hacienda was. You can't come over from Seattle with your kids on some musical pilgrimage, to see where all that late '80s, early '90s British indie music you loved actually came from. The scousers did it with The Cavern - knocking it down, then building it again down the road and saying, 'This is The Cavern'. Well no, it's not.

Why do you think James have managed to survive for so long, through so many scenes?

Because we genuinely weren't really part of anything. We knew that at the time, in Manchester. I remember doing lots of in-



interviews in the early '90s, especially after Sit Down kicked off. Obviously other bands around us were doing brilliantly well and gaining international recognition - The Roses and The Mondays and the rest of it, The Smiths to some extent. The media was very keen to find a capsule and try to lump everyone together. There were those things going on in Manchester, that's absolutely clear - and it wasn't only then but later on as well, with Oasis and all the rest of it. We've always said that we've got nothing to do with those other bands. They were bands we took on tour, they all supported us. All the bands, to some extent, looked after each other. We all went to each other's gigs. James' real gig was supporting The Fall. If James wanted to be anybody, it was The Fall in '82/'83 - although that would be hard to imagine, listening to our music and listening to Mark E Smith. The attitude was all the same - that feeling of being very alienated and very northern. Everybody knows about all this stuff.

That's why, to some extent, we still have a voice, because we have this incredible fan base that weirdly has grown. We've sold more tickets on this tour than any other UK tour. We haven't suddenly become a band looking to have mass appeal, but we're certainly finding a wider appeal. One reason why that is, in truth, is that we've had unbelievable support from 6 Music, and that really does help.

Are there any songs you've grown to dislike over the years?

No, not really. We've got quite a big catalogue. We play everything, so it's really nice when we get to the point where we go, 'Actually, on this tour, what we'll do is give songs X, Y and Z a rest and bring in some of these others that we haven't played for a while'. We're constantly chopping and changing our set. In that process it's really nice when we reach the natural point at which we want to leave a song behind - not because we don't like it, just because we feel we've probably gone as far as we can go with that particular tune for the time being. When our fans start to expect a certain thing, I think it's right that we change it. That way, we can keep ourselves and everybody who's into us on their toes a little bit. We're taking out all our biggest hits and replacing them with other big songs that we don't play as much. We're constantly trying to change things around, simply because we get a little bit bored with it. We're very aware that some people are coming to see James for the first time, so we've got to get the balance right between playing our new record, giving people songs which they've perhaps forgotten about and also playing to the gallery, but not doing it in such a way that we feel like we're playing on some f**king cruise ship.

What's the biggest change you've seen to the music industry?

I think that's simple - buying has gone to streaming. The other thing I would say is that it's gone from the record being the

thing that makes money. People used to lose money playing live, but that was a way of driving sales of records. Now people stream stuff, listen to it, then go and see the gigs.

Finally, how does your 14th album, *Girl At The End Of The World*, compare with previous James' releases?

Bands always say that their latest record is the best one they've ever made. I'm not saying it's our best record ever, but it's certainly been met with a really warm and positive response, so I would say it's a good record. It's quite a typical James record because stylistically it isn't one thing. Some bands make a record on which, in a good way, all the songs kind of sound like they're from the same band, and that's great. I think we always make it a little bit more difficult for our listeners because we're not consistent in that way. Our records kind of lurch from one thing to another. It's very much a sign that we make records that we ourselves like. We won't omit something from a record because we don't think it fits the tone of the record. We'll only omit something because we think it's shit. At the same time, if we like something collectively then we'll put it on a record, even if it slightly disturbs the balance of that record. That's what we do, really - we make quite unbalanced, weird pop records.

.....
James play Civic Hall, Wolverhampton on Wednesday 7th December

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Thai restaurant voted Best Oriental Establishment at prestigious national awards event

Popular Thai eatery Sabai Sabai has been named Best Oriental Establishment at the annual Food Awards England event.

Winning the coveted title topped off a great 2016 for the restaurant chain, which has Birmingham branches in Harborne and Moseley and a new establishment in Stratford-upon-Avon. Earlier in the year, the husband-and-wife-

owned eatery also won the Best Oriental Restaurant title at the Birmingham Food, Drink & Hospitality Awards. Food Awards England is now in its third year. Based on the results of a public vote, the initiative commends the talented individuals and businesses that 'constantly deliver high-quality dishes, produce and supplies, to ensure impeccable service to their customers'.



REVIEW: Umai, Golden Cross Passage, Shrewsbury Tastes from the Land of the Rising Sun in the Town of Flowers



Previously home to The Pantry and located in Shrewsbury's historic Golden Cross passage, the Japanese eatery Umai opened its doors to the Town of Flowers just over a month ago.

Being a huge fan of Japanese cuisine and having seen many a positive review online prior to my visit, it's safe to say I had pretty high expectations of this exciting new addition to the town's culinary scene - and I certainly wasn't disappointed. With 117 dishes to choose from and absolutely nothing on the menu that I wouldn't order, it was no easy task selecting which delicious-sounding offerings to sample.

To start, my partner and I each chose a maki dish. I opted for the Golden Dragon, which comprised salmon, sea eel and avo-

cado with a sweet baked miso mayonnaise and tobikko. The rolls were of a good size and packed full of ingredients. The flavour combination was absolutely spot on. Even from that first dish, it was apparent that the chefs really knew their trade. My partner opted for the Red Tiger maki - fried prawn, salmon, tobikko, cucumber and mayonnaise; another fantastic and flavoursome dish.

Umai prides itself on its fresh sushi, stating on its website: 'Our sushi is made fresh by order and never left over from the previous hour'. It was certainly some of the freshest-tasting sushi I've ever eaten - and I've eaten a lot!

Next up were the Ebi tempura, the soft shell crab with peppercorn salt, and the Tokoyaki -

octopus balls to you and me. To our delight, they turned out to be three perfectly executed and tasty dishes. The tempura batter was soft, light and in no way hindered the taste of the prawns. The crab melted in the mouth and was definitely up there with some of the nicest I've had, and the octopus balls tasted absolutely divine.

For my main course, I opted for the Kimchi Pock Bibimbap - stir-fried kimchi pork belly served with rice in a hot stone bowl. The sticky rice and the sour and salty kimchi complemented the sweet pork belly perfectly. The addition of a fried egg added further taste and texture to the dish. A flavour match made in heaven!

My partner opted for the chilli pepper beef rice teppanyaki - a

hearty and comforting bowl of ingredients, bursting with delicious, authentic Japanese flavours. The chilli gave the dish a nice, subtle kick, but nothing too overpowering. Both were served with miso soup, a welcome addition to the main courses.

On the chef's request, we were also presented with a chicken teriyaki dish to sample. The chicken was juicy and tender, the teriyaki sauce agreeably sweet. The dish made for a perfect end to an extremely enjoyable evening.

In addition to its mouthwatering food options, Umai serves a variety of Japanese beers, as well as sake, Japanese green tea, a Japanese soda and calpico.

The restaurant has something for everyone. The service was fantastic, the staff being both knowledgeable and welcoming. The food was exceptional and the surroundings comfortable. I can hardly wait for the next opportunity to sample the exquisite cuisine that this new gem has to offer.

Lauren Foster

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall value	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
OVERALL	■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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Italian wine tasting at Shrewsbury restaurant

Following several successful sold-out events, independent Shrewsbury restaurant The Peach Tree has announced its next wine-tasting evening - the first of many due to take place at the popular eatery in 2017. The Thursday 9 February event will see wine expert and guest speaker Simon Grayson guide attendees through a lesson about Italian wines. Not only that, succulent sharing plates from the restaurant's award-winning Executive Head Chef, Chris Burt, will be on offer throughout the evening.

Tickets are priced at £30 and can be booked directly through The Peach Tree by calling 01743 355055.



Sparkling start to the festive season at Weston Park

Weston Park in Staffordshire is this month offering guests 'a sparkling start to the festive season', courtesy of a special one-off 'dine & stay' event.

A late-afternoon Champagne reception will be followed by a 'mouth-watering' seasonal four-course meal. Following dinner, guests will be able to enjoy a drink by the fireside before heading off to bed.

A full English breakfast the following morning rounds off the overnight event.

The 'dine & stay' experience takes place from Saturday 10 into Sunday 11 December and costs £375 per couple. Pre-booking is essential. To do so, call Emily Thompson on 01952 852106 or email her at: emily@weston-park.com



New seafood eatery opens in old cinema building

A brand new seafood restaurant has opened in the building which once housed Birmingham's Futurist Cinema.

Situated on John Bright Street near the New Alexandra Theatre, Lobster Peninsula boasts a nine-strong kitchen team led by head chef Saming Saetang, a Brummie of Thai origin. The new eatery's menu includes lobster bisque and lobster chowder, chilled oysters, steamed

mussels and garlic prawns.

The top floor of the venue is a state-of-the-art nightclub, which opens on Friday and Saturday nights until 3am.

Lobster Peninsula is open Monday to Thursday from 12pm to 11pm (last orders at 10pm), Friday and Saturday from midday to midnight, and Sunday from 12pm to 10.30pm.

Shropshire set to sample a taste of Uncle Sam

An American-style diner is to join Shrewsbury's ever-expanding restaurant scene. Set to open in Frankwell - in the building which was once The Silverton Hotel - Biggie's diner is a new concept for the town, promising to serve classic food from across the pond, including shakes and fresh American waffles.

Biggies is the brainchild of Sam Taylor, whose venues also include The Libertine cocktail bar and House Of The Rising Sun, a fusion restaurant & bar where East meets West. Rumour has it that the new diner will open in early 2017. We'll keep you posted!

Midlands' entrepreneur opens Miss Macaroon

An informal venue where customers can enjoy up to 30 different types of macaroon and a glass of carefully chosen prosecco has opened in Birmingham's Great Western Arcade.

Miss Macaroon is the brainchild of local entrepreneur Rosie Ginday, who trained as a pastry chef under Glynn Purnell. "We've been working towards this for some time," says Rosie, "so I'm genuinely proud that we've been able to bring the first Miss Macaroon store to the people of Birmingham, my home city. "Whilst this is our first outlet, there are plans to open multiple venues across the UK. Leeds will hopefully be our next destination, and we have an ambitious business plan that we hope will see us hit 100 Miss Macaroon shops by 2021."

For further information, visit missmacaroon.co.uk or follow @iammissmacaroon on twitter.



Pixies

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Thurs 8 December

Supporting their sophomore post-reunion album, *Head Carrier*, Pixies embark on a highly anticipated world tour.

The 12-track collection of the band's unique mix of surrealism, psychedelia, dissonance and surf rock was released in September to great critical acclaim.

In addition, the band - Black Francis, Joey Santiago and David Lovering - officially welcome bassist Paz Lenchantin to the permanent line-up. Lenchantin has been the band's touring bassist since January 2014, and played an integral part in the recording of *Head Carrier*. Best known for singles such as *Where Is My Mind?* and *Here Comes Your Man*, Pixies' lyrics cover offbeat subjects such as extraterrestrials, surrealism, incest and biblical violence.



Red Hot Chili Peppers

Genting Arena, Birmingham, Sat 10 - Sun 11 December



With a reputation for outrageous on-stage antics, Red Hot Chili Peppers brilliantly blend rock with funk, throwing in elements of punk, hip-hop and psychedelic rock just for good measure.

Comprising Anthony Kiedis on vocals, Flea on bass, Chad Smith on drums and Josh Klinghoffer on guitar, the band are touring in support of their Danger Mouse-produced 11th studio album, *The Getaway*. Mixed by Nigel Godrich, it made the number-one spot in 10 countries across Europe.

14 whatsonlive.co.uk

Placebo

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 8 December

Alternative rock band Placebo, heading to Birmingham this month as part of a world tour, are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the release of their platinum-selling, self-titled debut album.

With best-known songs including *Pure Morning* and *Every You, Every Me*, and a cult fanbase that's stood by them throughout, their career has seen them delve into the genres of glam rock, goth rock, grunge and punk rock.

The band promise a set list spanning their whole back catalogue. Brian Molko teased: "Let's just say there will be songs in the set that I've sworn never to play again. I think it's time that we purposefully acknowledged what a lot of Placebo fans really want to hear."



Blue Rose Code

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Sun 4 December

"Blue Rose Code is more of a name for my music than for me," reveals Edinburgh-born songwriter Ross Wilson in an interview with thankfolkforthat.com. "I have a collective of people who I'm lucky enough to have believe in me and want to play with me."

Ross has made a welcome return to the music scene after a few years in the wilderness, during which period substance abuse robbed him of his natural impulse to pick up a guitar and play.

His appearance at Henry Tudor House is in support of his latest album, *The Ballads Of Peckham Rye - Live At St Pancras*.

Luke Jackson Trio

The Hive, Shrewsbury,
Sat 10 December



Canterbury-based Luke Jackson has been compared to a young Tim Buckley and hailed for possessing the kind of voice you could get lost in. He's also a BBC Radio Two Young Folk Award winner, bagging the title back in 2013. Not bad for a fella who's only recently left his teenage years behind him. Luke's debut album, *More Than Boys*, was launched in the Midlands at the Shrewsbury Folk Festival. Its success led to a follow-up offering, *Fumes And Faith*, a slower-burn album released in early 2014. He and his band visit The Hive following the release of third album *Tall Tales And Rumours*.

The Bootleg Beatles

Civic Hall, Wolverhampton,
Fri 9 December

Formed in 1980 from the cast of the musical *Beatlemania*, the Bootleg Beatles remain one of the most popular tribute acts in the country, despite the emergence of numerous rivals. Their ongoing success is down to the accuracy of their portrayals of the Fab Four, not only managing to look uncannily like them but also sounding incredibly authentic. A nostalgic but vital journey through the 1960s awaits...



Biffy Clyro

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,
Wed 7 December

Finding stardom in 2007 with the album *Puzzle*, Scottish rockers Biffy Clyro have since established themselves as one of the biggest bands on the music scene. *Puzzle* was actually the group's fourth

album, so the boys were no overnight success story. Indeed, it was only their decision to perform 'more mainstream' songs that brought them to the attention of a wider audience.

The three-piece have recently released seventh studio album *Ellipsis*, which shot straight to number one in the UK.

The Urban Folk Quartet

Stafford Gatehouse, Fri 9 December



The Urban Folk Quartet are like no other folk band. With Birmingham's vibrant and diverse music scene having a significant influence on their work, they dabble in all kinds of sounds, from funk grooves and Middle-Eastern melodies to afrobeat and north Indian rhythms.

They tug their collective forelock in the direction of more traditional folk music too, describing their sound as being 'fiddle-led' and drawing 'heavily on celtic dance forms and traditional song'.

The band's 2016 tour sees the first airing of brand new material and follows on from the success of last year's *Escape* album.

Meilyr Jones

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,
Thurs 8 December

Meilyr Jones's visits to various European locations have provided the inspiration for his loose and spacious folk music offerings - songs which he constructs with all manner of instrumentation, from guitar and banjo to 30-piece orchestras and Glaswegian community choirs. The former lead singer of quirky Welsh band *Race Horses*, Meilyr visits the Potteries in support of debut album 2013, recently released on *Moshi Moshi* and featuring a selection of brilliant concoctions that sound even better when performed live.



Mad Dog Mcrea

The Robin, Bilston, Thurs 1 December

Mad Dog Mcrea blend a unique mixture of folk rock, pop, gypsy jazz and bluegrass. From self-penned numbers telling of adventure, drinking, love and life to traditional offerings about gypsies, fairies, legless pirates and black flies, their infectious songs never fail to capture their audience's imagination.

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THU 15 DEC **VH**



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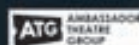


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Katherine Jenkins: Celebration

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 22 December

"The live performance aspect is my favourite part of what I do, and I also happen to love Christmas," says Katherine Jenkins in talking about her festive-season concert tour. "The show will feature traditional and popular Christmas music - and I also want to get everyone together to sing a little bit. I really want some community carol singing. I want to hear the voices of the audience and compare them as I make my way around the UK!"

As well as a selection of seasonal music, the concert also includes songs from Katherine's 11th and most recent album, *Celebration*, a collection created to mark a year that's included the Queen's 90th birthday, the Rio Olympics and Euro 2016.



Ex Cathedra: Christmas Music By Candlelight

St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 2 December; St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton, Sat 3 December; St Paul's Church, Birmingham, Mon 19 - Thurs 22 December



What better way to get into the Christmas spirit than by enjoying an evening with one of the country's finest choral music ensembles?

Under the directorship of its founder, Jeffrey Skidmore, Ex Cathedra is this month presenting its atmospheric Christmas Music By Candlelight experience, an event that features festive favourites from around the globe and across the ages, interspersed with a variety of

City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: White Christmas

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 9 December

Even if Birmingham's Symphony Hall isn't literally decked with boughs of holly this festive season, there's no question that the popular venue is offering its patrons plenty by way of yuletide cheer in the run-up to Christmas.

One of the undoubted highlights of its December programme is this concert of seasonal music presented by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, complete with contributions from top West End vocalists. The concert also includes an opportunity for audience members to exercise their own vocal chords in a sure-to-be-fun singalong.

Festive favourites featured in the show include *Let It Snow*, *When A Child Is Born*, *Frosty The Snowman* and *All I Want For Christmas Is You*. Richard Balcombe conducts.



BBC Philharmonic

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 9 December

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke-on-Trent, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concert-goers with popular classical works from its impressive repertoire.

This latest concert sees Chief Conductor Juanjo Mena picking up the baton for a programme which features a selection of Dvorák's *Slavonic Dances*, Mussorgsky's full-blooded *Night On A Bare Mountain* and extracts from Tchaikovsky's colourful *Nutcracker*.

The BBC New Generation Artist of 2014, Pavel Kolesnikov, also makes a contribution to what's certain to be an evening of high-quality music, performing Chopin's stylish *Piano Concerto No2*, written by the composer while still a teenager.

The BBC Phil returns to Victoria Hall on 10 February to play Haydn, Mozart and Sibelius, visiting the venue again on 3 March with a programme that features the music of Berlioz, Elgar and Musorgsky.



Halesowen Orchestra

Cornbow Hall, Halesowen, Sat 10 December

The Halesowen Orchestra was once described by James Morris MP as "one of the town's hidden jewels", a description with which the 40-strong ensemble's many supporters will no doubt wholeheartedly agree.

Founded in 1986, the amateur group of musicians meet once a week to practise a wide and varied repertoire of works by some of the world's greatest classical composers.

This month's concert sees them turning their attention to Mendelssohn's *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet Suite No2* and Elgar's *Violin Concerto*.

Barbara Nice

talks about her Christmas Cracker and explains why we all need to carry on laughing...



Fast becoming a staple feature of Birmingham's festive offering, Barbara Nice is back again with a brand new, bumper Christmas show for the fifth year running. As December descends upon us, we caught up with the much-loved King's Heath housewife - played by local legend Janice Connolly - to find out what we can expect from this year's Christmas Cracker...

"It's going to be a really good night out," Connolly assures. "You name it, I've got it! I've got a ukulele band, mince pies and Barbara's famous raffle. I've got special guests including Lorraine Bowen, who was a semi-finalist on Britain's Got Talent last year. It's great fun and a brilliant thing to do with friends. People always come out saying it's put them right in the mood for Christmas!"

The continued success of Barbara's annual Christmas show in the city has surprised Connolly, but she's pleased as a festive spiced punch that people are still turning out in their droves to share an evening of silliness with her - and there'll be more of them this year than ever!

"It was only supposed to be a one-off really, but people enjoyed it so much that I think it's become part of people's tradition now - it's as traditional as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer! It started off as just the one night at mac, and now it's grown into a kind of little tour. I'm doing a few dates at mac and also one at the Artrix in Bromsgrove, and then there are shows in Manchester, Clitheroe and Brighton."

Naturally, Barbara is pretty big on Christmas, but for Connolly herself, it's the quiet time that comes just after the big day that's the real joy of the holiday season.

"I don't mean to be miserable, but I do sometimes find Christmas Day itself can be a bit much. It's lovely when people get together and enjoy themselves, but there's such a lot to do, isn't there? I much prefer



those days in between Boxing Day and New Year's Eve - those kind of lost days where you haven't got to do anything, but your house looks great because your Christmas tree's up, and you can watch all the stuff on telly that you've been wanting to see on catch-up, and you can just kind of breathe a bit. That's my favourite."

Of course, a Barbara is for life and not just for Christmas, and 2016 has definitely been a brilliant year for the King's Heath comic. As well as taking home the title of Best Midlands Comedian in our own What's On Readers' Awards, she was also named as runner-up in the Midlands Comedy Awards, and has been busy in Birmingham and Salford recording a new sitcom set to air on BBC Radio Two in March.

"Barbara was never one for rushing - she's been taking it very slowly, but I do think she's finally starting to get the recognition she deserves. The sitcom is about Barbara's life at home with her husband and her best friend, Mary. She and her husband Ken have both got a lot of time on their hands, but Barbara's a get-up-and-doer while Ken just wants to stay at home watching quiz shows, so it's about her sort of putting a firework under him! We recorded four episodes to capacity audiences that really, really liked it, so I'm hoping people will listen in and say to the BBC, 'More of this please! More Barbara Nice!'"

It's now several years since Connolly came to Birmingham, but to this day she still nods to her northern origins in performances outside the city. She's Barbara from Stockport in some shows, Barbara from King's Heath in others.

"I don't change a thing really, apart from the bus - it's a number 50 bus when I'm doing King's Heath Barbara and a 192 if I'm doing Stockport Barbara. That's the only change. But she travels very well. Wherever I go, people come and tell me that I'm just like their auntie or their mum - it's the same down south as well."

In the past, Connolly has commented on the negative attitudes towards Birmingham that are present in much of the rest of the country, both in the north and the south. In recent years, however, huge re-development and investment in the city, as well as a growing cultural output, has helped to really challenge those perceptions.

"I was working with an actor from Walsall on a radio play recently, and he said he's noticed that a lot more people are asking for his proper accent now - it's something people are seeking out and enjoying, perhaps partly because of things like *Peaky Blinders*. Anybody that comes to Birmingham for the first time immediately changes their mind about it, and a lot of that is to do with what the powers-that-be are providing for people. It looks a lot better now, and there's genuinely more to do. I went to the Royal Television Society Awards at the Motorcycle Museum, and Steven Knight, who made *Peaky Blinders*, was there. Now he's a great fella! And he said that, I think within the next two years, they're looking to open a film studio at the NEC, so hopefully there should be more and more really good stuff coming this way."

Outside of being Barbara, Connolly also has a career as a theatre-maker, having run the well-regarded company Women In Theatre for an impressive 33 years. Their latest project, *Starting Out*, premiered at Birmingham REP in October, and was highly praised for its portrayal of the difficulties faced by young women entering the world of work today.

"About three years ago, to celebrate our 30th anniversary, we talked to women in Birmingham who'd also been doing their jobs for 30 years, and we created a set of monologues based on those conversations. So this year, I thought it'd be really good to talk to young women about their experiences of getting onto the career ladder, because I think it's really tough for young people now. We got great feedback

at The REP, and also when we took the show to London, which is great because we're not particularly well known there."

Nevertheless, *Women In Theatre* isn't, as the name might suggest, a project exclusively by and for women. Over the years, they've worked with many men, and even addressed important male issues such as mental health and testicular cancer. But at its heart is a commitment to improving diversity in our theatres, providing a platform for those whose voices might not otherwise be heard.

With her theatre company known for taking on weighty issues, Connolly is acutely aware of the many pressing problems in our society today. From the outside, the increasing hardship and division in our world might make a comedian's job seem like a tough one, but for her, the difficulties that we're facing only serve to make laughter more important than ever.

"I'm a big believer in comedy running side by side with serious issues because I think that, in life, often the times you laugh the most are after big, terrible events. I also think the working class are really good at laughing, and I think we should continue to do that. A lot of that is maybe because people have had harder lives and they know how to make the most of it when they're in a bad situation. In the north particularly you get a lot of comedy coming out of women working in the mills and shouting to each other and becoming these big, matriarchal characters - that's part of what's made things like *Coronation Street* so successful. And I think it's important. I think we've got to keep laughing because it gives us strength, and also it's a way of connecting with people and making them feel less powerless."

.....

Barbara Nice's Christmas Cracker shows at Artrix, Bromsgrove, on Monday 12 December and mac birmingham on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 December.

25 Years Of Reeves & Mortimer: The Poignant Moments

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Fri 9 December

Reeves & Mortimer's scheduled appearance in Birmingham last winter had to be postponed due to the latter's need for a triple heart bypass operation, so it's particularly nice to see them back in the Midlands this month.

Vic and Bob first worked together over a quarter of a century ago. They shot to stardom courtesy of a brand of anarchic humour that blended surreal material with more traditional double-act fare such as corny jokes and violent slapstick.

For a time in the 1990s they were pretty much the biggest names on the UK comedy circuit. Their TV work included shows such as *The Smell Of Reeves & Mortimer* and *Shooting Stars* - and even a remake of the cult 1960s television adventure series *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)*.

"Playing in front of a living audience is where it all began for us," says Bob Mortimer. "Some people feel most alive when they're on fire or in Turkey, but for us the stage is where we thrive. I will ensure that Vic arrives at all dates smartly dressed and unarmed. I promise not to mention football, JLS or apricots during the performances. Should you choose to attend, be warned - I will not be wearing a toupé."



Six of the best...

Mick Ferry

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 14 - Sat 17 & Sat 31 December

Highly regarded not only as a stand-up but also a compere, Mick has peddled his cynical brand of humour on BBC One's Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow.

He's also enjoyed the experience of 'being a film star', having appeared in Ken Loach's Palm D'Or-nominated movie, *Looking For Eric*.

He's an old-style comedian in many ways, his dour manner a throwback to the days when blunt northern funnymen were ten-a-penny, while his humour is derived from a fairly pessimistic outlook on life.

"There's no message in this show", he declared at one of his gigs. "There's no moral lesson, there are just some jokes. And if you need a comedian to tell you how to think and treat other people, then you should take a ****ing hard look at yourself."



Mickey Sharma

mac, Birmingham, Sat 10 December

If life had worked out differently for Mickey Sharma, the tool of his trade would have been a cricket bat rather than a microphone. The Karachi-born funnyman was a promising young cricketer with an ambition to play for India, but a nasty head injury, sustained while practising his batting, hit his chosen career for six...

One emergency operation later, Mickey's sporting aspirations were in tatters, and a long period of both recovery and depression followed. But the Indian cricket team's loss has proved to be comedy's gain, with Mickey earning himself plenty of plaudits and admirers since launching his full-time stand-up career four years ago.

His Birmingham appearance this month sees him presenting his latest show, *A Sharma Sutra's Tale*.



Josh Widdicombe

Civic Hall, Wolverhampton, Thurs 8 December

Peddling a nice line in exasperated, self-deprecating humour when performing

live, Devon-raised funnyman Josh Widdicombe pumps out his cleverly crafted gags at a brisk pace, hitting the mark with the vast majority of his observational material.

This latest touring show, *What Do I Do Now*, has met with favourable reviews and sees Josh blending nostalgic recollections about his childhood with a well-pitched rant at the modern world.

Widdicombe jokes include: "Hotdogs cause bum cancer - that was the original slogan for McDonald's before 'I'm loving it'," and, "People say it's better to have loved and lost than never loved at all. But that's not how losing things works. When you lose your phone, your first reaction isn't, 'At least I had a phone; it's better to have had a phone and lost a phone than never to have phoned at all.'"



Stephen K Amos

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 3 December

Stephen K Amos returns to Birmingham this month with his latest touring show, World Famous, in which he reveals everything he's learned from the cultures of the countries in which he's performed his stand-up routine.

His popularity both here and abroad are suitable reward for a comedian who sometimes wondered whether his big break would ever come. "I used to do a joke where I said I'd have to wait for Lenny Henry to die before I could get on television," he says, referring to his belief that opportunities for black comedians are few and far between.

Whatever the truth, there's little question that Stephen's very much basking in the televisual limelight these days. His success is no surprise, mind, given the quality of his material and his effortless ability to strike all the right chords with his ever-appreciative audience.

Jokes include: "Christmases were terrible, not like nowadays when kids get everything. My sister got a miniature set of perfumes called 'Ample'. It was tiny, but even I could see where my dad had scraped off the 'S'."



Ahir Shah

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 17 December

Oxbridge graduate Ahir Shah is happy to describe his act as a blend of 'philosophical inquiry, political vigour and sweet gags'.

He also realises that the path to comedy stardom can be a long and arduous one: "Over the course of the last decade," he says, "my status on the circuit has skyrocketed from 'curiosity' to 'interloper!'"

Ahir's latest touring show, Machines, not only went down a storm in Edinburgh last summer but also, he enthusiastically reveals, contains an absolutely cracking joke about lizards.

The gig's not without its serious moments - the comedian was caught up in the Paris attacks last year and shares his experience of the devastation - but his natural optimism and incisive delivery of his material ensure that a reason to smile is never too far away.



Rudi Lickwood

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 31 December

Nobody's safe from becoming a target of Rudi Lickwood's fast-paced humour, least of all his wife, who, he claims, has emasculated him, and whose snoring and menstruating he hates. His kids don't escape unscathed either - but then if they were better at art and playing the recorder, they wouldn't give their dad quite so much material to work with.

Lickwood started out as an Eddie Murphy impersonator back in the late 1980s, before turning his considerable comic talent to the business of stand-up.

Jokes include: "I've got a 26-year-old kid who I found out about last year through the Child Support Agency. They tracked me down and gave me a court summons for leaving the scene of the accident."

Rudi appears at the Regent as part of the venue's Laugh Out Loud Comedy Club night.



Scott Capurro

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 15 December

Outrageous and outspoken, gay comedian Scott Capurro certainly knows how to provoke a response - as hefty numbers of complaints following various television appearances ably testify. Confident, catty, charismatic and Californian, Scott has no qualms about using material that might well offend a significant proportion of an unprepared audience. When he's not in boundary-pushing mode and talking about subjects like AIDS - which, according to his website, he's avoided contracting 'by telling unsavory jokes in every English-speaking country' - his material includes such humorous observations as, "Scotland had oil, but it's running out thanks to all that deep frying." The gag was voted one of the top 10 at the Edinburgh Fringe a couple of years back.



Crime, Christmas and celebrity culture

John Partridge stars in *Chicago* at the New Alexandra Theatre



“

It's a dream of a part. I get to flick the hair, shine the shoes, put on the tux, and get draped in feathers!

”

Chicago in the 1920s. These are violent, troubled times, where danger lurks in shadows and gangsters run the show. It's also the beginning of a burgeoning celebrity culture, with the growth of Hollywood movies, popular music and a booming media industry combining to nurture a new breed of megastars. Sensational stories sell, and journalists prowl the streets, sniffing out the juiciest morsels they can find in the hope of making headlines...

Living and working among them is Maurine Dallas Watkins, a young reporter for the Chicago Tribune. It's while covering two high-profile murders that she sees how celebrity obsession is changing the way that courts treat criminals, prompting her to write a play based on her stories. Nearly 50 years later, the play would be transformed into what would become the longest-running American musical on Broadway, outdone only by the British Phantom Of The Opera.

Forty-one years after its smash-hit US debut, Chicago is undertaking a brand new UK tour, arriving at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre in time for Christmas. The production's fabulous cast includes EastEnders' John Partridge in the starring role of slick, quick-talking lawyer Billy Flynn, a character he imagines might have carved a slightly different career were he around today...

“Billy is the King of Spin,” explains Partridge. “I guess today's equivalent would be something like a PR Guru. It's his job to raise the profiles of our two loveable murderesses, Roxy and Velma, to ensure their

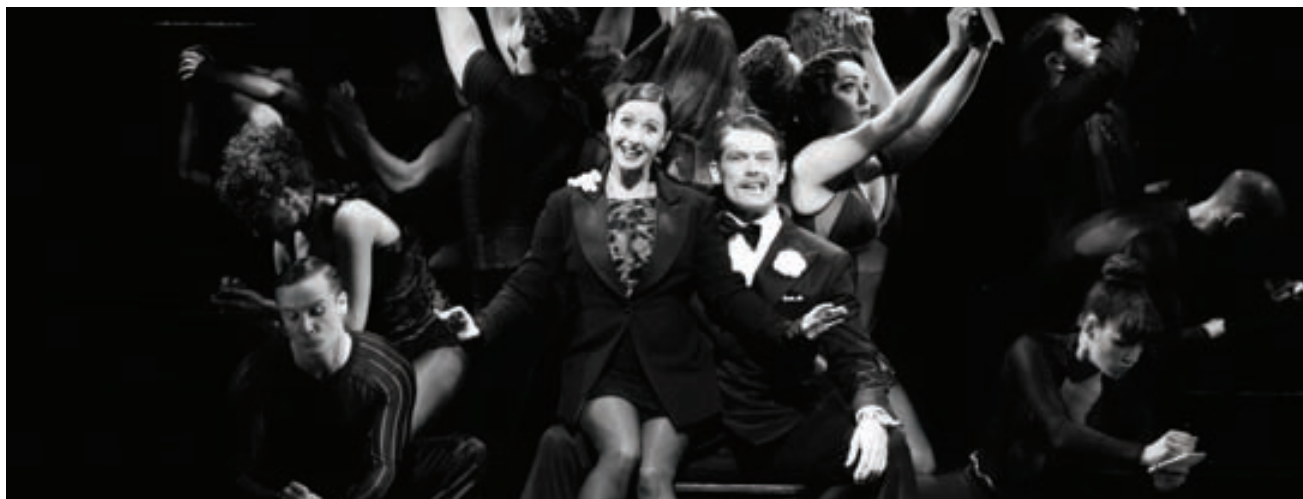
names stay in the press and ultimately get them let off for their crimes. It's a dream of a part. I get to flick the hair, shine the shoes, put on the tux, and get draped in feathers!”

Some things change while others stay the same. The internet and the explosion of reality TV might have affected the way we interact with our celebrities today, not to mention swelling their ranks enormously, but ultimately, our culture is a continuation of the one that Watkins saw emerging close to a century ago.

“It's very topical now,” Partridge continues. “Even when the musical was conceived back in 1975, I don't think we had any idea of how celebrity culture would explode. It's everywhere now - it's in people's homes, on television, in magazines and on social media. There's no getting away from it. I think that's part of the reason the show has this lasting appeal - the story is very contemporary in its nature but it's dealt with in this old-school way.”

Doing justice to the powerful story and its compelling characters is paramount in this production, which has been stripped clean of all the flashy and sometimes shallow extras that are often part and parcel of large-scale musicals.

“It's a very stark, minimal set that we have, which really focuses your attention on the narrative and the storytelling of the show. There are no scene changes and no costume changes, which is quite unusual for a musical and quite brave. Often, shows rely on sets and costumes, perhaps because they need to, whereas Chicago is so power-



ful that it doesn't need all the extras. It does mean audiences have to really pay attention, though, because they're not being directed by the set. That's what makes it such a great piece for an actor - it means that we're in charge of taking the audience on the journey, rather than external things doing that for you."

Rest assured, however, that the show will still look and sound fantastic. It might not be conventionally flamboyant, but it's still undeniably stylish in its own way, packed full of iconic musical numbers and incredible choreography.

"It's a very clever, highly stylised musical. The choreography and the dialogue and the songs are all woven seamlessly together so that everything is very fluid, and there really is something for everybody. The score is legendary - you couldn't ask for a better one - and our band is absolutely exceptional. People often forget that Chicago has a jazz score, and in this tour, we have an amazing 12-strong jazz band who're very much part of the show. In my opinion, they're worth the ticket price alone! We also have one of the sexiest ensembles of dancers that you'll see on stage this Christmas, trust me!"

With its clever script, intricate dancing and stand-out musical numbers, you might think that such a complex and demanding show would make hours of practice and rehearsal an essential, but for Partridge, fresh from his stint on *Celebrity Big Brother*, time was a luxury not afforded in this case.

"I actually only had three days' rehearsal,

which I do not recommend!" he laughs. "It was scary. I came out of the *Big Brother* house on the Friday, did all the press that went with that, and then I had my first rehearsal on the Monday. When we opened on the Wednesday, there were a lot of grey-faced producers standing in the wings thinking, 'Oh my God, is he gonna pull this off?' But fortunately musical theatre is in my blood. I went into *Cats* when I was 16 and I'm now 46, so it's something I've done for a long time. And, I'm pleased to say, it all came off. Funnily enough, I'm going to be going through another hair-raising rehearsal period shortly - we finish *Chicago* on 31 December, and then my next show, *La Cage Aux Folles*, opens in Oxford on 5 January. It seems to be becoming what I'm known for!"

Of course, it may have helped that Partridge already had some familiarity with the role, having initially been offered it back in 2010. But since beginning this year's tour, he's had plenty of time to get to grips with Billy, continually learning, finessing and developing the part.

"When I was first offered it in 2010, I turned it down because I didn't think I had the maturity, but when I knew the show was coming round again, I actively threw my hat into the ring. Luckily they were very receptive and offered me the part straight away. I've had a wonderful time doing it - it's a great company, we've really grown together, and we're all still constantly finding new ways of playing it. In Birmingham we're also going to be joined by Mica Paris, and it's always lovely to have a fresh viewpoint on some-

thing, especially at this stage in the tour."

Partridge is no stranger to working during the Christmas season. Over the last five years, he's appeared in various pantomimes, including Birmingham Hippodrome's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs* in 2013.

"This is the first year in a while that I won't be slapping my thigh and mugging outrageously to the audience for laughs! I'm afraid working over Christmas is all part and parcel of being an actor - the holidays are our busy times, so we take our vacations at other times of the year. But all my family are going to come and watch the show on Boxing Day - if I've got to do two shows on Boxing Day then they can all come and see me!"

And while treading the boards instead of flopping in front of the telly at the height of the holiday season isn't for everyone, Partridge is looking forward to being back here for another Christmas show, having thoroughly enjoyed his stint in the UK's biggest and best panto.

"Every audience is different, and every town you visit has a different sort of feel. Some are harder than others, but others are on their feet the minute you come out on stage! I've always found the audiences to be very warm and receptive in Birmingham, so I'm glad to be coming back."

.....
Chicago runs at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday 12 to Saturday 31 December.

Dick Whittington

Doctor Who and Torchwood star John Barrowman will be hoping the streets of the second city are paved with gold this Christmas, when he takes the title role in Birmingham Hippodrome's pantomime production of Dick Whittington

Joining John on stage this year, to star as King Rat, is Steve McFadden, best known as EastEnders bad boy Phil Mitchell.

Support comes from The Krankies (as Councillor and Jimmy Krankie), Hippodrome favourite Matt Slack (as Idle Jack), West End star Jodie Prenger (as Fairy Bow Bells) and popular Midlands panto Dame, Andrew Ryan (as Sarah the Cook).

The story of a young man who heads off on his travels in search of fame and fortune, Dick Whittington is one of the most popular of all pantomimes. It's therefore no surprise to find that our eponymous hero's journey sees him stopping off at not one, not two, but three theatres across the Midlands this Christmas.

Dick Whittington shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Mon 19 December - Sun 29 January

As well as the Hippodrome, Dick's also visiting the Coventry Belgrade, where the venue's long-term panto writer, director and Dame, Iain Lauchlan, is returning for his 22nd show. Iain's heading up a production that comes complete with 'singalong songs, amazing sets and extravagant costumes' - and which will no doubt be packed to its festive rafters with action, comedy and family fun.

Dick Whittington shows at Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, until Sat 7 January

Another well-established 'king of Midlands pantomime' is comedian Malcolm Stent, who, like Iain, has clocked up more years of writing and performing pantos than he probably cares to remember. In much the same way as Iain has made his indelible mark at the Belgrade, Malcolm has become a festive-season legend at The Core - formerly known as Solihull Arts Complex. His latest version of Dick Whittington features 'action, adventure, secrets, songs, dancing, trickery, romance, swashbuckling sailors and rogue-ish rats aplenty'. In short, pretty much every ingredient you need for a barnstorming evening of pantomime magic.

Dick Whittington shows at The Core, Solihull, from Fri 9 - Sat 31 December



Jack And The Beanstalk

Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock,
Thurs 22 - Fri 30 December



If you're up for a bit of fe-fi-fo-fumming this festive season, a trip to the Prince of Wales Centre should be right up your beanstalk, with a talented cast of performers ensuring that not all encounters with grumpy, cash-counting ogres need end in tears. Keith de Winter gets all glammed up to star as Dame Dolly, with CBBC's Shorelle Hopkin returning 'by popular demand' to perform some wand-waving magic as The Fairy.

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Robin Hood And The Babes In The Wood

The Roses, Tewkesbury, Sat 3 December -
Sat 7 January; Artrix, Bromsgrove,
Fri 16 - Fri 23 December

As if Robin Hood didn't already have enough on his plate, dealing with the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, wooing the delicious Maid Marion and wondering how to stop the colossal Friar Tuck from eating everything in his path, the festive season also finds him getting tangled up in the many and varied traditions of pantomime.

When the dastardly sheriff hires a pair of bungling baddies to put paid to his brother King Richard's children - the 'Babes' of the title - he thinks his wickedness will secure him the throne of England. But he's reckoned without our dashing hero, a Santa's Sack-worth of audience participation and more corny gags than you could fit into a giant-size Christmas stocking.

As is usually the case, Midlands theatre company All & Sundry are the purveyors of panto

mirth at the Artix.

Down the M5 in Tewkesbury, meanwhile, The Roses' version of the show has been written by the ever-reliable Ben Crocker, whose previous work for the theatre includes its last four pantomimes: Aladdin 2012; Jack And The Beanstalk 2013; Beauty And The Beast 2014; and Cinderella 2015.





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STEVE MCFADDEN THE KRANKIES
MATT SLACK JODIE PRENGER

Dick Whittington

The Magical Pantomime Adventure

Mon 19 Dec - Sun 29 Jan
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MATTHEW BOURNE'S

The Red Shoes

Tue 7 - Sat 11 Feb
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Everyone's Welcome

Pantos

Aladdin

The Wolverhampton Grand is certainly on a roll when it comes to providing high-quality panto fare - and the venue's Christmas 2016 offering looks set to be every bit as energised and entertaining as any of its illustrious predecessors.

X-Factor winner Joe McElderry takes the title role in a show that also sees internet sensation Doreen Tipton making her panto debut as the Lazy Empress Of China.

Pantomime stalwart Lisa Riley stars as the Slave Of The Ring, with CBeebies' Mr Bloom - Ben Faulks - threatening to feel a collar or two as the Chief of Peking Police.

Britain's Got Talent soprano Lucy Kay appears in the role of Princess Jasmine, while illusionist Stefan Pejic plays the evil sorcerer Abanazar.

Panto regular Ian Adams dons a plethora of glamorous outfits as Widow Twankey.

Aladdin shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Sat 10 December to Sun 22 January

Aladdin also manages to fly his magic carpet into Birmingham and Stratford this Christmas. He comes in to land in Brum at the Jewellery Quarter's Blue Orange Theatre, where the Midland Academy of Musical Theatre are the ensemble charged with the task of recounting this most famous of Arabian Nights stories.

Meanwhile over in 'Shakespeare country', a talented cast of West End performers will be looking to provide audiences with an Open Sesame to an evening of laugh-out-loud family fun.

Aladdin also shows at The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, from Wed 7 to Fri 9 December and Stratford Artshouse, Stratford-upon-Avon from Wed 14 to Tues 27 December



Sleeping Beauty

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 1 - Sat 31 December; The Place, Oakengates, Shropshire, Wed 7 - Sat 31 December; Malvern Theatre, Thurs 15 December - Sun 8 January



Sleeping Beauty - Lichfield Garrick

The tragic tale of a young princess who's tricked by an evil fairy and pricks her finger on a spinning wheel, causing her to sleep for 100 years, offers a great story around which to build a pantomime production of real quality.

And judging by the above venues' previous yuletide offerings, the Garrick, The Place and Malvern Theatre's 2016 festive versions of the popular fairytale are likely to provide some truly top-notch family fun...

In Lichfield, CBeebies television favourite Rebecca Keatley takes the role of Fairy Moonbeam, appearing alongside local lad

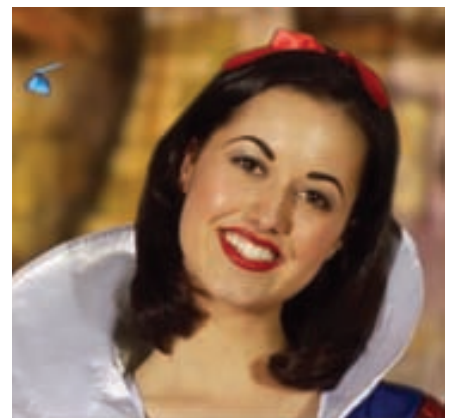
Sam Rabone - as the production's Dame, Nurse Nelly - and a host of special effects, including a fire-breathing dragon... Meanwhile, the star of this year's panto at The Place might well arrive at the venue in a rather unusual way. By ostrich! Long-established comedian and entertainer Bernie Clifton - who's best known for 'riding' his faithful ostrich companion, Oswald - is appearing in the Shropshire theatre's Christmas presentation alongside Wink Taylor from CITV's The Sooty Show... And speaking of The Sooty Show, another of its stars, Chris Pizzey, is appearing as Silly Billy in the Malvern Theatre version of the story. He's joined by a top-billing Gillian Wright - aka EastEnders' Jean Slater - Channel Five's Milkshake presenter Amy Thompson and Casualty's Rebecca Wheatley. Quinn Patrick dons the poorly applied rouge and comedy wig to play Nurse Nelly.



Sleeping Beauty - The Place, Oakengates

Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Fri 16 - Fri 30 December



Everybody knows the story of Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs, even if there are still a few people who haven't seen the golden-age Disney movie. The fact that it's a 24-carat classic of a fairytale means that a pantomime stage version is always a surefire winner. Expect all the usual elements, including rouged-up Dames and more slapstick comedy than you could throw a custard pie at.

Cinderella

'Son of the Potteries' Jonathan Wilkes dons the tights to star as Buttons in this ever-popular pantomime tale. Homecoming hero Jonathan is pretty much a festive fixture at the Regent Theatre nowadays, as is his good pal Christian Patterson, who's also making a welcome return. With its comical Ugly Sisters, match-making fairy godmother, drop-dead-gorgeous Prince Charming, super-cute mice and fits-one-foot-only glass slipper, Cinderella can justifiably lay claim to being the most popular of all pantomimes. And the Regent Theatre production isn't the only incarnation of this legendary fairytale delighting Midlands audiences this Christmas...

Cinderella shows at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent from Thurs 8 December to Sunday 8 January

Theatre Severn's version of the story features all the usual panto elements of comedy, singing, dancing, audience participation and 'stunning' sets and costumes. And also very much as usual, it stars the ever-popular Brad Fitt, on this occasion appearing 'as you've never seen him before'...

Cinderella shows at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 30 Nov - Sun 8 January

Cinders is this year also putting some elbow grease into scrubbing the stage at the Swan Theatre in Worcestershire, courtesy of the well-regarded Worcester Theatre Company.

Cinderella shows at Swan Theatre, Worcester from Mon 5 December to Sun 8 January



Cinderella at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



Cinderella at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Cinderella at Swan Theatre, Worcester

Aladdin: The Wok'n'Roll Panto

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 8 December - Sun 8 January



They've done it before and now they're doing it again. Yep, Stafford Gatehouse's oft-used strategy of imbuing their annual pantomime with a real rock'n'roll flavour has proved so popular in previous years that the venue is giving the exact same treatment to its 2016 production. So... they've taken this famous Arabian Nights story, stirred in a few time-honoured pantomime favourites, and then seasoned liberally with all manner of rock'n'roll hits - including favourites from Aretha

Franklin, The Monkees, James Brown, The Temptations and The Jackson Five. A recipe for success if ever there was one, so brace yourself for a fabulous festive feast of fun and frivolity.

Beauty And The Beast

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 3 - Sat 31 December; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Mon 5 - Sat 31 December

When a young woman is captured by a hideous beast, she finds herself facing a life of isolation in his mysterious palace. The Beast, too, is trapped - seemingly forever - inside the grotesquery of his physical appearance, the consequence of a spell cast upon him by an evil witch. Only Beauty's ability to look beyond his ugliness and see the person within can save him...

That's pretty much the story outline of this much-loved, age-old fairytale, which is this Christmas being given the pantomime treat-



ment by two popular Midlands theatres. The Royal Spa Centre in Leamington is promising a show that features 'spectacular scenery, fabulous costumes, incredible special effects and bags of slapstick fun' - not to mention a glamorous Dame with a turbo-charged Hoover!...

Over at the Palace in Redditch, Dancing On Ice winner and EastEnders actor Sam Attaway stars as the oafish and arrogant Gaston, with Emmerdale and Bad Girls favourite Nicole Faraday lending support in the role of Witch Guillotine.



MON 16 JAN



THU 26 JAN



FRI 27 JAN



SAT 28 JAN



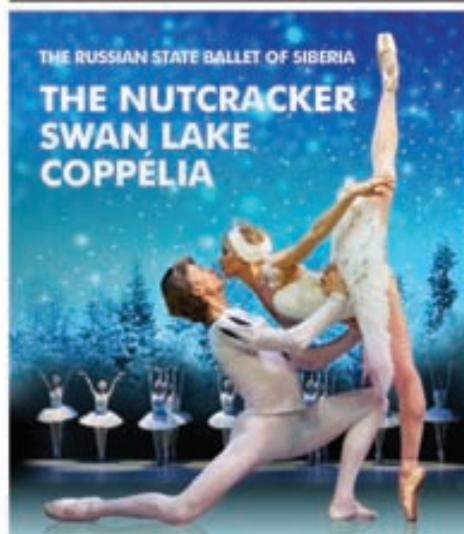
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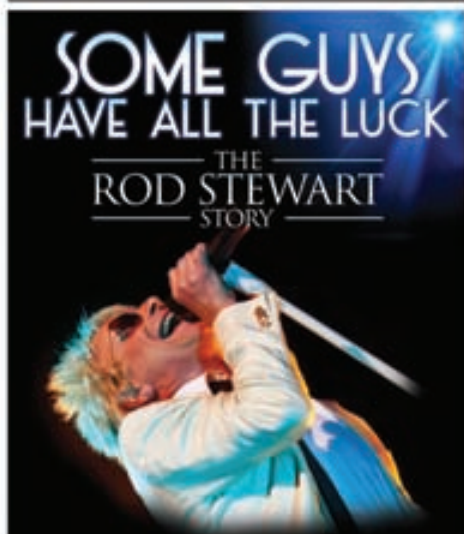
TUE 31 JAN - SAT 4 FEB



SUN 5 - TUE 7 FEB



WED 8 FEB



FRI 10 - SAT 11 FEB



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The Tempest

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 21 January

Boasting strange beings with superhuman powers, a thrilling fantasy plot and an underlying moral message about the triumph of reconciliation over revenge, *The Tempest* is the most obviously spectacular of Shakespeare's works.

This brand new production, starring Simon Russell Beale in the lead role of exiled Duke of Milan Prospero, is likely to be more visually impressive than any version that's gone before, thanks in no small measure to the use of groundbreaking motion capture technology.

This modern-day 'device' sees the shape-shifting spirit Ariel rendered as a digital projection whose movements will be controlled

by an actor live on stage.

"We had to really work at the vocabulary of this digital stuff," says Russell Beale. "As Prospero, I do have a relationship with Ariel as a digital figure, but I think in the end it's important for the character to have a human dimension - and especially in the big, emotional moments, like when Ariel asks if Prospero loves him, or when they say goodbye. But for the rest of the play you've got Ariel showing off, which causes Prospero great delight, and you can just enjoy the sheer splendour of these extraordinary figures."

Read our online interview with Simon Russell Beale at whatsonlive.co.uk



Crimes Against Christmas

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 9 - Sat 31 December

New Old Friends, whose previous theatrical endeavours have included the highly rated Falcon's Malteser, describe their latest offering as an 'anti-panto' cross between an Agatha Christie whodunnit, *The Twelve Days Of Christmas* and *The 39 Steps*.

Produced in partnership with Lichfield Garrick, Theatre Royal Bath and Natural Theatre Company, the show sees a host of characters invited to a party in a mysterious house on a remote island. Once the guests have gathered, curious and fatal things related to Christmas begin to happen, with Lords a-leaping to their deaths, lead-pipes 'piping people's heads in', and the guest of honour more than a little concerned about the presence of a rope in a nearby pear tree...



What The Dickens?!

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 7 December

Birmingham-based comedy improvisers Foghorn Unscripted use suggestions from their audience and the power of their own imaginations to create and perform their

shows. For this particular theatrical offering, the ensemble are promising a 'fast-moving, audience-led, made-up comedy romp' through the wonderful world of Charles Dickens.

Preposterous names, ludicrous coincidences and crowd-rousing melodrama will "delight and astound you," claim Foghorn. And it's a claim about which they're so confident, they're even willing to bet "a hundred gold sovereigns" that they'll be bang on the money...

Given the company's impressive collection of five-star reviews, you would probably do well to politely decline that wager.

The 39 Steps

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 15 - Fri 23 December

People who remember the various film versions of John Buchan's classic spy thriller will be hard-pressed to call any of them 'humorous'. By contrast, the stage version of his much-loved yarn bagged the 2007 Olivier Award for Best New Comedy - courtesy of some imaginative thinking on the part of its creative team.

So why not catch up with handsome hero Richard Hannay as he battles to remain impressively stiff-upper-lipped in the face of dastardly murders and life-threatening encounters with double-crossing secret agents.

Oh, and there are some beautiful and mysterious women involved too, so it's not all bad news for our intrepid hero!

Four fearless actors play no fewer than 150 roles in this real gem of a show.

A Christmas Carol

The covetous sinning of the miserly Scrooge, the eternal hope offered by Tiny Tim, the ghostly visions of redemption; of all Charles Dickens' festive stories, *A Christmas Carol* reigns supreme.

As you might expect at this time of year, Dickens' Victorian-age cautionary tale is much in evidence at theatres across the country - not least here in the Midlands, where it's being performed at three popular venues...

At mac birmingham, the highly rated Chapterhouse Theatre Company present a version that comes complete with song, dance and a 'magnificent' original musical score...

A Christmas Carol shows at mac, Birmingham from Fri 9 to Sat 10 December

Coventry's Albany Theatre, meanwhile, plays host to the award-winning *Tread The Boards*, as they present their family-friendly take on the much-loved Christmas classic...

A Christmas Carol shows at Albany Theatre, Coventry, Mon 12 December to Mon 2 January

The Crescent Theatre's ever-reliable in-house company is the other ensemble this month recounting the story of Scrooge's spiritual awakening.

A Christmas Carol shows at The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham from Sat 3 to Sat 17 December



Christmas



Treasure Island

Treasure Island

Birmingham Rep,
Fri 25 November - Sat 7 January

This latest theatrical version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale, a modern adaptation by Bryony Lavery, puts an interesting spin on the author's swashbuckling story, with the chief protagonist being a girl rather than a boy.

When pirates ransack her grandmother's inn, fearless Jim is drawn into the adventure of a lifetime - one which will see her not only setting sail in search of buried treasure but also spending time in the company of a one-legged pirate with murder in mind...

Zorro's Christmas Adventure

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 29 December

If you've already sampled a Little English Theatre production, you'll know just how much fun they are. And there's every reason to imagine this latest offering will follow suit. When Santa Claus crash-lands in the scorching Mexican desert, the future of Christmas is on the line. Thank heaven, then, for the arrival of the one and only Zorro. A masked avenger, he's on a mission not only to save Christmas but also to thwart the evil El Scorchio, who plans to marry the beautiful (take a deep breath...) Maria Conchita Juanita Tortilla Bonita...

Wind In The Willows

The Old Rep, Birmingham,
until Sat 31 December

A firm festive favourite, Kenneth Grahame's much-loved riverside tale ably demonstrates the way in which one life can command the full attention of three others!

Loyal Mole, faithful Ratty and steady old Badger simply don't have time for any of their own interests - they're far too busy having to look after their reckless and irrepressible friend, Mr Toad...

Presented by Scott Ritchie Productions and Birmingham Ormiston Academy.



The Snow Queen

The Snow Queen

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
until Sat 28 January

The Snow Queen is ruler of all she surveys. When she kidnaps young Kay, it's left to his sister, Gerda, to save him from a bleak future in the frostbitten wastelands...

The New Vic here give this Hans Christian Andersen work a brand new treatment, presenting a timeless tale that brings together 'enchancing characters, original music and breathtaking on-stage magic'.

This particular take on sibling love set against the snow-laden landscapes of the north has been directed with the intention of appealing to family members of all ages.

Rapunzel And Her Witch

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
Sun 4 & Mon 5 December

'Beautiful' puppets, 'magical' transformations and an innovative use of sign language are here combined by the highly rated Crazy Kat theatre company, an ensemble well versed in the business of visual storytelling. The 50-minute show, which is being publicised as 'a tall tale of princes and pigtailed, potions and pizzas', has been created for children aged between three and seven.

The production is suitable for both deaf and hearing audiences.

Santa's New Sleigh

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Fri 16 - Sat 24 December

When Theatre Severn regular Brad Fitt isn't busy playing pantomime Dames - or, as he's doing this year, starring as Buttons in the venue's production of Cinderella - he enjoys nothing more than replacing the panto wig with his playwright's hat.

Brad's Santa's New Sleigh - here being presented by Curve Theatre and suitable for two to seven-year-olds - comes complete with festive-show favourites including audience participation, singalong opportunities and a special Christmas present from Santa Claus



Stick Man

himself. And as an extra-special treat, audience members can also have their photo taken with the white-bearded giver of gifts, so be sure to have your cameras and smart phones at the ready....

Stick Man

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
until Sat 31 December

"Scamp Theatre send shivers down my spine," reveals Julia Donaldson, the co-creator (along with Alex Scheffler) of the hugely popular children's book on which this show is based. "They're so lively and innovative. I love their production of Stick Man, and so do the audiences."

Julia's not wrong - audiences most definitely do love the show, as a smash-hit season in the West End ably demonstrated.

Featuring a trio of talented performers, the production brings together puppetry, songs, live music and 'funky moves' to tell the story of Stick Man's desperate attempts to get back to the family tree. Suitable for children aged three and older.

Santa And The Pirates That Don't Want Christmas

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent,
Tues 13 December

CBeebies Spot Bots stars Callum Donnelly and Robin Hatcher are the dynamic duo behind this brand new touring show. Santa's getting ready for Christmas Eve and needs to know who's been naughty and who's been nice. Problem is, he's lost his naughty list. Enter some mainbrace-splicing pirates from the Good Ship Christmas Cheer, offering him the kind of helping hand he'd do well to accept - but then can he really afford to trust a pirate?...

Awash with familiar songs, this lively festive offering also provides children with the chance to post their Dear Santa letters, not to mention pick up a post-show gift from the big man himself.

more festive fun across the region...



Where's My Igloo Gone?

Where's My Igloo Gone?

Arena Theatre, Tues 6 - Thurs 8 December;
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 18 December;

Soaring snow geese, pet husky dogs, starry nights, fishing adventures and the kind of cold that makes the skin tingle are all featured in this Bone Ensemble story about a little girl who sets off in search of help when her igloo starts to melt...

"We're collaborating with experts in climate change and social psychology," explain the Birmingham-based theatre company, "so that we can weave scientific knowledge into a compelling narrative with dynamic interactive activities, engaging audiences with climate change in a new and refreshing way."

Dear Santa

Lichfield Garrick,
Tues 13 - Sat 24 December

Presented with the intention of giving children aged two to seven both a fun introduction to theatre and an early yuletide treat, Dear Santa tells the tale of Father Christmas's attempts to sort out the most fantastic of festive gifts for a girl named Sarah. But it's only with the intervention of his cheeky Elf that he finally manages to settle on the perfect prezzie for her... Youngsters get the chance to meet-and-greet Santa after the show.

What The Ladybird Heard

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 27 December -
Wed 11 January

Given the success of numerous stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson's hugely popular books, it's a real no-brainer to mount one of her stories as a festive offering. Birmingham Town Hall has very wisely done just that, presenting a stage version of the award-winning picture book by Donaldson and Lydia Monks.

When Hefty Hugh and Lanky Len set out to steal the farmer's prize cow, they soon find that the best-laid plans of mice and crafty robbers can sometimes be undone by the



What The Ladybird Heard

tinest and quietest of creatures - namely, one very small ladybird...

Fifty-five action-packed and musical minutes in length, this well-reviewed show is recommended for children aged three and older.

The Witches

Dudley Little Theatre,
Thurs 8 - Sat 10 December

Roald Dahl's evil witches don't look any different from human women - at least until you scratch the surface. When you do, it becomes apparent that they sport wigs to conceal their bald heads, gloves to cover their clawed hands, and find 'pretty shoes' a far-from-comfortable fit for their toeless feet. What's more, they'd love to squish and squelch all the wretched little children they despise. Fingers crossed, then (not clawed ones, though!), that an unnamed seven-year-old boy and his Norwegian grandmother can stop the gruesome rotters in their tracks. Presented by Dudley Little Theatre.

Santa's Polka Dot Pirate

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Thurs 8 - Sat 24 December

Imagine Theatre's previous Father Christmas adventures - Santa's Dizzy Day and Santa's Rusty Robot - went down an absolute snow-storm with their target audience.

The Coventry-based company will be hoping that their latest addition to the series warms the cockles of just as many tiny hearts.

Audience participation and singalong fun are much in evidence in a show that finds the Polka Dot Pirate lost at the North Pole. Created with two to six-year-olds in mind and with a running time of approximately 35 minutes, the production provides youngsters with the opportunity to give their Christmas wish-list to the great man in person.



The Sorcerer's Apprentice

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

The Core, Solihull, Sat 17 - Sun 18 & Tues 20 -
Sat 24 December

Blunderbus theatre company are past masters at pitching their shows to perfection when it comes to delighting and entertaining children aged three to seven. And the Nottinghamshire-based ensemble are at it again with this latest offering, in which a little boy with a dream to be a world-class magician encounters a real-life sorcerer. Music, puppetry and storytelling are all present and correct in a 55-minute, interval-free show that comes complete with all manner of 'magical' and Christmas-related surprises.

Room On The Broom

The REP, Birmingham,
Thurs 22 December - Sun 8 January

Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, the creators of The Gruffalo and We're Going On A Bear Hunt, are the team behind this spell-binding tale. A witch makes the mistake of thinking she can fit a daft dog, a beautiful bird and a friendly frog - as well as her own cat - on her broomstick without it snapping in two. And when a hungry dragon appears, things really start to hot up...

Presented by Tall Stories, this Olivier-nominated show features 'songs, laughs and scary fun' for children aged three and older.



CHRISTMAS at



Saturday 17 December 7.30pm

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

Joyous seasonal and traditional music that perfectly captures the true spirit of Christmas presented by **Kevin Whately**

Praetorius In dulci jubilo

Rutter Sans Day Carol

Cullen Joy to the World

Tchaikovsky Excerpts from *The Nutcracker Suite*

Handel Hallelujah Chorus from *Messiah*

Mozart Alleluia from *Exsultate Jubilate*

and **CAROLS FOR ALL**

Adrian Lucas conductor **Julia Doyle** soprano

City of Birmingham Choir

Fanfare Trumpeters from

the Band of the Queen's Division

London Concert Orchestra



Monday 19 December 2.30pm

CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGALONG

Sing your heart out as **Jonathan Cohen** leads you through a fun-filled jamboree of his most-loved carols and hits.

Mary's Boy Child **Let it Snow**

O little town of Bethlehem

Once in royal David's city

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

Merry Christmas Everybody

With very special guest singer

Louise Dearman

London Concert Chorus

London Concert Orchestra



Friday 23 December 7.30pm

WHITE CHRISTMAS

May your celebrations be magical, merry and bright with this nostalgic show of all-time favourite Christmas songs and carols.

White Christmas **Winter Wonderland**

All I Want for Christmas is You

Frosty the Snowman **Baby it's Cold Outside**

and **CAROLS FOR ALL**

Free interval mince pies for all

Terms and conditions apply.

Guest Singers **Laura Tebbut** & **Tim Howar**

John Rigby conductor **Capital Voices** choir

London Concert Orchestra



Saturday 24 December 2.30pm

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Celebrate in the most elegant style with this exquisite concert of carols and seasonal classics staged in full 18th Century costume in an evocative candle-lit style setting.

Handel Zadok the Priest,

Christmas sequence from *Messiah*

Corelli Allegro & Pastorale

from *Christmas Concerto*

Bach Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Willcocks I Saw Three Ships

Cullen Coventry Carol

Pearsall In dulci jubilo

and **CAROLS FOR ALL**

The first Nowell

O come, all ye faithful

Good King Wenceslas

While shepherds watched

O little town of Bethlehem

O come, o come Emmanuel

God rest ye merry, gentlemen

Hark! the herald angels sing

CANZONETTA choir

MOZART FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

in full period costume

Keri Fuge soprano

Michael Bawtree conductor

Tuesday 27 December 7.30pm

LAST NIGHT OF THE CHRISTMAS PROMS

A concert of rousing classics with a grand flag waving British finale!

Tchaikovsky Excerpts from *The Nutcracker Suite*

Pachelbel Canon

Sibelius Finlandia

Verdi La donna è mobile

Puccini O soave fanciulla

Bizet Danse Bohème

Suppe Light Cavalry Overture

And all your Proms favourites

Hornpipe **Land of Hope and Glory**

Nessun Dorma **Rule, Britannia!**

Madeleine Pierard soprano

Nicky Spence tenor

with special guest **Jonathan Antoine**

Hilary Davan Wetton conductor

London Concert Orchestra

SYMPHONY HALL

Wednesday 28 December 7.30pm

ABBA CLASSICS

Get ready to party with a line-up of West End singers as they perform record-breaking ABBA hits from *I Have a Dream* to *Dancing Queen...* and many more

A free glass of prosecco for everyone on arrival
Terms and conditions apply

Pete Harrison conductor
London Concert Orchestra
Capital Voices guest singers

Thursday 29 December 2.30pm

GLORIOUS HANDEL BY CANDLELIGHT

Handel masterpieces performed in full 18th century costume in an evocative candle-lit style setting.

Sarabande Trumpet Suite
Arrival of the Queen of Sheba
Selection from the Water Music Suites
Rejoice Greatly
Hallelujah Chorus
Worthy is the Lamb
and Amen from Messiah

Crispian Steele-Perkins trumpet
Daisy Brown soprano
Steven Devine conductor
CANZONETTA choir
MOZART FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
in full 18th century costume

Thursday 29 December 7.30pm

THE SOUND OF MUSICALS

Four star soloists perform show-stopping music and songs from the greatest Broadway and West End musicals.

Wicked **Hair** **Aspects of Love**
Anything Goes **Oklahoma**
Billy Elliot **Miss Saigon**
Sunset Boulevard **Rent**
The Phantom of the Opera
Les Miserables **A Chorus Line**

KERRY ELLIS
JOANNA AMPIL
OLIVER TOMPSETT
GRAHAM BICKLEY
Richard Balcombe conductor
Manchester Concert Orchestra

Sunday 1 January 2.30pm

JOHANN STRAUSS GALA

Spend an enchanting afternoon enjoying all your favourite waltzes, polkas and songs from the Strauss era.

Die Fledermaus Overture
Tritsch-Tratsch Polka
Blue Danube Waltz
Roses in Tyrol
Radetzky March
Roses from the South Waltz
Tales from the Vienna Woods

JOHANN STRAUSS DANCERS
in glorious costumes of the period
and the
JOHANN STRAUSS ORCHESTRA
with conductor **JOHN RIGBY**
featuring soprano **Corinne Cowling**

Monday 2 January 2.30pm

GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

The UK's most renowned big band swings you back in time playing favourite wartime chart-toppers and hits from the forties directed by legendary band leader **Ray McVay**.

Perfidia **Opus One**
Hot Toddy **Flying Home**
Running Wild
Sentimental Journey
Juke Box Saturday Night

plus all your favourites including
Moonlight Serenade
Little Brown Jug
Pennsylvania 6-5000
American Patrol **Tuxedo Junction**
In the Mood **Kalamazoo**

Guest vocalists
Mark Porter
and
Catherine Sykes

And special guests
The Swing Time Jivers



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THE CATHERINE TATE SHOW

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 30 NOV 16

ROD STEWART

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 2 & 3 DEC 16

ANDRÉ RIEU

GENTING ARENA – 21 DEC 16

BIFFY CLYRO

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BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 8 DEC 16

REEVES & MORTIMER

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 9 DEC 16

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

GENTING ARENA – 10 & 11 DEC 16

THE HUMAN LEAGUE

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 10 DEC 16

KORN & LIMP BIZKIT

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 15 DEC 16

STATUS QUO

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 16 DEC 16

MADNESS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 17 DEC 16

BBC SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

GENTING ARENA – 18 DEC 16

ANDRÉ RIEU

GENTING ARENA – 21 DEC 16

MARVEL UNIVERSE LIVE

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 26-30 DEC 16

BEST EVER CHRISTMAS

GENTING ARENA – 30 DEC 16

AVENGED SEVENFOLD

GENTING ARENA – 13 JAN 17

COMEDY CENTRAL IMPRACTICAL JOKERS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 13 JAN 17

STRICTLY COME DANCING – THE LIVE TOUR 2017

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 20-22 JAN 17

A DAY TO REMEMBER

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 25 JAN 17

BLACK SABBATH

GENTING ARENA – 2 & 4 FEB 17

DONNY OSMOND

GENTING ARENA – 3 FEB 17

JACK WHITEHALL

GENTING ARENA – 16 FEB 17

MULLER INDOOR GRAND PRIX BIRMINGHAM

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 18 FEB 17

KINGS OF LEON

GENTING ARENA – 20 FEB 17

DRAKE

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 22 & 23 FEB 17

PET SHOP BOYS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 24 FEB 17

THE X FACTOR LIVE

GENTING ARENA – 24 FEB 17

KAISER CHIEFS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 25 FEB 17

JACK WHITEHALL

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 26 FEB 17

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL VAREKAI

GENTING ARENA – 1-5 MAR 17

CRUFTS 2017

NEC – 9-12 MAR 17

YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 11 & 12 MAR 17

THE WEEKND

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 13 MAR 17

RUSSELL HOWARD

GENTING ARENA – 17 & 18 MAR 17

CRAIG DAVID

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 24 MAR 17

OLLY MURS

GENTING ARENA – 23-25 MAR 17

GOOD MOURNING MRS BROWN

GENTING ARENA – 6-9 APR 17

THE WHO

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 12 APR 17

HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 14 APR 17

DISNEY ON ICE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF MAGIC

GENTING ARENA – 14-16 APR 17

FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS

GENTING ARENA – 20 APR 17

DIVERSITY

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 22 APR 17

BETWAY PREMIER LEAGUE DARTS

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 27 APR 17

TAKE THAT

GENTING ARENA – 5-6 MAY 17

WWE LIVE

GENTING ARENA – 10 MAY 17

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX LIVE

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 12 MAY 17

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE™

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 15 MAY 17

ARIANA GRANDE

GENTING ARENA – 18 MAY 17

MICKY FLANAGAN

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 18 MAY 17

THE VAMPS

GENTING ARENA – 19 MAY 17

IRON MAIDEN

BARCLAYCARD ARENA – 21 MAY 17

TAKE THAT

GENTING ARENA – 1-4 JUN 17

ELTON JOHN

GENTING ARENA – 7 JUN 17



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We've all been there; flustered, fed up and stuck at the back of a long line that seems to be going nowhere fast. Queueing has almost become a quintessential part of Christmas - but what if it didn't have to be?

At Birmingham's Genting and Barclaycard Arenas, there's an easy way to beat the Christmas crush, whether you're organising a get-together or simply hunting for the perfect gift.

Working with the NEC Group across its two venues, Amplify deliver a range of unique hospitality packages, offering not only priority booking and a private members' entrance away from the crowds, but also a whole host of extras that will make you the envy of everyone else attending.

"The concept has been running at the NEC for about 30 years, starting out as the Arena Club," explains general manager Sally Walder. "Then, in 2009, it was re-branded as Amplify. We cover everything from rock and pop to classical, and from comedy to special events like Crufts and Sports Personality Of The Year, with benefits including premium tickets, car park passes, food and drink and access to our brand new and newly refurbished hospitality areas before the shows."

That's not all, though. For each event, packages are carefully tailored to suit the performance and its audience. A show for families might incorporate face-painting and fun activities for kids, for example, while a high-end concert like Paul Simon or Sting will boast a glamorous champagne reception and some of the best seats in the house.

"You might think, from the outside, that hospitality packages would mainly appeal

to a slightly older, more affluent audience," says Sally, "but they're actually really popular across everything from Disney shows to Justin Bieber to Rod Stewart. It might be that you want a more comfortable and convenient experience when you've got a group of kids with you, or it might be that you want to avoid the queues and treat yourself or a loved one."

There are various ways to take advantage of what Amplify has to offer. If it's just a single event that's caught your eye, there's no need to commit long-term, with various Freestyle packages available on an as-and-when basis. Nevertheless, there are excellent reasons for signing up for annual Club membership - around £500 plus VAT guarantees priority booking and great discounts and extras for all shows across both venues throughout the year.

Those looking for that extra level of luxury, meanwhile, can find it in Air membership, described as the 'crème de la crème' of hospitality and particularly popular with business clients. Due to its exclusivity, however, Air is currently sold out, with a waiting list for those hoping to sign up!

"When we've got huge names like Adele or Take That," explains Sally, "and there's a high demand, sometimes only our Amplify members will be able to enjoy the VIP treatment. I think the big advantage, though, is how well looked-after all our members are. For us, it's all about going that extra mile, forming a rapport and making sure we do the very best for them on every single visit."

Over the coming months, visitors should look out for what's on offer for everything from Black Sabbath to Andre Rieu and

from Olly Murs to Cirque du Soleil. Sally's own top recommendation is the hotly anticipated Sports Personality Of The Year awards ceremony.

"The Sports Personality is a big one we've got coming up at the Genting Arena with a super bespoke package. VIPs will come into our newly refurbished restaurant, the Lakeside Lounge, and enjoy a glass of champagne and a three-course gourmet meal. We've also got former Sports Personality Of The Year Steve Cram doing an exclusive Q&A before the show. Once they're inside, they'll be seated right at the front overlooking all the VVIPs - people like Andy Murray and David Beckham. Then we'll be putting on some after-show entertainment as well, with a band and more refreshments. I think the regular tickets for Sports Personality Of The Year have now sold out, so this is a great opportunity for anyone who's desperate to go and is looking for that top-tier experience."

Whoever you are and whatever your needs, Amplify promises to make your visit extra special. For full pricing and to find out more, visit amplify.co.uk

Courtesy of Amplify, What's On is giving away one pair of VIP tickets, plus a hospitality package, to Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour at Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, on Sunday 22 January. Visit whatsonlive.co.uk to find out more and to enter.



Borg Dressing Gown **£45** Marks & Spencer



Roberts Revival RD-60 DAB Radio
£180 House of Fraser



Q and A Day: 5-year Journal
£13.79 WH Smith

'tis the Season

Your ultimate gift guide for this Christmas,
courtesy of What's On



KitchenAid 150 Artisan 4.8L Stand Mixer
£449.95 John Lewis



Bayswater bag in Oxblood
£950 Mulberry



Christmas Miniatures Candle Collection
£66 Jo Malone



Christmas Slogan Jumper **£34** Topshop



YSL Holiday Look Palette Collectors Edition
£59 Exclusive to Selfridges



Dyson Supersonic Hairdryer
£299.99 Boots



Lulu Guinness Hard Sided 4W Medium Case
£229.99 very.co.uk



GoPro HERO5 Action Camcorder
£349 currys.co.uk



Chillsner beer chiller £17 root7.com



Kiehl's Limited Edition Skincare gift set for men
£29.50 Selfridges



Micro Maxi Micro Deluxe Scooter
£119.99 John Lewis



Personalised Polar Bear Bookends by Bombus
£50 notonthehighstreet.com



Furby Connect £74.99 Toys R Us



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Film

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story CERT tbc

Starring **Felicity Jones, Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Donnie Yen, Mads Mikkelsen, Alan Tudyk, Jiang Wen, Forest Whitaker, Riz Ahmed** Directed by **Gareth Edwards** (USA)

No, this is not a sequel to Star Wars: The Force Awakens, but a free-standing episode in the so-called Star Wars universe. Here, Jyn Erso, a recruit for the Rebel Alliance (Birmingham's very own Felicity Jones), is mobilised to steal the plans of the Death Star. But even with the aid of the intelligence officer Cassian Andor (Mexico's Diego Luna), the task proves to be more perilous than anybody could have imagined. The director, Gareth Edwards, is the Warwickshire-born filmmaker who conjured up the special effects for his first film - *Monsters* (2010) - on his laptop, before going on to helm the \$160million reboot of *Godzilla* (2014). Expect your multiplex to be packed.

Released Fri 16 December



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in December...

Sully: Miracle On The Hudson CERT 12a (96 mins)

Starring **Tom Hanks, Aaron Eckhart, Laura Linney, Anna Gunn, Ann Cusack** Directed by **Clint Eastwood** (USA)

The US Airways pilot Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger (Tom Hanks) grabbed international headlines when he landed his disabled aircraft on the waters of the Hudson River, saving the lives of everybody on board. However, what happened afterwards did not paint 'Sully' in such a favourable light... Adapted from the book *Highest Duty* by Sullenberger and Jeffrey Zaslow.

Released Fri 2 December



Eat That Question

CERT 15 (93 mins)

Directed by **Thorsten Schütte** (France/Germany)

Biographical documentaries have become all the rage. This one is about the late rock musician and songwriter Frank Zappa, who challenged both the political and musical norm. Expect some rude words.

Released Fri 2 December

Chi-Raq CERT 15 (127 mins)

Starring **Nick Cannon, Wesley Snipes, Teyonah Parris, Jennifer Hudson, Angela Bassett, John Cusack, Samuel L Jackson** Directed by **Spike Lee** (USA)

Classics' scholars will be familiar with the tale of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, in which the women folk in ancient Greece withheld their sexual favours until their men put down their weapons. Here, writer-director-producer Spike Lee transfers the action to the Englewood neighbourhood of Chicago where gang violence has become a way of life. It's the first film produced by Amazon Studios.

Released Fri 2 December



Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism

CERT U (96 mins)

Starring **Dominic Monaghan, Lesley Manville, Emily Watson, Joan Collins, Raffey Cassidy, Celia Imrie, Anne-Marie Duff**
Directed by **Christopher N. Rowley (UK)**

Kids just love these long titles. This is an adaptation of Georgia Byng's 2002 novel and features Molly Moon, an orphan and child hypnotist. However, once she achieves a degree of fame and fortune, a nasty stranger holds her dog captive and demands that she helps him steal some loot. The American reviews were not charitable.

Released Fri 2 December



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Moana

CERT tbc

With the voices of **Dwayne Johnson, Auli'i Cravalho, Temuera Morrison, Nicole Scherzinger, Rachel House, Jemaine Clement, Alan Tudyk** Directed by **Ron Clements and John Musker (USA)**

From the directing team that brought us *The Little Mermaid* and *Aladdin*, *Moana* promises big old-fashioned values and entertainment. This story, though, is a total original and is credited to seven different writers. Set within a mystical community in Polynesia, it features Moana

Waiialiki (the voice of Cravalho), the 16-year-old daughter of a chieftain, who takes to the high seas in order to rescue her people. Along for the ride comes none other than Maui, a Polynesia demi-god voiced by Dwayne Johnson.

The songs were co-written by the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, who previously wrote the music and lyrics for the Tony-winning musical *In The Heights*.

Released Fri 2 December

Bleed For This

CERT 15 (117 mins)

Starring **Miles Teller, Aaron Eckhart, Katey Sagal, Ciarán Hinds, Ted Levine**
Directed by **Ben Younger (USA)**

Hollywood does love its pugilism. After Jake Gyllenhaal gave his all in *Southpaw*, now comes Miles Teller as former champ Vinny Pazienza, he who held world titles as light-weight, light middleweight and super middleweight. Expect quite a lot of physical confrontation.

Released Fri 2 December



Office Christmas Party

CERT 15 tbc

Starring **Jason Bateman, Olivia Munn, TJ Miller, Jillian Bell, Courtney B Vance, Kate McKinnon, Jennifer Aniston**
Directed by **Josh Gordon and Will Speck (USA)**

The details are irrelevant. This is a seasonal American comedy in which grown men and women behave like animals in the spirit of farce. The title says it all..

Released Wed 7 December

The Unknown Girl

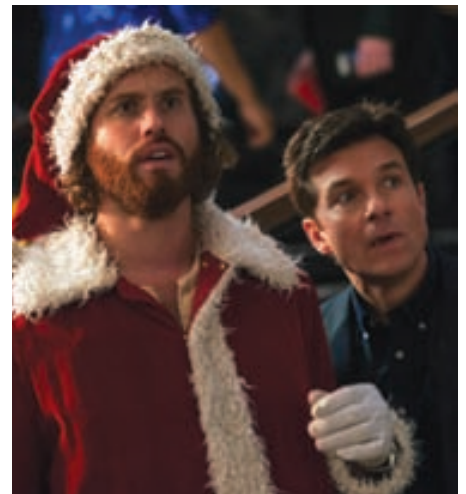
CERT tbc

Starring **Adèle Haenel, Olivier Bonnaud, Jérémie Renier, Louka Minnella, Olivier Gourmet**
Directed by **Luc Dardenne and Jean-Pierre Dardenne (Belgium/France)**

The Dardenne brothers continue their socio-political agenda with this drama about a doctor (Adèle Haenel) who sets about investigating why a patient was refused the surgery that might have saved her life.

The Dardennes previously brought us the award-winning films *L'Enfant*, *The Kid With A Bike* and *Two Days, One Night*.

Released Fri 2 December



Birth Of A Nation

CERT 15 (120 mins)

Starring **Nate Parker, Armie Hammer, Colman Domingo, Aja Naomi King, Jackie Earle Haley, Gabrielle Union**
Directed by **Nate Parker (USA/Canada)**

It's quite a year for revolting slaves. After the African-American rebellion portrayed in Gary Ross's exquisite and harrowing *Free State Of Jones* we now have the true-life story of Nat Turner (Nate Parker). Parker also directed, co-wrote and co-produced the drama, which received the Grand Jury Prize at this year's Sundance festival. Oscar glory is expected to follow.

Released Fri 9 December



The Pass

CERT 15 (87 mins)

Starring **Russell Tovey, Arinzé Kene, Lisa McGrillis, Nico Mirallegro**
Directed by **Ben A Williams (UK)**

In the age of celebrity and the digital image, one can never be too careful. Something that once happened between two aspiring footballers returns to haunt them years later. Expect some strong 'adult' themes.

Released Fri 9 December

Snowden

CERT 15

Starring **Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Shailene Woodley, Melissa Leo, Zachary Quinto, Tom Wilkinson, Rhys Ifans, Nicolas Cage**
Directed by **Oliver Stone (USA/Germany)**

Not a film about the Welsh mountain (or the photographer) but the whistle-blower Edward Snowden. It was he who leaked the NSA's illegal surveillance techniques and was forced to up sticks and move to Moscow. Oliver Stone does like to court controversy and has made a number of brilliant films, but he can also be a self-conscious director who lets his style overwhelm his subject. However, if this film is half as good as the stunning, Oscar-winning documentary about Snowden, *Citizenfour* (2014), it will be worth catching.



Released Fri 9 December

The Eagle Huntress

CERT U (87 mins)

Narrated by **Daisy Ridley**
Directed by **Otto Bell (UK/Mongolia/USA)**

Strange as it may seem, Mongolia has produced some of the most engaging and haunting of documentaries (not least *The Cave Of The Yellow Dog* and *The Story Of The Weeping Camel*). This one, co-produced by the English actress Daisy Ridley and the US documentarian Morgan Spurlock, is the true story of a 13-year-old Mongolian girl who attempts to become the first female eagle hunter in her country.

Released Fri 16 December

Ballerina

CERT U (89 mins)

Starring **Elle Fanning, Dane DeHaan, Maddie Ziegler, Carly Rae Jepsen**
Directed by **Eric Summer and Eric Warin (France/Canada)**

Félicie is a poor 11-year-old orphan girl from Brittany who finds her way to Paris in 1879. There, she hopes to enrol at the Grand Opera House to become a ballerina, without really knowing what the arduous process entails. Then she meets Victor, an aspiring young inventor, who believes that it is possible to realise one's dreams. The dance sequences employed motion capture the better to realise the authenticity of the moves.

Released Mon 19 December

Passengers

CERT 12a tbc

Starring **Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt, Michael Sheen, Laurence Fishburne, Andy Garcia** Directed by **Morten Tyldum (USA)**

Don't you hate it when you're woken prematurely? For two passengers on a spacecraft bound for a distant colony, a malfunction in the sleep chamber wakes them up 90 years too early. And that's an awful long time for two isolated strangers to get to know each other... Jennifer Lawrence was paid \$20million for her part (against 30 per cent of the profit). The director previously brought us *The Imitation Game*. In 3D.



Released Wed 21 December

Collateral Beauty

CERT tbc

Starring **Will Smith, Edward Norton, Keira Knightley, Michael Peña, Naomie Harris, Kate Winslet, Helen Mirren**
Directed by **David Frankel (USA)**

Following a terrible tragedy, a New York advertising executive (Will Smith) finds that Love, Time and Death are irrevocably linked. Expect some big questions and metaphysical musings. This could be a genuine turkey - or a future cult.

Released Mon 26 December



Monster Trucks

CERT PG (105 mins)

Starring **Lucas Till, Jane Levy, Barry Pepper, Amy Ryan, Rob Lowe, Danny Glover**
Directed by **Chris Wedge (USA/Canada)**

In an effort to escape the claustrophobia of his small town, a high school senior builds a monster truck out of the remnants of car scrap. And this is the really odd bit: an accident at a local oil-drilling site unleashes a subterranean creature with a need and talent for speed. Well, of course. In 3D.



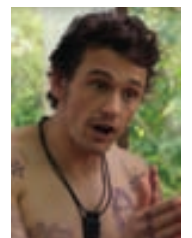
Released Mon 26 December

Why Him?

CERT tbc

Starring **James Franco, Bryan Cranston, Zoey Deutch, Megan Mullally, Griffin Gluck, Keegan-Michael Key**
Directed by **John Hamburg (USA)**

What are fathers like? A somewhat over-protective paterfamilias, Ned Fleming (Bryan Cranston) visits his daughter at university where she introduces him to her new boyfriend (James Franco). Ned takes an immediate dislike to the man, a profane, socially awkward character who also happens to be a billionaire...



Released Mon 26 December

Roger Hiorns

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham,
Wed 7 December - Sun 5 March

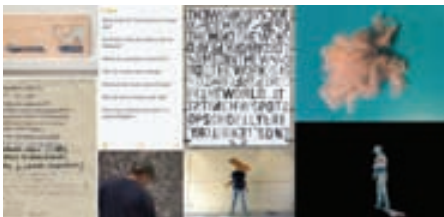
“You always have to think about materials and objects in terms of being malleable,” explains Birmingham-born artist Roger Hiorns. “You have to cut them off from what their established use is, to directly interfere with their world-ness. It becomes a process of human empowerment to re-use and re-propose the power of objects simply left lying in the street.”

Roger transforms materials and readymades in order to focus on various aspects of modern life, often through current affairs. His work to date has involved growing vast amounts of copper sulphate crystals on objects ranging from car engines to domestic interiors. He’s also created paintings made from brain matter, injected jet engines with anti-depressant drugs to affect a robotic nervous system, and produced a video work in which choristers of Birmingham’s St Philip’s Cathedral sing Evensong while lying on their backs on the floor of the nave. “I believe that the artist’s role is to move things on,” explains Roger, “to hold up a truthful mirror in order that progress might continue. Frankly I’m suspicious of many of my contemporaries who make work that simply reflects the desires of collectors.”



Midpointness

AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent,
until Sat 17 December



“Midpointness seeks to explore the dynamics of inner/outer dialogues between the work and the viewer,” explain the exhibition’s curators, Andrew Bracey and Steve Dutton. “It opens up other potentials that an artist might hope for when he/she explores the generative potential of the work of art.” This evolving project, investigating the nature of the artist, the exhibition, the audience and the work of art, brings together pieces by 27 UK and international artists. As part of the evolution process, the show’s curatorial control will at times be handed over to the gallery’s staff and exhibition visitors.

The Riches Beneath Us

Bilston Craft Gallery, Wolverhampton,
until Sat 31 December

This new exhibition features a range of geological objects drawn from a vast collection that was bequeathed to the city of Wolverhampton by Scottish geologist Doctor John Fraser in 1911.

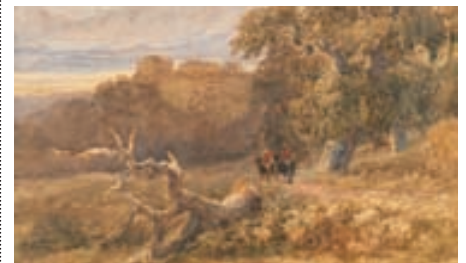
The objects on show all have a local connection. Highlights include an internationally renowned spider fossil - discovered near Coseley - and a fossilised leaf which fell from a prehistoric tree. Both objects are over 300 million years old.

The show also features the tooth of a Plesiosaur, a vicious predator from the Jurassic age.



The Pastoral And The Sublime

The Barber Institute, Birmingham,
until Sun 8 January



Watercolours, drawings and prints by Gainsborough, Turner and Constable all feature in this remarkable exhibition, which also features three impressive watercolours by Birmingham-born artist David Cox, one of which is pictured above.

Focusing on the work of British artists between the late 18th and 19th centuries, the show presents contrasting images of the natural world, displaying vast, desolate, dramatic and sometimes terrifying landscapes alongside charming and familiar pastoral scenes.

Night In The Museum

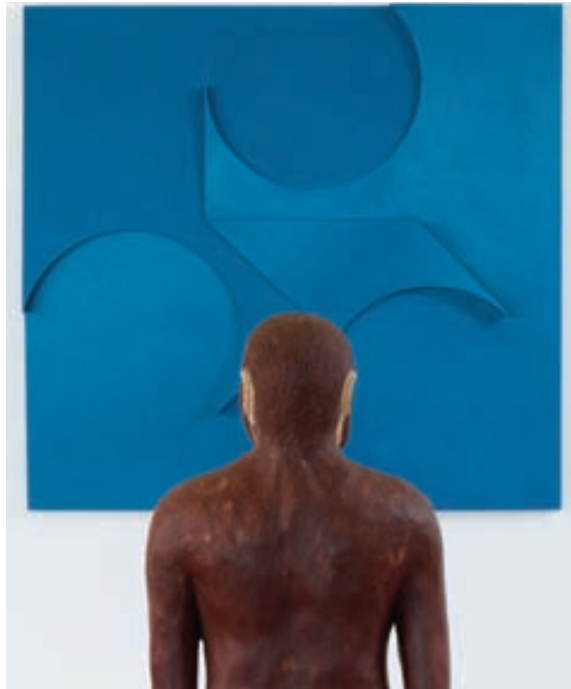
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 12 February

An exhibition presented to celebrate the Arts Council Collection's 70th anniversary, Night In The Museum features a selection of works curated by leading British artist Ryan Gander.

All of the included pieces, drawn from the Council's world-class national collection of modern and contemporary British art, challenge visitors to rethink the role of the curator, the art object and the spectator.

The exhibition features the work of over 30 artists, including Gander himself.

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is one of four 'national partners' hosting exhibitions drawn from the Arts Council Collection over the coming three years.



Made In The Middle

Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry, Fri 2 December - Sun 5 February

This touring exhibition features work by some of the best contemporary craftmakers in the Midlands, bringing together ceramics, jewellery, metalwork and textiles created by both new and established artists.

Selected by an expert panel through open entry, the items on show reflect the latest developments and trends in craft.

The exhibition is the eighth in the Made In The Middle series and provides visitors with an ideal opportunity to purchase locally produced work as Christmas gifts for family and friends.

Life Echo

Birmingham Open Media, until Sat 28 January

"Life Echo explores the links between sound, memory and wellbeing," explains sound artist Justin Wiggan. "It started when I discovered that my wife had triple negative breast cancer, which obviously had a massive impact on our lives. I became aware of how much I was relying on recalling good memories to get me through this traumatic period, and I started analysing those memories. As a sound artist, I was curious about the connection between sound and memory, and wanted to investigate that further."

It wasn't long before Wiggan realised that his research might be able to impact positively on other people's lives as well. He therefore embarked on a residency at the John Taylor Hospice, interviewing patients and selecting five strong memories from each. From these, he created one-minute sound experiences, which were then given to the patients to access whenever they were feeling low.

"We found that this not only had a massively positive effect on them," explains Wiggan, "but also that it helped their families, both in terms of leaving a legacy and bridging a gap at a time when conversation is hard. When you see someone at a hospice, day in, day out, you often end up not talking about what's important and just discussing mundane things like medication, so this became a way for people to share emotions."



Roger Hiorns

7 December 2016 – 5 March 2017

Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
www.ikon-gallery.org / 0121 248 0708
Tuesday – Sunday, 11am–5pm – free entry

Exhibition supported by Corvi-Mora, London; Annet Gelink, Amsterdam, Lühring Augustini, New York and the Ikon Investment Fund. Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered charity no. 528892.

IKON

Roger Hiorns (left) (son) Military aircraft engine, Fine youth
Courtesy of the artist and Corvi-Mora, London
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WARNING: The Circus of Horrors contains some
nudity and language of an adult nature, it is not suitable
for children, babies or chairs. This show contains nuts!

Events



Marvel Universe Live

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 22 - Fri 30 December

Having flown, leapt, jumped and powered their way off the comic book pages and onto cinema screens across the globe, Marvel's legendary superheroes are now coming in to land at the Barclaycard Arena.

The Stan Lee-created universe, including star names like Spiderman, Iron Man, the Hulk, Thor, Captain America and Wolverine, has been delighting generations of fans since the early 1960s. But it's been the advent of high-quality computer-generated imagery that's been the

real game-changer for these web-slinging, cape-wearing, hammer-wielding world-savers. Movie-makers can now create stunning visuals and special effects that regularly leave cinema-goers wide-eyed and gobsmacked.

Little wonder, then, that Marvel is looking to further develop its product by 'going live'. Cutting-edge special effects, pyrotechnics, aerial stunts, martial arts and motorcycles all feature in a brand new touring show that sees the aforementioned superheroes going into battle against some of Marvel's most sinister supervillains.

Sounds as though a breathtaking couple of hours could well be on the cards...

Blists Hill Victorian Christmas

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Sat 3 - Sun 4 and Sat 10 - Sun 11 December

Plenty of Victorian festive cheer is on offer at Shropshire's Blists Hill museum this month, as residents busy themselves with preparations for Christmas.

Visitors to the award-winning site can enjoy seasonal music from bands and choirs, ride on a horse-drawn cart, experience some festive-style entertainment - including a mini-pantomime and a singalong with carol singers - and partake in a spot of Christmas shopping in the town's numerous retail outlets.

And just in case all that's not enough to ensure your youngsters are happily entertained, Father Christmas himself - along with his reindeer - will be on hand to hear some last-minute gift requests.



Antiques For Everyone Winter Fair

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 December

The Birmingham Assay Office, where hallmarks are applied, is making a significant contribution to this month's show.

A number of items from a beautiful range of silver - inspired by the arts & crafts movement and manufactured in Birmingham in the late 19th and early 20th century - will be on show at the fair in a special feature exhibition. The items form part of the Assay Office's private collection.

The fair features displays of antique and decorative furniture, treen, ceramics, kitchenalia, silver, glass, jewellery and works of art, arms and armour, maps, dolls, bears and an array of vintage and decorative collectables. With more than 250 dealers showcasing their wares - and with items ranging in price from as little as £10 right up to £100,000 for the more serious collectors - this ever-popular event offers the perfect opportunity to pick up some unusual gifts.



It's been a long time since Birmingham experienced a white Christmas, but there is at least *one* place in the city where people can enjoy the delights of a winter wonderland. As in previous years, Ice Skate Birmingham is offering fun-seeking Midlandsers the chance to pretend they're Torvill or Dean by taking a yuletide spin across the 'icy wastes' of Centenary Square. The big observation wheel is back too, for anybody who fancies a bird's-eye view of the second city this festive season. Lauren Cox gets her skates on to find out more...

The countdown to Christmas is now in full swing, with Ice Skate Birmingham, located in the city's iconic Centenary Square, now officially open for business.

And there are plenty of reasons to visit the ice rink, the Ice Lounge bar and the big wheel during the festive season.

Situated next to the Frankfurt Christmas Market & Craft Fair, Ice Skate Birmingham was opened by the city's Lord Mayor - Councillor Carl Rice - and Father Christmas himself.

The ice rink

A great way to get into the festive spirit, the attraction is suitable for participants of all ages and abilities, from ice-skating novices to professional-standard skaters.

Skating aids in the shape of penguins can be purchased for beginners from the box office for £3.

Marshals are on the ice at all times to ensure that the rink is always a safe place to skate, so there's no need to worry about falling over - after all, it's all part and parcel of the fun and adds to the overall experience.



The Ice Lounge bar

What better way to relax after a 45-minute ice-skating session than with a hot chocolate & marshmallows, a glass of mulled wine or cider.

The Ice Lounge, located right next to the ice rink and open both to skaters and non-skaters, serves coffee, tea, wine, beer, prosecco and a selection of spirits. It's the perfect place to unwind and watch others taking a spin on the ice.

You can also spectate from the viewing platform outside the bar.

With 600 square meters of iced surfaces, Ice Skate Birmingham can accommodate up to 300 people at any one time and is therefore ideal for large groups. Parties of more than 10 people who are looking to book for Christmas office outings, birthday celebrations and social get-togethers can make use of the discounted prices on offer for the ice rink and the big wheel.

The big wheel

And speaking of the big wheel... why not take a ride right up to the top and enjoy beautiful views of Birmingham's skyline and Centenary Square's 'winter wonderland'. The sights are pretty spectacular, whether you're taking a ride in the daytime or at night.

And make a special note in your diary for New Year's Eve, when the big wheel, ice rink and Ice Lounge bar will all be open until 1am, allowing you to skate your way into 2017.



Ice Skate Birmingham is open seven days a week from 10am to 10pm (closed Christmas Day) and can be enjoyed until 8 January.

Prices for the ice rink range from £7 to £9.50. Tickets for the big wheel cost £5 each

Santa's Winter Wonderland

SnowDome, Tamworth, until Sat 31 December

Suitable for all age groups, Santa's Winter Wonderland provides plenty of festive fun for visitors to Tamworth's snowy indoor attraction.

A safe environment ensures youngsters are able to play and slide in real snow as they explore Santa's Christmas snow trail, take a walk through the enchanted forest, enjoy a game of snowballs and hitch a ride on a sledge.

There's also an all-new Santa Show to enjoy, with the Big Man in Red making final preparations for another 'Christmas extravaganza'. The less adventurous, meanwhile, can observe the snow-related action as they amble along the promenade walkway. There's even an animal village, where you can visit Santa's reindeer and meet some of his furry friends.



Clothes Show Live

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 2 - Tues 6 December

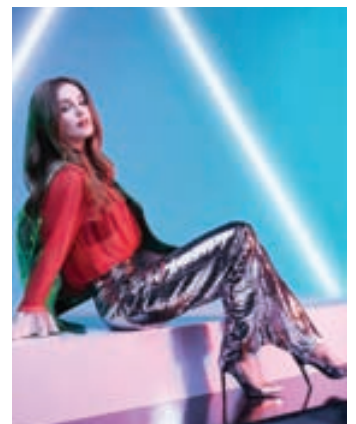


A hot ticket for fashionistas everywhere, Clothes Show Live regularly attracts a plethora of well-known celebrities from the worlds of music and TV - and this year is no exception. With appearances by TOWIE's Joey Essex and Made In Chelsea's Binky and Jamie confirmed, 2016 promises to be a bumper show.

In addition to showcasing wares from hundreds of leading fashion and beauty brands, the five-day event also features non-stop catwalk shows and live performances by, among others, rising British music stars Charlotte OC and Daecolm.

Other attractions include a Q&A session with fashion blogger Sarah Ashcroft - otherwise known as 'that Pommie girl' - and TV favourite Mark Heyes's Curves With Confidence workshop.

Plenty to enjoy at this year's show, then, which is sadly the last one to be held in Birmingham. From 2017, the event will be taking place in Liverpool, as part of British Style Collective.



Christmas In The Home

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley
Sat 26 - Sun 27 November
Sat 3 - Sun 4, Sat 10 - Sun 11
and Sat 17 - Sat 24 December



The sights, sounds and smells of Christmases past are very much in evidence at the Black Country Living Museum this month.

Visitors can step inside period cottages and houses to help costumed characters create 'a host of fabulous festive recipes from Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management'. Helping to stir the sixpence into the Christmas pudding, assisting with some 'make do and mend' decorations and crafting a spiced orange pomander are among the other attractions ensuring a hands-on experience for families to enjoy.

Telford European Christmas Market

Southwater, Telford, Thurs 1 - Fri 23 December

Running daily throughout December until the 23rd, Telford's European market features 32 traditional chalets, 70 percent of which will be European, 30 percent local.

A funfair for younger visitors and performances from local choirs and acoustic bands also play their part in creating a suitably festive

atmosphere.

"The market will not only be showcasing food, drink and products from authentic European stallholders," says Shaun Davies, Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council, "it will also give a number of local businesses the opportunity to have a stall of their own at an event which is likely to attract thousands of visitors."

Shrewsbury Winter Festival

The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury
Sat 10 - Sun 11 December



Shopping avenues filled with more than 170 artisan producers, craftspeople and designers ensure the Shrewsbury Winter Festival offers plenty of opportunity for visitors to get their Christmas shopping done. And there's lots to enjoy at the event besides retail therapy, including family activities across the weekend and a programme of live music events. There's even the chance to 'get vocal' yourself, by taking part in a big festive singalong.

There are numerous activities to enjoy outside the festival gates too, not least among which are the Hobsons Ale and Festive Food trails. The event is this year fundraising on behalf of the Shrewsbury Ark, a charity for homeless and vulnerable people.



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Santa Safari

Hawkstone Park,
Shrewsbury,
Fri 2 - Fri 23 December

The North Pole's most famous resident comes to North Shropshire this month, with Hawkstone Park



Follies once again transformed into a Santa Safari experience. A trip through the site's 'illuminated woodland' leads the way to a hillside grotto, where a Wishing Arch marks the entrance to a network of fairy-lit caverns and tunnels. It's here that Santa will reside in the run-up to Christmas (along with his elves and reindeer, of course), spreading plenty of festive cheer and handing out a special gift to every visiting child.

Christmas At The Valley

Sandwell Park Farm, Sat 3 - Sat 24 December

Given that it's one of the Midlands' most popular visitor destinations, it's perhaps a little surprising that this is Sandwell Park Farm's very first Christmas At The Valley. If the inaugural festival's line-up is anything to go by, though, it's unlikely to be the venue's last such event, with organisers ensuring there's plenty to make the experience one that will see families returning year after year. Attractions include Santa Claus in his grotto with a sackful of goodies to hand out to young visitors, kids' activities galore, a Christmas treasure hunt, the chance to sample seasonal food and drink, and extra events scheduled at the weekends. And good ol' St Nick's even brought along his reindeer too, to delight children who're keen to make some fabulous four-legged friends this festive season.

Carols in the Caverns

Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust, Dudley,
Sun 4, Sun 11 and
Sun 18 December

As Christmas experiences go, this one's pretty unique, featuring a boat trip around the Dudley Canal Trust's caverns and limestone mines. Along the way, an onboard choir sing a host of festive favourites, including; Ding Dong, Merrily On High; God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen; Coventry Carol; and Silent Night. The trip through the tunnel network takes in locations such as Cathedral Arch and the famous Singing Cavern.



Magic Lantern Festival

Birmingham Botanical Gardens,
Fri 25 November - Mon 2 January

Celebrating over 2,000 years of lantern festivals, this 'illuminating' event sees visitors accessing the venue through a giant lantern entrance before following a lantern-lit trail around the gardens. Aside from enjoying the collection of beau-

tifully constructed lanterns and the natural scenery, visitors to the festival can also catch up with Santa and his reindeer. Other attractions include a 12-metre-wide lantern scene - featuring penguins, snowmen, Christmas trees and baubles - and a special fairy-themed area, complete with a floating fairy, beautiful butterflies and thousands of bright and tiny lights.

Drayton's Magical Christmas

Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth,
until Sat 31 December

Real reindeer, an indoor ice rink, Christmas arts and crafts, live shows, carols, presents, light shows, Santa Claus and a 'magnificent' fireworks display - oh, and snowfall over the Island of Sodor! - are among the attractions giving Drayton Manor Park & Zoo a decidedly festive feel this month.

Families can also catch a ride on Thomas The Tank Engine, dance along with The Fat Controller and all his Fungineer friends and sample the thrills and spills of a 15-minute Polar Express In 4D experience.

made mulled wine and festive food are available for anybody who enjoys themselves best on a full stomach.

Victorian Christmas Weekends

Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
Sat 3 - Sun 4 and Sat 10 - Sun 11 December

If you're going to host a Victorian-style Christmas, who better to have along for the ride than Queen Victoria herself? Her Majesty is part and festive parcel of Compton Verney's 2016 yuletide celebrations, explaining to visitors how the Victorian era changed the way in which the country celebrates Christmas. As well as this fascinating brush with bygone royalty, the event also features a festive food fair, craft demonstrations and workshops, the chance to learn how to design and make Christmas cards and an opportunity to say a yuletide hello to Father Christmas and his reindeer. Compton Verney's 'season to be jolly' ends with hymns and songs in the chapel, followed by traditional Christmas tunes underneath the portico. A sure-to-be-impressive fireworks display brings proceedings to an end with a suitably big bang or several.

Tudor Christmas

Blakesley Hall, Birmingham
Sat 10 December

Historical reenactors, handbell ringers, costumed musicians and a talented choir are all present and correct at this special one-day event. Visitors to the 17th century house can find out what domestic life would've been like for a well-to-do family, their friends, servants and visiting tradesmen during the Christmas season. Home-

BLISTS HILL VICTORIAN TOWN



Victorian CHRISTMAS WEEKENDS

3 & 4 and 10 & 11 December,
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Moscow State Circus

Star City, Birmingham,
Tues 20 December - Sun 8 January

The Moscow State Circus is very possibly the best-known circus in the world, based on over 200 years of tradition.

When animals became an unpopular aspect of circuses, this flexible family favourite adapted to survive by moving the emphasis to astonishing displays of human skill and endurance -

many of which are evident in its current production, Zhelaniy.

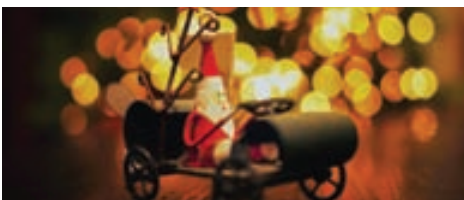
Based on a popular Russian folklore story, the show transports its audience to 'a wondrous and mysterious enchanted garden', where wishes are granted to the beautiful Zhenya, who finds herself surrounded by 'a multitude of flying, back-flipping, juggling, wire-walking and roller-skating performers'.

Santa's Workshop

Coventry Transport Museum,
Mon 19 - Wed 21 December

As well as the chance to check out numerous work & leisure vehicles and stop off in the glittering Jaguar room, a yuletide visit to the Coventry Transport Museum also provides visitors with plenty of opportunity to get themselves in the festive spirit.

While Santa looks after his sleigh ride, children can 'get crafty' in a mini Christmas workshop by making large paper stars, winter wands and jingle sticks. There's also a free Family Trail to enjoy, which sees participants following Santa through the museum's exhibitions, decorating the venue's Makaton Christmas tree as they go. Children of any age are welcome, but activities are particularly suitable for youngsters aged four-plus.



Webb's Ice Skating

Webbs Of
Wychbold Garden
Centre, until
Mon 2 January

Visitors to Webbs Of Wychbold Garden Centre can get their skates on and have some fun on the ice this Christmas.

The popular Worcestershire venue is once again hosting a festive-season ice-skating rink - and is letting it be known that this year's version is bigger and better than ever before.

Open seven days a week (excluding Christmas Day and Boxing Day), the rink comes complete with a lit-up roof, allowing families to skate whatever the weather.

The popular attraction also provides skates that strap over normal shoes, to ensure that younger children and toddlers can have lots of fun on the ice too. Sit-on and push-along aids are also available.



The Bear: Story Readings

mac, Birmingham, Mon 12,
Sat 17 and Sat 24 December

Now here's a novel and entirely admirable approach to introducing young children to theatre. Cognisant of the fact that tiny tots and toddlers might find a great big polar bear just a little bit disconcerting, those clever people at mac birmingham have taken steps to stop the youngsters' nerves from jangling while they're watching the venue's Christmas adaptation of Raymond Briggs's *The Bear*. Prior to three performances of the show, a member of the cast will read the story aloud, so that children know what to expect when they settle down to enjoy the production.

And who knows - if they're really lucky, they might even catch a sneaky glimpse of the big, friendly bear himself...



Yuletide At Avoncroft

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove
Tuesdays & Wednesdays between
6 & 21 December

Avoncroft's historic buildings are being transformed for the festive season by the addition of period decorations.

Yuletide visitors can help re-enactors prepare for Christmas, try seasonal craft activities and enjoy festive music in the Mission Church.

Meanwhile, on Fridays and Saturdays between the 9th and the 23rd, younger visitors can join the Avoncroft Elves and help Santa prepare for the big day.

And speaking of Santa, he'll be taking up residence in his Grotto and giving a gift to every child who pays him a visit.

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the list

Your week to week
listings guide

December 2016



Victorian Christmas at Bliss: Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge - Sat 3 - Sun 4 and Sat 10 - Sun 11 December

Music | Comedy | Theatre | Dance | Film | Events | Visual Arts | and more!

What's On

Thurs 1 to Sun 11 December



Dan Owen at The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury
Fri 2 - Sat 3 December

Mon 12 to Sun 18 December



Scrooge's Victorian Christmas at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent
Sat 17 December

Mon 19 to Sun 25 December



Christmas Gothic at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre
Tues 20 December

Mon 26 to Sat 31 December



Aladdin at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
until Sun 22 January

THROUGHOUT DECEMBER

Visual Arts

Dudley Museum & Art Gallery

NEW DUDLEY SOCIETY OF ARTISTS EXHIBITION Works in a variety of media by members of the highly respected local art society, Sat 3 - Sat 31 Dec

Museum of Cannock Chase

EVERYBODY'S DARLING: THE FIRST WORLD WAR, NURSE Exhibition paying homage to the nursing organisations that served during the war, until Fri 16 Dec

New Art Gallery - Walsall

NEW WALSALL SOCIETY OF ARTISTS The 67th annual exhibition by Walsall Society of Artists brings together works in a range of media by local artists, Fri 2 Dec - Sun 22 Jan

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

THE HISTORY OF ETRURIA; FACTORIES AND FESTIVALS Using objects from across the museum's collections, the display charts the history of Etruria from its inception by Josiah Wedgwood in the 18th century through to today's business, retail and leisure developments, Sat 26 Nov - Fri 31 Mar

Qube Gallery, Oswestry

CHRISTMAS ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION A collection of handmade arts and crafts, created locally and for sale over the festive period, until Fri 23 Dec

Shire Hall Gallery - Stafford

CHRISTMAS CRAFT & CONTEMPORARY PRINT Christmas crafts ranging from handmade jewellery, Christmas decorations and textiles to metalware and ceramics, on display alongside works by contemporary printmakers, until Sun 8 Jan

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

'HEAVENLY LIGHTS: THE UNTOLD STORY OF STAINED GLASS ARTIST MARGARET AGNES ROPE' Celebrating the life and times of Shrewsbury stained-glass artist Margaret Agnes Rope, until Sun 15 Jan 2017

Weston Park

NEW ROYAL BIRMINGHAM SOCIETY OF ARTISTS Exhibition by members of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists who're considering the Capability Brown legacy, Thurs 1 - Sat 31 Dec

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION Showcasing work from Border visual arts group Bijoux and Kay Boyce, amongst others, until Sat 14 Jan

KAY BOYCE: THE BLACK ON WHITE COLLECTION A new aspect of Kay's work following her study and admiration of a beech tree at the foot of her garden, which rekindled her interest in the medium of pen and ink, until Sat 14 Jan

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

LARISSA SANSOUR - IN THE FUTURE THEY ATE FROM THE FINEST PORCELAIN Film by Larissa Sansour which focuses on a resistance group that makes underground deposits of elaborate porcelain - suggested to belong to an entirely fictional civilisation, until Sun 8 Jan

Other VISUAL ARTS

THE MAN ON THE HORSE Display marking the 150th anniversary of Queen Victoria's visit to Wolverhampton, until 2 Dec, Wolverhampton City Archives

EMPIRES OF EMPTINESS - FORTRESSES OF THE SAHARA AND THE STEPPE Photographic exhibition by Alain Sèbe which concentrates on two colonial conquests in arid environments, until Sat 17 Dec, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge

MIDPOINTNESS A group exhibition, featuring works by 27 UK and international artists, until Sat 17 Dec, AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

ANTIQUE AND VINTAGE MAGIC TRICKS The exhibition, from the private collection of Michael Dixon, displays some of the most popular tricks of the last 100 years, until Sat 31 Dec, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

MERRY MID-WINTER EXHIBITION Showcase of members' work and a great chance to buy a unique Christmas present, until Sat 28 Jan, VAN Gallery, Shrewsbury

DESIGN AND DESIRE: THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851 Objects and images, including prints and paintings from the Elton Collection, tell the story of how the Great Exhibition became one of the most influential and renowned events of the 19th century, until Fri 24 Feb 2017, Coalbrookdale Gallery, Telford

PICTURES OF THE FUTURE INSTALLATION This interactive installation is a response to Peter Rice's mural, A Bright Past For Stoke-on-Trent, and includes day-to-day objects, voiceovers and musical demonstrations, until Thurs 26 Jan, Keele University

THE BREWHOUSE CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION A mixed-media exhibition featuring a range of festive artworks and decorations, made by local schools, alongside a hand-picked selection of professional handmade items sourced from local designer-makers, Mon 28 Nov - Sat 7 Jan, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

Gigs

SENIOR CITIZENS ORCHESTRA Thurs 1 Dec, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

ANDY MORTON'S JAZZ BALLARDS Thurs 1 Dec, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

MAD DOG MCREA Thurs 1 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE & HUGH CORNWELL Thurs 1 Dec, O2 Institute, B'ham

GERRY COLVIN Sun 4 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DR HOOK STARRING DENNIS LOCORRIERE Thurs 1 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

KATIE MELUA Thurs 1 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EMILY PORTMAN AND THE CORACLE BAND Thurs 1 Dec, mac, Birmingham

THE SCRATCH BAND Thurs 1 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

GORDON HENDRICKS IS ELVIS Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

VOODOO SIOUX, FURY, VALOUS & THE DEVILS PLAYGROUND Fri 2 Dec, The Haygate, Wellington

THE ELECTRIC SWING CIRCUS Fri 2 Dec, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

PANIC ROOM Fri 2 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

ICONIC 80S Fri 2 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE TRAVELLORS Fri 2 Dec, The Huntsman, Little Wenlock, South Shropshire

JESSARAE Fri 2 Dec, O2 Institute, B'ham

DUA LIPA Fri 2 Dec, O2 Academy, B'ham

PILGRIMAGE FEAT ROTUNDA OF WONDER, SKA'D FOR LIFE & YOUNG PILGRIMS Fri 2 Dec, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

WHISKEY MYERS Fri 2 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SONIA 'INDIGO' CLARKE & LYNETTE WALTERS Fri 2 Dec, Blue Piano Restaurant And Bar, Birmingham

DONA OXFORD Fri 2 Dec,



The Saw Doctors - Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

Hermon Chapel, Oswestry, Shropshire

SIMON SPILLETT Fri 2 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FRONTEERS Fri 2 Dec, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SETH LAKEMAN Fri 2 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

DAN OWEN Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury

GORDON HENDRICKS IS ELVIS Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

ROD STEWART Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

THE BEAT Sat 3 Dec, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

LISSIE Sat 3 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DARKSIDE - THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Sat 3 Dec, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

THE BORN AGAIN BEATLES Sat 3 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

THE SMYTHS Sat 3 Dec, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE SHIRES Sat 3 Dec, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE JAR FAMILY Sat 3 Dec, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

SACK SABBATH Sat 3 Dec, Route 44, B'ham

THE SENSATIONAL 'MOTOWN' PARTY WITH RHINO AND THE RANTERS Sat 3 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

FROM THE JAM Sat 3 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

ANDY O'BRIEN Sat 3 Dec, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

ULTIMATE 40 - UB40 TRIBUTE Sat 3 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

PRIMAL SCREAM Sat 3 Dec, Keele University, Staffordshire

RAYMOND FROGGATT AND HIS BAND Sat 3 Dec, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

BUFFALO SUMMER Sat 3 Dec, The Asylum, Birmingham

GARY BLAND Sat 3 Dec, Blue Piano Restaurant And Bar, Birmingham

SEAN TAYLOR Sat 3 Dec, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

ZEUS Sat 3 Dec, The Haygate, Telford, Shropshire

WALSALL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Sat 3 Dec, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

CELTIC CHRISTMAS STRINGS Sat 3 Dec, Lichfield Guildhall

JIM BOB Sat 3 Dec, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

BREAK STUFF Sat 3 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN Sun 4 Dec, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE FABULOUS BORDELLOS Sun 4 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE MOONS Sun 4 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ELIZA AND THE BEAR Sun 4 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KATE TEMPEST Sun 4 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SCOTT MATTHEWS Sun 4 Dec, Glee Club, B'ham

BLUE ROSE CODE Sun 4 Dec, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

PRIMAL SCREAM Sun 4 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SAW DOCTORS Sun 4 Dec, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

Classical Music

ALISON BALSOM WITH THE ZÜRICH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Programme includes works by Mozart, Hummel & Shostakovich, Thurs 1 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

HANDEL'S MESSIAH Featuring the City of Birmingham Choir, Alison Roddy (soprano), Fri 2 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FLORENTINE ARTS ENSEMBLE: DAHL'S NORWEGIAN LANDSCAPE Programme includes works by Grieg, Fri 2 Dec, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

BRASS CLASSICS AT ADVENT Programme includes works by Mahler, Saint-Saens, Berlioz arr. Brand & Dvorak arr. Tarling, Fri 2 Dec, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY SINGERS AND UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CHOIR Featuring Simon Carrington (choir director). Programme includes works by Guerrero, Lully, Berlioz, Poulenc, Dove, Byrd, Legrenzi & Raminish. Fri 2 Dec, The Bramall, University Of Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT Fri 2 Dec, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

UNIVERSITY CHORUS Programme includes Vaughan Williams' In Windsor Forest & George Shearing's Songs & Sonnets from Shakespeare, Sat 3 Dec, The Bramall, University Of Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT Sat 3 Dec, St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

LUDLOW ORCHESTRA Featuring Thomas Payne (conductor) & Claire Tocknell (leader). Programme comprises a semi-staged production of Mozart's Don Giovanni, Sat 3 Dec, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

DI XIAO PIANO RECITAL Sat 3 Dec, Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield

THE BRITISH POLICE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - PROMS NIGHT SPECTACULAR Programme includes works by Puccini, Wagner, Walton, John Williams & Beethoven, Sat 3 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA Programme includes works by Dvorak & Shostakovich, Sun 4 Dec, The Bramall, University Of Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: A BRAZILIAN CHRISTMAS Featuring the Ex Cathedra Consort & Baroque Orchestra. Jeffrey Skidmore conducts, Sun 4 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

MONDAY SHOWCASE Featuring Yue Yu (viola), Gyorgy Hodoszo (piano), Michael Lam (baritone) & Jonathan French (piano). Programme includes works by Vieuxtemps, Liszt, Mozart, Schubert & Brahms, Mon 5 Dec, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy Gigs

KUM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY NIGHT Thurs 1 Dec, Stourbridge Town Hall

STAND UP COMEDY SHOWCASE Thurs 1 Dec, mac, Birmingham

MANILLA ROAD COMEDY Thurs 1 Dec, The Victoria, Birmingham

MITCH BENN, CARL DONNELLY, ANGIE BELCHER & GEORGE ZACH Thurs 1 Dec, The George Hotel, Lichfield

VINCE ATTA, DAVE TWENTYMAN, GARY MEIKLE, HANNAH SILVESTER & LEE KYLE Thurs 1 Dec, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

ANDREW O'NEILL Thurs 1 Dec, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

ED GAMBLE, JIMMY MCGHIE, JOHN FOTHERGILL & ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 1 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEOFF BOYZ, EDDIE BRIMSON, MATT WELCOME & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Dec, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

CARL HUTCHINSON Fri 2 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TOM BINNS, IAN D MONTFORT & IVAN BRACKENBURY Fri 2 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

JOHN SIMMIT, RUDI LICKWOOD, ANNETTE FAGON & ROGER D Fri 2 Dec, mac, Birmingham

ANDREW BIRD, ED GAMBLE, JIMMY MCGHIE & JOHN FOTHERGILL Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 3 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

STEPHEN K AMOS Sat 3 Dec, Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Theatre

RELATIVELY SPEAKING The Crescent Theatre Company present an amateur production of Alan Ayckbourn's comedy of mistaken identity, until Sat 3 Dec, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

GEORGE'S MARVELLOUS MEDICINE The Birmingham Stage Company presents its acclaimed version of Roald Dahl's much-loved story, until Sat 3 Dec, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS An irreverent and playful take on Kenneth Grahame's classic children's story, until Sat 31 Dec, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

TREASURE ISLAND Bryony Lavery's modern adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling classic, until Sat 7 Jan, The REP, B'ham

THE SNOW QUEEN Hans Christian Andersen's classic children's tale of adventure, friendship and bravery, until Sat 28 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN Based on Chaucer's The Knight's Tale, The

Two Noble Kinsmen is attributed to John Fletcher & William Shakespeare and is best described as a tragicomedy exploring the intoxication and strangeness of love, until Tues 7 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE SEVEN ACTS OF MERCY Anders Lustgarten's visceral new play confronts the dangerous necessity of compassion, in a world where it's in short supply. Directed by RSC Deputy Artistic Director Erica Whyman, until Fri 10 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE ROVER Aphra Behn's anarchic restoration comedy, set in the topsy-turvy world of the carnival. Loveday Ingram returns to the RSC to direct, until Sat 11 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

DIRTY DANCING The story of Baby and Jonny, told through heart-pounding music and sensationally sexy dancing, Mon 28 Nov - Sat 3 Dec, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE FLINT STREET NATIVITY The Nonentities present a staging of Tim Firth's comedy, which explores the paediatric power-politics of the school nativity, Mon 28 Nov - Sat 3 Dec, Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

ERIC'S CHRISTMAS PARTY Eric is back for his annual christmas party. Join him and his multi-talented band of actors and musicians for a non-stop night of comedy, inspired mayhem, and some of the greatest music of the 1960s, Mon 28 Nov - Sat 10 Dec, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

BROKEN BISCUITS Paines Plough & Live Theatre present a heartwarming coming-of-age story, Tues 29 Nov - Sat 3 Dec, The REP, B'ham

THE TUNNELLERS Tower Players present a brand new play about a group of local miners who took their skills and toughness to the Western Front in World War One, Wed 30 Nov - Fri 2 Dec, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

CINDERELLA Panto favourite Brad Fitt make his debut as Buttons in what

promises to be yet another excellent production from Evolution. Ian Smith & Matt Daines star as the Ugly Sisters, Wed 30 Nov - Sun 8 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE FESTIVE FOOTSIE CLUB Featuring femme fatales, quirky comedy and 'extraordinary performances to surprise and delight...' Thurs 1 Dec, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

FRANKENSTEIN A brand new adaptation of Mary Shelley's Gothic horror masterpiece, fusing ensemble storytelling, puppetry, live music and stunning theatrics. Presented by Blackeyed Theatre Company, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Dec, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ORLANDO Little Earthquake direct Sarah Ruhl's staging of Virginia Woolf's gender-bending novel, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Dec, George Cadbury Hall, University Of B'ham

FROM IBIZA TO THE NORFOLK BROADS Adrian Berry's acclaimed tale of a young David Bowie obsessive, Fri 2 Dec, mac, Birmingham

TINA TURNER: TEA LADY AND FRIENDS Character comedian Tracey Collins returns to the OJS with a range of new characters in what promises to be a 'high-octane and utterly hilarious show', Fri 2 Dec, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

TREASURE ISLAND Luke Players present Phil Willmott's adaptation of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, mac, Birmingham

ALADDIN New production based on a Middle Eastern folk tale, Sat 3 Dec, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

HAIRY FAIRY TALES Fun-packed storytelling for all the family, featuring physical theatre, puppetry and live music, Sat 3 Dec, The Market Theatre, Ledbury, Herefordshire

LOST IN BLUE Debs Newbold's funny, uplifting, poignant and at times downright bizarre performance of innovative storytelling fuelled by playful sound technology, Sat 3 Dec, Quatt Village Hall, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire



Dirty Dancing - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ROBINSON CRUSOE AND THE CARIBBEAN PIRATES Presented by Stoke Amateur Theatre Society, Sat 3 - Sun 11 Dec, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

A CHRISTMAS CAROL The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Charles Dickens' festive tale, Sat 3 - Sat 17 Dec, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

SLEEPING BEAUTY Casting includes CBeebies star Rebecca Keatley as Princess Aurora and Sam Rabone as Nurse Kelly. Children's entertainer Ben Thornton and author Ian Billings also star, Sat 3 - Sat 31 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

LOST IN BLUE Debs Newbold's funny, uplifting, poignant and at times downright bizarre performance of innovative storytelling fuelled by playful sound technology, Sun 4 Dec, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury

THE WIZARD OF OZ A festive stroll to the Emerald City with Dorothy, Toto, Scarecrow, Tin Man & Lion. Presented by Working Theatre, Sun 4 Dec, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

RAPUNZEL AND HER WITCH A fantasy for three to seven-year-olds and their families, Sun 4 - Mon 5 Dec, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Dance

THE NUTCRACKER - BRB Brimming with festive energy, this ballet is the perfect Christmas treat for the entire family, until Tues 13 Dec, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE WOLF AND PETER Coisceim Dance Theatre present an energetic staging of the timeless story of courage and imagination, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, DanceXchange, Birmingham



Talks

AN EVENING WITH GRAHAM NORTON Join the broadcaster and comedian as he talks about his debut novel, Holding, Sun 4 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

INFERNO (12A) Action/Adventure. Starring Tom Hanks, Felicity Jones. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 1 Dec; Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, until Thurs 1 Dec

ARRIVAL (12a) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 1 Dec

FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Eddie Redmayne, Ezra Miller. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 1 Dec; Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 1 Dec

A UNITED KINGDOM (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring David Oyelowo, Rosamund Pike. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 1 Dec; The Mockingbird, Birmingham, until Thurs 8 Dec; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 9 - Thurs 22 Dec

ONE MORE TIME WITH FEELING (15) Documentary. Starring Nick Cave. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Thurs 1 Dec

HOLDING THE MAN (15) Biography/Romance. Starring Ryan Corr, Sarah Snook. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 1 Dec

THINGS TO COME (12a) Drama. Starring Isabelle Huppert, André Marcon. Foreign language, subtitles. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Thurs 1 Dec

BURN BURN BURN (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Laura Carmichael, Joe Dempsie. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 1 Dec

JOY (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Fri 2 Dec

TANGERINES (15) Drama/War. Starring Lembit Ulfak, Elmo Nüganen. Foreign language, subtitles. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 2 Dec

ETHEL & ERNEST (PG) Animation/Drama. Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec

A STREET CAT NAMED BOB (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Bob, Luke Treadaway. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 2 - Thurs 8 Dec

ZARAFI (PG) Animation/Family. mac, Birmingham, Sat 3 Dec

BLUE COLLAR (18) Crime/Drama. Starring Richard Pryor, Harvey Keitel. mac, Birmingham, Sun 4 Dec

BOYZ N THE HOOD (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jnr. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 4 Dec

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 2 December, showing at selected cinemas

BLEED FOR THIS (15)

CHI-RAQ (15)

EAT THAT QUESTION (15)

MOANA (15)

MOLLY MOON AND THE INCREDIBLE BOOK OF HYPNOTISM (U)

SULLY (12a)

THE UNKNOWN GIRL (tbc)

Events

TAKE A STROLL TO THE NORTH POLE AT THE NATIONAL SEA LIFE CENTRE until Fri 23 Dec, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

SANTA BOAT TRIPS Why take the kids to Lapland to see Santa this Christmas when they can visit him by boat in his underground grotto deep in the Dudley Caverns, until Fri 23 Dec, Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines

CHRISTMAS GROTTTO until Fri 23 Dec, Darwin Shopping Centre, Shrewsbury

MEET SANTA until Fri 23 Dec, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS AT THE NATIONAL FOREST ADVENTURE FARM until Sat 24 Dec, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-on-Trent

THE SHROPSHIRE SANTA EXPERIENCE until Sat 24 Dec, Park Hall Farm, Shropshire

SANTA SAFARI A magical festive day out for all the family, combining a four-mile self-drive safari with a visit to see Santa, until Sat 24 Dec, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley

BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET until Thurs 29 Dec, Birmingham City Centre

SANTA'S WINTER WONDERLAND until Sat 31 Dec, Snowdome, Tamworth

MAGIC LANTERN FESTIVAL See page 49 for details, until Mon 2 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

ICE SKATE BIRMINGHAM An ice rink located near the Frankfurt Christmas Market, until Sun 8 Jan, Centenary Square, Birmingham

NATIVITY TRAIL Follow the stars, answering the Christmas questions as you go, before reaching the live Nativity scene in the barn buildings. You may even be lucky enough to see a new-born baby donkey, until Sun 8 Jan, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

DECK THE HALLS Browse stalls and visit Father Christmas in his grotto, Thurs 1 Dec, Manor House Museum, West Bromwich

CHRISTMAS CRACKER EXPRESS Magical steam train journey along the Severn Valley in the company of Father Christmas, Thurs 1 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

LUDLOW CHRISTMAS MARKET Thurs 1 Dec, Ludlow, South Shropshire

ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE WINTER FAIR See page 45 for details, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS THROUGH THE AGES Guided tours of the Hall exploring

Christmas throughout the ages. Pomander-making sessions and Wassailing included as part of the tour, Thurs 1 - Thurs 22 Dec, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

TELFORD EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET See page 47 for details, Thurs 1 Dec - Fri 23 Dec, Southwater Development, Telford, Shropshire

SANTA'S GROTTTO Thurs 1 Dec - Sat 24 Dec, Dudley Zoological Gardens

CHRISTMAS REVELS BY THE FIRESIDE Settle around the magnificent Jacobean fireplace for some festive storytelling and join in the seasonal songs performed by the Birmingham City Council Choir, Fri 2 Dec, Aston Hall, Birmingham

WINTER ART FAIR Showcasing affordable artworks, artist books and editions, music and homemade refreshments, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, Eastside Projects, Birmingham

FLYER LIVE The UK's biggest indoor aviation event, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Dec, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

ILLUMINATED GARDENS Brighten up the dark winter night with a stroll around the formal gardens, terraces and courtyard, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Dec, Powis Castle and Garden, Welshpool

WINTER WONDERFARM Get into the festive spirit with a visit to Lower Drayton Farm's 'winter wonderfarm', Fri 2 - Sun 4 Dec, Lower Drayton Farm, Stafford

THE CLOTHES SHOW 2016 See page 47 for details, Fri 2 - Tues 6 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

SANTA SAFARI A magical adventure by Land Rover through the woodland to see Santa in his hillside grotto, Fri 2 - Fri 23 Dec, Hawkstone Park & Follies, Shrewsbury

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND GARDEN TRAIL From flamingo croquet and shadow puppet shows to making a mad hat to take home, this unforgettable trail promises to delight both young and old, Fri 2 - Sun 29 Jan, Erddig Hall, Wrexham

CHRISTMAS RAG WREATH MAKING Learn the history of the craft and the techniques needed to create your own wreath, Sat 3 Dec, Birmingham Back to Backs

CHRISTMAS FAIR Sat 3 Dec, Freemasons Hall, Ditherington, Shrewsbury

CHILDREN'S PINE CONE DECORATION WORKSHOP Have a go at making your very own Christmas penguin and owl decorations with pine cones gathered from the garden, Sat 3 Dec, Biddulph Grange Garden, Staffordshire

CHRISTMAS ON THE HOMEFRONT Explore period houses and shops against a backdrop of festive wartime entertainment, and discover how ordinary families kept their spirits high while the rations were low, Sat 3 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

WINTER MARKET Sat 3 Dec, The Bond Complex, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS FAYRE Sat 3 Dec,

Thursday 1 - Sunday 4 December

Prestfelde School, Shrewsbury
CHRISTMAS CAROLS & FESTIVE FAIR Sat 3 Dec, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

ART LATES: BUBBLES & BLUES An evening of art, bubbles and blues music, Sat 3 Dec, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS Featuring carol singing, costumed guided tours and a children's Christmas Lanterns craft activity, Sat 3 Dec, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

WESTON PARK CHRISTMAS FOOD & CRAFT FAYRE See page 13 for details, Sat 3 Dec, Weston Park, Shifnal, Shropshire

CHRISTMAS TUDOR BANQUET Dine like King Henry VIII, be entertained by musicians, singers and storytellers, Sat 3 Dec, Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Meet the world's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, as he's called upon to solve the greatest mystery of all time, Sat 3 Dec, Severn Valley Country Park, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

IRONBRIDGE CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON & FIREWORKS Sat 3 Dec, Ironbridge, Shropshire

A FROZEN CHRISTMAS AND SANTA SATURDAY Join Anna, Elsa, Olaf and

Sven in a special singalong show, then meet Santa - who may have a little Christmas surprise for you to take home, Sat 3 Dec, Manor House Museum, West Bromwich

UK DRONE SHOW Europe's largest gathering of drones, drone racers, RC cars, robot fighting and consumer technology, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

DEER FEEDING AT ATTINGHAM PARK Get closer to the fallow deer as the wardens feed them in the winter months, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOME Step back in time and take part in some seasonal activities, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS Soak up the seasonal atmosphere and revel in traditional celebrations and entertainment, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION WEEKENDS Santa stars in his very own show and has a gift for every child, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Cadbury World, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS SWAGS SWING Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

FATHER CHRISTMAS IN HIS GROTTTO Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Powis Castle and Garden, Welshpool

FATHER CHRISTMAS AT ATTINGHAM Step into a winter wonderland and visit Father Christmas in his study in the Mansion, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

SANTA HUNTS Fun-filled search for Santa, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



STORYTELLING AT BROCKHAMPTON Festive stories and exciting tales, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Brockhampton Estate, Herefordshire

SANTA STEAM SPECIALS Travel by steam train from Kidderminster to Arley and meet Father Christmas in his grotto, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley

SANTA AND MRS CLAUS Meet Santa, make a wish and take away a gift, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Dec, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

ATTINGHAM 1920S CHRISTMAS Discover Christmas traditions old and

new, from the 1920s to the present day, Sat 3 - Fri 23 Dec, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

CHRISTMAS AT THE VALLEY Sat 3 - Sat 24 Dec, Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich

SANTA'S SLEEPOVERS Experience a magical festive sleepover at one Alton Tower's themed hotels, Sun 4 Dec, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

CAROLS IN THE CAVERNS Join the live on-board choir for a unique tour of the caverns and limestone mines, Sun 4 Dec, Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS BUS TOUR Sun 4 Dec, Birmingham City Centre

ANTIQUE AND COLLECTORS FAIR Sun 4 Dec, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

CHRISTMAS MAGIC LANTERN SHOW Step back in time and witness a traditional Victorian magic lantern show, Sun 4 Dec, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS CRAFTS Make your own small Christmas Tree out of sticks and pine cones, Sun 4 Dec, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills

MAKE A CHRISTMAS TABLE DECORATION Spend a cosy afternoon making a centrepiece for your festive table, Sun 4 Dec, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

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Gigs

AGAINST ME! Tues 6 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ROACHFORD Tues 6 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE Tues 6 Dec, O2 Academy, B'ham

PAUL YOUNG Tues 6 Dec, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

BEANS ON TOAST Tues 6 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HEART OF GOLD Tues 6 Dec, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

JAMES Wed 7 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

THE FRANKIE VALLI STORY - JERSEY BOY FEAT: STEPHEN JAMES Wed 7 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

MARTIN HARLEY Wed 7 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MARTHA TILSTON Wed 7 Dec, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

CLAY Wed 7 Dec, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE PLAY THE POISON Wed 7 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BIFFY CLYRO Wed 7 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

GLENN TILBROOK Wed 7 Dec, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

GALACTIC EMPIRE Wed 7 Dec, O2 Academy

ROY WOOD ROCK & ROLL BAND Thurs 8 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES Thurs 8 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE FRATELLIS Thurs 8 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PLACEBO Thurs 8 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

PIXIES Thurs 8 Dec, O2 Academy, B'ham

DANIEL LIONEYE Thurs 8 Dec, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

JAZZ COLLECTIVE CHRISTMAS SWING-ALONG Thurs 8 Dec, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

SON OF DAVE Thurs 8 Dec, Newhampton Arts

Centre, Wolverhampton

MEILYR JONES Thurs 8 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

LARKIN POE Fri 9 Dec, O2 Institute, B'ham

JEAN GENIE - TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE Fri 9 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

ROBYN GORDON Fri 9 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GO WEST Fri 9 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES Fri 9 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

ONE STOP BOOGIE Fri 9 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE BAD FLOWERS Fri 9 Dec, Route 44, B'ham

FULLSHORE, ROOK CRUTCHES, THE BRAZEN Fri 9 Dec, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

JON PLEASED WIMMIN Fri 9 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE AMITY AFFLICTION Fri 9 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST Fri 9 Dec, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

A SELECTION OF PRE-1918 CHAPLIN SHORTS Fri 9 Dec, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CANDICE NIOR Fri 9 Dec, The Haygate, Wellington, Shropshire

OF KINGS AND CAPTAINS Fri 9 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

USED & ABUSED Fri 9 Dec, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

THE URBAN FOLK QUARTET Fri 9 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DEVILMENT Fri 9 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ULTIMATE EAGLES Sat 10 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

KING PLEASURE AND THE BISCUIT BOYS Sat 10 Dec, Lichfield Guildhall

SHOWADDYWADDY Sat 10 Dec, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

REAL FRIENDS Sat 10 Dec, The Asylum, Birmingham

LEVELLERS Sat 10 Dec, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE ARTHUR DOHERTY BAND Sat 10 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE SENSATIONAL '60S EXPERIENCE Sat 10 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SURF'S UP Sat 10 Dec, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

SWEDE DREAMZ Sat 10 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BLACK ROSE CADILLAC Sat 10 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HUMAN LEAGUE Sat 10 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

DAN PAGE Sat 10 Dec, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

MAGNUM Sat 10 Dec, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

THE OVERTONES Sat 10 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ABSOLUTE BOWIE Sat 10 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

EASTWOOD Sat 10 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SUPER FURRY ANIMALS Sat 10 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LUKE JACKSON TRIO Sat 10 Dec, The Hive Shrewsbury

THE YARCHESTERS Sat 10 Dec, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

THE ZOOB'S Sat 10 Dec, The Haygate, Wellington, Shropshire

IN2MINDS U2 INXS and Simple Minds tribute band. Sat 10 Dec, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

BOWJANGLES Sat 10 Dec, Chelmarsh Paris Hall, Bridgnorth

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS Sat 10 Dec - Sun 11 Dec, Genting Arena, Birmingham

JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA Sun 11 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MOSTLY AUTUMN Sun 11 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE LINDISFARNE STORY Sun 11 Dec, Lichfield Guildhall

BEARTOOTH Sun 11 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

REUBEN JAMES TRIO & TROPE Sun 11 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THAT'LL BE THE DAY CHRISTMAS SHOW Sun 11 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

Classical Music

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE TRIO Programme includes works by Philip Glass, Rachmaninov, Ravel, Roxanna Panufnik & Mendelssohn, Tues 6 Dec, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

LUNCHTIME CHRISTMAS MUSIC WITH THE CHORISTERS OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY Featuring James O'Donnell (conductor) & Thomas Trotter (organ), Wed 7 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring Jeffery Skidmore (conductor) & Alexander Mason (organ), Wed 7 Dec, Hereford Cathedral

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITH NICOLA BENEDETTI Featuring Omer Meir Wellber (conductor). Programme includes works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky & R. Strauss, Wed 7 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: WIND SERENADE Programme includes works by Hummel, Mozart & Dvorak arr. Clements, Thurs 8 Dec, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CBSO: WHITE CHRISTMAS Featuring Richard Balcombe (conductor) & Graham Bickley, Mary Carewe, Emma Kershaw & Maurice Clarke (vocalists), Fri 9 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BBC PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Juanjo Mena (conductor), Pavel Kolesnikov (soloist). Programme includes works by Dvorak, Chopin, Mussorgsky & Tchaikovsky, Fri 9 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BCMG: SOUND INVESTMENT 25TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT Featuring Thomas Ades (conductor) & Elizabeth Atherton (soprano), Sat 10 Dec, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

SUTTON COLDFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY & ORCHESTRA: HANDEL'S MESSIAH Sat 10 Dec, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

HALESOWEN ORCHESTRA Featuring Charlotte Moseley (soprano). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Prokofiev & Elgar, Sat 10 Dec, Cornbow Hall, Halesowen

CHRISTMAS WITH THE SALVATION ARMY Sun 11 Dec, Symphony Hall, B'ham

Comedy Gigs

CHEEKY MONKEY COMEDY Tues 6 Dec, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

JOJO SMITH, PAUL MCCAFFERY, TOM STADE & COMIC TBC Wed 7 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Thurs 8 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

GARY DELANEY, LLOYD GRIFFITH, DAVID MORGAN Thurs 8 Dec, The Bramall, Birmingham

GAVIN WEBSTER, MATT REED, STEPHEN BAILEY & STEVE SHANYASKI Thurs 8 - Sat 10 Dec, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

PAUL MCCAFFERY, AMEY ASKINS, TOM STADE & COMIC TBC Thurs 8 - Sat 10 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

REEVES & MORTIMER Fri 9 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

KEN DODD Sat 10 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

MICKY SHARMA Sat 10 Dec, mac, Birmingham

DAN NIGHTINGALE, MARK SMITH, DARREN HARRIOTT & PIERRE NOVELLIE Sat 10 Dec, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Theatre

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS An irreverent and playful take on Kenneth Grahame's classic children's story, until Sat 31 Dec, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

TREASURE ISLAND Bryony Lavery's modern adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling classic, until Sat 7 Jan, The REP, B'ham

CINDERELLA Panto favourite Brad Pitt make his debut as Buttons in what promises to be yet another excellent production from Evolution. Ian Smith & Matt Daines star as the Ugly Sisters, until Sun 8 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE SNOW QUEEN Hans Christian Andersen's classic children's tale of adventure, friendship and bravery, until Sat 28 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE BEAR Pins & Needles present a brand new staging of Raymond Briggs' heartwarming and humorous wintry tale, Mon 5 - Sat 31 Dec, mac, Birmingham

WHERE'S MY IGLOO GONE? The Bone Ensemble take audiences 'on a magical journey through an Arctic world of soaring snow geese, pet husky dogs and starry nights', Tues 6 - Thurs 8 Dec, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

SILHOUETTE Amateur production of Simon Brett's ingeniously structured thriller, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Dec, Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre

ALADDIN Midland Academy of Musical Theatre presents its version of the festive favourite, Wed 7 - Fri 9 Dec, The Blue Orange, Birmingham

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS Innovative new writing, absurd humour and an entire improvised scene come together in this 'Christmas show with a difference', Wed 7 - Fri 9 Dec, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

BLITHE SPIRIT Birmingham School of Acting present its version of Noel Coward's comic play, Wed 7 - Sat 10 Dec, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

WIND IN THE WILLOWS Follow the

adventures of Toad, Rat, Mole, Badger and friends as they battle their adversaries, the weasels and stoats from the Wild Wood, Wed 7 - Sat 10 Dec, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

SLEEPING BEAUTY Starring comedy legend Bernie Clifton, West End star Matt Brinkler and family favourites Theo The Mouse & Wendy, Wed 7 - Sat 31 Dec, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

THE WITCHES Amateur staging of one of Roald Dahl's most popular tales, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Dec, Dudley Little Theatre

ALADDIN Discover a magical tale of eastern promise, Genie wishes and singing fish!, Thurs 8 - Mon 19 Dec, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

CINDERELLA Starring Stoke's favourite son Jonathan Wilkes as Buttons, alongside panto favourite Christian Patterson and Simon Nehan as the Ugly Sisters, Thurs 8 Dec - Sun 8 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HAIRY FAIRY TALES Fun-packed storytelling for all the family, featuring physical theatre, puppetry and live music, Fri 9 Dec, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Chapterhouse Theatre bring Charles Dickens' festive story to life via period costume, song, dance and a 'magnificent' original musical score, Fri 9 - Sat 10 Dec, mac, Birmingham

ALADDIN Ben Crocker's version of the much-loved pantomime, Fri 9 - Sat 17 Dec, Hall Green Little Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

CRIMES AGAINST CHRISTMAS New comedy thriller that sees a host of characters invited to a party in a mysterious house on a remote island, Fri 9 - Sat 31 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

ALADDIN: THE WOK AND ROLL PANTO Festive show with a difference, featuring classic rock'n'roll hits from Aretha Franklin, The Monkees, James Brown, The Temptations, The Jackson Five, and many more... Fri 9 Dec - Sun 8 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MR B THE GENTLEMAN RHYMER Mr B continues his ongoing quest to reconnect hip-hop with manners and the Queen's English, Sat 10 Dec, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE KEN DODD HAPPINESS SHOW Sat 10 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

ALADDIN Magical pantomime adventure starring Joe McElderry, Lisa Riley, Ian Adams, Ben Faulks and 'Lazy Cow' Doreen Tipton, Sat 10 Dec - Sun 22 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

WIFI WARS Live comedy game show where audience participation is compulsory, Sun 11 Dec, mac, Birmingham

Dance

KEEP DANCING Brand new dance show celebrating the world of Ballroom and Latin, featuring Robin Windsor and other special celebrity guests from Strictly Come Dancing, Tue 6 - Sat 10 Dec, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ROMEO & JULIET Ballet Cymru presents a choreographed staging of the greatest love story of all time, Sat 10 Dec, Stourbridge Town Hall

THE COLOUR OF ME Wriggle Dance Theatre invite audiences to join them in a magical world of colour, where live music, projection and dance promise to 'delight, tickle and inspire young audiences', Sat 10 Dec, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Talks

JOHNNY MARR: SET THE BOY FREE Fri 9 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

A HOLOGRAM FOR THE KING (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Tom Hanks, Sarita Choudhury. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 5 Dec

I, DANIEL BLAKE (15) Drama. Starring Dave Johns, Hayley Squires. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Mon 5 - Wed 7 Dec; Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, Tues 6 & Thurs 8 Dec

WHITE CHRISTMAS (U) Musical/Romance. Starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Tues 6 Dec

TOP FIVE (15) Comedy/Romance. Starring Chris Rock, Rosario Dawson. mac, Birmingham, Fri 9 Dec

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING (PG) Adventure/Drama. Starring Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 9 Dec

COURTED (12a) Musical/Romance. Starring Fabrice Luchini, Sidse Babett Knudsen. Foreign language, subtitles. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Fri 9 Dec

THE RETURN OF THE KING (12) Adventure/Drama. Starring Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 11 Dec

THE TWO TOWERS (12) Adventure/Drama. Starring Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 10 Dec

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring James

WHAT'S ON AT THEATRE SEVERN...

<p>FRI 16 - SAT 24 DEC</p>  <p>Perfect family theatre for children Age 2+</p>	<p>SUN 22 JAN</p> <p>MICHAEL PORTILLO LIFE: A GAME OF TWO HALVES</p> 
<p>TUE 24 JAN</p> <p>OMID DJALILI SCHMUCK FOR A NIGHT</p> <p>Award winning comedian and actor, Omid returns with his captivating comedy masterclass.</p> 	<p>WED 25 JAN</p> <p>JIM DAVIDSON 40 YEARS ON</p> <p>This is Jim Davidson as you've never seen him before.</p> 
<p>THU 26 JAN</p> <p>A CLASSIC BOOK SPECTACULAR It Has The Lot!</p> <p>THE STRANGLERS VAMPIRES ROCK! GHOST TRAIN</p> <p>All aboard the Ghost Train! The UK's favourite Vampire Baron is back!</p> 	<p>FRI 27 JAN</p> <p>MARTYN JOSEPH</p> <p>A unique talent, he continues to write, sing and play from the heart.</p> 

CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR FULL LISTINGS



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BOOK ONLINE WWW.THEATRESEVERN.CO.UK

THEATRE SEVERN, FRANKELL QUAY, SHROPSHIRE SY5 6PT

Stewart, Donna Reed. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 10 - Sat 24 Dec

THERE WILL BE BLOOD (15) Drama. Starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Paul Dano. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 11 Dec

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 9 Dec, showing at selected cinemas

OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY (tbc)

BIRTH OF A NATION (15)

THE PASS (15)

SNOWDEN (15)

Events

SPORTING LUNCH WITH PHIL TUFNELL Mon 5 Dec, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

AN EVENING OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS Voices of Tantallon sing a wide variety of festive music, Mon 5 - Tues 6 Dec, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

TUESDAY TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Activities vary from day

to day, Tues 6 Dec, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

CRAFTPLAY EXPLORERS Discover, play and create with your child, Tues 6 Dec, Bilston Craft Gallery, Wolverhampton

CHRISTMAS CRACKER EXPRESS Take a magical steam train journey along the Severn Valley in the company of Father Christmas and your classmates, Tues 6 - Thurs 8 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP Create a wreath made from hollies, berries and foliage from the garden, Wed 7 - Fri 9 Dec, Biddulph Grange Garden, Staffordshire

TALK: LOOKING FOR ORCHIDS IN CHINA Phil Seaton returns to the park to talk about his travels to China, Thurs 8 Dec, Severn Valley Country Park, Bewdley

MAKE YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS WREATH Fri 9 Dec, Severn Valley Country Park, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVENINGS Stroll through the museum's beautifully decorated gas-lit streets and take in the sights, sounds and smells of a magical Christmas past, Fri 9 - Sat 10 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

CIRCUSMASH PRESENTS MAD WORLD WINTER SHOWCASE Fri 9 - Sat 10 Dec, CircusMASH, Birmingham

INSOMNIA59 Featuring the latest and greatest in games, music and drone racing, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Dec, NEC, Birmingham



WINTER WONDERFARM Get into the festive spirit with a visit to Lower Drayton Farm's 'winter wonderfarm', Fri 9 - Sun 11 Dec, Lower Drayton Farm, Stafford

BOWMAN ANTIQUES Selection of antiques, curios, vintage, retro and collectables. Up to 400 stalls, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Dec, Staffordshire County Showground, Staffordshire

ILLUMINATED GARDENS Brighten up the dark winter night with a stroll around the formal gardens, terraces and courtyard, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Dec, Powis Castle and Garden, Welshpool

CHRISTMAS AT SUNNYCROFT Enjoy Sunnycroft dressed for Christmas, with carol singers, handbell ringers and presents under the tree, Fri 9 - Tues 13 Dec, Sunnycroft, Shropshire

FATHER CHRISTMAS' LIVING ROOM Sat 10 Dec, Birmingham Back to Backs, Birmingham

CRUELTY FREE CHRISTMAS FAIR Sat 10 Dec, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury

CAROLS IN THE TRENCHES An evening of carols and readings set in the WW1 trench system, concluded by a re-enactment of the Christmas Truce in No Man's Land, Sat 10 Dec, The Staffordshire Regiment Museum, Staffordshire

FESTIVE CHRISTMAS CONCERT Free charity carol concert raising money for Heart Research UK at Birmingham Children's Hospital, Sat 10 Dec, Brindleyplace, Birmingham

TUDOR CHRISTMAS AT BLAKESLEY HALL See Blakesley Hall dressed for a Tudor Christmas and meet Tudor characters preparing for the Yuletide festivities, Sat 10 Dec, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH SANTA Charity event to raise funds for the zoo's new Snow Leopard enclosure project, Sat 10 Dec, Dudley Zoological Gardens

SONGWRITING WORKSHOP Luke Jackson shares tips on how to get creative. A truly unique opportunity to learn from an expert! The workshop is free of charge but booking is essential, Sat 10 Dec, The Hive Shrewsbury

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOME Step back in time and take part in some seasonal activities, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SANTA'S GROTTTO Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Apley Farm Shop, Shifnal,

Shropshire

FATHER CHRISTMAS AT ATTINGHAM Step into a winter wonderland and visit Father Christmas in his study in the Mansion, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION WEEKENDS Santa stars in his very own show and has a gift for every child, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Cadbury World, Birmingham

LADIES KENNEL ASSOCIATION General Championship Dog Show licensed by the Kennel Club, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS Soak up the seasonal atmosphere and revel in traditional celebrations and entertainment, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire

MEDIAEVAL CHRISTMAS WEEKENDS Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Chirk Castle, Chirk

17TH CENTURY CHRISTMAS Taste traditional Christmas recipes, see the house decorated with traditional greenery, toast bread over the open fire in the hall and much more, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

CHILDREN'S VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS SANTA TRAILS Meet the Victorian household, readying themselves for Santa's annual visit, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

SANTA STEAM SPECIALS Travel by steam train from Kidderminster to Arley and meet Father Christmas in his grotto, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

SANTA AND MRS CLAUS MEET SANTA, make a wish and take away a gift, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

ELIZABETHAN CHRISTMAS WEEKEND Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

SANTA AT THE CONE Meet Santa, receive a gift, try a craft and follow a trail (charges apply), Sat 10 - Sun 11 Dec, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AT ST CHAD'S Sat 10 - Sat 17 Dec, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

SANTA'S SLEEPOVERS Experience a magical festive sleepover at one Alton Tower's themed hotels, Sun 11 Dec, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

CHRISTMAS RAG WREATH MAKING Learn the history of the craft and the techniques needed to create a wreath, Sun 11 Dec, Birmingham Back to Backs

A CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE Join the Friends of the Museum as they bring the 1837 Darby Hand Chapel to life for a traditional candlelit carol service, Sun 11 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

CAROLS ON THE FARM Mulled wine, mince pies, community Christmas songs, hot chocolate and Father Christmas in the Green Grotto, Sun 11 Dec, Fordhall Organic Farm, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

HUNT FOR SANTA Sun 11 Dec, Manor House Museum, West Bromwich

Dear Santa

TUESDAY 13 - SATURDAY 24 DECEMBER

Rod Campbell's 'Dear Santa' is an ideal introduction to theatre for those aged 2 to 7 years old; sure to be one Christmas present children and parents alike will never forget.

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THU 1 DEC + SUPPORT THE ENGINES
MAD DOG MCREA

FRI 2 DEC
PANIC ROOM
FEAT ANNE-MARIE HELDER

SAT 3 DEC + SUPPORT THE SOUND AKA
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BRUCE FOXTON - RUSSELL HASTINGS

SUN 4 DEC
TYKETTO RESCHEDULED TO MONDAY 30th JANUARY 2017
MINI-MOD EVENING
FEATURING **FABULOUS BORDELLOS**

TUE 6 DEC + ROSIE O'SULLIVAN
ROACHFORD

WED 7 DEC FEAT STEPHEN JAMES
THE FRANKIE VALLI STORY

THU 8 DEC + LOUIS COUPE & THE BOOZ
ROY WOOD
ROCK AND ROLL BAND

FRI 9 DEC **SOLD OUT**
GO WEST

SAT 10 DEC HOTEL CALIFORNIA...
ULTIMATE EAGLES

SUN 11 DEC
MOSTLY AUTUMN

MON 13 DEC 80's ROCK HAIR METAL XMAS PARTY!
WHITE COAST REBELS VS WHITE TYGER

TUE 13 DEC STEVE GIBBONS
THE DYLAN PROJECT
FIFTY YEARS AFTER BLONDE ON BLONDE

WED 14 DEC + SUPPORT DARK CIRCUS
THE URBAN VODOO MACHINE

THU 15 DEC + BLACKHEART ORCHESTRA
FOLK/ROCK LEGENDS
LINDISFARNE

FRI 16 DEC **SOLD OUT**
SLADE

SAT 17 DEC ON STAGE 8.30pm
CHRISTMAS ROCK & ROLL PARTY!
SHOWADDYADDY!

SUN 18 DEC
TOUCHSTONE
FEATURING THE GREAT ESCAPE BAND
SPECIAL GUESTS

MON 19 DEC + VODOO SIOUX
FEATURING ANDY SCOTT
SWEET

TUE 20 DEC + THE BITTER + PURPLE STEREO
SANTA CLAUSE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL
SEX PISSED DOLLS

WED 21 DEC + SUPPORT THE LEGAL SUSPECTS
SUPREME QUEEN
FEATURING SCOTT MALEY AS FREDDIE MERCURY

THU 22 DEC ON STAGE 9.00pm
FRED ZEPPELIN

FRI 23 DEC + THE BRITANNIA BEAT
KICK UP THE 80's

SAT 24 DEC XMAS EVE SPECIAL
UPBEAT BEATLES
50th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

MON 24 DEC BOXING NIGHT BASH
LIMEHOUSE LIZZY

TUE 27 DEC + SUPPORT SKAAS'S
BAD MANNERS
FEAT BUSTER BLOODVESSEL

WED 28 DEC + SUPPORT SUITS FOR CLOWN
DIRTY DC
AC/DC TRIBUTE

THU 29 DEC + HAPPY MONDAZE
OASIS
THEIR DEFINITELY MIGHT BE
STONE ROSES
THEY ARE BACK!

FRI 30 DEC ALTERNATIVE NYE PARTY
SOUL SURVIVORS & THE NEW AMEN CORNER

SAT 31 DEC NEW YEARS EVE PARTY
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SAT 3 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
ANDY O'BRIEN

FRI 9 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
NIIBS & EDDY

SAT 10 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
DAN PAGE

FRI 16 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
DAN PAGE

SAT 17 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
GARAGE FLOWERS & FLATLANDS

FRI 23 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
CAMERON FORREST

FRI 30 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
MICHAELA WYLDE

SAT 31 DECEMBER 9PM - 12PM
HANNAH & BRIAN

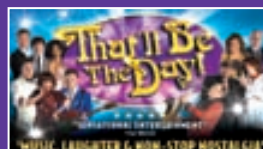
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What's on...



Tuesday 24th January 2017
TONY STOCKWELL
Time: 7.30pm



Thursday 2nd February 2017
THAT'LL BE THE DAY
Time: 7.30pm



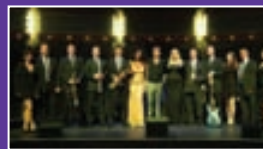
Friday 3rd February 2017
LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY SHOW
Time: 7.30pm



Sunday 5th February 2017
THE JUNGLE BOOK
Time: 7.30pm



Friday 10th February 2017
ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING
Time: 7.30pm



Saturday 11th February 2017
BACK TO BACHARACH
Time: 7.30pm



Wednesday 15th February 2017
FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Time: 7.30pm



Friday 17th February 2017
THE RAT PACK CONCERT
Time: 7.30pm



Tuesday 21st February 2017
AN AUDIENCE WITH LESLEY GARRETT
Time: 7.30pm

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Gigs

KULA SHAKER Mon 12 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WHITE TYGER + WHITE COAST REBELS Mon 12 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

JAMES TW Mon 12 Dec, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ROCKET Mon 12 - Tues 13 Dec, The Jam House, Birmingham

JASON DONOVAN Tues 13 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE DYLAN PROJECT Tues 13 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

NIKKI ROUS Tues 13 Dec, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

MIST Tues 13 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BOB LOG III Tues 13 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JORJA SMITH Tues 13 Dec, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE URBAN VOODOO MACHINE Wed 14 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE ALBION CHRISTMAS BAND Wed 14 Dec, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

AREA 11 Wed 14 Dec, The Asylum, B'ham

ALISON EVE Wed 14 Dec, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THE CHRISTMAS SKA PARTY FEATURING THE NEVILLE STAPLE BAND, TALISMAN & BUSTER SHUFFLE Wed 14 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

JOOLS HOLLAND AND HIS RHYTHM AND BLUES ORCHESTRA Wed 14 - Thurs 15 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE STONES Thurs 15 Dec, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

SLOW CLUB Thurs 15 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BAY CITY ROLLERS Thurs 15 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

SCHOOLBOY Q Thurs 15 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE LINDISFARNE STORY Thurs 15 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

KORN & LIMP BIZKIT Thurs 15 Dec, Barclaycard Arena,

Birmingham

SYNERGY Thurs 15 Dec, The Huntsman, Little Wenlock, South Shropshire

NE-YO Thurs 15 Dec, O2 Academy, B'ham

WAVES AGAINST TIDES Thurs 15 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

THE JAKE LEG JUG BAND Thurs 15 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DEVILMENT Thurs 15 Dec, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

TALON Thurs 15 Dec, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

CLUTCH Fri 16 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FULLY LOADED & VON KRYSTAL ROXZ Fri 16 Dec, Route 44, B'ham

STATUS QUO Fri 16 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

SLADE Fri 16 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

HELLS BELLS Fri 16 Dec, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

ROY ORBISON STORY Fri 16 Dec, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

ALEXANDER O'NEAL Fri 16 Dec, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

BOWIE EXPERIENCE Fri 16 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

UNDER A BANNER WITH HEADSTICKS Fri 16 Dec, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

SKABURST Fri 16 Dec, The Haygate, Wellington, Shropshire

THE WILDHEARTS Fri 16 Dec, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

BOWJANGLES Fri 16 Dec, The Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton, South Shropshire

SAX IN THE CITY: THE NOTEBENDERS Fri 16 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PIVA Fri 16 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BLACK COAST Fri 16 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SOLID SOUL Fri 16 - Sat 17 Dec, The Jam House, Birmingham

KICK UP THE 80'S Fri 16 - Sat 17 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FESTIVE FAVOURITES WITH JESSICA HYNES Fri

16 - Mon 19 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SHOWADDYWADDY Sat 17 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

MADNESS Sat 17 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

IVOR & LYN'S CLASSIC ROCK DISCO Sat 17 Dec, Route 44, Birmingham

BEAT GOES BANG Sat 17 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DARK SIDE OF THE WALL Sat 17 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

STARVIN RASCALS Sat 17 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TSB Sat 17 Dec, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

FREESTYLE XMAS PARTY WITH DJ FORMAT Sat 17 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

A CHRISTMAS BALL FOR A MODERN WORLD Sat 17 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS Sat 17 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WOLFTOWN Sat 17 Dec, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

FOREVER YOUNG - BANDS & DJS Sat 17 Dec, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

VELVET TARDIS Sat 17 Dec, The Haygate, Wellington, Shropshire

THE TWANG Sat 17 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

AMINGTON BAND Sat 17 Dec, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

METROPOLITAN BRASS QUINTET Sat 17 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GENERATIONS Sat 17 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

ANDY MCKEE Sun 18 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SLADE Sun 18 Dec, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

TOUCHSTONE Sun 18 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

YELLOWCARD Sun 18 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

DANIELLE DE NIESE Intimate concert with 'operas coolest soprano', Mon 12 Dec, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

JOHN RUTTER'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION Featuring the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, John Rutter (conductor), Elin Manahan Thomas (soprano), Melanie Marshall (mezzo-soprano), Andrew Lucas (organ), Choristers of St Albans Cathedral & The Bach Choir, Mon 12 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE TALLIS SCHOLARS: A RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS Programme includes works by Victoria, Part, Sheppard, Britten, Tavener & Tallis, Tues 13 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: ENIGMA VARIATIONS Featuring Vassily Sinaisky (conductor) & Behzod Abduraimov (piano). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saens & Elgar, Tues 13 Dec, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BLAKE Wed 14 Dec, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

MESSIAEN: LA NATIVITÉ DU SEIGNEUR Enjoy this testament to Olivier Messiaen's faith, inspired by the birth of Jesus, performed by members of the Birmingham Conservatoire organ department, Wed 14 Dec, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

THE BIRMINGHAM CANOLDIR MALE CHOIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY CHRISTMAS CONCERT Thurs 15 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

MIDLANDS HOSPITAL CHOIR: CHRISTMAS-IS-A-COMING Featuring James Llewelyn Jones (conductor), Gemini Brass (Ensemble), Richard Dawson (Organist), Kieran Jones (Soloist) & the Four Oaks Cluster Choir, Fri 16 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

PIVA Evening of Renaissance music to celebrate the festive season, Fri 16 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE REPERTOIRE ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor) & Nafis Umerkulova (piano). Programme includes works by Liadov, Rachmaninov & Tchaikovsky, Fri 16 Dec, Bramall Hall, Birmingham University

FESTIVE FAVOURITES WITH JESSICA HYNES Featuring Simon Halsey (conductor), Jessica Hynes (presenter) & the CBSO Choruses, Fri 16 - Mon 19 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE FRONCSYLLTE MALE VOICE CHOIR Sat 17 Dec, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE CHOIR WITH NO NAME: BIG CHRISTMAS SINGALONG Sat 17 Dec, The Bramall, University Of Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: CHRISTMAS CLASSICS Featuring Kevin Whately (special guest reader), Adrian Lucas (conductor), Julia Doyle (soprano), City of Birmingham Choir & the Fanfare Trumpeters from the Band of the Queen's Division, Sat 17 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA featuring the City Of Birmingham Choir, Michael Lloyd (conductor) & Alison Roddy (soprano). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Bernstein, Respighi & Tchaikovsky, Sun 18 Dec, The Bramall, University Of Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

JO ENRIGHT, CHARMIAN HUGHES ALI WARWOOD & MAUREEN YOUNGER Wed 14 Dec, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

MICK FERRY, ROB DEERING, MIKE WILMOT & ANDY ROBINSON Wed 14 - Sat 17 Dec, The Glee Club, B'ham

SCOTT CAPURRO, ABBIE SCHAMAUN & BEC HILL Thurs 15 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

CHARLIE BAKER, PAUL TONKINSON Thurs 15 Dec, Station Pub, Sutton Coldfield

ROB ROUSE, RAY PEACOCK, VINCE ATTA & SEAN PERCIVAL Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Dec, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

KEN DODD Sat 17 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

AHIR SHAH Sat 17 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MARK NELSON, JAY HANDLEY, MICKY P KERR & ADAM ROWE Sat 17 Dec, Religion, Wolverhampton

MARK NELSON, MICKY P KERR, JAY HANDLEY & ADAM ROWE Sat 17 Dec, Couture, Stafford

WES ZAHARUK, MICHAEL LEGGE, ROBIN MORGAN & PAUL IMRIE Sat 17 Dec, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

BARBARA NICE'S CHRISTMAS CRACKER Sat 17 - Sun 18 Dec, mac, B'ham

TODALLY FREE COMEDY! Sun 18 Dec, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

Theatre

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS An irreverent and playful take on Kenneth Grahame's classic children's story, until Sat 31 Dec, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

SLEEPING BEAUTY Starring comedy legend Bernie Clifton, West End star Matt Brinkler and family favourites Theo The Mouse & Wendy, until Sat 31 Dec, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

CRIMES AGAINST CHRISTMAS New comedy thriller that sees a host of characters invited to a party in a mysterious house on a remote island, until Sat 31 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

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CINDERELLA Panto favourite Brad Pitt make his debut as Buttons in what

promises to be yet another excellent production from Evolution. Ian Smith & Matt Daines star as the Ugly Sisters, until Sun 8 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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ALADDIN: THE WOK AND ROLL PANTO Festive show with a difference, featuring classic rock'n'roll hits from Aretha Franklin, The Monkees, James Brown, The Temptations, The Jackson Five, and many more... until Sun 8 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ALADDIN Magical pantomime adventure starring Joe McElderry, Lisa Riley, Ian Adams, Ben Faulks and 'Lazy Cow' Doreen Tipton, until Sun 22 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE SNOW QUEEN Hans Christian Andersen's classic children's tale of adventure, friendship and bravery, until Sat 28 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

I, CORINNE DADAT Fiction and documentary blend to paint a portrait of a woman who's invisible to most, Mon 12 - Tues 13 Dec, The REP, Birmingham

A CHRISTMAS WASSAIL Evening of festive fun, Christmas comedy and seasonal song, Mon 12 - Tues 13 Dec, Highbury Hall, Birmingham

CHICAGO THE MUSICAL John Partridge stars as lawyer Billy Flynn in a brand new UK tour of Kander & Ebb's smash-hit musical. Soul Queen Mica Paris stars as Mama Morton, while Coronation Street star Hayley Tamaddon takes the lead as Roxie Hart, Mon 12 - Sat 31 Dec, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

SANTA AND THE PIRATES (THAT DON'T WANT CHRISTMAS!) Festive show for young audiences featuring Callum Donnelly and Robin Hatcher, stars of popular CBeebies TV show Spot Bots, Tues 13 Dec, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

DEAR SANTA Festive story which promises to be 'a perfect introduction to theatre for two to seven-year-olds', Tues 13 - Sat 24 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

IT'S A KIND OF PANTO Presented by Sound Foundations in association with Walton's Way Music Charity, Wed 14 Dec, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

ROBIN HOOD: THE PANTO Brand new local version of the tale of the legendary Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, Wed 14 - Sun 18 Dec, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Concert portrayal of some of the greatest musical songs in musical theatre, Thurs 15 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

CINDERELLA Thurs 15 Dec, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK Pantomime experience in a heated big top, Thurs 15 - Thurs 22 Dec, Tamworth Castle Grounds, Staffs

THE 39 STEPS Award-winning, fast-paced whodunnit where over 150 zany characters are played by a cast of four, Thurs 15 - Fri 23 Dec, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

CIRCUS OF HORRORS - THE NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE An amalgamation of bizarre, brave and beautiful acts, all woven into an Alice In Horrorland-type story, driven by a mainly original soundscape and performed with a forked tongue firmly in each cheek! Fri 16 Dec, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

SANTA'S NEW SLEIGH A festive treat for youngsters, with audience participation, singalongs and a present from Santa for every child, Fri 16 - Sat 24 Dec, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SNOW WHITE Singing sensation Lydia Borg stars in the title role of this festive favourite, Fri 16 - Fri 30 Dec, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

CIRCUS OF HORRORS - THE NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE An amalgamation of bizarre, brave and beautiful acts, all woven into an Alice In Horrorland-type story, driven by a mainly original soundscape and performed with a forked tongue firmly in each cheek! Sat 17 Dec, Star City, Birmingham

EMBRACED BURLESQUE: CHRISTMAS SPECIAL Cabaret extravaganza featuring live music, comedy, burlesque, mistletoe and audience participation, Sat 17 Dec, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE KEN DODD HAPPINESS SHOW Sat 17 Dec, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring James Stewart, Donna Reed. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Mon 12 Dec; Birmingham Cathedral, Sat 17 Dec; Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Sun 18 Dec

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring Richard Attenborough, Elizabeth Perkins. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 13 Dec; Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Thurs 15 Dec

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP (U) Drama/Romance. Starring Kate Beckinsale, Chloë Sevigny. Foxlow Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Tues 13 Dec

WHERE TO INVADE NEXT? (15) Documentary. Starring Michael Moore. Foxlow Arts Centre, Leek,

Staffs, Wed 14 Dec

SING STREET (12) Comedy/Music. Starring Ferdia Walsh-Peelo, Aidan Gillen. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 16 Dec

INFERNO (12A) Action/Adventure. Starring Tom Hanks, Felicity Jones. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Dec

CAR WASH (PG) Comedy. Starring Richard Pryor, Franklyn Ajaye. mac, Birmingham, Sat 17 Dec

CINEMA PARADISO (15) Drama. Starring Philippe Noiret, Enzo Cannavale. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 17 Dec

BATMAN RETURNS (15) Action. Starring Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 17 Dec

TROLLS (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Anna Kendrick, Justin Timberlake. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Sat 17, Mon 19 - Tues 20 Dec

HOME ALONE (PG) Comedy/Family. Starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 17 - Sat 24 Dec

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (U) Drama, Fantasy. Starring George C. Scott, Frank Finlay. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sat 17 - Sat 24 Dec

HOME ALONE 2 (PG) Comedy/Family. Starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 17 Dec; Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Sun 18 Dec

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 16 Dec, showing at selected cinemas

STAR WARS: ROGUE ONE (tbc)

THE EAGLE HUNTRESS (tbc)

Events

AN EVENING OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS Voices of Tantalion sing a wide variety of festive music, Mon 12 - Tues 13 Dec, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

TUESDAY TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Activities vary from day to day, Tues 13 Dec, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

CHRISTMAS CRACKER EXPRESS Take a magical steam train journey along the Severn Valley in the company of Father Christmas and your classmates. Tues 13 - Thurs 15 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley

CAROLS IN THE SQUARE Eric Smith of BBC Radio Shropshire hosts, Wed 14 Dec, The Square, Shrewsbury

SANTA AND MRS CLAU Meet Santa, make a wish and take away a gift, Wed 14 Dec, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

FRIDAY TWILIGHT - GHOST STORIES FOR CHRISTMAS Theatre group Don't Go

Into The Cellar present an evening of classic ghost stories, Fri 16 Dec, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVENINGS Stroll through the museum's beautifully decorated gas-lit streets and take in the sights, sounds and smells of a magical Christmas past, Fri 16 - Sun 18 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

CHRISTMAS AT SUNNYCROFT Enjoy Sunnycroft dressed for Christmas, with carol singers, handbell ringers and presents under the tree, Fri 16 - Tues 20 Dec, Sunnycroft, Wellington

SCROOGE'S VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS Christmas comedy performed by two storytellers who need your assistance, Sat 17 Dec, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

17TH CENTURY CHRISTMAS Taste traditional Christmas recipes, see the house decorated with traditional greenery, toast bread over the open fire in the hall and much more, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Dec, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION WEEKENDS Santa stars in his very own show and has a gift for every child, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Dec, Cadbury World, Bournville

SANTA'S GROTTTO Sat 17 - Sun 18 Dec, The Dana Prison, Shrewsbury

SANTA STEAM SPECIALS Travel by steam train from Kidderminster to Arley and meet Father Christmas in his grotto, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley

CHILDREN'S VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS SANTA TRAILS Meet the Victorian household, readying themselves for Santa's annual visit, Sat 17 - Tues 20 Dec, Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

SANTA'S SLEEPOVERS Experience a magical festive sleepover at one Alton Tower's themed hotels, Sat 17 - Fri 23 Dec, Alton Towers, Staffordshire

SANTA AT THE CONE Meet Santa, receive a gift, try a craft and follow a trail (charges apply), Sat 17 - Fri 23 Dec, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

SANTA AND MRS CLAU Meet Santa, make a wish and take away a gift, Sat 17 - Fri 23 Dec, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOME Step back in time and take part in some seasonal activities, Sat 17 - Sat 24 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

BBC SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR Gary Lineker, Claire Balding and Gabby Logan celebrating the biggest sporting achievements of the year, Sun 18 Dec, Genting Arena, Birmingham



Gigs

SWEET FEATURING ANDY SCOTT Mon 19 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

JAMES YORKSTON Mon 19 Dec, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO ABBA Mon 19 Dec, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

TOM FITZPATRICK Mon 19 Dec, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE SEX PISSED DOLLS Tues 20 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

MICHAEL BUBLE - KAI MCKENZIE Tues 20 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DIRTY OLD FOLKERS Tues 20 Dec, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

THE TRAVELLORS Tues 20 Dec, The Huntsman, Little Wenlock, South Shropshire

ROY WOOD ROCKMAS Tues 20 Dec, Symphony Hall, B'ham

D-RAN D-RAN Wed 21 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

HOOPLA BLUE, FLAMINGO FLAME, PAPER BUOYS & GRIM DISCO Wed 21 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SUPREME QUEEN Wed 21 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

MAD JOCKS AND ENGLISHMEN Wed 21 Dec, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THE DESTROYERS Wed 21 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TIGRESS Wed 21 Dec, The Asylum, B'ham



The Wonder Stuff - O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE TEMPER TRAP Wed 21 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

A FAMILY CHRISTMAS WITH THE TOWN HALL GOSPEL CHOIR Wed 21 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

NGOD Wed 21 Dec, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

JAMES ARTHUR Wed 21 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE STUBBLE BROTHERS Thurs 22 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE HAIR ROCK EXPERIENCE Thurs 22 Dec, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

FRED ZEPPELIN Thurs 22 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

SANTAGEDDON Thurs 22 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

MADDY PRIOR & THE CARNIVAL BAND Thurs 22 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

THE STONES Fri 23 Dec, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

THE GURUS Fri 23 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SHOWADDYWADDY Fri 23 Dec, Victoria Hall,

Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

KICK UP THE 80'S Fri 23 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE REWIND 80's PARTY BAND Fri 23 Dec, Route 44, Birmingham

SPACEHOPPERS Fri 23 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE WONDER STUFF Fri 23 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JAYKAE Fri 23 Dec, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE HOGZ Fri 23 Dec, The Haygate, Wellington, Shropshire

ANDY WILLIAMS CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR STARRING THE OSMONDS Fri 23 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

ROD STEWART TRIBUTE - GARRY PEASE Sat 24 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE STRAIGHT ACES Sat 24 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE WEST COAST EAGLES Sat 24 Dec, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Sat 24 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

SING CAROLS WITH THE CITY ORGANIST AND BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL CHOIR Featuring Marcus Huxley (musical director), Jeremy Nicholas (presenter) & Thomas Trotter (organ), Mon 19 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: A PALM COURT CHRISTMAS PARTY Featuring the Berkley Salon Ensemble & the CBSO Youth Chorus, Mon 19 Dec, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGALONG Featuring Louise Dearman (special guest singer), the London Concert Orchestra & the London Concert Chorus, Mon 19 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor), Mon 19 - Thurs 22 Dec, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

ANDRE RIEU Wed 21 Dec, Genting Arena, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH GILBERT & SULLIVAN Wed 21 Dec, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

EX CATHEDRA FAMILY CONCERT: ANGELS STARS & KINGS Featuring Ex Cathedra, Ex Cathedra Academy of Vocal Music, Wed 21 Dec, St Paul's Church, B'ham

KATHERINE JENKINS: CELEBRATION Featuring Anthony Inglis (conductor) & the London Concert Orchestra, Thurs 22 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: WHITE CHRISTMAS Featuring Laura Tebbutt & Tim Howar (guest singers), John Rigby (conductor) & Capital Voices, Fri 23 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MOZART FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA: CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring Keri Fuge (soprano) & Michael Bawtree (conductor), Sat 24 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

LUISA OMILEAN Mon 19 Dec, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

CHEEKY MONKEY COMEDY Tues 20 Dec, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

DANNY MCLOUGHLIN, STEVE HARRIS, ROGER MONKHOUSE & DARIUS DAVIES Wed 21 - Fri 23 Dec, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

GEOFF NORCOTT, CARL DONNELLY, MARK OLVER & ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 22 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TAMAR BROADBENT & CHRISTIAN REILLY Fri 23 Dec, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BARBARA NICE, TOM WARD, PAUL RICKETTS & DAMION LARKIN Fri 23 Dec, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

GEOFF NORCOTT, CARL DONNELLY, STEVE GRIBBIN & COMIC TBC Fri 23 Dec, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS An irreverent and playful take on Kenneth Grahame's classic children's story, until Sat 31 Dec, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

SLEEPING BEAUTY Starring comedy legend Bernie Clifton, West End star Matt Brinkler and family favourites Theo The Mouse & Wendy, until Sat 31 Dec, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

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ALADDIN Magical pantomime adventure starring Joe McElderry, Lisa Riley, Ian Adams, Ben Faulks and 'Lazy Cow' Doreen Tipton, until Sun 22 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE SNOW QUEEN Hans Christian Andersen's classic children's tale of adventure, friendship and bravery, until Sat 28 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

DICK WHITTINGTON Starring John Barrowman as Dick Whittington, EastEnders' bad lad Steve McFadden as the evil King Rat, Jodie Prenger as Fairy Bow Bells, legendary double act The Krankies as Councillor & Jimmy Krankie, Matt Slack as Idle Jack and Andrew Ryan as Sarah the Cook, Mon 19 - Sun 29 Jan, Birmingham Hippodrome

CHRISTMAS GOTHIC Rebecca Vaughan's dark celebration of the festive season, complete with tales of terror for dark Christmas nights, Tues 20 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SING-A-LONG-A FROZEN A full screening of Disney's Frozen, with lyrics on screen to help you sing along during the film, Tues 20 Dec, Stourbridge Town Hall



Showaddywaddy - Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SANTA SAVES CHRISTMAS Join Fairy Twinkle and Pompom the Penguin as they meet Father Christmas at his home in the North Pole, Tues 20 Dec, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS The world-renowned circus present Zhelanly, an 'awe-inspiring' show based on Russian folklore, Tues 20 Dec - Sun 8 Jan, Star City, Birmingham

SANTA IN LOVE The People's Theatre Company present a festive tale for younger audiences, Wed 21 - Sat 24 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TEA WITH OSCAR WILDE Join Oscar Wilde as he interviews leading celebrities of the Victorian era, Thurs 22 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AN EVENING WITH JULIE ATHERTON Diverse cabaret performance from the woman who originated the roles of Kate Monster and Lucy The Slut in Avenue Q, Thurs 22 Dec, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK Traditional panto promising plenty of laughs, songs and audience participation, Thurs 22 - Fri 30 Dec, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

ROOM ON THE BROOM Festive staging of Julia Donaldson's magical tale for younger audiences, Thurs 22 Dec - Sun 8 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

THE ANDY WILLIAMS CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA Featuring The Osmonds, ventriloquist Steve Hewlett, singer Charlie Green (Britain's Got Talent) and The Moon River Singers & Dancers, Fri 23 Dec, Birmingham Town Hall

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

STORKS (tbc) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Kelsey Grammer, Andy Samberg, Jennifer Aniston. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Mon 19 Dec; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Fri 23 Dec

QUEEN OF KATWE (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Lupita Nyong'o, David Oyelowo. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Tues 20 & Thurs 22 Dec

RISE OF THE GUARDIANS (U) Animation/Adventure. Starring Hugh Jackman, Alec Baldwin. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 21 Dec

TROLLS (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Anna Kendrick, Justin Timberlake. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Thurs 22 Dec

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring James Stewart, Donna Reed. Birmingham Cathedral, Wed 21 & Thurs 22 Dec; Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, Thurs 22 Dec

FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Eddie Redmayne, Ezra Miller. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 23 - Sat 31 Dec; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, Sat 24 Dec

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Mon 19 Dec, showing at selected cinemas

BALLERINA (tbc)

PASSENGERS (tbc)

Events

SANTA BOAT TRIPS until Fri 23 Dec, Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines

SANTA SAFARI until Sat 24 Dec, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley

BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET until Thurs 29 Dec, Birmingham City Centre

SANTA'S WINTER WONDERLAND until Sat 31 Dec, The Snowdome, Tamworth

DRAYTON'S MAGICAL CHRISTMAS until Sat 31 Dec, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

MAGIC LANTERN FESTIVAL See page 49 for details, until Mon 2 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

ICE SKATE BIRMINGHAM until Sun 8 Jan, Centenary Square, Birmingham

SANTA HUNTS Mon 19- Sat 24 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

A VICTORIAN CINDERELLA PUPPET SHOW Tues 20 Dec, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

CHRISTMAS QUEST 2016 A trip round Kings Walk Wood to find the tastes, sights, sounds and smells of Christmases past, Tues 20 - Wed 21 Dec, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS See page 51 for details, Tues 20 Dec - Sun 8 Jan, Star City, Birmingham

MARVEL UNIVERSE LIVE! Marvel superheroes step off the silver screen and onto the stage, Thurs 22 - Fri 30 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

SANTA STEAM SPECIALS Travel by steam train from Kidderminster to Arley and meet Father Christmas, Sat 24 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley

Christmas at Red House Glass Cone
Handmade for Christmas
Unique, distinctive, bespoke and locally made gifts

Winter Wonderland An exhibition of goods by designer makers at the Cone starts 17 November

Guild of Glass Engravers
Christmas Festival Craft Market & Teenage Market
26 & 27 November 10am to 4pm.
(joint event with White House site)

Santa at the Cone
10 & 11 and 17-23 December.
Pre booking essential call 01384 815571

FREE admission and parking
Open 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday
11am to 4pm Saturday & Sunday

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oddsOcks

THE JUNGLE BOOK

Fri 19 Jan, 7.30pm
Sat 14 Jan 2pm and 7.30pm
BRIDGE HOUSE THEATRE,
WARWICK
Box Office: 01926 776438

Sun 15 Jan, 7pm
ARTRIX,
BROMSGROVE
Box Office: 01527 577330

Sun 5 Feb, 7.30pm
THE PLACE, OAKENGATES
TELFORD
Box Office: 01952 382382

Sat 25 Feb, 7.30pm
THE GARRICK THEATRE
LICHFIELD
Box Office: 01543 412121

www.oddsOcks.co.uk

Gigs

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY Mon 26 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

RICHY AHMED Mon 26 Dec, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Mon 26 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SOULED OUT 2 FUNK Mon 26 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

RUBIO, BIGGER THAN SEATTLE, PARGETERS REUNION1 Mon 26 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TREVOR NELSON CLUB CLASSICS UK TOUR Mon 26 Dec, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DAVE BUSBY Mon 26 Dec, The Huntsman, Little Wenlock, South Shropshire

HOUSE OF JEALOUS LOVERS Mon 26 - Tues 27 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BAD MANNERS Tues 27 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

STEVE GIBBONS Tues 27 Dec, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GORDON HENDRICKS IS ELVIS Tues 27 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SKABUCKS Tues 27 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

THE TREVOR BURTON CHRISTMAS SHOW Wed 28 Dec, The Roadhouse, B'ham

ABBA CLASSICS Wed 28 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DIRT BOX DISCO Wed 28 Dec, The Asylum, Birmingham

THE DIRTY DC - AC/DC TRIBUTE Wed 28 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE LIQUOR AND POKER BAND Wed 28 Dec, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DIRTY MONEY NO. 5 Wed 28 Dec, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SEX PISTOLS EXPERIENCE Thurs 29

Dec, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

DEFINITELY MIGHT BE + ADORED + HAPPY MONDAZE Thurs 29 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

WHITE TYGER + WHITE COAST REBELS Thurs 29 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE SOUND OF MUSICALS Thurs 29 Dec, Symphony Hall, B'ham

B'SPOKE Fri 30 Dec, The Jam House, B'ham

KILLERSTREAM Fri 30 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

KICK UP THE 80'S Fri 30 Dec, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

SOUL SURVIVORS Fri 30 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

THE DECADES BAND Sat 31 Dec, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

T.REXTASY Sat 31 Dec, The Robin, Bilston

SOUL SUPPLY - NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY Sat 31 Dec, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

Classical Music

LAST NIGHT OF THE CHRISTMAS PROMS

Featuring the London Concert Orchestra, Madeleine Pierard (soprano), Nicky Spence (tenor), Jonathan Antoine (guest singer) & Hilary Davan Wetton (conductor), Tues 27 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MOZART FESTIVAL CHORUS: GLORIOUS

HANDEL BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring the Canzonetta Choir, Crispian-Steele Perkins (trumpet), Daisy Brown (soprano) & Steven Devine (conductor), Thurs 29 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: ZIMMER

VS WILLIAMS Enjoy the best scores from the two greatest film composers of the 20th Century, Fri 30 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: NEW

YEAR'S EVE GALA Featuring Adrian Dwyer (tenor), James Cleverton (baritone) & Anthony Inglis (conductor), Programme includes works by Debussy, Denza, Walton, Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Glinka, Mascagni, Bizet & Mussorgsky, Sat 31 Dec, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

TREASURE ISLAND Bryony Lavery's modern adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling classic, until Sat 7 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

CINDERELLA Starring Stoke's favourite son Jonathan Wilkes as Buttons, alongside panto favourite Christian Patterson and Simon Nehan as the Ugly Sisters, until Sun 8 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

CINDERELLA Panto favourite Brad Fitt makes his debut as Buttons in what promises to be yet another excellent production from Evolution. Ian Smith & Matt Daines star as the Ugly Sisters, until Sun 8 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROOM ON THE BROOM Festive staging of Julia Donaldson's magical tale for younger audiences, until Sun 8 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

ALADDIN: THE WOK AND ROLL PANTO

Festive show with a difference, featuring classic rock'n'roll hits from Aretha Franklin, The Monkees, James Brown, The Temptations, The Jackson Five, and many more... until Sun 8 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS The world-renowned circus present Zhelanly, an 'awe-inspiring' show based on Russian folklore, until Sun 8 Jan, Star City, Birmingham

ALADDIN Magical pantomime adventure starring Joe McElderry, Lisa Riley, Ian Adams, Ben Faulks and 'Lazy Cow' Doreen Tipton, until Sun 22 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DICK WHITTINGTON Starring John Barrowman as Dick Whittington, EastEnders' bad lad Steve McFadden as the evil King Rat, Jodie Prenger as Fairy Bow Bells, legendary double act The Krankies as Councillor & Jimmy Krankie, Matt Slack as Idle Jack and Andrew Ryan as Sarah the Cook, until Sun 29 Jan, Birmingham Hippodrome

WHAT THE LADYBIRD HEARD Stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Lydia Monks' colourful farmyard adventure, Tues 27 Dec - Wed 11 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall



TRES TRES CABARET Wed 28 Dec, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Theatre

THE BEAR Pins & Needles present a brand new staging of Raymond Briggs' heartwarming and humorous wintry tale, until Sat 31 Dec, mac, Birmingham

SLEEPING BEAUTY Starring comedy legend Bernie Clifton, West End star Matt Brinkler and family favourites Theo The Mouse & Wendy, until Sat 31 Dec, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

CRIMES AGAINST CHRISTMAS New comedy thriller that sees a host of characters invited to a party in a mysterious house on a remote island, until Sat 31 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

SLEEPING BEAUTY Casting includes CBeebies star Rebecca Keatley as Princess Aurora and Sam Rabone as Nurse Kelly. Children's entertainer Ben Thornton and author Ian Billings also star, until Sat 31 Dec, Lichfield Garrick

THE WIZARD OF OZ A festive stroll to the Emerald City with Dorothy, Toto, Scarecrow, Tin Man & Lion, until Sat 31 Dec, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

CHICAGO THE MUSICAL John Partridge stars as lawyer Billy Flynn in a brand new UK tour of Kander & Ebb's smash-hit musical. Soul Queen Mica Paris stars as Mama Morton, while Coronation Street star Hayley Tamaddon takes the lead as Roxie Hart, until Sat 31 Dec, New

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3rd December

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Monday 26 - Sunday 31 December

Film

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Mon 26 Dec, showing at selected cinemas

COLLATERAL BEAUTY (tbc)

MONSTER TRUCKS (PG)

WHY HIM? (tbc)

Events

CHRISTMAS AT BADDESLEY Warm up in front of a crackling fire in the Great Hall, surrounded by natural yuletide decorations, until Tues 27 Dec, Baddesley Clinton, Solihull

BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET until Thurs 29 Dec, Birmingham City Centre

SANTA'S WINTER WONDERLAND until Sat 31 Dec, The Snowdome, Tamworth

DRAYTON'S MAGICAL CHRISTMAS Enjoy the guaranteed snowfall over the Island of Sodar, meet Father Christmas and catch a ride on Thomas, until Sat 31 Dec, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

MAGIC LANTERN FESTIVAL See page 49 for details, until Mon 2 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

THE THEATRE OF CHRISTMAS See Packwood dressed for Christmas by professional artist Jennifer Collier, until Fri 6 Jan, Packwood House, Solihull

ICE SKATE BIRMINGHAM Plenty of fun to be had at the ice rink located near the Frankfurt Christmas Market, until Sun 8 Jan, Centenary Square, Birmingham

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS until Sun 8 Jan, Star City, Birmingham

MARVEL UNIVERSE LIVE! Marvel super-heroes step off the silver screen and onto the stage, until Fri 30 Dec, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Tues 27 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS WINTER WARMERS 2016 Mon 26 - Wed 28 Dec, Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

FESTIVE SEASON SERVICE Let the Christmas festivities continue with a leisurely steam train journey along the beautiful Severn Valley, Mon 26 Dec - Mon 2 Jan, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley

ALICE IN WINTERLAND NEW YEAR'S EVE SPECIAL Sat 31 Dec, The Bohemian, Wolverhampton



Santa's Winter Wonderland - Snowdome, Tamworth

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Christmas in Burton

What's on?

Thursdays from 24th November Late Night Shopping Burton Market Hall, 10-11pm	Saturday 3rd December, 9am-4pm Christmas Craft Market & Christmas Tree Decorating Burton Market Hall, 9am-4pm
Saturday 3rd December Festive Family Fun Day Brewhouse Arts Centre, 10am-1pm	Friday 9th December Christmas Party Night Burton Town Hall, 7pm-Late
Tuesday 13th December Cbeebies SpotBots Santa & the Pirates Brewhouse Arts Centre, 1:30pm & 6:30pm	Monday 18th December An Evening with Tom Fitzpatrick Brewhouse Arts Centre, 7:30pm
Tuesday 20th December GEM Recitals: Hayley Parkes Piano Recital Brewhouse Arts Centre, 12 noon	Tuesday 20th-Friday 23rd December The Magic of Musicals at Christmas Brewhouse Arts Centre, 7:30pm plus 3pm Friday Matinee
Wednesday 21st December The Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan Brewhouse Arts Centre, 7:30pm	Thursday 20th December An Evening with Julie Atherton Brewhouse Arts Centre, 7:30pm

www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/christmas-in-burton

#ChristmasInBurton

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