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the heat is on as smash-hit musical lands in the Midlands

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brings adult-themed entertainment to The Old Rep

**JQ FESTIVAL**
music, heritage and street food in the Jewellery Quarter

What's On

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July 2017

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Birmingham Weekender in call to communities

The organisers of Birmingham's biggest arts festival, Birmingham Weekender, are inviting communities and citizens to get involved with the 2017 edition of the event (taking place from 22 to 24 September).

“We want the citizens of Birmingham to make Birmingham Weekender their own,” said Festival Directors Graham Callister and Piali Ray in a joint statement, “showcasing their skills on the Culture Catwalk stage, performing as part of the Colours Of Birmingham Parade and signing up to help us make the weekend happen as an event volunteer. What a way to experience Birmingham Weekender - enjoying music, dance, culture from within our city and beyond as well as through becoming part of the Weekender themselves!” More information is available at birminghamweekender.com

Diana Vickers to star in Dusty Springfield musical

Former X Factor favourite Diana Vickers is to star in a ‘heartwarming’ new musical showcasing the songs of Dusty Springfield. Directed and choreographed by Strictly Come Dancing judge Craig Revel Horwood, Son Of A Preacher Man visits the city’s New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday 12 to Saturday 16 September.

The production will feature a selection of the late singer’s best-loved songs, including the famous title track with which she enjoyed a transatlantic hit in 1968. Tickets for the show are on sale now and can be purchased at atgtickets.com/birmingham. For more information about the production, visit sonofapreachermanmusical.com

Beauty app launched in Birmingham

The UK’s largest and fastest-growing ‘on demand’ beauty services company has launched in Birmingham. Known as the ‘Uber of the beauty world’, blow LTD. offers customers hair and makeup services direct to their door from 7am until late. The company has now expanded its intuitive app into the second city, giving clients the chance to order professional treatments to their home, office, hotel or event.

Commenting on the new development, Hannah Soll-Morris, Head of Expansion at blow LTD., said: “All of our beauty professionals are rigorously skills tested, vetted, CRB and insurance checked before they’re signed up, and only 10% of professionals who apply are invited to join the platform.” For more information, visit blowltd.com and download the ‘blow LTD.’ app in the App Store or Google Play.

Dudley museum Forging Ahead with lottery help

Dudley’s Black Country Living Museum has been given the green light for a £21.7million project that will expand the size of the venue by 30%.

BCLM: Forging Ahead will see the creation of a major historic 1940s-to-1960s development, new learning spaces and improved visitor facilities. The long-term project has recently secured a £9.8million grant from the National Lottery.

Kids’ TV favourites set to star in the Midlands

A touring concert featuring stars from some of kids’ TV’s most popular shows is set to finish youngsters’ summer holidays on a high note when it visits Birmingham’s Barclaycard Arena on 2 September. Presented by Disney Channel UK and Girl Talk Magazine in association with DHX Tele-

vision and Live Nation, The Big Ticket Concert is hosted by fan-favourite dancers Trevor Tordjman and Jordan Clark, best known for their roles in the tween drama, The Next Step. Trevor and Jordan are joined by a number of fellow cast members, including Taveeta, who’ll be performing her new single, Resurrection.

Stars from Disney Channel UK’s hit series The Lodge also feature, as do Backstage favourites McKenzie Small (Scarlett), Josh Bogert (Miles) and Aviva (Alya).

For more information and to book tickets for the show, visit barclaycardarena.co.uk

4 whatsonlive.co.uk
**Birmingham Fest back for fifth year**

Birmingham Fest is making a welcome return for a fifth year. The 17-day event brings together a wide range of shows and performances, with this year’s line-up of productions being presented at the Blue Orange and Crescent theatres and in the AE Harris Building. Commenting on the event, organiser Darren Haywood said: “We have lots of shows and artists from across the UK, including some old favourites, but there’s lots of brand new work too. Many are one-off performances, so be sure not to miss them.” Birmingham Fest runs from 14 to 30 July. For more information, visit birminghamfest.co.uk

**Fancy joining the School Of Rock?**

Aged between eight and 12? Play the drums, keys or the electric or bass guitar? Fancy being in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s smash-hit West End production of School Of Rock - The Musical? If you can answer yes to all three of these questions, then you’ll be delighted to know that the blockbuster show is holding open auditions in Birmingham on Saturday 15 July.

To register your interest and for more details, visit schoolofrock-themusical.co.uk/opencall

**Brum summer fun with the explosive Electric Swing Circus**

An afternoon concert of electro swing, speakeasy and balkan beats is being performed at macBirmingham this month. Summer Swing Circus takes place in the venue’s outdoor arena and features, among other performers, the Electric Swing Circus. Boasting ‘an explosive sound that reverberates back through time’, the six-piece ESC will be hotfooting their way through everything from rock to electronica, house, big beat and rock’n’roll, all with their own unique style of swing.

The event takes place on Sunday 23 July. For more information, visit macbirmingham.co.uk

**New Culture Card launched in the Midlands**

A Birmingham cultural and heritage social media account is this month launching a membership scheme giving card holders exclusive offers, discounts and access to the very best arts, culture and heritage in the West Midlands and beyond. For £12.95 a year, BrumPic’s Culture Card allows holders to access events at more than 30 of the region’s top destinations. The card will be available to purchase from Thursday 6 July at culturecard.uk

**Hospital charity launches new 5k walk**

Birmingham Children’s Hospital Charity has launched a new event in association with The Big Sleuth, the public art trail which will see 100 giant bear sculptures being displayed around the city from Monday 10 July. The charity’s brand new Fun Family 5 is a 5k sponsored walk taking place at Boldmere Gate, Sutton Park, on Saturday 29 July. As well as the walk itself, the event will feature a wide range of attractions for families to enjoy, including bear-themed face painting, circus skills workshops, bouncy castles and the unveiling of a Big Sleuth bear.

Commenting on the event, Annie Eyle, Acting Events & Regional Fundraising Manager at Birmingham Children’s Hospital Charity, said: “Every year, our hospital treats over 90,000 children and young people from across the country. We’d love as many people as possible to sign up to Fun Family 5 and encourage their friends, family and colleagues to sponsor them in support of our sick kids, ensuring we can continue to be the world-class hospital that everyone knows and loves.”

To find out more about Fun Family 5, email events@bch.nhs.uk, call 0121 333 8506 or visit funfamily5.bch.org.uk
Purple Rain set to fall on Birmingham

A touring show celebrating the music of Prince will stop off at the Birmingham Hippodrome in March next year. Presented by the producers of hit shows Hairspray, Motown The Musical and Thriller Live, Purple Rain will pay homage to the late star’s songwriting genius and showmanship. The show visits Birmingham from 27 to 31 March. For more information, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

City youth tackle terrorism...

A multicultural cast of young people will this month tackle the impact of terrorism when they present Steven Berkoff’s Requiem For Ground Zero, a eulogy to the thousands of victims of 9/11... Birmingham’s Stage2 theatre company first performed the work in 2004. The ensemble will be reprising the piece at the Crescent Studio in the city’s Brindleyplace from 19 to 22 July. For more information, visit Stage2.org

Kings Heath Street Festival makes a return

Kings Heath Street Festival will return for a fourth year in September. The free-to-attend community event, which features market stalls, live music, traditional funfair rides, a host of children’s activities, street food traders and outdoor bars, will take place on Sunday 10 September. Commenting on the festival, Martin Mullaney, Town Centre Manager for Kings Heath Business Improvement District (BID), which organises the event, said: “The festival is a real highlight of the BID calendar, bringing the community together to celebrate everything Kings Heath has to offer. This year it’s going to be bigger and better than before, so make sure the date is in your diary!”

Photo contest to Capture Kings Heath

It’s all going on in Kings Heath this summer! As well as the street festival taking place for a fourth time (see news item to the left), the Birmingham suburb is also set to be the subject of a photographic competition. Capture Kings Heath, coordinated by Kings Heath Business Improvement District (BID), is inviting local photographers to show off their skills by submitting shots of the area, “from sunsets and sunrises over the town to summer spots in the park or local community and independent businesses enjoying the warmer weather”.

“Following on from the stunning images entered into the Spring Capture Kings Heath competition, we can’t wait to see what the talented photographers of Birmingham will submit this summer,” says Kings Heath BID Town Centre Manager Martin Mullaney. “With the weather warming up and the days getting longer, summer is the perfect opportunity to get out there and Capture Kings Heath in all of its glory. You never know, your photograph could be the front cover of the next Enjoy Kings Heath magazine!” For more information, visit enjoykingsheath.com

Tolkien movie trilogy at Moseley Park

Brace yourselves, Tolkien fans, there’s an exciting movie event coming your way... Coinciding with the Middle Earth Festival at nearby Sarehole Mill, Birmingham’s Moseley Park is hosting special screenings of all three Lord Of The Rings films between 8 & 10 September. Each screening will begin at 7pm on each of the three evenings, with the event also featuring twilight orchestral performances by the Central England Camerata and plenty of family-friendly entertainment.

Mela magic returns to Smethwick park

More than 100 artists and groups are set to perform at this month’s Sandwell & Birmingham Mela, taking place in Victoria Park, Smethwick, on 1 & 2 July. The weekend extravaganza features live international music performances, stalls, food, arts, community showcases, workshops and a funfair. Top billing at the 2017 edition of the festival is Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff and chart-topping artists Zack Knight, Sudesh Kumari, Dilpreet Dhillon and Hashmat Sultana. The event runs from 12 noon to 7pm on both days.

Hosting Games good for Brum

The Chair of the Steering Group behind Birmingham’s efforts to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games believes that a successful bid will significantly speed up the city’s existing development plans. The Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council, Ian Ward, said: “Hosting the Games will accelerate Birmingham’s plans for homes, jobs, services and infrastructure. Sitting at the heart of the UK and standing for the diversity of the Commonwealth, with our population made up of over 187 different nationalities and with 314,000 West Midlands residents born in a Commonwealth country, we are in a strong position to attract people to the Games and ensure that the benefits of hosting extend from the city and region to the UK and Commonwealth.

“Our vision is brought to life through a new logo, which positions Birmingham as the heart of the UK, soul of the Commonwealth. Our logo celebrates Birmingham’s super-diversity and youthful energy.”
LET THE SUMMER BE-GIN

Is there any better way to celebrate summer than by sipping an ice-cold G&T on a warm, sunny day? We think not. With that in mind, we’ve put together a list of the best gin bars in and around Birmingham. From parlours to distilleries and vaults to speakeasy bars, there are plenty of great venues to visit where it’s always Gin O’Clock.

1. **40 St Paul’s**
   - This intimate gin bar - tucked away near St Paul’s Square in the Jewellery Quarter, behind an unassuming black door - stocks more than 140 hand-picked gins and provides a bespoke flavour-matching service.
   - 40 St Paul’s have developed their very own Hockley Tonic, meaning you’ll never again have to worry about tonic ruining the flavour of your gin.
   - They’ve also recently developed the ultimate summertime drink - an Elderflower G&T shushe!
   - The bar has a new menu on the way, with owner Amanjot Johal assuring us that it’s going to be ‘something special’. 
   - **16 Gas St, Birmingham B1 2JT**

2. **The Jekyll & Hyde**
   - Ever dreamed about drinking gin from a bathtub? This bar can make that dream a reality.
   - Follow the stairs up to Dr Jekyll’s Gin Parlour and be transported back in time to the Victorian era.
   - Open from Thursdays to Saturdays, this decadent bar serves a whole host of classic gin cocktails, not to mention a sharing cocktail for four, served in a mini-bathtub.
   - The bar’s new menu features a Lily, Rose and the Jack of Hearts cocktail, which consists of hibiscus-infused Mason’s Tea gin, in-house vermouth blend, apricot, rose and orange bitters.
   - **28 Steelhouse Ln, Birmingham B4 6BJ**

3. **The Distillery**
   - Formerly the Fiddler And Bone and opened in April this year by the owners of the Jewellery Quarter’s Button Factory, The Distillery is split over two floors and features an expansive courtyard that’s ideal for summertime G&Ts. As the canalside bar’s new name suggests, the venue is now home to a distillery, producing signature small batch Roundhouse gin from copper stills, ready to enjoy on the gin terrace.
   - Gin lovers can find out more about their favourite drink and how to make cocktails at a gin masterclass. They can also craft their own gin using miniature pot stills at Birmingham’s first gin school, launching this month.
   - **4 Sheepcote St, Birmingham B16 8AE**

4. **The Gin Vault**
   - This one-year-old hidden gem is situated alongside the canal and offers an oasis of gin.
   - The Gin Vault currently stocks the most gins in Birmingham - a staggering 155, and the number may even increase!
   - The intimate bar, complete with warm and inviting decor, hosts live music every Friday night.
   - Take advantage of two house doubles and any three tapas from £18.95 Sunday to Friday between midday and 7pm, and doubles for singles all day and night every Tuesday.
   - **16 Gas St, Birmingham B1 2JT**

5. **Simpsons Bar**
   - Located in the heart of the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield, Simpsons Bar is a new establishment opened by the family of local pop star Brad Simpson from The Vamps.
   - The luxurious speakeasy-style venue seats 50 people and offers table service, with knowledgeable bar staff providing recommendations from a lengthy menu featuring 72 gins (including the specialist and premium variety and gin-based cocktails). If that’s still not enough gin for you, they also regularly host gin-tasting evenings and other special events.
   - **7A High St, Sutton Coldfield B72 1XH**

6. **Flave**
   - Opened in November last year, this Solihull-based cocktail lounge underwent a small renovation in May to introduce a new gin bar. Flave stocks more than 40 dry, floral, fruity and citrus gins and provides twists on classic gin cocktails such as Martini and White Lady by using different flavoured gins.
   - According to General Manager Corie Grant, a Larios Rose Gin Martini is ‘particularly delicious’. The boutique bar regularly hosts live music in its stunning art deco lounge.
   - **50 Station Rd, Solihull B91 3RX**
MAKING SPACE

Art and science collide in Thinktank’s out-of-this-world summer exhibits
Thinktank hopes to see its gravitational pull skyrocket this summer with both the sun and moon at the centre of a programme that is truly out of this world.

Alongside an array of artworks and artefacts from the Birmingham Museums Collection, the science-themed attraction is playing host to two captivating contemporary installations: Luke Jerram’s Museum Of The Moon and Katie Paterson’s solar eclipse-inspired Totality.

Opening on Friday 21 July, just as the school holidays begin, Museum Of The Moon comes to Thinktank fresh from appearances in London, Cork and Rennes.

Using breathtakingly detailed 120dpi, 5.5GB NASA images taken by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Camera, Jerram has created a spectacular three-dimensional replica model of the moon at a scale of 1:500,000.

Inspired by the tidal variations he observed looking out at the sea while cycling over the Avon Cut in Bristol, Jerram began to explore the earth’s relationship with the moon from an array of scientific and cultural perspectives. This led to the creation of Museum Of The Moon and a sister piece called Tide, both typical of his multidisciplinary approach.

Measuring an imposing seven metres in diameter, Museum Of The Moon is an immersive experience, combining striking lunar imagery with lighting effects and surround-sound music by BAFTA and Ivor Novello Award-winning composer Dan Jones.

Commenting on the installation, Lisa Stallard, Museum Manager at Thinktank, said, “Museum Of The Moon fits perfectly with the dynamic surroundings of our Science Museum. It really does have to be seen to be believed and is a beautiful spectacle that I know our visitors will enjoy. We have a jam-packed programme of events this summer, so families will have an extra-special visit with us during the holidays as there will be even more to see and do.”

Having already opened to the public in late May, Katie Paterson’s Totality offers a more abstracted, imaginative response to celestial activity, playing with the idea of perception and drawing on records of solar eclipses through the ages. A total of 10,000 contemporary and historical images of the same phenomenon are fixed to the glittering tiles of an illuminated, rotating mirror ball, light bouncing back from the solar haloes around the moon in each individual picture.

Complementing Totality is Looking Up, Looking Down: The Earth, Moon, Sun And Beyond!. The display brings together a fascinating selection of objects from Birmingham’s collection that looks at the ways in which artists and scientists have explored the skies.

Totality and Looking Up, Looking Down: The Earth, Moon, Sun And Beyond! are showing until Sunday 1 October. Museum Of The Moon is at Thinktank from Friday 21 July until Sunday 20 August.

Prepare to have your mind blown at Thinktank this summer...

Prepare to have your mind blown with fascinating facts and demonstrations in the action-packed science show Fly Me To The Moon, or take a look through the Science Garden’s solar telescope to see the Sun in a whole new light.

Fancy something even more hands-on? Why not draw your own eclipse image to be projected onto the museum walls, create space art to take away, or take part in the Eclipse Challenge by using perspective to make objects disappear. Under-eights can also join the space crew engineering team to have a go at building moon buggies.

Other features to check out over the holidays include the expanded wildlife gallery, with its brand new Nature Detectives section and a whole host of amazing animals to discover. Geared up for kids of all ages to enjoy, the recent additions include opportunities to learn more about the wildlife inhabiting urban environments, the uses of natural history museums and their collections, and how various exhibits are preserved, as well as the impact of human activity on other species.

Dinosaur fans will be amazed by the massive triceratops skull and ichthyosaur skeleton, while those who like to get stuck in can try communicating like a gorilla, explore how insects see plants differently, attempt to catch a moth using echolocation and build their own foodchains, or pick up a Wildlife Explorers trail card to hunt for animals in the museum. From polar bears to peacocks and pangolin to ptarmigan, there’s plenty to see, including the skeleton of an enormous, extinct giant deer and a taxidermied fox that you can stroke!

Best of all, if you can make it during term-time, entry is reduced to just £3 after 3pm on weekdays.
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Experience the magical story live on stage this Christmas
Situated in the heart of the city’s business district, high-end restaurant chain Gaucho opened its doors in Birmingham at the beginning of May. With a reputation built around its expertise with quality Argentinian beef, Gaucho’s newest addition boasts 120 covers and benefits from contemporary decor inspired by the giant Ombu trees of rural Argentina. The stunning interior allied to the low lighting ensured that we felt relaxed from the moment we walked through the door. Shown to our table by the friendly receptionist, we perused the menu over some warm cheese-filled bread and Chimichurri - a traditional Argentinian sauce.

While famous for its steaks, Gaucho also offers a selection of seafood and fish dishes, prime home-made sausages and a range of lamb and poultry.

To start, I chose the Scallops Succotash - scallops served on a bed of roasted fresh corn, nduja, smoked paprika and fresh lime. The scallops were divine and of a reasonable size - I often find restaurants skimp on this. They were cooked perfectly. Sealed nicely on the outside yet soft on the inside, they showcased just the right amount of seasoning. The roasted corn provided not only an additional texture but a flavour combination that was entirely new to me. It was an extremely tasty starter.

My partner opted for a selection of sausages - Argentine chorizo, pork and honey, lamb merge and beef, piquillo pepper and chipotle were the four he chose from the six available options. They were all delicious, and an accurate indicator of the quality of cuisine that was to follow.

For my main course, I chose 300g of fillet. The beef was tender and cooked to absolute perfection. It provided a beautiful melt-in-the-mouth sensation and was by far the best fillet steak I’ve had to date.

My partner opted for a 500g cut of Tira De Ancho, a spiral cut rib-eye, slow grilled with chimichurri, that was just incredible! The meat was seasoned perfectly, packed full of flavour and definitely the highlight of the evening.

Each steak was served with a choice of fat chips, thin chips or salad. Both my partner and I opted for the chips. As with the beef, they were cooked to perfection. We also shared a side of button and chestnut mushrooms. Cooked in beef fat, garlic, chilli and thyme, they were the perfect accompaniment to the beef.

We were so impressed with the quality of the food that despite being suitably full, we decided we really couldn’t leave without trying dessert.

We shared the mango mess with whipped cream and passion fruit and the dulce de leche cheesecake served with hot salted dulce de leche and toasted marshmallow. Suffice it to say that although Gaucho specialises in beef, its desserts are pretty sensational too!

Our waiter was exceptional. He explained each cut of beef, giving an example of the size and the taste, and also advised about which wine would be most suitable. He selected a delicious Malbec to accompany my meal. It was one of the nicest reds I’ve ever had the pleasure of drinking - just as you might expect of a wine that cost £17.25 per 175ml glass.

I can’t recommend Gaucho highly enough. Boasting a relaxed atmosphere and phenomenal food, it is, quite simply, a meat eater’s paradise. I can’t wait to return to this outstanding restaurant to sample more of the exquisite food and drink it has on offer.

Lauren Foster

Sutton Coldfield hotel teams up with Scottish whisky distillery

Sutton Coldfield’s Moor Hall Hotel & Spa is teaming up with one of the world’s most respected Scottish independent distilleries to present a five-course dinner. Specially crafted by head chef Nigel Parnaby, each dish will be teamed with a dram from the Ian Macleod Distillers repertoire. The event is taking place on Thursday 20 July. Tickets cost £59 per head and can be purchased via moorhallhotel.co.uk

REVIEW: Gaucho

High-end restaurant chain is a meat eater’s paradise in the heart of the city

Food:

Service:

Ambience:

Overall value:

OVERALL

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New vegan fast food concept for Birmingham

A 100% vegan, plant-based fast-casual food concept is coming to Birmingham city centre. Expected to open in August, Fressh will serve speciality granary blend coffee, a variety of breakfast options and a range of salads, burgers and baked fries, including the ‘What the Guac’ burger, comprising guacamole, tortilla strips and ‘a secret sauce’. Other hot dishes include the Mac N’ Cheese with a creamy sauce, and a Meatball Sub in marinara sauce topped with vegan mozzarella.

American-style diner launches new menu

American-influenced diner and speakeasy-style bar Buffalo & Rye has launched a new menu. The Birmingham venue’s latest offering includes pulled pork bon bons, buffalo prawn lollipops and buffalo reuben hash. Smoke house favourites such as St Louis ribs, olive & herb pulled lamb and butter milk chicken burgers also feature on the extensive menu.

Sabai Sabai to open fourth Thai eatery

Award-winning Thai restaurant Sabai Sabai has announced that it’s opening a fourth venue, its third in Birmingham, in the city centre later this year. Owned by husband-and-wife team Torquil and Juree Chidwick and situated on Waterloo Street - a prime location near other popular eateries such as Cosy Club and Fumo - the new venue is set to open in the autumn.

Marco Pierre White opens new Midlands steakhouse

Three times Michelin-starred celebrity chef Marco Pierre White has opened a new Steakhouse Bar & Grill restaurant in four-star hotel The Best Western Plus Manor, located in Meriden, near Solihull. A popular venue for local food lovers and hotel guests, the restaurant’s menu features signature MPW steaks, timeless English and French classics and a comprehensive selection of premium cocktails, all delivered with Marco’s unique flair.

“|My restaurants are not pretentious,” says Marco. “Instead they are about enjoying your evening, with excellent food and drink in luxurious, relaxed surroundings, and quite simply having a good time.” The Meriden restaurant is Marco’s 24th Steakhouse to open in the UK.

New vegetarian options at popular Mailbox restaurant

Tom’s Kitchen at Birmingham’s Mailbox has launched a brand new summer menu featuring a host of seasonal dishes. A key element of the menu - which has been created by Michelin-starred Tom Aikens, the restaurant’s owner and head chef - is the introduction of a number of vegetarian dishes. These include Norfolk asparagus with landcress salad, summer truffles, a cacklebean egg yolk finished with spelt granola and a courgette dukkah and raw fennel salad served with turmeric and saffron dressing. For meat eaters, roast breast of duck and grilled baby spatchcock chicken are among the new additions. A full gluten-free menu is available on request.

Turkish restaurant opens in historic Jewellery Quarter

A new Turkish restaurant has opened in Birmingham’s historic Jewellery Quarter. Formerly Bistro O Clock, Cappadocia is situated on Frederick Street, just a few metres from the iconic Chamberlain clock, and offers diners an authentic Turkish taste. The menu includes traditional kebabs, chicken dishes and seafood, as well as a tasty variety of Turkish treats for vegetarians and vegans. Traditional Turkish desserts like baklava and sutlac (rice pudding) also feature.
Linkin Park
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 6 July
Hailing from Agoura Hills in California, rock band Linkin Park rose to international fame following the release of debut album Hybrid Theory in the year 2000. Best known for singles Numb, In The End and What I’ve Done, they’re this month visiting Birmingham in support of new album One More Light.

UFO
Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 27 July
Formed in 1969 by vocalist Phil Mogg, drummer Andy Parker, guitarist Mick Bolton and bassist Pete Way, UFO’s global breakthrough arrived four years later, following the arrival of German guitarist Michael Schenker. Schenker was the catalyst for a hat-trick of album successes - Phenomenon (1974), Force It (1975) and No Heavy Pettin’ (1976). Their latest offering is A Conspiracy Of Stars, an album that brings together meaty riffs, intelligent lyrics and a laid-back attitude - a combination which has served the band well for almost half a century.

Chuck Prophet
Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Tues 25 July
Prophet first came to prominence in American psychedelic/desert rock group Green On Red, with whom he toured and recorded in the 1980s. This month sees him return to Europe in support of his 13th album, Bobby Fuller Died For Your Sins. Describing the new record as ‘California noir’, Chuck states: “Doomed love, inconsolable loneliness, rags to riches to rags again, and fast-paced violence are always on the menu on the Left Coast.” Support comes from The Mission Express.

Kevin Devine
The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham, Wed 12 July
Known for penning numbers on introspective and political themes, Brooklyn-born songwriter and musician Kevin Devine recently released his ninth full-length album, Instigator. With influences ranging from older indie artists such as Neutral Milk Hotel and Pavement to more mainstream acts like Nirvana and Bob Dylan, Devine visits Birmingham as part of a six-date UK tour.

Blink 182
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Friday 7 July
Perhaps best known for their high-energy live shows and irreverent toilet humour, punk-pop favourites Blink 182 came to prominence in the early 1990s. The band have sold over 12 million albums in the US and more than 35 million worldwide. They’re currently basking in the glory of their recent UK and US chart success, California. Frank Turner & The Sleeping Souls and The Front Bottoms support.

Roy Hemmings
The HOUSE at The REP, Birmingham, Fri 14 July
Drifters star Roy G Hemmings brings his latest stage show to the Midlands. The Sounds Of Philadelphia And Motown includes songs by The Temptations, Four Tops, The Supremes, The Ojays, Stevie Wonder and (of course) The Drifters.
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Igor Levit Performs
Shostakovich’s 24
Preludes and Fugues
Birmingham Town Hall, Wed 5 July
The full-cycle of Shostakovich’s 24 Preludes and Fugues is here performed by the outstanding Russian-German pianist, Igor Levit. Shostakovich’s marathon work was a homage to Bach, drawing its inspiration from the latter’s set of 48 preludes and fugues, The Well-Tempered Clavier.

The People’s Orchestra:
Superhero Symphonies
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Sat 22 July
Look! Up on the stage! It’s a bird! It’s a plane! No, it’s The People’s Orchestra, making their debut appearance at Birmingham’s New Alexandra Theatre!
At a time when heroes are very much the order of the day, not only on the cinema screen but also in an ever more dangerous world, the West Bromwich-based ensemble here present a concert that showcases soundtracks from movies including Superman, Batman and Spider-Man.
They also perform a live accompaniment to an all-new X-Men fan film, Cable: Chronicles Of Hope... Why not grab your cowl’n’cape and get along...

Dame Evelyn Glennie
Lichfield Cathedral, Mon 10 July
There’s certainly nothing middle of the road about Dame Evelyn Glennie. The Scottish-born 51-year-old was the first full-time solo percussionist in the world and the first classical musician to have her own website. She’s also the proud owner of a staggering 2,000-plus musical instruments.
If you add to that list of fascinating facts numerous other terrific titbits - she speaks ‘Buchan tongue’, a language used only in the North East of Scotland, plays the Great Highland Bagpipes and owns her own tartan, the delightfully named Rhythms Of Evelyn Glennie - it becomes clear that you’ll be spending the evening in the company of a truly remarkable woman.
If you’re looking for a musical experience which is just that little bit different, then this is most definitely a concert to catch.

The Hallé Orchestra
Lichfield Cathedral, Fri 7 July
The Manchester-based Hallé has been a real force to be reckoned with since performing its first concert over 150 years ago. Although the orchestra is renowned for its affinity with English music - particularly the works of Elgar and Delius - it turns its attention on this particular occasion to compositions by Strauss (Don Juan), Rachmaninov (Paganini Variations) and Beethoven (Symphony No3).
The Hallé’s Principal Guest Conductor, Ryan Wigglesworth (pictured), is the man with the baton; the pianist is the highly rated Andrew Tyson.

CBSO Youth Orchestra Academy
Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 30 July
The bright young things of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra’s youth academy once again pick up their instruments to present a concert that’s been described as ‘a plunge into the dark heart of the 20th century’. Michael Seal conducts an evening of music which includes Stravinsky’s Symphony in Three Movements and Shostakovich’s ninth symphony, two works that provide differing perspectives on the horrors of the Second World War. Samuel Barber’s exceptional Cello Concerto completes the programme.
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Created by the Midlands masterminds behind Moseley Folk and Lunar Festival, Mostly Jazz, Funk And Soul does just what it says on the tin. World-class artists come together with the leading lights of the local jazz scene in a laid-back, family-friendly event celebrating Brum's musical heritage.

Like its sister folk festival, it’s located in the gorgeous Moseley Park, a stunning woodland glade tucked away behind busy Birmingham streets - making it the ideal retreat for music-loving city-dwellers.

**Line-up includes:** Chaka Khan, Soul II Soul, St Paul & the Broken Bones, The Sugarhill Gang, The Pharcyde, Craig Charles, Crazy P, Omar, Don Letts, Lee Fields & the Expressions, The Comet is Coming, Harleighblu, Marta Ren & the Groovelets, Too Many T's, Stuff
**Warwick Folk Festival**
Warwick School & Warwick Town Centre, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 July
Attracting some of the folk scene’s most seasoned performers as well as scouting out the best new talent, Warwick Folk Festival ranks among the UK’s best traditional music events. Conveniently located in the grounds of Warwick School, with its indoor and outdoor performance space and plenty of indoor facilities, it also boasts one of the most comfortable festival sites. Folk dance, kids’ activities, a friendly atmosphere and fringe acts in the town all contribute to making Warwick Folk one of the Midlands’ most all-round enjoyable festival experiences.

**Line-up includes:** Oysterband, The Spooky Men’s Chorale, Elephant Sessions, Andy Kershaw, Gaellica, Goitse, Louvat Bros, Alistair Anderson & Northlands, Will Pound & Eddy Jay, Piaf: The Songs, Crows, Tilston Lowe, Birlinn Jiarg, Northern Company, Leif, Granny’s Attic

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**MADE Birmingham**
The Digbeth Triangle, Birmingham, Sat 29 July
From cutting-edge live music and dance to vibrant street art and design, the Metropolitan Arts & Dance Event (MADE Birmingham) compiles the best in contemporary urban and underground culture in the bustling heart of Britain’s second city. Expect dynamic, award-winning performers, drum’n’bass, hip-hop, grime, techno and all-night DJ sets. Easy to access thanks to its inner-city location, this 18-plus festival takes place across Birmingham’s Digbeth Triangle.

**Line-up includes:** Chase & Status + Rage, Gggs, Gorgon City, Sub Focus, Chris Lorenzo, Goldie, My Nu Leng, Charlie Sloth, Stefflon Don, Levelz, DJ Target, Jaykae, Dapz on the Map, Camo & Krooked, High Contrast, Friction, Shadow Child, Deetron, Cause & Affect, Patrick Nazemi

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**Nozstock**
The Farm, Rowden Paddocks, Bromyard, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July
Founded by a fun-loving family in the noughties and still overseen by Farmer Noz, this eclectic and eccentric festival invites visitors to indulge their curiosity with an off-the-wall, generically diverse array of talent. Nine stages and several intimate, secluded areas showcase a wide array of entertainment, from live music near the Tudor farmhouse and converted cowsheds, to after-dark, experimental comedy and cabaret in the ‘Bantam Of The Opera’ Theatre. Look out for arts and crafts, folk diversions, film screenings, dance workshops, sound art and much more.

**Line-up includes:** Seasick Steve, Hayseed Dixie, Happy Mondays, The Sugarhill Gang, Hazard & Eksman, Delta Heavy, Ocean Wisdom, Goldie Lookin’ Chain, Mind Vortex, Frankee, Ferocious Dog, Levelz, General Levy

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**Splendour Festival**
Wollaton Park, Nottingham, Sat 22 July
Since 2008, this family-friendly festival has built up a proud history of attracting national and international talent of the highest calibre to the city. In addition to an impressive two-stage line-up of pop and indie artists, expect a funfair, market stalls, kids’ activities and a silent disco. Look out, too, for herds of red and fallow deer grazing in the beautiful yet easily accessible Wollaton Park.

**Line-up includes:** Kaiser Chiefs, Billy Ocean, Busted, British Sea Power, Buzzcocks, Tony Hadley, Gabrielle Aplin, Will Varley, Black Grape, Bud, Josh Wheatley, Yola Carter, Georgie
Over the last six years, the free-to-attend Simmer Down has grown to become one of the most popular and diverse festivals in Birmingham.

Featuring music, dance, spoken word, visual arts, commissioned work, outreach & young people’s programmes, workshops and participation activities, the family-friendly festival celebrates the city’s rich cultural diversity with a line-up of internationally acclaimed artists and homegrown talent.

Rooted in North Birmingham, Simmer Down pays tribute to the centrality of reggae and other musical genres that have contributed to Birmingham’s growing reputation as an international city of culture.

**Line-up includes:** Freddie McGregor & Macka B, Black Voices, Ras Tweed, Ras King Bobo, Motown In Dub, Khaliq, Mikey Tuff, Robbie Levi, Iam Malaikhi, Christina Adelsi

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Lichfield Festival

various locations, Lichfield, Fri 7 - Sat 15 July

Each July, Lichfield plays host to one of the UK’s most eclectic multi-arts festivals. Established in the early ‘80s, the event has more than 35 years’ experience in working with performers from across the world, as well as nurturing young talent from throughout the UK.

The nine-day festival features music, film, theatre, comedy, dance, family activities, visual arts, walks and talks.

**Line-up includes:** Armonico Consort, Seth Lakeman and Wildwood Kin, The Halle Orchestra, Rich Hall’s Hoedown, Hal Cruttenden, Black Voices, Elysian Piano Trio, From The North Sea To Atlantic Shores, The Swingles

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Three Choirs Festival

various locations in and around Worcester, Sat 22 - Sat 29 July

This year celebrating its 302nd birthday, the Three Choirs is the oldest non-competitive classical music festival in the world.

The event brings together established favourites of the British classical choral tradition with works drawn from a broader, more international musical canvas.

Choral and orchestral concerts feature prominently in a week-long programme that also includes cathedral services, solo and chamber music recitals, masterclasses, talks, theatre, exhibitions and walks.

**Line-up includes:** Roderick Williams, Lucy Russell, Hall Bright Cecilia, Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony, Paradise Remembered

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Bromsgrove Folk Festival

Bowling Green Inn, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, Thurs 13 - Sun 16 July

Bromsgrove Folk Festival offers patrons the chance to enjoy intimate concerts by UK-based folk, roots and acoustic performers. Taking place at the town’s Bowling Green Inn, the festival spreads across two marquees (one 350-seater and one 120-seater), with sessions and singarounds inside the pub.

**Line-up includes:** The Melrose Quartet, Quicksilver, Dan McKinnon, Gren Bartley Band, Patchwork Skies, Clive Brooks & Tom Perry, Anthony John Clarke, Three Daft Monkeys

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Simmer Down Festival

Handsworth Park, Birmingham, Sun 23 July

Over the last six years, the free-to-attend Simmer Down has grown to become one of the most popular and diverse festivals in Birmingham.

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Faith, Folk & Anarchy

Tom Robinson reunites with former bandmates at Shrewsbury Folk Festival
It’s been 40 years since Tom Robinson shot to chart success with his first single, ‘2-4-6-8 Motorway’, an anniversary he’s set to celebrate with a new tour in October.

Since 1977, the singer, songwriter and bassist has gone on to enjoy a varied and prolific career working on both sides of the music industry. Now a familiar voice on BBC Radio 6 as well as the founder of the pioneering Fresh On The Net blog, he’s spent the last few years cultivating a reputation for championing new music, though in 2015 he surprised fans by re-releasing his first studio album in nearly 20 years.

But it’s as part of a much more short-lived trio that he’s appearing at Shrewsbury Folk Festival this summer - a surprise rekindling of the Faith, Folk And Anarchy project that saw him collaborate with Martyn Joseph and Show Of Hands’ Steve Knightley in the early noughties.

Initially unsure about a reunion, the group were eventually won over to the idea by the organisers’ enthusiasm.

“It was Shrewsbury’s idea,” says Robinson. “There was somebody in the management of the festival who thought, ‘I remember that - it was great!’”

Faith, Folk And Anarchy was the title given to the only album the trio ever recorded, in 2001. The accompanying 2002 tour was then followed by a brief reunion two years later.

“It was a very special project because it was three lead singers, and I hadn’t really been in that kind of situation since the early ’70s. Steve and Martyn are also both fantastic songwriters, and so we had the output of three songwriters’ brains instead of just one. There’s a big difference between that and singing backing vocals or playing bass on someone else’s songs. But almost immediately after that first tour, I got the job at 6 Music. Steve and Martyn both had busy schedules too, so it was hard to find time to put together any more dates. This is just a one-off, but in a way I think that’s quite nice because it makes it all the more special.”

Thirteen years after the band’s last outing, Robinson is looking forward not only to working with his former bandmates again, but also to enjoying a good catch-up.

“I’ve never been as relaxed and at home on stage as I was on that first tour with Faith, Folk And Anarchy because the whole thing was founded on our friendship. When you’re just on stage with your mates, none of you is trying to prove anything.

“Steve and I do bump into each other at folk events and occasionally get up and sing together, but I haven’t seen as much of Martyn because he works across the Atlantic so much. He’s gigging almost non-stop, except when he’s rescuing children in remote parts of the world. He’s an amazing man, Martyn - the activism and the charity work he does just puts the rest of us to shame.”

As a keen folk fan himself, Tom’s also hoping to check out some of the other acts appearing at Shrewsbury this year, though he confesses he hasn’t yet had time to properly investigate the line-up.

“Musically, most of the really interesting stuff I hear coming through at 6 Music is roots and acoustic. There’s a whole generation of folk artists in their 20s and 30s who are really innovating in terms of the noise they’re making - people like Sam Lee or Eliza Carthy. Even an apparently traditional duo like Will Pound and Eddy Jay - they play harmonica and accordion, and you think, what could be more of a finger-in-the-ear, folks cliche than that? But technically and stylistically, they’re really pushing the boundaries of those instruments, and it’s absolutely breathtaking.

“I think there’s a misperception and a great ignorance in the wider world about what folk is and what it can be, partly because the BBC doesn’t cover it enough. It only gives us one hour a week of folk music on Radio Two, which is nothing when you consider that there are more folk festivals in this country than any other kind of music festival. I think there are just under 400 every year in England alone, and then another hundred or so in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, so there’s a phenomenal demand and appetite for this music out there, which the BBC should be paying more attention to.”

Fortunately, as a BBC Radio DJ himself, Robinson has gone some ways towards plugging this gap on his own show, although with around 200 tracks a week to listen to from across all different genres, folk can only account for a fraction of the music that he plays.

“I feel a bit like a poacher turned gamekeeper, having spent a good 30 years on the outside, knocking on doors and trying to get my own music onto Radio One. But to now be on the other side and to be the person making the calls about what gets included and what doesn’t, I’ve learned so much about the mechanics of it, what’s needed and why sometimes work or don’t.”

Anyone can submit a track to Robinson for consideration both on his show and on the independent Fresh On The Net blog he runs with a growing team of enthusiastic contributors.

“It’s really nice having a separate outlet where we can get behind stuff that the BBC wouldn’t necessarily play. We have 20 moderators, and about a dozen active in any given week, so anyone who sends us a track between Monday and Thursday will be listened to by those 12. I don’t think there’s anywhere else on the web that guarantees submissions will be heard by that many people of all different tastes. It provides a safety net, so there’s little chance of anything getting missed in the deluge, and even if I don’t like something, someone else might go completely crazy for it.”

Not content with only operating a groundbreaking music blog, Robinson has fully embraced online media and its many tools, crowdfunding his last album, Only The Now, via PledgeMusic, as well as finding its graphic designer by networking on social media.

“It’s the future for all of us now - I don’t think music is different from anything else. We all have to find our way in a world where it’s getting harder and harder to get paid for your work, but at the same time, your potential for finding a worldwide audience is expanding exponentially.”

Promoting other people’s work might take up most of his time these days, but as his family has grown up and moved out, he’s found himself with more time to pursue new endeavours, leading to the release of his 2015 album. For now, however, he’s focusing on a completely different project.

“Recently I’ve been trying to write a memoir, but I’m not getting very far with it at the moment. I’ve had quite a strange, very blessed life over the years, from my first nervous breakdown at the age of 16 to living in East Germany in my 30s, plus all the bizarre and interesting people I’ve met. There is a story there that I’d like to get written down before I shuffle off this mortal coil. But it’s hard because as you get into your 60s, it’s a race against declining memory!”

Tom Robinson performs with Faith, Folk & Anarchy at Shrewsbury Folk Festival on Monday 28 August.

For the full festival line-up, visit shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk

by Heather Kincaid
Mark Thomas
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 17 July
Mark Thomas is no ordinary comedian. Hugely witty and as savage as a rabid dog when it comes to putting hecklers in their place, he takes to the stage with the intention not only of making people laugh but also of exposing governmental and corporate exploitation in its many and varied forms.
Mark’s latest show, a speculation on what the future might look like in the aftermath of recent political earthquakes, sees him collecting and examining his audience’s predictions, and then gambling on their outcome.

Zoe Lyons
Lichfield Garrick, Mon 10 July
Zoe Lyons creates funny routines based on astute observation of life’s absurdities. Her latest show, titled Little Misfit, looks back on her experiences as ‘the awkward gay kid at school’. A severe bout of alopecia didn’t help her situation any, particularly when she then adopted a less-than-attractive comb-over to conceal her hairloss. She also harboured secret desires for Charlie’s Angels - “The blonde one mostly,” she admits, “but with a comb-over, who can afford to be fussy?”
Described by one reviewer as ‘Alan Bennett on speed’, Zoe’s jokes include: “The old blind fisherman liked nothing more than coming home and putting on a pair of his favourite kippers.”

Justin Moorhouse
The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 8 July
Audience members catching Justin Moorhouse for the first time will find themselves in the company of a seasoned pro who knows exactly how to work a crowd. Although his accent and style of delivery call to mind Peter Kay, Moorhouse is very much his own man, presenting an evening of well-honed, hugely enjoyable, adult-themed entertainment… Jokes include: “The women you see on Jeremy Kyle are so big they have to get their leggings on prescription.”

Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival
Various venues around Shrewsbury, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July
Already a hotbed of food, flowers and folk music, Shrewsbury is this month tossing its hat into the comedy ring too. Four of the town’s venues are co-hosting this inaugural festival of laughter, which offers top-drawer comedians the chance to preview their new material in readiness for the Edinburgh Festival.
The event comprises 15 hour-long performances and features comic turns from, among others, Joe Lycett, Terry Alderton, Spencer Jones, Barbara Nice and Irish hip-hop improv duo Abandoman.
The festival culminates with a Gala at the town’s Theatre Severn, hosted by the hugely popular Greg Davis.
Commenting on the new event, its co-producer and one-time standup comic, Kevin Bland, said: “Shrewsbury has a great tradition of hosting festivals, including everything from street theatre to folk music, food to comics and beer to flowers. We reckoned it was high time we brought some comedy to the town as well.”
Yep, it’s that time of year again, when all good comedians stop off in Birmingham to try out their new material en route to the Edinburgh Festival. The venue’s Thursday night line-up of mirthful merrymakers should certainly ensure a chuckle or several is never too far away. And the comedians in question will no doubt be measuring the audience reaction to their every gag, as they frantically try to hone their material in preparation for their forthcoming trip to Bonnie Scotland.

macBirmingham’s July Edinbrum shows are as follows: Brennan Reece & Eleanor Tiernan (6 July); Fin Taylor & Jayde Adams (the 13th); Luisa Omielan & Phil Nichol (the 20th); and Geoff Norcott & Carl Donnelly (the 27th).

Kiwi comic Jarred Christmas is delighted with the warm reception he receives from UK audiences. “I think it’s the charming and ‘sixy’ New Zealand accent that does it,” he jokes. “I think Brits are also great at laughing at themselves, so don’t mind Johnny Foreigner making jokes about British stuff. In fact, they seem to love it.” A 2010 Chortle Award-winning compere, Jarred has some hard-hitting views about the business of being an MC. “A lot of comperes just don’t get it,” he observes. “They seem to forget that along with keeping the show moving and warming up the audience they still have to be funny. If they’re not funny, then they should get the **** off the stage.”

Adam Hess & Mat Ewins
Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 12 July
This work-in-progress preview show offers Birmingham audiences the chance to catch up with the comedy output of two fast-rising funnymen... Adam Hess has built his reputation on his penchant for quickfire gags - “In France, J-Lo is known as ‘I have water’”. Mat Ewins, meanwhile, has developed his act around an inventive use of technology and a host of comic characters.

Barry Castagnola
Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham, Sat 29 July
The sharp and topical Barry Castagnola has been tickling funny bones for more than a decade now. Back in the early days of the 21st century, he was also one-third of spoof, anti-capitalist, eco-warrior, dance-music act Cyderdelic (with Marc Wootton and Liam Woodman). Presenting a set that includes satire, farce, character comedy and the use of multi-media, Barry boasts a style that manages to be both easy-going and impressively physical.
The Heat is On...

Miss Saigon comes to the Birmingham Hippodrome

“Things like the helicopter are just thrilling for any audience, regardless of whether you’re into musical theatre or not.”
Associate Director Jean Van Der Spuy discusses the continued power and relevance of Boublil’s and Schönberg’s smash-hit musical.

On 30 April 1975, American soldiers fled the Vietnamese capital of Saigon, leaving the city to be reclaimed by opposing native forces. This dramatic day marked the culmination of a long and brutal conflict, passionately fought on both sides to defend not simply territory, but fundamentally opposing ideologies. But while thousands of Vietnamese celebrated the end of US occupation and the reunification of their country under communist leadership, city dwellers who had lived among the Westerners were devastated by their abandonment, left behind to face the harsh consequences of having been on the wrong side of the war.

It’s against this fraught and politically complex backdrop that Les Misérables creators Alain Boublil and Claude Schönberg set their second most famous musical, Miss Saigon. Inspired by the plot of Puccini’s classic opera, Madame Butterfly, it tells the tale of a doomed romance between American GI Chris and Vietnamese barmaid Kim, divided by the enforced evacuation.

Following critically acclaimed runs in London, New York and Tokyo, the show now embarks on its first UK tour in more than a decade, with a spectacular new production heading for the Birmingham Hippodrome this month.

“It’s geared to an age where we’re seeing a lot of cinema and glossy HBO-type shows, so it’s very cinematic and epic in scale,” explains Associate Director Jean-Pierre Van Der Spuy. “The previous production was very operatic, whereas this really celebrates the intimacy of the story. It’s quite brutal and gritty in places, and it feels very real.”

Though it’s been a while since regional theatres have hosted an official touring production, those who’ve seen the show during its recent London run will have a good idea of what to expect, with much of the staging and design adopted from 2014’s Prince Edward Theatre version. But with a new cast comes a fresh interpretation of the characters and the relationships between them.

“I think what’s brilliant about something as well-written and well-constructed as Saigon is that there’s always scope to find nuance and detail and colour that’s never been seen before,” says Van Der Spuy. “There are lots of things about this and the Prince Edward production that are very similar, but I think people will find there’s a slightly different focus in terms of the storytelling.

“The cast we’ve assembled is incredibly exciting. It’s quite young and edgy with a lot of energy. There’s maybe 30% of them who’ve done the show before, but on the first day of rehearsals, I said that they needed to empty their minds of what the show had been before, so that everyone could start again together on page one.”

Back in the ’90s, early productions attracted criticism for their unenlightened casting choices, sparking protests against what’s now colloquially known as ‘whitewashing’. Today, however, properly reflecting the diversity of the characters themselves is top of the agenda, resulting in a vibrant multiculturalism amongst the company which Van Der Spuy highlights as one of the joys of working on the show.

“Miss Saigon is kind of unique for a director because you get to work with a whole range of different people from all over the world. That coming together of people from completely different cultural backgrounds is very exciting. And challenging, too - you’re having to deal with a lot of difficult topics. But it’s thrilling when people start to really take ownership and invest in stories like this.”

Creating something that resonates truthfully and sensitively with the very real horrors of the Vietnam War and its aftermath was also massively important to the team behind the show, and both the cast and the creatives have taken time to fully immerse themselves in the world that the production seeks to represent.

“I’m a bit of a history geek, so I love tethering everything we do in it to truth, to the root of where these stories come from. We don’t start with the script: we go back further than that first, and if you go into our rehearsal room you’ll see the research material stuck all over the walls.

“Everyone has a job to find their own characters, so every single GI and Vietnamese civilian writes a character breakdown. We’re actually really lucky with Saigon because it’s so easy to access resources. We watch loads of documentaries. We have Tuesday film nights. I’ve even got a load of Life magazines which are from the period, and what’s interesting is not only the articles, but also things like the adverts for the cigarettes they would have smoked or the washing machines they might have had. It’s those tiny details that help people to really understand the world.”

It’s partly the proximity of these events to our own lives and our general familiarity with the broad brushstrokes of the story that help to make this show so readily accessible. Admitting it’s a slightly controversial claim, Van Der Spuy makes a strong case for Miss Saigon being an even more accessible work than its more famous cousin, Les Misérables.

“It’s very relatable, and much closer in terms of our history. So many people think Les Mis is about the French Revolution, and it’s not at all - it’s actually about the later student uprisings, so in a way it provokes a lot of questions. But with this, people know what the context is - they get who the characters are and why they’re there without it needing to be explained.

“I also think that even though it’s a period piece it has a lot to say about where we are in our world today. Sometimes looking at something through a slightly different prism is good for people, and that’s why we need to be telling these stories now. I think Saigon has a real pertinence - and for me, that relevance is one of the reasons I love working on it and why I’ve continued to work on it.”

Yet as serious and often tragic as both the real and fictional elements of this story are, there’s also plenty in it offering straightforward entertainment and enjoyment, from the sharp sense of humour and wide-ranging musical styles, to the breathtaking design which has been lauded by critics and theatre-goers alike.

“If you look at something like Les Mis, from the first note to the last note it has a score that feels like it’s in a single style, whereas in Saigon, there’s a lot more variety within the writing. You’ve got musical theatre comedy in the shape of things like Bangkok and American Dream, and you’ve also got those big, impassioned duets like Last Night Of The World and Sun And Moon, which are typical of Schönberg and Boublil. So whoever comes, there’s something in it that will appeal to them. It’s also really exciting. Things like the helicopter are just thrilling for any audience, regardless of whether you’re into musical theatre or not.”

Miss Saigon shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 26 July to Saturday 23 September

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by Heather Kincaid
COMING SOON TO THE NEW ALEXANDRA THEATRE

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Funny Girl
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 24 - Sat 29 July
Debuting on Broadway in 1963, featuring hit numbers People and Don’t Rain On My Parade, and making a star of Barbra Streisand, Funny Girl tells the story of real-life Broadway legend and comedian Fanny Brice.
This critically acclaimed new version of the hit musical stars Natasha J Barnes in the title role, with Popstar To Operastar winner Darius Campbell lending support as her ne’er-do-well husband.
“Fanny’s a funny old character to play because she was a real person,” says Natasha. “You don’t want to do an impression, but there are certain things that you have to honour in the performance - like she was known for really big facial expressions and for being larger than life. She’s a very strong woman, a real fireball and quite ahead of her time. She’s also very funny and really wears her heart on her sleeve. She doesn’t hide anything, so it’s all about trying to be as open and as full of light as you can be.”

Oddsocks: Macbeth
Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sun 9 July; mac, Birmingham, Sun 16 July; Mary Arden’s Farm, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 28 July
Having been spurred into action by the prophesies of three supernatural beings, Macbeth’s desire to become king of Scotland sees him committing all manner of atrocities - including the murder of women and children...
Not that the finer points of Shakespeare’s blood-spattered tragedy are likely to be overly important in this particular production, given that it’s zany funsters Oddsocks who’re at the helm! Expect plenty of madcap mayhem and laughter from this always-value-for-money ensemble.

The Tempest
Stafford Castle, until Sat 8 July
Shakespeare’s last and most complete play, The Tempest brings together many of the themes that informed his greatest dramas. When a wild storm forces a royal ship onto the rocks of an enchanted isle, the castaways, separated from one another, find themselves slipping under the control of the mysterious Prospero. Matters are further confused by the presence of supernatural spirit Ariel and the grotesque man-beast, Caliban...
This outdoor production is set in the 1930s, a golden age for luxury cruise liners and Hollywood glamour that also welcomed in the dying days of vaudeville...

Sense And Sensibility
Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, Sat 1 & Sun 2 July; Blakesley Hall, Yardley, Sat 8 & Sun 9 July; Selly Manor, Bournville, Wed 12 & Thurs 13 July & Harvington Hall, Kidderminster, Sat 15 & Sun 16 July
The Crescent’s own theatre company is the ensemble performing this Jessica Swale adaptation of Jane Austen’s popular novel. Regency-era sisters Elinor and Marianne Dashwood are the story’s main protagonists, busily making their first forays into the decadent world of 18th century high society, where the giddy excitement of love and the terrible pain of heartbreak await them...
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The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time
Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 4 - Sat 8 July

This National Theatre stage adaptation of Mark Haddon’s award-winning novel bagged an impressive seven Olivier Awards in 2013 and has met with almost universal acclaim. At its centre is the character of 15-year-old Christopher, a boy who describes himself as “a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties”. Initially coming under suspicion after discovering the lifeless body of his neighbour’s dog, Christopher decides to investigate the crime - and in so doing embarks on a journey that will change his world forever...

About A Goth
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 27 July

Birmingham-based Gritty Theatre are the company behind this lively show. A ‘rude and raucous’ comedy, it follows the trials and tribulations of a gay Goth teenager struggling to meet the challenges of living in the 21st century. The show has an anticipated but subject-to-change running time of 45 minutes and includes partial nudity.

The Life And Death Of Marilyn Monroe
The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July

Marilyn Monroe was widely considered to be the sexiest female movie star of the 20th century - except maybe by Tony Curtis, who once said that making love to her was like ‘kissing Hitler’. The woman who began life as Norma Jeane Mortenson courted controversy throughout her Hollywood career, her troubled life ending at the tragically young age of 36. Breakthrough Theatre’s new production aims to take a peek behind the glitz and glamour of the Marilyn phenomenon, presenting the Some Like It Hot star as she sits alone in her dressing room ‘stripped back and bare - just an ordinary girl telling her story’.

As You Like It
Mary Arden’s Farm, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 14 - Sat 15 July; St. Andrew’s Church, Droitwich Spa, Thurs 20 July; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 28 July; Arley Arboretum & Gardens, near Bewdley, Sun 30 July

Bromsgrove’s very own Mad Cap Theatre Productions are the ensemble behind this new version of Shakespeare’s highly likable comedy. The storyline revolves around the character of Rosalind, banished by her usurping uncle to the Forest Of Arden, where her exiled father is already living. Revelling in the naturalness of their surroundings, Rosalind and her companions - cousin Celia and Touchstone the fool - find a happiness they hadn’t known existed...

Bonnie And Clyde
Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 20 - Sat 29 July

The Old Joint Stock Musical Theatre Company makes a welcome return after enjoying previous successes with productions of Rent, Avenue Q, Dogfight, American Idiot and Urinetown. This latest musical tells the Great Depression-era story of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, two small-town nobodies destined to become one of America’s most notorious couples. Blues, gospel, country, rockabilly and bluegrass music all feature.

The Third Policeman
mac, Birmingham, Sat 8 July

Flann O’Brian’s 1967 comic masterpiece features a plot too strange to explain here; suffice to say the novel’s world is a curious one in which all manner of strange things occur. Published the year after O’Brien’s death, The Third Policeman secured for the author comparisons with some of the greats of Irish literature, including James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. Indeed, Joyce himself hailed the author ‘a real writer with the true comic spirit’... Cornwall’s long-established Miracle Theatre is the company presenting this stage version of O'Brien’s novel. They describe the work as existing ‘in a world somewhere between Alice in Wonderland and the Marx Brothers, where the earth is not round but sausage-shaped and night is actually an accumulation of black air’.
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Wonderland
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 10 - Sat 15 July; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 31 July - Sat 5 August
It was during the lifetime of the book’s author, Lewis Carroll, that the wacky world of Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland first made its way onto the stage; in 1866, to be precise. A mere 17 years later, the topsy-turvy story and its cast of colourful characters were being interpreted through the exciting new medium of film. One of the latest companies to join the long and noble tradition of reinventing Alice visits the Midlands this month. It’s being led by Broadway composer Frank Wildhorn, whose work on shows like Jekyll & Hyde, Victor/Victoria and Bonnie & Clyde has earned him international acclaim. Wendi Peters, Dave Willetts and Kerry Ellis star.

The Mikado
Malvern Theatre, 4 - 8 July; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 July
Local klutz Koko has risen to the post of Lord High Executioner, the highest rank a citizen can attain. He’s lusting after the delicious Yum-Yum, but she’s firmly set her cap at the freewheeling Nanki-Poo. And just to make matters worse for Koko, the Emperor of Japan is about to arrive, intent on finding out why there have been no executions in the town for over a year...
Set in the fictitious Japanese location of Titipu and poking wicked fun at revered institutions and the world of politics, The Mikado is one of Gilbert & Sullivan’s best-loved works, boasting a bountiful score, witty lyrics and more than its fair share of toe-tapping classics.

Romeo & Juliet
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Wed 12 July
Widely regarded as Shakespeare’s fifth tragedy, this story of a forbidden and secret love tends to fair less well critically than the rest of the playwright’s high-profile works. Nonetheless, its popularity is ensured by its timeless themes and its regular appearance as a study text on the National Curriculum. This latest version of the play is helmed by The Watermill Theatre’s new Artistic Director, Paul Hart, and features live music and an ‘outstanding’ new ensemble of actors.

Jane Austen’s Persuasion
Stratford Artshouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Mon 24 July
Bringing to life Jane Austen’s last and most personal novel, Chamber Opera Tours’ critically acclaimed production comes complete with beautiful Regency costumes, projected scenery, a chamber orchestra and world-champion Irish dancers. The show’s been touring the UK and US for the last four years, and returns to Stratford in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Austen’s death.

Strictly Murder
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 14 - Sat 15 July
Brian Clemens, the man behind hit TV series The Avengers and The Professionals, is the fella who penned this fast-moving thriller. It’s April 1939 and English couple Peter and Suzy are living in idyllic isolation in Provence, far away, it seems, from the rumblings of the coming war. Their peace is shattered from within, however, when Suzy discovers that she’s been betrayed by the man she loves. And what’s more, she may well be in mortal danger...
One-time Corrie killer Brian Capron stars alongside Corrinne Wicks and Gary Turner in a production directed by Clemens’ son.

The Play That Goes Wrong
Malvern Theatre, Mon 17 - Sat 22 July
Mischief Theatre Company’s much-loved show arrives in the region on the back of a fantastic reputation and a couple of successful West End runs. For those not in the know, the play focuses on the Corney Polytechnic Drama Society’s attempt to put on a 1920s-set murder-mystery. The only trouble is, the bumbling thespis are more than a little accident-prone - so much so, in fact, that they’re not even sure they’ll manage to reach the curtain call...
Theatre previews for younger audiences from around the region

**Room On The Broom**
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 17 - Wed 19 July; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, 24 - 26 July
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 Award-nominated show features 'songs, laughs and scary fun' for children aged three and older.

**Peter Pan Jnr**
The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 22 July
Fly away to Neverland with the boy who wouldn't grow up, meet a real fairy, marvellous mermaids, wonderful Wendy and the down-on-their-luck lost boys. Oh, and beware the ever-so-wicked Captain Hook and a very hungry crocodile who goes tick-tock (he swallowed a clock)!... XcelShowbiz’s brand new, all-singing, all-dancing version of JM Barrie’s legendary story is here presented by some of the Midlands’ best young talent, with performers ranging in age from six to 18.

**Billionaire Boy**
Brueton Park, Solihull, Tues 25 - Wed 26 July
Although Heartbreak Productions are best known for their outdoor presentations of Shakespeare plays, the company also tours a selection of other stage works, one of which is this adaptation of David Walliams’ bestselling children’s book.
Heartbreak have impressive form when it comes to Walliams’ work, having previously presented critically acclaimed, under-the-stars versions of Ratburger and Mr Stink. For those unfamiliar with the book, it tells the tale of how Mr Spud made and lost his billions, and how his son, Joe, became the richest boy in the world... Suitable for children aged three and older.

**Curious Creatures**
mac, Birmingham, Thurs 27 July
Performing fleas, skateboarding snails, gymnastic gerbils and all manner of other ‘curious creatures’ abound in this lively show that aims to uncover the mysteries of the animal kingdom. It’s presented by Squashbox Theatre, which in reality is Penzance-based solo performer Craig Johnson. “Animals are amazing” explains Craig. “There are big ones, little ones, scary ones, friendly ones and scary ones! There are over eight million different species of animal on earth today, and in this show we’re going to meet all of them! Well, okay, maybe not all of them but certainly quite a few!”
The production is suitable for children aged three and older.

**How Time Flies**
mac, Birmingham, Thurs 20 July
The company presenting this quirky new show is the well-regarded HandMade Theatre, an ensemble that specialises in interactive productions designed to engage audiences in unusual ways. Taking its inspiration from the themes of archaeology, history and discovery, How Time Flies provides children with the chance to help an eccentric team of archaeologists uncover the hidden truth behind an ancient skeleton. The show combines original songs, puppetry and storytelling, and is suitable for youngsters aged between three and 11.

**Mister Maker And The Shapes Live**
Palace Theatre, Redditch, Sat 8 July
CBeebies presenter Phil Gallagher is out on tour with the character that made his name. Phil’s Mister Maker combines slapstick comedy with all manner of art projects in the BAFTA-nominated children’s television series.
He’s joined for this latest live show by ‘a fabulous supporting cast’ who encourage the grown-ups as well as the kids to sing, dance and make some noise. A great way to inspire your youngsters to ‘get crafty’.

**The Showstoppers’ Kids Show**
Lichfield Garrick, Sat 15 July
This improvised musical show for children of all ages is presented by West End performers The Showstoppers.
“We take kids’ ideas and turn them into marvellous, musical adventures from scratch,” explain the Olivier Award-winning ensemble, “right away and in front of your very noses. Together, we’ll explore magical kingdoms, as you decide where the story is set, what happens next and who the characters are. You can even join us on stage if you want!”

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**Dunkirk** CERT 12a

Starring: Fionn Whitehead, Tom Glynn-Carney, Jack Lowden, Harry Styles, Aneurin Barnard, James D’Arcy, Kenneth Branagh, Cillian Murphy, Mark Rylance and Tom Hardy

Directed by Christopher Nolan (UK/USA/France/The Netherlands)

Any Christopher Nolan movie is an event, but this looks really, really special. Forget that the director is allegedly pocketing $20 million for his services, most of the budget should be up on the screen. Apparently, Nolan spent $5 million on a vintage German Luftwaffe plane which will be seen crashing in the movie, preventing its re-sale on ebay.

This, of course, is the story of Operation Dynamo, when 300,000 British, French, Belgian and Canadian troops were surrounded by the German army on the eponymous French beach in 1940, necessitating a massive evacuation. We can’t wait. In IMAX.

Released Fri 21 July

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**The Last Word**

CERT 15 (108 mins)

Starring: Shirley MacLaine, Amanda Seyfried, Anne Heche, Tom Everett Scott

Directed by Mark Pellington (USA)

Harriett Lauler (Shirley MacLaine) has always been a control freak. She has even fabricated her own obituary for the local newspaper. So it’s up to cub reporter Anne Sherman (Amanda Seyfried) to shake up the facts...

Released Fri 7 July

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**Spider-Man: Homecoming**

CERT 12a

Starring: Tom Holland, Michael Keaton, Jon Favreau, Zendaya, Donald Glover, Tyne Daly, Marisa Tomei, Robert Downey Jr

Directed by Jon Watts (USA)

Remember when all the Hollywood villains were played by Brits? Well, the London-born Tom Holland now joins the British rollcall of Christian Bale, Henry Cavill, James McAvoy and Benedict Cumberbatch to play yet another Hollywood superhero in this second reboot of the Spider-Man film franchise.

Here, following the events of Captain America: Civil War, Peter Parker struggles to balance his schoolwork with his new prowess as a web designer. In 3D.

Released Wed 5 July

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**The Beguiled**

CERT 15 (94 mins)

Starring: Colin Farrell, Nicole Kidman, Kirsten Dunst, Elle Fanning, Angourie Rice, Oona Laurence

Directed by Sofia Coppola (USA)

While the American Civil War is raging, the residents of an all-girls’ school in Virginia have been protected from the outside world. Then a wounded Union soldier (Colin Farrell) stumbles upon their mercy and unleashes a Pandora’s Box. Winner of the best director award for Sofia Coppola at Cannes, this is actually a remake of a 1971 Clint Eastwood film. This version, though - adapted from the Thomas P Cullinan novel A Painted Devil - takes a decidedly more female perspective of the same events.

Released Fri 14 July
War For The Planet Of The Apes CERT tbc
Starring Andy Serkis, Woody Harrelson, Steve Zahn, Amiah Miller, Karin Konoval
Directed by Matt Reeves (USA)
In the third chapter of the Planet Of The Apes reboot, the tentative truce that was realised in the last film, Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes, is now a thing of the past. As Caesar, leader of the Apes, encounters the aggressive tactics of the ruthless human Colonel McCullough (Woody Harrelson), he falls back on his own darkest instincts. It’s a battle for the planet - and for a species. Matt Reeves’ Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes was a worthy sequel to Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes and Reeves returns for the new instalment, which heralds the ninth Planet Of The Apes film. In 3D.
Released Tues 11 July

Monster Island CERT tbc
With the voices of Fiona Hardingham, Roger Jackson, Jenifer Beth Kaplan, Eric Larsen, Kaitie Leigh
Directed by Leopoldo Aguilar (Mexico)
A seemingly normal kid must find his inner monster in order to survive the terrifying ordeals of the eponymous isle - and to save his monstrous new family. From those people who brought us Top Cat Begins (2015).
Released Fri 21 July

Scribe CERT tbc
Starring François Cluzet, Denis Podalydès, Sami Bouajila, Simon Abkarian, Alba Rohrwacher
Directed by Thomas Kruithof (France/Belgium)
What Duval (François Cluzet) is required to transcribe are telephone conversations tapped by the secret service. For him it’s just a job, but the political repercussions prove treacherous... Fans of French cinema will recognise François Cluzet from such high-end titles as Tell No One, Little White Lies and Untouchable.
Released Fri 21 July

Girls Trip CERT 15
Starring Regina Hall, Jada Pinkett Smith, Tiffany Haddish, Queen Latifah, Larenz Tate
Directed by Malcolm D Lee (USA)
You know what girls are like. This friendly foursome heads for the Essence Music Festival in New Orleans and all sorts of mischief is unleashed. Expect a lot of dancin’ and drinkin’.
Released Wed 26 July

Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie CERT U (89 mins)
With the voices of Kevin Hart, Ed Helms, Thomas Middleditch, Nick Kroll, Jordan Peele
Directed by David Soren (USA)
Children, you should be very, very careful of your hypnotic powers. Here, high schooler George Beard (Kevin Hart) uses the 3D Hypno Ring he finds in his cereal box to convince his principal that he’s a dim-witted superhero called Captain Underpants. Quite what David Lean would think of the chutzpah of the title is another matter entirely. From DreamWorks Animation. In 3D.
Released Fri 28 July
THE BIG FEAST

Appetite’s annual arts extravaganza promises two days of fun, frivolity and feistiness across Stoke city centre
Annual arts extravaganza The Big Feast is returning to the streets of Stoke-on-Trent city centre for its fourth year over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The event is being produced by Appetite, an Arts Council-funded Creative People & Places programme, led by the New Vic Theatre, which has the aim of getting more people in Stoke-on-Trent engaged in and inspired by the arts.

Gary Cicinskas, the programme manager for Appetite, said: “We aim to put high-quality arts and culture in front of people in Stoke-on-Trent who wouldn’t normally get to see it.

“Money is a consistent barrier for people when it comes to accessing the arts, which is why we work with a huge range of organisations and artistic partners to bring that world-class content to the streets of Stoke-on-Trent for free.”

Since 2013, Appetite has put on more than 650 performances and reached almost 40,000 audience members. They expect to reach as many as 12,000 people across The Big Feast weekend, from Stoke and beyond.

“To many people in the UK, Stoke-on-Trent is most likely not considered to be a cultural destination,” says Gary, “but The Big Feast gives everyone the chance to engage with something that might have just been performed at the Edinburgh Fringe.

“These opportunities are vital for arts organisations across the UK. It pleases me that The Big Feast is able to offer such a big menu of high-calibre acts on people’s doorsteps.”

The free two-day festival will showcase a variety of events from more than 20 performing companies, including Flatpack Film Festival and The Royal Opera House.

Traditional comedy and dance street performances, unusual interactive art installations and storytelling workshops all feature on the bill.

Sponsored by Realis Estates, The Big Feast will hold events across the weekend in non-traditional arts venues such as yet-to-be-used units and giant inflatable whales.

Speaking about this year’s highlights, Gary says: “I know Urban Astronaut by Highly Strung Performance is going to go down really well. Seeing an astronaut suspended 20 feet in the air above the high street should be very engaging.

“Charlie O’Taney, Brooklyn Healer by The Miraculous Theatre Company does personal performances for audiences of up to only four people and it looks hilarious, as does Camper Van Of Love by New Art Club - a musical adventure about Cupid falling in love, based around a pink VM Camper Van.

“I’m also really looking forward to the DIY Drive-In Cinema from Flatpack - where children can build their own cars and watch animated shorts. It’s something we haven’t done before.

“Each year, we try to introduce new elements. We fine-tune our content, to make it relevant, appealing and interesting, by looking at feedback about performers at arts festivals across the UK from our research team, Supper Club.

“By having such a cross-section of Supper Club members, we get a much broader range of opinion and appeal. We take their feedback onboard and adapt our programme to make it appeal to all communities in the area.”

Gary, who performed at Edinburgh Fringe in his youth, says it was through alternative arts routes that he first became interested in the industry. He believes that it’s vital that people who aren’t engaged in the arts still get a chance to be a part of it.

“My favourite thing about The Big Feast is that people can see an entertaining and unusual performance without feeling pressured to put their hands in their pockets or understand the theoretical background of it.

“It’s two days of fun, frivolity and feistiness, where people can stumble upon world-class performances in unusual locations.”

The Big Feast returns to Stoke-on-Trent city centre on Friday 25 and Saturday 26 August. For more information, visit appetitestoke.co.uk
Fearsome Craftsmen: Discover The Artistry Of The Viking World
Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry, Sat 1 July - Sun 24 September

A touring show from Jorvik Viking Centre, Fearsome Craftsmen offers visitors the chance to step back a thousand years to explore the story of the Vikings in Britain. The exhibition includes the opportunity to learn about the people who settled in the country, and to explore Norse myths and legends in a family-friendly Viking settlement.

Also featured are real examples of Viking crafts and a replica 15ft fishing boat, decorated with designs which exemplify ‘the true creative spirit of the Viking Age’.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2017
Wolverhampton Art Gallery
22 July - 1 October

For full details of tickets and pricing information, please visit: www.bit.ly/WildWolvesTickets

N Natural History Museum

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts
More Real Than Life
19th-century portrait photography
9 June - 24 September 2017
Visual Arts previews from around the region

**Wildlife Photographer Of The Year**
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Sat 22 July - Sun 1 October

After last summer hosting the exhibition for the very first time, Wolverhampton Art Gallery is this month welcoming back the prestigious Wildlife Photographer Of The Year show. Now in its 52nd year, the competition received more than 40,000 submissions from amateur and professional photographers in just shy of 100 countries.

The exhibition is displayed in an ultra-modern lightbox format and features awe-inspiring images capturing fascinating animal behaviour and breathtaking landscapes. It visits the Midlands after premiering in London.

**Seurat To Riley: The Art Of Perception**
Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 8 July - Sun 1 October

The ways in which visual perceptions have been explored by artists is the theme of this thought-provoking summer exhibition. The colour theories of scientific thinkers such as Michel Eugène Chevreul have long been of interest to artists, among them Georges Seurat. The French post-Impressionist’s pointillist works featured colours other than those actually painted on the canvas, generated in the eye of the viewer via the application of small dots of primary colour. Optical art continues to fascinate. Indeed, as recently as the 1960s, a high-profile ‘Op art’ movement was established, with famous exponents such as Bridget Riley developing and exploring new possibilities. Works from Seurat through to Riley and beyond are included in a wide-ranging show that’s well worth catching.

**Sidney Nolan**
Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until 3 September

Ikon’s exhibition forms part of a nationwide programme of events to celebrate the centenary of Sir Sidney Nolan’s birth. Considered one of the most important artists of the 20th century, the Australian-born Nolan is best known for a series of paintings featuring legends from Australian history - including, and most famously, the outlaw Ned Kelly.

This Birmingham show features a selection of spray-painted portraits depicting individuals who had a strong personal significance for Nolan, including close friend Benjamin Britten and fellow artist Francis Bacon.

“The portraits, made mainly with spray paint on canvas, exemplify the unflagging inventiveness of Nolan,” explains Director of Ikon, Jonathan Watkins. “Large and stylistically very free, they’re like spontaneous breathings of colour, artistic conspiracies that conjure up likenesses mainly of people staring wide-eyed out of their pictorial space. Like ghosts wanting to make contact, they seem to interrogate us, spectrally, with their gaze.”

**Unknown Legacy**
Artifex Gallery, Birmingham, Sat 1 - Sun 30 July

Birmingham-based artist Dr Mohsen Keiany draws heavily on his Iranian heritage to create paintings which are characterised by their complex narrative compositions, jewel-like colours and spiritual content.

“I am very much into multi-culturalism,” explains Mohsen. “I’m always interested in researching different cultures and traditions, particularly art and architecture. My artwork is deeply influenced by my Persian background and covers a range that encapsulates spiritual contemplation, humans and the natural world, and human mythical suffering.”
Venture out into the Shropshire countryside around Telford and you might just find yourself journeying back in time to the cradle of the Industrial Revolution. From the elegant family home of the pioneering Darby family to the Old Furnace and ironworks through which they rose to fortune, and from the China works and beautifully painted tiles of the Jackfield Museum to the Broseley Pipeworks and 914 metre-long underground Tar Tunnel, there’s a whole wealth of history to explore in and around the famous Blists Hill Victorian Town in Ironbridge Gorge.

One of the UK’s first attractions to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in 1986, Ironbridge has long been internationally recognised as offering an invaluable insight into Britain’s industrial past. A total of 10 separate museums, 36 scheduled ancient monuments and several listed buildings over a six square-mile area are managed by the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust, placing it among the world’s largest independent museum operators. Formed by the Dawley Development Corporation in 1967, the trust this year celebrates an incredible 50 years, and in honour of this milestone, visitors will be able to enjoy a range of brand new features and special events throughout the summer. With something to cater for all interests and ages, the Coalbrookdale site looks set to be one of the Midlands’ hottest holiday destinations for 2017.

Following a six-month programme of extensive redevelopment, the 50th anniversary celebrations began in April with the reopening of the Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron. Long before the advances of the Victorian age, iron had been at the centre of the Ironbridge story for thousands of years. Located in a bright, expansive building not far from the original 18th century furnace, the museum follows the evolution of the area through the ages, from the abundant limestone, iron ore and low-sulphur coal seams forming its distinctive geology, to the first entrepreneurs to take advantage of its rich and readily accessible raw materials. In particular, it celebrates the groundbreaking work of Abraham Darby, who helped to catalyse the industrial revolution by smelting iron ore with coke instead of charcoal.

Later in the 19th century, the Coalbrookdale Company he created went on to become the country’s leading foundry for domestic and decorative cast iron products, with many of its magnificent designs now on display in the museum. But the Museum of Iron’s redevelopment is only the first phase of an ongoing “Coalbrookdale Masterplan”, an ambitious scheme aiming to raise a total of £15million for use across the site. Over the coming months and years, the trust will be developing new exhibitions, increasing educational opportunities and putting currently redundant space to practical use.

Nearby, the National Design & Technology Centre, Enginuity, is also set to undergo an expansion and full redesign, bringing it up to date with the latest in digital tech to inspire a greater understanding of STEM (science, technology, engineering, art and maths) subjects. But if you can’t wait for all of that to start, the centre already offers plenty to enjoy in its present state. Continuing Ironbridge’s proud engineering legacy, Enginuity invites curious minds to explore and interact with the technology of the past, present and future in a scientific wonderland. Bright colours, sounds and hands-on exhibits create
a sensory feast guaranteed to spark kids’ imaginations.
Throughout the summer holidays, there’ll also be opportunities to try your hand at new skills in a series of exciting drop-in Enginuity workshops. From 26 to 30 July and 7 to 13 August, you can decorate a copper keyring with enamel beads, then watch as the high temperatures of the mini-furnace fix them in place. From 31 July to 6 August and from 14 to 20 August, you can make your own pewter medallion by carving a design into foam to produce a mould, then watch as it gets filled in with molten metal. Finally, from 21 August to 3 September, kids will be able to make a working paddleboat.

As always, the picturesque and ever-popular Blists Hill Victorian Town plays host to themed events, family fun and academic conferences throughout the summer. The July programme kicks off on Saturday the first with the town’s first ever Steampunk Festival. Beautifully preserved shops, streets and more provide the perfect backdrop for Victorian-inspired fancy dress, while the area’s rich industrial history taps into the subculture’s science-fiction influences. So grab your goggles and top hat, browse the market for accessories, and stick around after dark for a Wild West-themed evening extravaganza, featuring shootouts, saloon girls and zombie outbreaks!
Meanwhile, those who prefer their entertainment more traditional and free of ‘the undead’ can kick back with a night of 1930s nostalgia in the Forest Glen Pavilion on Friday 28 July. Dust off your vintage gear and enjoy the hits of Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire and Judy Garland over a delicious meal, finished off with tea or coffee and a classic sherry trifle dessert.
But a special occasion calls for special celebrations, and unique 50th anniversary events will fill the school holidays in the form of a Furnace, Fire and Steam series. Between 26 July and 3 September, vintage steam machines will be up and running in Blists Hill. These will include the newly restored Winding Engine and an accurate replica of Trevithick’s 1802 Coalbrookdale locomotive, believed to be the world’s very first steam locomotive.

At the Jackfield Tile and Coalport China Museums, you can create your own unique designs inspired by the ‘fire and furnace’ theme, while on Wednesday mornings, there’ll even be a chance to see the furnace blazing and watch spectacular casting demonstrations in the town’s iron foundry.

The highlight of the series will be a special Steam Weekend on 19 & 20 August, when the town will come alive with a dazzling array of steam machines. In addition to the Coalbrookdale locomotive, discover the Merry Weather fire pump, Fielding oil engine and various portable and ploughing engines. ‘Billy’, the fantastic 1903 Wallis & Steevens roadroller, will also be in operation, alongside the Blists Hill steam hammer and ironworks engines, complete with a 27-tonne fly wheel.

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Enginuity and other Ironbridge museums are open from 10am to 4pm daily, with special events sometimes running outside normal hours. An annual passport ticket, allowing unlimited entry into all 10 attractions, costs just £25 for adults and £15 for children, with concessions and family discounts also available.
With last month’s snap general election having yielded no clear victor, a disunited parliament now prepares to lead the country through Brexit, one of its toughest foreign policy challenges in decades. As chance would have it, 2016’s Birmingham European Festival directly coincided with the UK’s EU referendum on 23 June. Since then, shifting moods have repeatedly thwarted all attempts to predict political outcomes across the continent: these are certainly interesting times.

Now, with the nature of the UK’s future relationship with Europe looking more uncertain than ever, BE Festival returns to the Birmingham REP with its annual celebration of international theatre, art and collaboration.

“This year we received 1,070 applications to perform, as well as several visual arts proposals,” says Miguel Oyarzun, co-director of BE Festival. “Within the range of work we’ve seen in our scouting across Europe, artists have definitely been tapping into current socio-political issues - as of course they should do. Part of that is Brexit, but actually that’s just one symptom of what’s happening: there aren’t any shows here talking about Brexit directly, but there are lots that address the wider situation in Europe and across the world. For example, we have a show about the economic and refugee crises in Greece, and we have another about how people can become extremists, which taps into fears about people coming into the country, so it’s all interconnected.”

Aptly enough, the theme for the visual arts programme this year is ‘Borders’ - a topic which has only become more pertinent since it was selected a couple of years previously.

“We are living in a global society now,” says co-director Isla Aguilar, “and I don’t really understand why we keep trying to put up these walls to contain us and stop us from being close to each other. From a sociological point of view, I think it’s important to have people from other countries coming here and enriching us with new cultures. We try to celebrate difference in the festival. But I also really liked the idea of crossing borders because I think it’s the main ethos of the fes-
tival. In terms of artistic disciplines, crossing borders can help us to create something very rich.”

Among the most striking manifestations of the Borders theme will be Asingeline by German company Mameza. This community project-cum-interactive installation takes the form of a single, straight line of red tape, laid down by the artists over the course of a few days and arriving at the theatre in time for the festival opening.

“They go through shops, they go through houses - just about anywhere!” says Aguilar. “It’s a piece which tries to bring people into the theatre, but also works the other way by taking theatre out into the streets. They’ve done this in many cities around the world, but it’s never been done in the UK before, so I’m really looking forward to seeing how it works in Birmingham.”

“We’re offering free tickets for people whose houses are crossed by the line,” adds Oyarzun. “The idea is to connect up an area of the city with low artistic engagement to the venue, so in this case it will be going from Ladywood to the REP through Brindleyplace.”

Another interactive piece called British Enough? plays on the idea of national identity, taking its cues from official tests that non-British nationals must now pass in order to adopt UK citizenship.

“It’s a site-specific project made especially for the REP through a collaboration between Kristina Cranfield and Foolish People,” Oyarzun explains. “Audiences will go through a series of tests inspired by the British citizenship test, and depending on the results, they will then be taken to a series of secret locations in the building. It’s a great way to discover parts of the REP you’ve never seen before. Some of the staff have never even been to these places, so it should be really fun.”

But though the questions of identity, security and cohesion thrown up by the EU referendum are still far from being resolved, after interviewing people on Birmingham’s streets, Oyarzun believes voters on both sides are now beginning to tire of the debate.

“Since Brexit has been in the news and everywhere constantly, the vision of Europe has become very politicised - when you think of Europe here, the first thing you think of is Brexit. But actually, it’s about many more things than that, and with this festival and the theme of Borders we’re trying to share with audiences another idea of Europe - one that is political, of course, but also one that is fun, that is about sharing and making connections and discovering things about ourselves through the eyes of other people.”

This spirit of playful interaction, conversation and co-operation extends to subverting traditional audience-artist relationships, both during the shows themselves and in the friendly, informal spaces between them where visitors, artists, programmers and organisers alike all come together to unwind, break bread and start discussions.

“One of the main aims of the festival is that everybody talks about what they’ve seen,” says Aguilar. “It’s not always easy to create a space where artists can talk with audiences directly, but I think it’s very important to open conversations and break down the barrier between them. Part of the reason artists want to bring their work here is that we create a kind of hub where they get to stay for the whole week, see all of the works and really experience the city.”

“The artists that come here do so with a spirit of sharing and trying to develop new audiences for contemporary work,” adds Oyarzun. “We encourage them to make themselves available to audiences and to really take on board their comments. I think that’s what’s lovely about this festival - there’s a different kind of ethos than you’d find at a normal event where you just go and see shows.”

As well as a dazzlingly diverse programme of live art, drama, physical theatre, dance, circus and more, with opportunities to see four shows in a single day, there are also workshops running daily and post-show live music playing until late each night. And of course, BE Festival’s famous interval dinners are a crucial part of the schedule. Taking place between the second and third shows of the evening, they’re held in a large, open space, with unreserved bench seating at long tables, in a bid to encourage everyone to meet and talk to new people.

The warmth, friendliness and commitment to nurturing new talent at BE keeps both staff and visitors returning year on year, sometimes in very different capacities. Working with young people as part of 2017’s BE Next scheme is Anna Howard Himali, who has a long history with the event.

“Anna started as one of our volunteers when she was 17,” explains Oyarzun. “Then she worked with us as part of the organisation before becoming a REP Foundry artist. Now she’s working in London as a director!”

“It’s a beautiful thing,” adds Aguilar. “We’ve worked with lots of young people who’ve volunteered and gone on to run their own ventures. At that age, it can help to open a window, so if someone really wants to engage and come back, we always try to facilitate that.”

“There was a quote from one journalist who described BE as “an experience that goes beyond theatre’”, says Oyarzun, “and that really speaks to what we’re trying to achieve here. We try to put art at the centre of something even bigger, which is about the experience and the encounter and sharing and celebrating the crossing of borders together.”

BE Festival takes place at the Birmingham REP from Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 July.
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Tues 25th to Thu 27th July
11.30am-4.00pm
The storyteller will be in residence to tell tales of knights, dragons and princesses. Visitors are invited to come along dressed in their favourite costumes and listen to stories or have a go at telling their own. There will also be craft activities available for those who want to get creative.

Saxons at the Castle
Tues 15th to Thurs 24th August
11.30am-4.00pm
Come and find out what life was like for those living in Tamworth during Saxon times. Try your hand at archaeology, learn about the weapons and neighbours, the enemy princess Aethelflaed and Saxon battle tactics, then see if you can solve our riddle puzzles.

Medieval Living History
Tues 22nd to Thurs 24th August
11.30am-4.00pm
Discover what life was like for our Medieval characters. Visit Lady Freiville and learn about the activities that would fill her days. Encounter the laundresses and help her prepare clothes. For washing the medieval way and meet the Armourer to find out how maille was made and how medieval weapons were fashioned.

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SUMMER OF FUN

With the school holidays once again upon us, parents across the Midlands will no doubt be looking for places to visit and things to do with their kids during the long summer break. We’ve taken a look at what’s happening where and have come up with a few suggestions to get you started...

All aboard for Severn Valley Railway summertime fun
Kidderminster, DY10 1QR, Tel 01562 757900

With its exciting steam trains, fantastic events and equally fantastic ticket offer, Severn Valley Railway has everything you need for a great family adventure this summer. And from 22 July to 3 September, families can enjoy a day out on the railway for just £44!

Visitors can hop on and off to explore any of SVR’s six historic stations, while the Flag & Whistle Food Stop is the perfect destination to refuel. The unlimited travel pass also provides entry to The Engine House Visitor Centre, complete with its wealth of interactive exhibits, including brand new exhibition Floods Of 2007 - Ten Years On. There’s also the Coalyard Miniature Railway at Kidderminster and the Paddock Garden Miniature at Hampton Loade to enjoy. For further information and forthcoming events, visit svr.co.uk

Arty escapades and vintage fun at Compton Verney
Compton Verney, Warwickshire, CV35 9HZ
Tel 01926 645500

Set in 120 acres of classical parkland landscaped by Capability Brown, Warwickshire’s ‘best art gallery and park’ offers a summer-long programme of boredom-busting events to keep visitors entertained during the six-week school holiday.

For art lovers, Compton’s summer exhibition, Seurat To Riley: The Art Of Perception, runs from 8 July to 1 October (see page 37 for more info). Aviation enthusiasts, meanwhile, can observe scaled models in action in Wings And Water on 23 July, while those wishing to step back in time can do so on 5 August, when Compton returns to the Swinging ‘60s with a celebration of Motown, Mods and Michael Caine. For all summer events, opening times and further information, visit comptonverney.org.uk

Motoring treasures at British Motor Museum
Banbury Rd, Gaydon, Warwickshire, CV35 OBJ
Tel 01926 644188

From family tours with costumed guides to an abundance of themed craft activities, this award-winning museum is geared up to host a ‘treasure trove’ of child-friendly activities over the summer holidays.

Meet costumed explainers who’ll talk through the history of exhibits every Monday, or take part in crafty workshops (Tuesdays to Saturdays) in which you’re invited to create your very own motoring treasure to take home.

Meanwhile, My First Car Project invites visitors young and old to create a drawing or compose a few words about their first vehicle - and yes, that does include pedal cars! For information about all summer events, visit britishmotormuseum.co.uk

Plenty on offer for young adventurers at Avoncroft
Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove, B60 4JR
Tel 01527 831363

There’s action and adventure aplenty on offer at this Bromsgrove living history museum during the summer. Themed activities include: Wilderness Warriors, where young adventurers can get back to basics and learn survival skills; Traditional Games, allowing visitors to play boardgames, fly kites and enjoy an abundance of outdoor fun; and Folklore, where more-adventurous visitors can seek out the mythical beasts that dwell within the museum grounds. Pony & train rides, have-a-go archery and 19 acres of park-like grounds offer plenty more reason to visit this popular venue.

And when you’re ready for some rest and relaxation, the Edwardian Tea Rooms provide an ideal setting in which to enjoy a cuppa and a slice of cake. For information on all forthcoming events, prices and opening times, visit avoncroft.org.uk
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To explore this enthralling exhibition, book by calling 0333 733 3003 quote RRS2017 or visit www.solihull.landroverexperience.co.uk/rangeroverstory
Mythical tales and Saxon history at Tamworth Castle
The Holloway, Tamworth, Staffs, B79 7NA
Tel 01827 709626
Join Tamworth’s resident storyteller this summer for mythical tales of knights, dragons and princesses. Visitors are invited to attend dressed in costume and get involved with the numerous craft activities on offer. Throughout July the castle is hosting an Enchanted Trail, along which families can discover the wishing tree and encounter mischievous pixies. In August the focus shifts to the Saxons, with activities revolving around hands-on archaeology, runic puzzles, history lessons about warrior princess Aethelflaed and Saxon battle tactics. Visitors can also meet the laundress and help her prepare clothes for washing the medieval way, while the castle’s armourer will explain how maille was made and medieval weapons fashioned.
For further information and forthcoming events, visit tamworthcastle.co.uk

The metal’s not heavy at the British Ironworks Centre
Whitehall, Aston, Morda, Oswestry, SY11 4JH
Tel: 0800 688 8386
The British Ironwork Centre boasts a varied collection of beautifully decorative metal items for the home and garden, some of which are faithful reproductions of ironwork no longer seen today. There’s also a collection of animal sculptures to admire - including a majestic silverback gorilla - and indoor show areas featuring a treasure trove of trinkets and interior adornments. The venue’s outdoor area, meanwhile, is home to an impressive array of carefully crafted architectural structures and sculptures. The centre also features an exotic zoo and hosts numerous family fun days throughout the year, with scavenger and ladybug hunts, vintage car rallies, motorbike meets and balloon festivals among the attractions featured on the events calendar.
For information about what’s on at the venue this summer, visit britishironworkcentre.co.uk

An action-packed summer at Twinlakes Theme Park
Melton Spinney Rd, Melton Mowbray, Leicester, LE14 4SB Tel: 01664 567777
All-action theme park Twinlakes is offering plenty of family-friendly fun this summer holiday. The popular East Midlands venue has weird and wonderful attractions aplenty to explore, including a birds of prey centre, a creepy-critter zone and a vast indoor arena of family-orientated activities. And that’s not all. August sees three action-packed shows taking place at the Melton Mowbray theme park: Mad Science (on the 3rd), Meet Rex The T-Rex (8th to the 12th) and Titan The Robot (28th). For more information, visit twinlakespark.co.uk

A summer of science at award-winning Thinktank
Millennium Point, Birmingham, B6 6JD. Tel: 0121 348 8000
This award-winning science museum is packed with things to see and do during the summer holidays. Static features include the Spitfire Gallery - showcasing the innovative design and cutting-edge technology that played such an important role in World War Two - and the Marine Worlds Gallery, exploring animals past and present that have adapted to life in the sea. There’s also the Planetarium, presenting regular shows about astronomy and space. Elsewhere, the outdoor Science Garden is packed with fun things to do, with more than 30 hands-on exhibits bringing to life the subjects of engineering, mechanics and transportation.
For further information, visit birminghammuseums.org.uk

Get active at Malvern Outdoor Elements
Old Hollow, West Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 4NR Tel: 01684 574546
There’s no shortage of exciting activities for youngsters to enjoy at Malvern Outdoor Elements. A not-for-profit organisation based in nine acres of woodland in the beautiful setting of the Malvern Hills, this outdoor adventure site offers a wide range of fun pastimes for children aged between seven and 13. Activity days start from £35 per person, with an 8% discount if you book for five days. So if you have an adventurous youngster chomping at the bit for some adrenaline-fuelled action over the summer holidays, check out malvernoutdoors.co.uk for more information. Activities include hill walking, abseiling, kayaking, canoeing, high & low ropes, king swings, orienteering and problem solving.
Steampunk Festival
Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July
This first ever steampunk festival at Blists Hill forms part of Ironbridge Gorge Museum’s 50th anniversary celebrations. Steampunk is a subgenre of science fantasy that reimagines modern technology powered by 19th century steam.
Highlights of the festival include an exhibition of steampunk art, costumes and sculptures, a living history encampment, inflatable dinosaurs featuring in an interactive event, the chance for youngsters to track down fairies hidden in a garden, and a craft area in which kids can make their own steampunk items. The Saturday evening sees Blists Hill transformed into a fantastical science-fiction Western World, complete with zombie outbreaks, shootouts and saloon-bar girls.

JQ Festival
Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, Fri 28 - Sun 30 July
Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter Festival returns for a third year this month. Organised by the Jewellery Quarter Business Improvement District (JQBID) and supported by local businesses, the festival features a range of free family activities, entertainment including local comedian Barbara Nice, live music, free heritage tours and a selection of street food and drink. For further information, visit jewelleryquarter.net/JQ-Festival

Dinosaurs In The Wild
NEC, Birmingham, until Wed 23 August
Dramatic storytelling and high-end digital graphics and animatronics lie at the heart of this brand new show. The 70-minute experience combines theatre, theme park fun and the very latest scientific research to create an immersive adventure that’s ‘designed to make you feel as though you’re really there, in amongst the dinosaurs, in their world, at their time’. The show has been created by the award-winning producers of the hit BBC TV series, Walking With Dinosaurs.

Formula One: British Grand Prix
Silverstone Circuit, Northamptonshire, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July
The main event needs no introduction, with Lewis Hamilton hoping to win his fifth British Grand Prix as he attempts to reclaim his World Champion crown. Away from the fast lane, this three-day Silverstone spectacular offers plenty of attractions to keep visitors fully engaged. Sara Cox headlines the Friday night entertainment, presenting a DJ set called Just Can’t Get Enough ’80s, while Reef & The Hoosiers are the top attraction at the Saturday night concert. The RPJ Band play the Grand Prix after-party on the Sunday.
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The Hive At Five
The Hive, Worcester, Sat 8 July
Worcester venue The Hive this month celebrates its fifth birthday with a series of special events. Anniversary highlights include cake-making competition The Great Hive Cake-Off, a ‘creation station’ featuring treasure hunts, storytelling and craft activities, and a dance performance by Watch Out Worcester Dance Fest. There’s also an exhibition about the venue on show from the 3rd to the 10th of the month.

Shropshire Family Vintage Show
The Greenhous West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July
Hundreds of vintage motorbikes, cars, tractors and military vehicles are on display at this popular family show, which also features a children’s activity centre, steam-powered carousel, and numerous displays and demonstrations. Admission for children under the age of 16 is free.

Brindleyplace Film Festival
Brindleyplace, Birmingham, Mon 17 - Sun 23 July
Taking place for a sixth year and once again free to attend, the Brindleyplace Film Festival features a selection of hit movies selected by the general public.

“There are some fantastic films on the shortlist this year,” says Brindleyplace Marketing & Events Executive Nathan Sanghera. “Whether you love the classic romance of Top Gun, want to see the Avengers Assemble on the big screen, watch Men In Black save the galaxy or bring Charlie’s Angels to Central Square, make sure you vote!”

Antiques For Everyone Summer Fair
NEC, Birmingham, Tues 20 - Sun 23 July
With more than 200 specialist dealers showcasing their wares, Antiques For Everyone is one of the largest events of its kind in the UK. This latest edition of the show features as its centrepiece an exhibition celebrating ‘the wonderful world of gadgets, gizmos and thingamajigs’. The display comprises an impressive range of obscure and unusual objects, including a number of eccentric labour-saving devices, ladies accoutrements and World War Two escape buttons. The featured items have been loaned to the show by Maurice Collins, whose interest in collecting began in the 1970s when he would accompany his son on bottle-digging trips to old Victorian rubbish tips.

Step Back To The 1940s
Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth, Shropshire Sat 1 - Sun 2 July
All aboard for a Severn Valley Railway train journey back in time to the 1940s. The railway’s lighthearted homage to wartime Britain features an impressive selection of attractions up and down the line. Visitors are encouraged to get dressed up and join the event’s costumed re-enactors, with ‘Prime Minister Winston Churchill’ and ‘King George VI’ both in attendance. Taking place across two weekends, the festival includes firefighting reenactments, vintage bus rides, musical entertainment, a wartime newsreel, a vintage marketplace and a big band show featuring the Worcestershire Jazz Orchestra.
1940s Weekend BCLM
Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 15 - Sun 16 July

The sights and sounds of wartime Britain are recreated in the region this month, courtesy of this nostalgic weekend. BCLM's largest-ever celebration of all things 1940s, the event offers visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in a wartime atmosphere. Attractions include vintage memorabilia markets, the chance to say hello to some 1940s characters and the opportunity to 'get handy' in make-do-and-mend workshops. Air-raid scenarios take place throughout the weekend, and there's plenty of food and drink to enjoy too, including American-style cuisine from a GI bar.

Viking Weekend
Arley Arboretum & Gardens, Bewdley, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July

Telford’s Raudr Vagr Vikings group are this month setting up camp on the front lawn of the Arboretum to present a weekend-long Living History experience. Over the course of the two days, the reenactors will be demonstrating a variety of Viking Age crafts, skills, games and pastimes. They’ll also be engaging in numerous combat displays and chatting to visitors about all things Viking.

Dinosaur School
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Mon 31 July - Fri 4 August

Dinosaur lovers get the chance to learn all about their favourite prehistoric creatures at this week-long get-together. Featuring dinosaur facts, fossils, art, model making and stories, the children-only event is suitable for youngsters aged between seven and 11. Highlights include the chance to make a baby dinosaur nest, create a dinosaur sculpture and learn to make fossil drawings.

Truckfest
Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire Sat 1 - Sun 2 July

Making a welcome return to Malvern, Truckfest showcases a range of family entertainment, a programme of main-arena events and 'all that’s best in the road haulage industry'. Highlights include appearances by celebrity truckers, live music from Cheltenham-based rock, boogie and blues four-piece Hot Tubes, monster truck action and a family funfair.

The Fast Car Festival
Donington Park, Northamptonshire, Sun 2 July

Making a full-throttle return to Donington after enjoying a record-breaking year in 2016, The Fast Car Festival aims ‘to capture the essence of all that’s great from the past, present and future of the motoring industry’. The event features thousands of on-display vehicles, including Supercars, Hypercars, perfectly restored barn finds, rallycross champions, quarter-mile demons and vintage classics. Stunts, demos and appearances by racing legends further add to the fun.

Hands On History: Medieval
Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, Mon 24 - Sun 30 July

Wannabe knights and young princesses are sure to enjoy a day out at Kenilworth Castle. And if you’re thinking of popping along there this summer holiday, why not coincide your visit with the residency of the Hands On History crew, who’ll be bringing the past to life and revealing the ingenious secrets of castle-building. Other attractions at the 900-year-old one-time medieval fortress include the chance to scale the heights of the tower built to woo Queen Elizabeth I, check out the mighty Norman keep, explore the exhibition in the Gatehouse and visit the majestic Great Hall, a room that would once upon a time have played host to all manner of medieval monarchs and early Tudor kings.
**Camper Jam**
Weston Park, Shropshire, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July

One of the most anticipated and highly regarded shows of its kind, Camper Jam is marketed as a fun-filled family-friendly event with a chilled-out, take-it-easy vibe. Weekend highlights include live bands, hundreds of traders, a ‘tastebud-tantalising’ food village, numerous children’s activities, a funfair and the always-popular ‘cooking in a camper’ competition. The show is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary.

**Moscow State Circus: Gostinitsa - Hotel Of Curiosities**
Becketts Farm, Wythall, Birmingham, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July

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 this current production. Highlights of the show include unicycling, foot juggling, trapeze acts and high-wire acrobats. Award-winning clowns The Chervotkins Duo are the audience’s guide for the evening.

**Stratford-upon-Avon River Festival**
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July

The award-winning Stratford River Festival features a wide range of entertainment for the local community to enjoy. Among the two-day event’s highlights are live music, a host of fun activities taking place in the family & charity zone, a display of narrowboats, an artisan craft market, numerous global food stalls and a ‘spectacular’ firework display on the Saturday night.

**Pirates Day**
The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 9 July

Well shiver yer timbers and splice the mainbrace if there ain’t a packed programme of piratical pursuits awaitin’ visitors to the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery this month! Families can join in a sea shanties singalong, settle back for stories of seafaring adventure, participate in a cutlass drill at Pirate School and enjoy a puppet presentation of Blackbeard The Pirate. There are even a number of real parrots in attendance - although that other great pirate staple of bottles of rum may be harder to come by!
Friendly & fun, a family VW bus event for all types

Camper Jam’17
10th Birthday

DAY TICKETS ON SALE NOW
Weston Park, Shropshire 7-9 July 2017

WHAT'S ON!
VW vehicle displays
Live entertainment
Kids' clubs
A mile of traders
Fun workshops
And SO much more!

For more information call 01244 881895
www.camperjam.com
Music  | Comedy  | Theatre  | Dance  | Film  | Events  | Visual Arts  | and more!

What’s On

Sat 1 to Sun 9 July

The Vamps at O2 Academy, Birmingham
Sat 1 July

Mon 10 to Sun 16 July

Birmingham & Solihull Jazz & Blues Festival
Fri 14 - Sun 23 July

Mon 17 to Sun 23 July

Brindleyplace Film Festival in Brindleyplace
Mon 17 - Sun 23 July

Mon 24 to Mon 31 July

Joe McElderry at New Alexandra Theatre
Thurs 27 July
**The Barber Institute**

**ONLY LIGHT AND SHADOW** This display of examples from the Barber’s collection places five of Goya’s enigmatic works among those by other Spanish artists - including Picasso and Miró - who also delved into ideas of light and shadow through subject matter and painting, until Sun 22 Oct.

**GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE IN BYZANTIUM** Discover Byzantium - the once-great empire whose glittering capital was the city of Constantinople (today’s Istanbul) - through this intriguing exploration of its coinage and economy, until Sun 18 Mar 2018.

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**THROUGHOUT JULY**

### Visual Arts

**Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery**

**BIRMINGHAM PEOPLE AND CHANGE IN THE INNER-CITY** Birmingham People explores the ways in which ordinary Birmingham people have been represented in art during the 20th and 21st centuries. Change in the Inner City focuses on the four inner-city wards of Ladywood, which include Nechells, Soho, Aston and Lady I WANT! I WANT! ART & TECHNOLOGY A curated selection from the Arts Council Collection - with key loans from other major collections - that presents the work of contemporary artists using new technologies, until Sun 1 Oct.

**BOM (B’ham Open Media)**

**A WHITE HOUSE ON PARADISE STREET** Exhibition inspired by what may be the first Daguerreotype image made in Birmingham, and potentially the first in England using the Daguerreotype process (invented in 1839 by Louis Daguerre, using silver-plated copper), until Sat 19 Aug.

**Ikon Gallery**

**SHEELA GOWDA** Indian artist Sheela Gowda’s exhibition at Ikon is a considered response to the gallery’s architecture, until Sun 3 Sept.

**JOHN STEZAKER - HORSE** John’s video, Horse, will be screened in Ikon’s Tower Room. It consists of 3,600 images of various horses from a side angle, taken from the front page of the same racehorse catalogue over the past 30 years. Near-identical pictures are projected at 23 frames per second, creating a shaking and flickering portrait of a horse, until Sun 3 Sept.

**mac, Birmingham**

**ARTIST ROOMS: JENNY HOLZER** Exhibition showcasing works by political artist Jenny Holzer, until Sun 10 Sept.

**RBSA Gallery**

**NEW FRANCESCA CURRIE ARBSA** A collection of oil paintings by new Associate Francesca Currie that combine traditional techniques of the Old Masters with a contemporary viewpoint, Mon 3 July - Sat 26 Aug.

**NEW ROB HAMP NWA** An installation of custom-built pieces by one of the new RBSA Next Wave Associates, Mon 10 July - Sat 12 Aug.

**NEW PAUL KI-KYOD RBSA** An exhibition of coloured landscape drawings in mixed-media, Mon 17 July - Sat 9 Sept.

**NEW PORTRAIT PRIZE 2017** Exhibition providing artists with the opportunity to show their work and the chance to be rewarded for their talents, Thurs 27 July - Sat 19 Aug.

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### Gigs

**KINGS HEATH FAKE FESTIVAL** Sat 1 July, Kings Heath Park, B’ham

**GARETH GATES** Sat 1 July, Lichfield Garrick

**OPIUM LORD, WREN, FVNERALS & KHOST** Sat 1 July, The Flapper, Birmingham

**SHOOT THE SYMPHONY. THE MOJO FILTERS & MIDDLE SPACE** Sat 1 July, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**MUNCH** Sat 1 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**INSTAJAM THE REUNION** Sat 1 July, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MOTOWN’S GREATEST HITS - HOW SWEET IT IS** Sat 1 July, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**QUIET** Sat 1 July, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE HURLING BOYS** Sat 1 July, Irish Centre, Birmingham

**OUR WORLD BELOW** Sat 1 July, The Slade Rooms, Whampton

**KICK UP THE 80’S** Sat 1 July, The Robin, Bilston

**TOM JONES** Sat 1 July, Delamere Forest, Northwich, Cheshire

**JUST FLOYD** Sat 1 July, Route 44, Birmingham

**THE BIG CHRIS BARBER BAND** Sat 1 July, Astrox, Bromsgrove

**HENRY WU** Sat 1 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL CHORUS** Sat 1 July, mac, Birmingham

**THE VAMPS** Sat 1 July, O2 Academy, B’ham

**AMERICAN YOUNG** Sun 2 July, The Slade Rooms, Birmingham

**SOLITIONS** Sun 2 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE ASTOR BIG BAND AND SINGERS** Sun 2 July, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**GLADYS KNIGHT** Sun 2 July, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

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**SOWETO KINCH** Fri 7 July, Birmingham Town Hall

**JUST FLOYD** Sun 2 July, The Robin, Bilston

**RICK ASTLEY** Sun 2 July, Delamere Forest, Northwich, Cheshire

**JOANNA EDEN** Sun 2 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**TONY BENNETT** Mon 3 July, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CROW BLACK CHICKEN** Mon 3 July, The Robin, Bilston

**JESSE MALIN** Mon 3 July, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**THE DABNERRY’S TUES 4 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham**

**CATHERINE NIGHTINGALE & OZ MCGOWAN** Tues 4 July, The Jam House, Birmingham

**TRAVIS SCOTT** Tues 4 July, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ELECTUS** Wed 5 July, The Robin, Bilston

**LINKIN PARK** Thurs 6 July, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**JANE TAYLOR** Thurs 6 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**T’PAU FEATURING CAROL DECKER** Thurs 6 July, The Robin, Bilston

**ODYSSEY** Thurs 6 July, The Jam House, Birmingham

**MILK SOCIETY, ALDO & OZ MCGOWAN** Fri 7 - Sat 8 July, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE ELO EXPERIENCE** Fri 7 July, mac, B’ham

**ELBOW** Fri 7 July, Canock Chase Forest, Staffordshire

**THE UB40 EXPERIENCE** Fri 7 July, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**SOWETO KINCH** Fri 7 July, Birmingham Town Hall

**CHRIS BOWDEN** Fri 7 July, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BLINK 182** Fri 7 July, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**TITAN OF TITANS** Fri 7 July, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**THE REGULARS, SPLIT MILK SOCIETY, ALDO & OZ MCGOWAN** Fri 7 July, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**FRESCO LOVE SOUNDS & JACK TOOP** Sat 8 July, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE REBEL MASSIVE** Sat 8 July, Route 44, Birmingham

**ARCHIE HAMILTON, SEB ZITO, LOPASKI** Sat 8 July, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**TITAN OF TITANS** Sat 8 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CRAIG CHARLES- FUNK & SOUL SHOW** Sat 8 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SPECIAL KINDA MADNESS** Sat 8 July, The Roadhouse, B’ham

**STRAIGHT FOR THE SUN & SOUL SHOW** Fri 7 July, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**WHITE TIGER & FURY** Fri 7 July, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**DJ 0 FRI 7 July, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham**

**2 BAD MICE & DJ FAYDZ** Fri 7 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DON LETTS** Fri 7 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE SUBTERRANEANS** Fri 7 - Sat 8 July, The Jam House, B’ham

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**Saturday 1 - Sunday 9 July**
**Classical Music**

**SINFONIA SUMMER CONCERT** Featuring Jonathan Bloxham (conductor) and Claire Burnell (trombone). Programme includes works by Mozart, Strauss, JS Bach & Mendelssohn, Sat 1 July, St Andrew’s Church, Barnt Green, Bromsgrove.

**BRANT INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION: THE FINAL** Sat 1 July, Birmingham Town Hall.

**BIRMINGHAM JUNIOR CONSERVATOIRE SHOWCASE** Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor), Jeffrey Snowdon (conductor), Timothy English (conductor), David Wynne (conductor), Junior Conservatoire Choirs and Orchestras. Programme includes works by Lehr and Tchaikovsky, Sat 1 July, The Bra- mall, Birmingham.

**THE CBSO IN SUTTON PARK** Features Michael Seal (conductor) and Noah Stewart (tenor). Programme includes works by Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Puccini, Mascagni, Elgar, Williams, Bern. stein, Donizetti and many more, Sat 1 July, Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield.

**YOUTH CHORUS SUMMER SHOWCASE** Features Julian Wilkins (conductor). Programme includes works by Brahms, Britten, Elgar, Fauré, Holst, Mendelssohn and John Rutter, Sat 1 July, CBSO Centre, Birmingham.

**SPOTLIGHT ON BROADWAY** Classical Music

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**SPOTLIGHT ON BROADWAY** Classical Music

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**Comedy**

**ROB ROUSE, PAUL THORNE, RO CAMP-BELL & GEORGE ZACH** Sat 1 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham.

**MICYE BARTLETT, ALLYSON JUNE SMITH, JOHN LYNN & SIMON BLIGH** Sat 1 July, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham.

**PIERRE HOLLINS, JOE ROWNTREE & SEAN PERCIVAL** Sat 1 July, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham.

**BARRABA NICE, GARAGHITHY AND THOM** Sat 1 July, mac, Birmingham.


**BRENNAN REECE & ELEANOR TIERNAN** Thurs 6 July, mac, Birmingham.

**MARCUS BIRDMAN, ZOE LYONS, PHIL REID & GEORGE ZACH** Thurs 6 July, The George Hotel, Lichfield.

**KIM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY NIGHT** Thurs 6 July, Stourbridge Town Hall.

**BARRY CRYER & COLIN SELL** Fri 7 July, Artix, Bromsgrove.

**DANIEL TOWNES, IAN COPPINGER, TOM HOUGHTON & MAFF BROWN** Fri 7 - Sat 8 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham.

**MATT REED & CERYS NELMES** Fri 7 - Sat 8 July, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham.

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**Theatre**

**CARMILLA** Stage27 present Sheridan La Fanu’s gothic novella, Fri 30 June - Sat 1 July, mac, Birmingham.

**LA CAGE AUX FOLLES** John Partridge, Adrian Zmed & Marti Webb star in a touring production of the smash-hit musical, until Sat 1 July, Grand The- atre, Wolverhampton.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS** Bloody and brutal play in which the decay of Rome reaches violent depths, until Sat 2 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

**SALOME** Oscar Wilde’s lyrical drama, written in French and originally banned in England, recounts in a single act the biblical story of Herod Antipas’s daughter, until Wed 6 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Strat- ford-upon-Avon.

**ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA** Shakespeare’s tragedy of love and power, until Thurs 7 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

**THE TEMPEST** Outdoor staging of Shakespeare’s last and most com- plete play, until 8 July, Stafford Castle.

**THE MAGIC FLUTE** Heritage Opera North West present an open-air ver- sion of Mozart’s mystery-drama, Sun 2 July, Stafford Castle.

**A JUDGEMENT IN STONE** A brand new staging of Ruth Rendell’s classic thriller, Mon 3 - Sat 8 July, Wolver- hampton Grand Theatre.

**INDOMADOR BY ANIMAL RELIGION** Comic, punchy look at the way we build our identities. Part of BE FESTI- VAL 2017, Tues 4 July, The REP, Birmingham.

**THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT TIME** Highly acclaimed Na- tional Theatre production based on Mark Haddon’s award-winning novel, Tues 4 - Sat 8 July, Birmingham Hippo- podrome.

**THE SENSEMAKER BY WOMAN’S MOVE** A story of managing expectations which fuses contrasting music and

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BIRCHFIELD JAZZ FESTIVAL
JULY 28TH TO 30TH 2017
JULY 28TH
Festival Opens: 10.00am
Performance Starts: 7.00pm
Buses at 8.00pm

SUNDAY
JULY 30TH
Family Fun Day
At the Walkabout
Hands North Park
End at 8pm

BIG LOCAL
MUSIC
THSH JAZZ
JAZZINGS

Admission FREE
Performance starts at 3pm

Live entertainment;
family-friendly
activities; street food
stalls and guided heritage tours.

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GOLDEN SQUARE

28-30 JULY

ST PAUL'S SQUARE

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NEW Birmingham 1 - 9 July

**REVOLUTION ATHENS VAL 2017**, Thurs 6 & Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham

An immersive, theatre about holding onto the simple and everyday as we grow older. A story of Portuguese immigrants in the UK. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Thurs 6 July, The REP, Birmingham

**THE SIMON AND GARFUNKEL STORY**

Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Wed 5 July, The REP, Birmingham

**EVERYTHING IS OK BY MARCO D’AGOSTIN** One-man show about cultural and sensory overload. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Wed 5 July, The REP, Birmingham

**MY COUNTRY IS WHAT THE SEA DOESN'T WANT BY CASA DA ESQUINA** The story of Portuguese immigrants in the UK. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Wed 5 July, The REP, Birmingham

**THE SIMON AND GARFUNKEL STORY**

Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Wed 5 July, The REP, Birmingham

**SING (U) Animation/Comedy** With the voices of Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Atrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 1 & Wed 5 July

**Egghead (12a) Comedy/Drama** Starring Shalashshree Mulki, Shreya. Foreign language, English subtitles. mac, Birmingham, Sat 1 July

**THE BIG KNIGHTS (U) Animation** With the voices of Alexander Armstrong, Brian Blessed. mac, Birmingham, Sat 1 July

**WHAT DOES STUFF DO?** Featuring pour-ing, ping-pong and a motivational speech delivered by a man in swimming trunks... Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Fri 7 July, The REP, B’ham

**MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS PRESENT GOSTINJA: HOTEL OF CURiosITIES** Brand new show featuring award-winning clowns, jugglers, unicyclists and trapeze artists, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July, Beckett’s Farm, Birmingham

**ALL THE VOICES BY TANIAETANIA** The eccentric sister-duo return to showcase the results of their awarded residency, which began a week in advance of this year’s BE FESTIVAL, Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham

**NEX UK** Working in unison to create a physical theatre performance, this youth theatre initiative sees local 14 to 19-year-olds from a range of backgrounds take to the stage. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham

**HOMO FURIES BY PLAN-K** Re-imagining the experience of soldiers’ military training, this is a story about pushing beyond what we thought we were capable of. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham

**PERFORMANCE MUNICIPAL BY VICENTE ARRANZ** Playful dialogue testing the limits of language. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham

**ANATOMIA PUBLICA BY MAN DRAGE** A story of strange, fractured relationships in the aftermath of war. Part of BE FESTIVAL 2017, Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham

**BEYOND THE WATER’S EDGE** Captivating series of portraits presented through the words of some of the world’s best poets, Sat 8 July, Lichfield Garrick

**MISTER MAKER AND THE SHAPES LIVE!** Interactive live show for younger audiences, Sat 8 July, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE** Join Iliyra for a social whirlwind of balls, dinners and very eligible officers, Sat 8 July, Packwood House, Solihull

**THE third POLICEMAN** Flann O’Brien’s comic masterpiece, Sat 8 July, mac, Birmingham

**MACBETH** Oddysocks present a Steam-punk musical adaptation of Shakespeare’s tragic story of ambition turned bad, Sun 9 July, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**SENSE AND SENSIBILITY** Outdoor staging of the Crescent Theatre’s version of Jane Austen’s romantic novel, Sat 8 - Sun 9 July, Blakesley Hall, B’ham

**THEATRETRAIN GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE** Singing, acting & dancing extravaganza packed with a host of colourful characters, Sun 9 July. The Core, Solihull

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17-28 October
BEDLAM
ARTS AND MENTAL HEALTH FESTIVAL

For full programme visit:
www.birmingham-rep.co.uk
www.macbirmingham.co.uk

The Secret Garden
A Much Loved, Timeless and Magical Tale for the Whole Family
5th - 12th August 2017
Blue Orange Theatre
118 Great Hampton Street, Birmingham, B18 6AD
www.blueorangetheatre.co.uk

Fred Theatre presents, for the first time in over 300 years
THE DUTCH LADY

London c.1650: Fuscara, the Dutch lady, finds herself broke and needing to marry for money. Follow her exploits in this hilarious Restoration comedy, recently discovered in manuscript in the USA.

7pm, 11-12 July 2017
Stan's Cafe Theatre, Birmingham and on tour
£12.50 (£10)
0845 680 1926
www.fred-theatre.co.uk/whats-on

This production is supported by:
ABILENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
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NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:
Released from Wed 5 July, showing at selected cinemas:
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING (12a)
A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER (PG)
IT COMES AT NIGHT (15)
THE LAST WORD (15)
The Midwife (12a)
TOMMY’S HONOUR (PG)

Festivals

BARN ON THE FARM FESTIVAL Line-up includes Tom O’Dell, Lucy Rose & Benjamin Francis-Leftwich, until Sun 2 July, Over Farm Market, Highnam, Gloucestershire
KINGS HEATH FAKE FESTIVAL Line-up includes tribute bands Oasis, Blondied & Green Date, Sat 1 July, Kings Heath Park, Birmingham
LLANGOLLEN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD Featuring Marc Street Preachers, Gregory Porter & Bryn Terfel, Mon 3 - Sun 9 July, Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen, North Wales
LILLANFEST Line-up includes Roving Crows, Buddy Holly & The Black Jacks, Army of Skanks & the Delta Radio Band, Mon 3 - Sun 9 July, Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen
BE FESTIVAL Featuring a diverse range of contemporary theatre from across Europe, Tues 4 - Sat 8 July, The REP, Birmingham
2000TREES FESTIVAL Line up includes Slaves, Nothing But Thieves, Pulled Apart By Horses, Jamie Lennard & Feed The Rhino, Thurs 6 - Sat 8 July, Upcote Farm, Cheltenham

Events

BIRMINGHAM INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL Europe’s largest Indian film festival, often referred to as the ‘punk-rock of Indian cinema’, until Sun 2 July, various locations throughout Birmingham
THE STITCHING, SEWING & HOBBYCAST SHOW Featuring talks and demonstrations, new product launches and plenty of inspiration, until Sun 2 July, NEC, Birmingham
DINOSAURS IN THE WILD Featuring dramatic storytelling and high-end digital graphics and animatronics, until Thurs 24 Aug, NEC, Birmingham
SUMMER HOLIDAYS Summer of fun featuring magicians and ventriloquists, until Sun 3 Sep, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham
JEWELLERY QUARTER HERITAGE WALK Learn about the history of the area, its buildings and businesses, Sat 1 July, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham
JAPANESE CAR FEST Europe’s largest Japanese car show returns to Donington Park, Sat 1 July, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby
STEAMPUNK FESTIVAL Corsets and clogs at Ironbridge’s first ever Steampunk gathering, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire
CONCERTS IN THE PARK Open-air evening concert by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and a FREE family fun day, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July, Boldmere Recreation Field, Sutton Coldfield
BIRMINGHAM SANDWELL WEST MIDLANDS FIESTA 2017 Celebration of Filippino cultures and heritage, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July, Lightwoods Park, Smethwick, Birmingham

THE BMC AND LEYLAND SHOW Celebrating the vehicles produced by the British Motor Corporation, Sun 2 July, British Motor Museum, Gaydon
THE FAST CAR FESTIVAL Featuring club displays, track action, motorsport legends and superbac displays, Sun 2 July Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby
LET’S FEED BRUM - SUMMER SLEEPOVER Grab your picnic blanket and enjoy a lazy summer Sunday of live music and relaxation on the lawns in front of the Court, Sun 9 July, Wittey Court, Great Wittey, Worcestershire
JAPSHOW 2017 All Japanese cars and bikes welcome. Featuring the show paddock, club displays and trade area, Sun 9 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northampton

MONOLIGHT (15) Drama. Starring Mahershala Ali, Shariff Earp, Artxix, Bromsgrove, Fri 7 July
LA TRAVIATA (U) Opera/Drama. Starring Francesca Dotto. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 9 July

VICKING WEEKEND! Raudr Vagr Vikings group re-creates the lifestyles of the Viking and Anglo-Saxon peoples, Sat 1 - Sun 2 July, Arley Arboretum, Beawley
SEE SANDWELL & BIRMINGHAM MELA Sat 1 - Sun 2 July, Victoria Park, Smethwick, Birmingham
LAVENDER MONTH Learn about the historical uses of lavender, then try out some lavender tea and cake in the tearoom, Sat 1 - Sun 30 July, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham
THE BLACK COUNTRY ROAD RUN First ever Halesowen Elite 5k Timed Race, specifically for those who can complete a 5k in under 30 minutes, Sun 2 July, Halesowen Library, Eid Mela Fun-filled day celebrating Eid Mela, with activities including Henna, live bhangra and music, face painting, crafts, sports and a bouncy castle, Sun 2 July, Soho House, Handsworth, Birmingham
THE BMC AND LEYLAND SHOW Celebrating the vehicles produced by the British Motor Corporation, Sun 2 July, British Motor Museum, Gaydon
THE FAST CAR FESTIVAL Featuring club displays, track action, motorsport legends and superbac displays, Sun 2 July Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby
LET’S FEED BRUM - SUMMER SLEEPOVER Grab your picnic blanket and enjoy a lazy summer Sunday of live music and relaxation on the lawns in front of the Court, Sun 9 July, Wittey Court, Great Wittey, Worcestershire
JAPSHOW 2017 All Japanese cars and bikes welcome. Featuring the show paddock, club displays and trade area, Sun 9 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northampton

Run what you bring Take your car or motorcycle out on the quarter-mile dragstrip and test its performance limits, Sat 8 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northampton
Behind the scenes tours Learn about the amazing story of the Hippodrome Theatre, Sat 8 July, Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre
City of Wolverhampton festival of Food & Drink Bringing together a selection of the UK’s finest street food traders with the best of local chefs, restaurants and bars, Sat 8 - Sun 9 July, Wolverhampton City Centre
Village in the park A full weekend of vintage and handmade things, live entertainment, dancers and music, Sat 8 - Sun 9 July, Lightwoods Park, Smethwick, Birmingham
National Garden scheme Discover hidden gems including a Mediterranean-inspired garden, Sun 9 July, Selly Manor, Bournville, Birmingham
Lazy Jazz on the lawn Grab your picnic blanket and enjoy a lazy summer Sunday of live music and relaxation on the lawns in front of the Court, Sun 9 July, Wittey Court, Great Wittey, Worcestershire
JAPSHOW 2017 All Japanese cars and bikes welcome. Featuring the show paddock, club displays and trade area, Sun 9 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northampton

Review

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**Gigs**

**LEMURIA** Mon 10 July, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
**THE JIGANICS** Mon 10 July, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham
**MARTIN STEPHENSON** Tues 11 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
**THE BIG Q FISH** Tues 11 July, The Jam House, Birmingham
**TRAP, FALLEN STATE & CONFESSIONS OF A TRAITOR** Tues 11 July, The Flapper, Birmingham
**KEVIN DEVINE** Wed 12 July, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
**THE SWINGLES** Wed 12 July, Lichfield Garrick
**DORJA, CHARLES DEXTERWARD, ARAMANTUS, KILLER BOB & GENESIS ARC** Wed 12 July, The Flapper, Birmingham
**VO FLETCHER** Wed 12 July, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
**EZIO** Wed 12 July, The Robin, Bilston
**TRISTAN & HESTON** Thurs 13 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
**RED JUMP SUIIT APPARATUS** Fri 14 July, O2 Institute, Birmingham
**SAMANTHA WRIGHT QUINTET** Fri 14 July, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
**URBAN INTRO** Fri 14 - Sat 15 July, The Jam House, Birmingham
**TEQUILA MOCKINGBYRD** Fri 14 July, The Flapper, Birmingham

**LEILA & CYRIL DUCLOS** Fri 14 July, The Core Theatre, Solihull
**WITTERQUICK** Fri 14 July, The Asylum, Birmingham
**THE SOUL SURVIVORS WITH MEL DAY** Fri 14 July, The Robin, Bilston
**THE SPIKY MEN'S CHORALE** Fri 14 July, Birmingham Town Hall
**ANDREW WEATHERALL** Fri 14 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
**MARY J. BLIGE** Sat 15 July, O2 Academy, Birmingham
**CLAUDIA VON STROKE, MARC SPENCE & TOM SHORTERZ** Sat 15 July, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham
**IVOR & LYNN'S CLASSIC ROCK NIGHT** Sat 15 July, Route 44, B'ham

**Classical Music**

**ELYSIAN PIANO TRIO** Featuring Emily Sun (violin), Jane Lindsay (cello) & Jennifer Hughes (piano).
Programme includes works by Beethoven, Brahms & Gershwin, Mon 10 July, Wade Street Church, Lichfield

**ISAAC COLLIER CELLO RECITAL**
Programme includes Richard Arnell's Cello Suite Op 48 "Cello Sonata No.2," Anon Minsky's "10 American Cello Etudes," Isaac Collier's Improvisation on 'Jewish Prayer' by Ernest Bloch, Mon 10 July, Wade Street Church, Lichfield

**KERRY LEIGH & MAUREEN YOUNGER**
Wed 12 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**ALISTAIR BARRIE, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC**
Thurs 13 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOHN FOTHERGILL, JARLETH REGAN, ALEX BOARDMAN & SALLY-ANN HAYWARD**
Sat 15 July, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**ROBERT WHITE & RACHEL FAIRBURN**
Sat 15 July, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**Theatre**

**BEYOND THE WATER'S EDGE** Captivating series of portraits presented through the words of some of the world's best poets, Mon 10 July, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**AUSTEN'S WOMEN** Thirteen of Jane Austen's heroines come to life in a bold revisiting of some of literature's most celebrated works, Tues 11 July, Lichfield Garrick

**THE SCARECROW'S WEDDING** Family show based on the book by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler, Tues 11 July, Lichfield Garrick

**THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY** Auteur production presented by Artrix Youth Theatre, Tues 11 July, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**ROMEO & JULIET** New production of Shakespeare's immortal tale of an all-consuming love, Wed 12 July, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**POLICE COPS: THE PRETEND MEN** Action-packed hour of adrenaline-fuelled physical comedy, cinematic style and uncompromising facial hair, Wed 12 July, Lichfield Garrick

**SILENCE AND SENSIBILITY** Outdoor staging of the Crescent Theatre's version of Jane Austen's romantic novel, Wed 12 - Thurs 13 July, Selly Manor, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM ORMISTON ACADEMY COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE** Bringing together music, dance and acting, Wed 12 - Thurs 13 July, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**TWELFTH NIGHT** Shakespeare’s magi-
cal tale is reimagined in the 1920s, with prohibition rife and Europe still reeling in the wake of war. Thurs 13 - Fri 14 July, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

**TRANSITIONS** New play by Lorna French which follows the fortunes of a group of students and teachers from four schools as they battle for survival, Thurs 13 - Tues 18 July. The REP Birmingham

**SPENCER** Nick Hall brings humour to the story of Spencer Pericival, the only Prime Minister ever to be assasinated, Fri 14 July, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**MRS OSCAR WILDE** The story of the wife of one of the Victorian era's most famous writers, Fri 14 July, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE** Juliet Stevenson narrates Jane Austen's classic love story in honour of the bicentenary of the author's death. Music by Carl Davis is performed by pianist Ashley Wass & violinst Matthew Trusler, Fri 14 July, Lichfield Garrick

**THE LIFE & DEATH OF MARILYN MONROE** Breakthrough Theatre explore the life of one of history's most iconic women, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**OLD KING COLE** Derek Webb's show for children, Fri 14 - Sat 22 July, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

**ROMEO & JULIET** Oddsocks breathe new life into Shakespeare's classic tale by giving it a Mods & Rockers theme, Sat 15 July, mac, Birmingham

**JUMPROV 2 - THE SEQUEL** Unique comedy sketch show completely made up on the spot and 100% improvised, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELISIE GREY** One-woman show in which Susan Hallcroft explores the issues that cause people with dementia to seemingly disappear, Sat 15 July, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**THE APPAREANCE OF ELSIE GREY** Oddsocks fuse laughter and witchcraft in a unique take on Shakespeare's dramatic story of ambition turned bad, Sun 16 July, mac, Birmingham

**Dance**

**U-DANCE** Showcase of work by youth dancers from across the UK, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Birmingham Hippodrome

**NAVAAD** Academi's national South Asian youth dance competition, run this year in partnership with One Dance UK, ISTD and Sampad, Sat 15 July, Birmingham Hippodrome

**Talks**

**SARAH OUTEN: DARE TO DO** The rower and adventurer talks about picking herself up after a fall and finishing what she set out to do, Mon 10 July, The George Hotel, Lichfield

**JEM CLEGG: THE REALITY FRAME** Afternoon talk hosted by the acclaimed science writer, Mon 10 July, The George Hotel, Lichfield

**AN AUDIENCE WITH ANN WIDDECOMBE** Tues 13 July, Stratford ArtsHouse, Stratford-upon-Avon

**JANE AUSTEN: THE BANKER’S SISTER** Professor Emma Cleary delves into new research about the Austen family relationship, exploring how the actions of Jane’s brother informed the novelist’s writing and career, Thurs 13 July, Lichfield Garrick

**WATLING STREET** Author John Higgs takes audiences on a journey along one of Britain’s oldest and ‘most enchanting’ roads, Fri 14 July, The George Hotel, Lichfield

**TOMMY’S HONOUR (PG)**

**Film**

**INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:**

**FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (18)** Action/Adventure. Starring Sean Connery, Robert Shaw. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Thurs 13 July

**NAPOLEON (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring Albert Dieudonné, Vladimir Roudenko. mac, Birmingham, Sat 15 July

**FEEL GOOD** Film Fest Highbury Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 16 July

**SLOW WEST (15)** Western, Starring Kodi Smit-McPhee, Michael Fassbender. Highbury Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 16 July

**New Films on General Release:**

**WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES (12c)**

**THE BEGUILED (15)**

**THE LAST WORD (15)**

**THE MIDWIFE (12a)**

**Tommy’s Honour (PG)**

**Events**

**Summer Outdoor Living Exhibition** Event bringing together leading manufacturers of garden products and showcasing exciting new developments, Tues 11 - Thurs 13 July, NEC, Birmingham

**British Grand Prix** Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Silverstone Circuit, Towcester, Northamptonshire

**Midlands Home and Garden Show** Featuring nurseries, garden designers, experts in home decor and much more, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Ragley Hall, Ragley, Alcester

**Dragalicia** A weekend dedicated to drag racing, hot rods and bikes from a bygone era, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northampton

**The Kickback Motorbike Show & Workshop Fair** Featuring over 50 customs, cafe racers and classic motorcycles, as well as around 20 suppliers providing parts, accessories and much more, Sat 15 July, The Custard Factory, Digbeth, Birmingham

**40s Evening** Don’t forget to dress up! Sat 15 July, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**French Car Show** Sat 15 July, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

**Wolverhampton Fiesta** The ‘ultimate city show,’ Sat 15 - Sun 16 July, West Park, Wolverhampton

**Wimbledon Finals Live Stream** Game, set, match! Celebrate all things Wimbledon with live streams of the finals, Sat 15 - Sun 16 July, Raley Hall, Ragley, Warwickshire

**Octonauts Octo-Glow Explorers** A brand new deep-sea adventure where you can see the ocean in a whole new light, Sat 15 July - Sun 13 Aug, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

**Bonsai Demo** Experts demonstrate best care and practice for Bonsai trees, Sun 16 July, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham

**Victorian Day** Millers make flour in the watermill, plus children’s crafts and outdoor fun and games, Sun 16 July, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

**Festivals**

**Bromsgrove’s Folk Festival** Line-up includes The Melrose Quartet, Quicksilver and Dan McKinnon, Thurs 13 - Sun 16 July, Various locations across Birmingham

**Birmingham Festival** Annual showcase of new theatrical productions from across the UK, Fri 14 - Sun 30 July, Various locations across Birmingham

**Flashpoint Festival** Line-up includes Sophie Ellis-Bextor, KT Tunstall, Hue and Cry and ABC, Fri 14 - Sun 16 July, Rockingham Castle, Market Harborough, Leicestershire

**Birmingham & Solihull Jazz & Blues Festival** Line-up includes Brush with the Blues, The Broombustes, C-Jam, Suzi Woods, Roy Forbes Trio, The Catfish Kings, Books Williams, The Whiskey Brothers and many more, Sat 15 - Sun 23 July, various locations across Birmingham & Solihull
We were mesmerised throughout

Chantal R, Tripadvisor

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THE SUGARHILL GANG
HAZARD & EKSMAN
DELTA HEAVY
HAYSEED DIXIE
OCEAN WISDOM
GENERAL LEVY / LEVELZ
KRAFTY KUTS & DYNAMITE MC
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MIND VORTEX / FRANKEE
FEROUS DOG / GOLDIE LOOKIN CHAIN
BEANS ON TOAST / THE CORRESPONDENTS
THE BAGHDADDIES / RODNEY P & SKITZ / DABBLA WITH ELEWAN RT
+ DJ FROSTY / FREESTYLERS / BENNY PAGE / PHIL KAY
JAYDE ADAMS / CHAINSA WARRIOR / SONNY HALLÉT
LADY CHANN / UNCLE DUGS + BILLY DANIEL BUNTER SHOWCASE
JEREMIAH FERRARI / SOLA ROSA SOUNDSYSTEM / LE GALA (IE)
LAND OF THE GIANTS / THE STUFF JOINT / OH MY GODIT'S THE CRUNCH
HANNAN FEEL / DEATH BY LINCOLN SONG / GYAN DOOPS / KETO / THE BIPED
CARAVEL MC / BENNY MC / DOCTOR OR / GINNIE + M C STEE / NOZMANTOY STREET
HALLOOMAHNI / SUPERGLUE / DOM KANE / DIRTY SECRETS / REMEMBER

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Gigs

THE SUPERSKAS Fri 21 July, The Robin, Bilston
BUCK AND EVANS Fri 21 July, The Asylum, Birmingham
SOLID SOUL Fri 21 - Sat 22 July, The Jam House, Birmingham
DESPERATE MEN Sat 22 July, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton
SACRED SOUNDS-SIKH MUSIC TRADITIONS AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR Sat 22 July, Birmingham Town Hall
THE DICKIES Sat 22 July, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
ESSENTIAL 80's Sat 22 July, The River Rooms, Stourbridge
DARKZY, USSY, DJ CHEF Sat 22 July, The Rainbow Venues, B'ham
TUNDE JEGEDE & THE ART ENSEMBLE OF LAGOS Sat 22 July, mac, Birmingham
ABI KELSEY BAND Sat 22 July, Katie Fitzgerald's, Birmingham
DON GIOVI Sat 22 July, The Robin, Bilston
ABBA REUNION Sat 22 July, Artrix, Bromsgrove
THE WEST COAST EAGLES Sat 22 July, The Roadhouse, B'ham
KIKO! Sat 22 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
SHAPLA SALIQUE Sun 23 July, 23 July, Birmingham Town Hall
AMYTHYST KIARIS JULIUS Sun 23 July, 23 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
SEYES Sun 23 July, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

MUSIC SERVICE GALA CONCERTS Mon 17 - Fri 21 July, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
LEGENDS: SUPERHERO SYMPHONIES The People’s Orchestra showcase soundtracks from a series of well-known superhero films including Superman, Spiderman and Batman, Sat 22 July, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Comedy

TODDALLY FREE COMEDY! Mon 17 July, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham
MARK THOMAS Mon 17 July, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre
LUCY PORTER, ROGER JAMES Wed 19 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham
JARRED CHRISTMAS & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 20 July, The Glee Club, B'ham

Theatre

ROOM ON THE BROOM Tall Stories’ musical adaptation of the classic picture book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, Mon 17 - Wed 19 July, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
TAMING OF THE SHREW Heartbreak Productions present an outdoor staging of Shakespeare’s unconventional love story. Suitable for ages eight-plus, Tues 18 July, Bruton Park, Solihull
THE WIZ Brit Youth Theatre presents a funky modern version of The Wizard Of Oz, Tues 18 - Wed 19 July, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham
REMEMBER, REMEMBER The Young REP presents Grace Nineham’s play, which recounts three different versions of the same event, Tues 18 - Thurs 20 July, The REP, B'ham
JANE EYRE Chapterhouse Theatre Company present an outdoor staging of Charlotte Bronte’s classic novel, Wed 19 July, Birmingham Botanical Gardens
REQUIEM FOR GROUND ZERO Stage2 present an amateur staging of Steven Berkoff’s acclaimed eulogy to the thousands of victims of 9/11, Wed 19 - Sat 22 July, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham
HOW TIME FLIES Handmade Theatre presents an original and quirky show inspired by the intriguing world of archaeology, Thurs 20 July, mac, Birmingham
A JOURNEY THROUGH WAR On The Floor Theatre Company explore life in the trenches and the wartime role of women, Thurs 20 - Fri 21 July, Selly Manor, Birmingham
BONNIE & CLYDE The sounds of blues, gospel, bluegrass, country and rockabilly provide the backdrop for this ‘gripping and sexy’ production, which charts the journey of America’s most renowned folk heroes, Thurs 20 - Sat 29 July, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham
FRANKENSTEIN: MAN OR MONSTER Mad Tom Theatre presents a gothic comedy featuring madness, a monster and a teddy bear… Fri 21 July, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham
THE MARRIAGE OF KIM Ambitious retelling of Mozart’s Marriage Of Figaro in which comparisons are made with Kim Kardashian’s marriage to NBA star Kris Humphries, Fri 21 - Sat 22 July, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham
ANNIE Brit Youth Theatre presents its version of this much-loved family musical, Fri 21 - Sat 22 July, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham
DESH O’CONNOR & JIMMY TARBUCK LIVE Sat 22 July, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
A JOURNEY THROUGH WAR On The Floor Theatre Company explore life in the trenches and the wartime role of women, Sat 22 July, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham
PETER PAN JR XcelShowbiz presents its version of the popular Disney musical, Sat 22 July, The Old Rep, Birmingham
**Dance**

XPOSE A showcase to celebrate Year 12 Dance students’ achievements at Birmingham Ormiston Academy, Tues 18 - Wed 19 July, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**THE RED SHOES** Matthew Bourne’s acclaimed production returns to the Midlands, Wed 19 - Sat 22 Jul Birmingham Hippodrome Find out more on page 33

**THE JUNGLE BOOK** ‘Spectacular’ street dance and ‘breathtaking’ circus combine to bring Kipling’s classic tale crashing into the 21st century, Wed 19 - 22 July, Birmingham Hippodrome

**Film**

**INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:**

MOONLIGHT (15) Drama. Starring Mahershala Ali, Shariff Earp. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 17 - Tues 18 July

BOTTICELLI INFERNO (12a) Documentary. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 19 July

HIDDEN FIGURES (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Taraji P Henson, Octavia Spencer. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 21 July

**NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:**

Released from Fri 21 July, showing at selected cinemas:

CITY OF GHOSTS (tbc)

DUNKIRK (12a)

MONSTER ISLAND (tbc)

SCRIBE (tbc)

THE MIDWIFE (12a)

**Events**

BRINDLEYPLACE FILM FESTIVAL Mon 17 - Sun 23 July, Brindleyplace, B’ham

ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE SUMMER FAIR Enjoy loved styles and treasures while learning about their origins from the enthusiastic experts, Thurs 20 - Sun 23 July, NEC, Birmingham

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE MEMORY CAFE The cafe supports individuals with early to moderate dementia. Suitable for anyone living with dementia or memory-related concerns and their caregivers, family and/or friends, Fri 21 July, Soho House, Handsworth, Birmingham

SILK PAINTING COURSE Workshop exploring how unusual and often startling effects can be achieved when painting and dyeing silk, Sat 22 July, Selly Manor, Bournville, B’ham

WARS OF THE ROSES LIVE The War of the Roses unfolds in an epic live-action show, Sat 22 July - Sun 3 Sep, Warwick Castle

**Festivals**

DEERSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL Line-up includes Doggen All Star Band, K.O.G & the Zongo Brigade, Transglobal Underground, Inner Terrestials & Devils Prefects, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July, Newton Cross Country Course, Nottingham

NOZSTOCK Line-up includes Seasick Steve, Happy Mondays, General Levy, Ocean Wisdom, Mungo’s Hi-Fi & Beans on Toast, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July, Rowden Paddocks, Bromyard, Herefordshire

BUG JAM FESTIVAL Line up includes Reverend and The Makers, Wham!Duran & South Church, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northamptonshire

SHREWSBURY INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL Featuring Greg Davies, Joe Lycett & Terry Alderton, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July, various locations, Shrewsbury Town Centre

L Fest Music, arts & comedy festival featuring Sian Evans, Fri 21 - Mon 24 July, Prestwold Hall, Loughborough

BURTONFEST 2017 Line-up includes Union J and X Factor 2016 winner Matt Terry, Sat 22 July, National Brewery Centre, Burton-on-Trent

SPLENDOUR FESTIVAL Line-up includes Kaiser Chiefs, Tony Hadley, Billy Ocean, Busted, Gabrielle Aplin, British Sea Power, Georgia & Black Grape and many more, Sat 22 July, Wollaton Park, Nottingham
Gigs

INDIGO GIRLS Mon 24 July, Birmingham Town Hall
CHUCK PROPHET & THE MISSION EXPRESS Tues 25 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
THE ACOUSTIC SESSIONS Tues 25 July, The Jam House, Birmingham
THE CISSY STONE BAND Wed 26 July, The Jam House, Birmingham
CHARLOTTE BERG Wed 26 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
PETE KENT Wed 26 July, The Robin, Bilston
THREADED PLUS JACK COOKSON Wed 26 July, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
CELINE DION Thurs 27 July, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham
JAKE MITCHELL Thurs 27 July, O2 Academy, Birmingham
JESSICA LYNN Thurs 27 July, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
THE KUT Thurs 27 July, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
MILK TEETH Thurs 27 July, The Flapper, Birmingham
JOE MCELDERRY - SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES LIVE! Thurs 27 July, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
GRAHAM BONNET BAND Thurs 27 July, The Robin, Bilston
UFO Thurs 27 July, Birmingham Town Hall
DEL CAMINO Thurs 27 - Fri 28 July, The Jam House, Birmingham
THE VIOLENT HEARTS, DISJOY & BARE PALE Fri 28 July, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
PALESTINE JAZZ: NAI BARGHOOUTI, MOHAMED NAJEM & FRIENDS Fri 28 July, Birmingham Town Hall
KEITH EMERSON: A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF LEST LIFE Fri 29 July, Symphony Hall, B’ham
MR BEN Fri 28 - Sat 29 July, The Jam House, Birmingham

Classical

CSO YOUTH ORCHESTRA ACADEMY
Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) and Michael Petrov (cello). Programme includes works by Shostakovich, Barber and Stravinsky.
Sun 30 July, Birmingham Town Hall

Comedy

JOHN ROBINS Wed 26 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham
CARMEN LYCH & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 27 July, The Glee Club, Birmingham
GEOFF NORCOTT & CARL DONNELLY Thurs 27 July, mac, Birmingham

Theatre

MORGAN & WEST’S UTTERLY SPOTTING SPECTACULAR MAGIC SHOW FOR KIDS AND CHILDISH GROWN UPS
Morgan & West mix brain-busting illusion and good old-fashioned tom-foolery, Sun 23 July, Artix, Bromsgrove
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL JR: AMATEUR STAGING PRESENTED BY PAULINE QUIRK ACADEMY SOILHULL, Sun 23 July, The Core, Solihull
BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS
Adaptation of the Dennis Potter tale about seven English children on a summer’s afternoon during World War Two, Sun 23 July, Artix, Bromsgrove
DNA Stages School of Acting present an amateur version of Dennis Kelly’s teenage drama, Sun 23 July, Artix, Bromsgrove
ROLE PLAY Taking Chances present a new comedy about a couple who think they may have a ‘seven-year itch’, Sun 23 - Tues 25 July, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham
DERREN BROWN: UNDERGROUND Latest stage show from the award-winning master of psychological illusion, Mon 24 - Wed 26 July, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
ROOM ON THE BROOM Tall Stories’ musical adaptation of the classic picture book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffer, Mon 24 - Wed 26 July, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
FUNNY GIRL Natasha J Barnes stars as Fanny Brice in this touring production of the critically acclaimed West End musical, Mon 24 - Sat 29 July, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
BILLIONAIRE BOY Heartbreak Productions present David Walliams’ tale of love, loss and friendship, Tues 25 - Wed 26 July, Buxton Park, Solihull
MISS SAIGON Cameron Mackintosh’s acclaimed new production of Boublil & Schönberg’s legendary musical, Wed 26 July - Sat 23 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome
THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS An outdoor staging of the classic children’s adventure featuring Ratty, Mole, Badger and Mr Toad, Thurs 27 July, Birmingham Botanical Gardens
ABOUT A GOTH Gritty Theatre present a rude and raucous comedy about the trials and tribulations of being a 17-year-old gay Goth in the 21st century, Thurs 27 July, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham
CURIOS CREATURES Squash Box Theatre fuse puppetry, slapstick, live music and lots of amazing natural-history facts to uncover the mysteries of the animal kingdom, Thurs 27 July, mac, Birmingham
ROBERT WHITE, JAVIER JARQUIN & JASON PATTERSON Fri 28 - Sat 29 July, Jongleurs Comedy Club, B’ham
GAVIN WEBSTER, ANDY ROBINSON, HELEN BAUER & KEVIN GILDEA Sat 29 July, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

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WIND IN THE WILLOWS An outdoor staging of the classic river bank adventure featuring Ratty, Mole, Badger and Mr Toad, Sat 29 July, Packwood House, Solihull

IN THE MIDST Play based around the Burt family and its secrets, Sat 29 July, The Crescent Theatre, B’ham

THE OVER COAT Enact Academy present a new work of youth theatre adapted from Nikolai Gogol’s classic, Sat 29 July, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

CIRCUS DAY: TAKING FLIGHT Aerial theatre created for visually impaired audiences, Sun 30 July, mac, Birmingham

WONDERLAND Wendi Peters, Dave Willetts & Kerry Ellis star in Frank Wildhorn’s musical adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland and Through The Looking Glass, Mon 24 - Wed 28, Mon 31 July

JURASSIC PARK (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 24 - Wed 28, Mon 31 July

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:
 Released from Wed 26 July, showing at selected cinemas

GIRLS TRIP (15) Released Wednesday 26th July

ANGELES IN AMERICA PART TWO: MILLENIUM APPROACHES (NT LIVE) Hound of Love (tbc)
The Big Sick (15)
The Wall (tbc)
Wish Upon (tbc)

FESTIVALS
WARWICK FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Oysterband, Spooky Men’s Chorale, Andy Kershaw & Gælica, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 July, Warwick School, Warwick
CARFEST Line-up includes Deacon Blue, Dodgy, Manic Street Preachers, Melanie C, Rick Astley, Seaseick Steve, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Texas & Tom Odell, Fri 28 - Sun 30 July, Bolesworth Castle, Tattenhall, Cheshire
BIRCHFIELD JAZZ FESTIVAL Line-up includes Milton Godfrey, Kate Luxmoore, Handsworth Community Choir and African Roots Fusion Band, Fri 28 - Sun 30 July, St Mary’s Church, Birmingham
MADE FESTIVAL Line-up includes Chase & Status, Gigs, Gorgon City, Sub Focus, MY KANG, Chris Lorenzo, High Contrast, Camo & Krooked, NuLogic, Danny Byrd, DJ Hype, DJ Hazard, Gorgon City & Cause & Affect, Sat 29 July, The Rainbow Venues, Digbeth, Birmingham
SHARDFEST Line-up includes Lucy Spraggan (pictured), 5 After Midnight, DJ Luck & MC Neat, Sat 29 - Sun 30 July, Norman Chamberlain Playing Fields, Birmingham

and visual artist, for a ‘fun, interactive and sensory treat’, Sat 29 July, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

FLOATING PATTERN Stitched textile workshop exploring the manipulation of fabric and paper elements in a free and relaxed way to produce a personal pattern-based piece of work, Sat 29 July, RBSA, Birmingham

FREE DAY AT THE MUSEUM OF THE JEWELLERY QUARTER Explore this extraordinary time capsule on a lively guided tour, Sat 29 July, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

MEDIEVAL OPEN DAY See knights do battle on the ruins, learn about the medieval history of the castle and take part in craft activities, Sun 30 July, Wedley Castle Ruins, B’ham

DINOSAUR SCHOOL Bonkers about brachiosauruses? Mad about microraptorst? Then head over to Dinosaur School - a week packed with dinosaur facts, fossils, art, model making and stories, Mon 31 July - Fri 4 Aug, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:
HIDDEN FIGURES (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 24 - Wed 28, Mon 31 July

IMPROVING YOUR IMAGES Receive step-by-step guidance on how to edit and organise images of your artwork using a range of imaging tools, Wed 26 July, Royal Birmingham Society Of Artists, Birmingham

PAW PATROL Come and see Marshall & Chase at intervals throughout the day. Perfect for little ones, Wed 26 July - Wed 30 Aug, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham

ENAMELLING, PEWTER CASTING OR PAPERMAKING WORKSHOPS Discover more, through a variety of hands-on activities, about how furnaces, fire and steam were used in the Industrial Revolution, Wed 26 July - Sun 3 Sep, Enginiuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

ONE Gnome is lost in the wilds of the estate - help his friends to find him, Thurs 27 July, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

FLOWERS IN MIXED MEDIA Explore a mix of inks, watercolour and collage to create a final piece of art, Fri 28 July, Royal Birmingham Society Of Artists, Birmingham

POTTERY WORKSHOP Take part as a family in a creative workshop, learning a variety of techniques using real clay, Fri 28 July, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

LET’S MAKE ROBOTS WORKSHOP Hands-on workshop explaining how to assemble a robot with pens for legs that will draw for you, Fri 28 July - Fri 1 Sep, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

BEAR-ILLIANT NEW 5K Attendees are encouraged to get sponsored to stroll through Sutton’s beautiful parkland, before enjoying the event’s dedicated Activity Zone, Sat 29 July, Boldmere Gate, Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield

EXPERIMENTS IN VIRTUAL REALITY Join James Alliban, designer, programmer
Coventry Transport Museum

C4RTI5TS
REIMAGINING THE CAR

14 ARTISTS, 1 CHALLENGE...
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Step into a world where art and engineering collide, and see cars as you’ve never seen them before in this incredible new exhibition.

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