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Your 16-page week by week listings guide

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CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON
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Coventry & Warwickshire
ISSUE 387 MARCH 2018

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Coventry arts venue awarded £4.2million

Coventry’s Warwick Arts Centre has been awarded £4.2milion by Arts Council England towards its 20:20 capital project, which will see a major redevelopment of the venue taking place between now and autumn 2020. Commenting on the award, Peter Knott, Area Director for Arts Council England, said: “We’re delighted to be investing in Warwick Arts Centre, particularly at this time, as Coventry gears up to host UK City of Culture in 2021. The application was very strong and the vision for the future is really exciting. Warwick Arts Centre has a fantastic reputation, and its future promises more great things. Sitting alongside a fantastic, repurposed building will be a programme that attracts even more local, national and international visitors.”

Mad scientists present AutoScience Live show

An AutoScience Live show, presented by two ‘mad scientists’ and featuring interactive demonstrations explaining the science that drives cars, is among the attractions to enjoy at the British Motor Museum this Easter. Family tours, technic workshops and a Secret Mission family trail also add to the fun - as does a traditional Easter Egg hunt, which comes complete with a motoring twist and takes place over the Easter weekend (30 March to 2 April). For more information, visit britishmotormuseum.co.uk

The Little Match Girl makes her way to Malvern

Critically acclaimed production The Little Matchgirl And Other Happier Tales is stopping off at Malvern Theatre this month. The hit show, which premiered at Shakespeare's Globe and brings together music, laughter, puppetry and magic, includes the Hans Christian Andersen stories of The Princess And The Pea, The Emperor’s New Clothes and Thumbelina. The production runs in Malvern from Wednesday 21 to Saturday 24 March. For more information, visit malvern-theatres.co.uk

A Christmas Carol heading back to the RSC

The Royal Shakespeare Company’s critically acclaimed production of A Christmas Carol will make a welcome return to Stratford-upon-Avon in December. David Edgar’s adaptation of Charles Dickens’ festive classic proved a massive hit with family audiences last Christmas, and will return to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre from 4 December to 20 January.

For more information, visit rsc.org.uk

Albany Theatre launches brand new studio space

Coventry’s art deco Albany Theatre has launched a brand new performance facility. The Studio, part of The Albany’s commitment to Coventry communities and their Arts For Life initiative, aims to host accessible, diverse and sometimes challenging work which is better suited to a flexible and more intimate performance space.

4 whatsonlive.co.uk
**Gallery unveils its British Folk Art collection**

Warwickshire’s Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park unveils its popular British Folk Art Collection - the biggest in the UK - to the public on Saturday 17 March, following a £100,000 renovation of its galleries. The term ‘folk art’ is used to cover a wide-ranging number of artistic and/or artisanal objects created by people who were not formally trained, or who transferred skills from other professions to create their own artworks.

**International dance festival makes a welcome return**

The hugely popular Birmingham International Dance Festival (BIDF) makes a welcome return from 1 to 24 June. Produced by the Birmingham Hippodrome-based DanceXchange, the event will feature ‘fantastic dance in the city’s theatres and a takeover of Birmingham’s streets and squares, with show-stopping free performances and opportunities to get dancing’. The programme, inspired and curated around themes of imagination and digital art, will present work that shows choreographic practice at its best, pushing the boundaries of dance as a contemporary art form. Alongside the performance programme will be a series of professional and industry events, debates and workshops - creating a valuable space for dialogue, collaboration, the sharing of ideas and the development of skills... To find out more about the festival, visit bidf.co.uk

**BRB announces new season**

Birmingham Royal Ballet’s 2018/19 season will comprise 159 performances of 11 different productions at 13 venues across the country, with 90% of the shows taking place outside London. The new season, entitled Beyond Words, will feature four world premieres as well as old favourites including La Fille mal gardée, Beauty And The Beast and Hobson’s Choice. The Birmingham Hippodrome-based company’s touring destinations include Shrewsbury and Cheltenham... For more information, visit brb.org.uk

**New date for Coventry’s Godiva Festival**

Coventry’s annual Godiva Festival will this year take place from 31 August to 2 September at the city’s War Memorial Park. Coventry City Council have decided to hold the event later in the year than usual, due to the BBC Music-hosted Biggest Weekend festival taking place in the park at the end of May. For more information, visit godivafestival.com

**Topical issues placed under the microscope at Stratford Literary Festival**

The 11th Stratford Literary Festival takes place next month, from Sunday 22 to Sunday 29 April. The popular event includes discussion and debate around some of today’s hottest topics, including post truth, the #MeToo campaign, the far right, the threat to nature in the UK, the place of women in 21st century Britain and the ways in which the subject of death is dealt with in a ‘denial society’. Contributors to this year’s festival include Costa winner Jon McGregor, Gavin & Stacey creator Ruth Jones, and MPs Harriet Harman and Jess Philips (pictured), who’ll be commenting on 100 years of Women’s Suffrage. For more information, visit stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk
Award-winning opera stars reinvent Mozart’s famous Magic Flute

Olivier Award-winning OperaUpClose will bring their new version of Mozart’s The Magic Flute to the Coventry Belgrade Theatre on Saturday 12 May. The production will re-invent the opera ‘in fabulous new robes for the era of Trump and recessions, casting rays of light and love into the darkness’. For further information about the show, visit belgrade.co.uk.

Shakespeare education, RSC style!

New research from the University of Warwick shows that using the Royal Shakespeare Company’s (RSC) approach to studying Shakespeare can significantly improve student language acquisition and skills - with some schools reporting better SATS and GCSE English scores as a result. The research, carried out on behalf of the RSC, included 100 schools nationwide who are involved in the Company’s Associate Schools’ Programme, a long-term partnership initiative that aims to immerse teachers and students in a new approach to teaching Shakespeare, based on the techniques RSC actors use in rehearsals.

Celebrating 60 years of the Belgrade

To coincide with World Theatre Day (Tuesday 27 March), Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre is marking the 60th anniversary of its opening in 1958. Since becoming the UK’s first civic theatre to open after World War Two, the Belgrade has had plenty to celebrate, enjoying local and national renown as the city’s only venue housing both home-produced and touring shows. Over the years, it has continually expanded and diversified its offerings, via changes such as the construction of its B2 studio, which marked its own 10th anniversary in 2017.

Celebrations get into full swing next season, with a glittering Diamond Anniversary Gala and some ‘exciting’ home-produced shows in the autumn. But before that, look out for announcements and events in spring and summer, including a performance takeover of the neighbouring CET Building in July, as well as a birthday quiz and a live BBC radio broadcast on the day itself.

Solicitors fight hunger...

The Rotary Clubs of Kenilworth and Leamington Spa Regency are urging schools, youth groups, community groups and local businesses to join them and a group of solicitors in ‘the fight against hunger’. Lawyers from Coventry-based Band Hatton Button have teamed up with Rotary for the one-day Tackling Hunger event (King Henry VIII School, Sunday 22 April), where at least 400 volunteers are needed to help pack 100,000 meals for families overseas. Food bank collections will also be made on the day for UK families.

Sting musical sets sail for the region

Rock star Sting is bringing his north-eastern shipbuilding musical to the Midlands. The Last Ship tells the story of how a community copes with the demise of the shipbuilding industry in Tyne & Wear. The show runs at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham from Monday 16 to Saturday 21 April.

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READY TO SHOP

Coventry’s art & performance festival is a UK first
In the wake of the excitement surrounding Coventry’s City of Culture win, there’s been something of a lull in new announcements, as people put their heads together to formulate new plans for the coming years. This month, however, the 2021 momentum will start building up again as the city centre comes alive with art and performance for the UK’s first ever Shop Front Festival.

Supported by the City of Culture Trust and the Heritage Lottery’s Great Places scheme, this first major cultural happening to follow the 2021 announcement is being masterminded by Chris O’Connell and Julia Negus, the creative duo behind performance company Theatre Absolute and its distinctive Shop Front Theatre home in Coventry’s City Arcade.

“What we’ve been developing is a kind of pilot festival that’s very much about experimenting and testing ideas to help us in the future,” explains Julia. “Although we’ve taken our own work to other festivals before, we’ve never actually created a festival ourselves, so even though we’ve been making theatre for a long time, we’re still learning new things from this process.”

Located in a repurposed chip shop formerly known as Fishy Moore’s, Britain’s only Shop Front Theatre was established in Coventry in 2009 after Chris toured his play Zero to Chicago.

“There was a cluster of companies there working on what they called ‘storefront’ theatre,” he explains, “the idea being that companies embedded themselves in disused retail units to offer a different way of looking at the city and a different approach to theatre. The manifesto, if you like, is that you just work with what you have and don’t wish for any more. It’s not a terribly original idea - it’s something that’s been done all over Europe and America - but other than a few short-term, pop-up pieces, there’s not much of a scene here in the UK.”

“After we came back and set up Shop Front Theatre, we initially only expected to be here for 18 months, but nine years later we’re still here,” laughs Julia. “So even though we used to be a touring company, Shop Front has kind of become our comfort zone now, and the idea of taking work outside and applying our methodology to other spaces in the city is kind of scarcely exciting!”

To assist them, the pair have enlisted the support of Lou Lomas and Orit Azaz, both experienced in producing outdoor work. They also intend to learn as much as possible from the international artists, producers and speakers flying in to appear alongside local talent at the event.

“One of the key things to emphasise is that there’s a really good mix of local, regional, national and international people involved,” says Chris. “As well as learning from other people, we want to use the festival to really recognise the rockbed of talent here in the city as much as we can.”

Spread out in locations across the city centre, the eclectic programme they’ve assembled encompasses everything from DIY dance to soda bread baking, and from a city symphony to an interactive, improvised soap opera called Latherland. Three key original commissions will sit alongside established pieces, but even these will be adapted, responding directly to the architecture, history and people of the city.

One example is The Empathy Museum’s A Mile In My Shoes, for which artist Clare Patey has collected shoes and stories from numerous donors. Participants drop into a pop-up ‘shoe shop’ and pick up a pair of shoes to walk around in, along with some headphones to listen to the donor’s story. As well as acquiring three new stories from local people which will continue to tour with the show elsewhere, the production will also be made to blend in with its surroundings with the help of Architecture students from Coventry University.

Meanwhile, original work will include Made In Store - an interactive story trail created by Talking Birds’ Nick Walker, which will take audiences into shops and restaurants around the city and see their owners getting involved in the performance.

“I think when we first arrived,” recalls Julia, “some of the shopkeepers were a bit like, ‘What’s a theatre doing in a chip shop?’ But over the years they’ve been to see our shows and we’ve developed great relationships, and discovered that they have some fantastic stories as well.

“For Made In Store, we put a call out, and straight away people were like, ‘Yeah, we want to be involved, just let us know what we need to do.’ James at Wagamama, for example, suggested putting out some special food samples that you had to take like a potion as part of the story, so they’ve been really buying into it and using their imaginations as well.”

It seems like rather a lot to be getting along with, yet it’s also clear that this is really just a starting point for something that Chris and Julia are hoping will become a regular fixture in the city’s cultural calendar. So how often do they envisage it recurring, and where will it go from here?

“I think the idea is that by 2021 it should be something pretty much fully formed,” says Julia. “In some respects I think we should have a go at it again next year, just to keep the momentum going, but it depends. Obviously finance is a key thing - are we able to grow the budget at all? Also availability - not just of artists but also of ourselves, because we’re not really festival curators and we’re also making our own work here. Plus, there’ll have to be an evaluation period to see what worked and what didn’t this time. But eventually I think, maybe in two or three years’ time, we’d like to look beyond the city centre to other areas as well - maybe somewhere like Jubilee Crescent, for example.”

Shop Front Festival runs throughout Coventry city centre on Friday 23 & Saturday 24 March. Most events are free, with some ticketed performances. Visit the Shop Front Theatre website for full details.
The lights of the Tame Hare were a cheering sight on a bitterly cold February night in the heart of Leamington, the welcome from our friendly waiter an even warmer one given the Arctic conditions outside.

Not as warm as the hot air being spouted by a table of too-young-to-be-yuppie males we had the misfortune to be sat rather too near to, though. The trio of privileged bores liked nothing more than the sound of their own voices, regaling each other with tales of work trips to Ibiza and £10k pay rises (all figures quoted were in Ks), and contemplating whether an upmarket new apartment was a ‘good buy’ or not. Their own ‘goodbye’ couldn’t come soon enough, as it was difficult to tune them out on a quiet Friday night in the bistro-style restaurant opened a couple of years ago by chef Jonny Mills, who honed his skills at Leamington’s Mallory Court and The Cross in Kenilworth, among other venues. Those skills are now being put to use in the creation of quality, value-for-money food using local and seasonal produce.

On the basis of our experience - nearby diners notwithstanding - he’s making a great fist of it. The menu of four starters, mains and desserts might seem limited (there are only two chefs, who also wash up), but quality always beats quantity, and my partner and I still needed a few minutes to make up our minds. We did so accompanied by some lovely homemade sourdough bread with herb oil. I ended up regretting not saving it to mop up my chicken liver starter, a lovely smooth parfait made with mango, curry, apple and gem lettuce - a combination that sounds bold but was actually delightfully subtle. It was a bit naughty not to mention the nut garnish on the menu, though.

My partner opted for cured salmon with beetroot, horseradish and dill, which I eschewed due to an ongoing aversion to beetroot. She reported it to have a delicate flavour and a ‘zippy’ fresh taste. She was even more effusive about her main course, describing the pork belly with smoked bacon, black pudding, cabbage, roasted garlic and cider as “bloody gorgeous”. After sampling a mouthful, I had to agree - beautifully cooked pork augmented by a brilliant mix of complementary flavours and textures.

If it had been a competition, my main course of lamb with cauliflower, pomegranate, caper and anchovy would’ve come a close second. The mix of flavours and even colours worked wonderfully - the tiny heads of crunchy cauliflower contrasted beautifully with the colourful pomegranate and anchovy, while the lamb was braised to perfection, a virtual crust on the outside giving way to succulent meat within.

The dish also came with a smattering of couscous not mentioned on the menu - another naughty omission, given the prevalence of wheat allergies these days - so it was just as well we’d only ordered one side of triple cooked chips to share. No Jenga-style building brick nonsense here, by the way - just huge, perfectly crisp, chunky chips, which we almost finished.

Leaving one chip in the bowl seemed to justify a third course, giving us the chance to embark on another taste adventure.

I’d like to think I was the more ambitious, choosing a dessert which featured artichoke, while my partner opted for chocolate. In terms of pure enjoyment, she was the marginal winner again, but there was little to choose between my iced ginger parfait with muscovado cheesecake (the artichoke - in the shape of candied pieces - was a revelation) and her delectable combination of beautifully light, icky chocolate with refreshing juniper and blackcurrant sorbet.

And ‘refreshing’ is an adjective that equally applies to the restaurant itself, which offers inventive fine dining without the slightest pretence - or need for a second mortgage. Starters range from £6.50 to £7.50, mains from £15 to £18 and desserts from £7 to £8.

A fabulous-looking tasting menu at £60 a head, meanwhile, ought to provide an enjoyably wild ride for the tastebuds...

Steve Adams

REVIEW: The Tame Hare
Bistro-style restaurant offering a value-for-money experience

Food: nnnnn
Service: nnnnn
Ambience: nnnnn
Overall value: nnnnn
OVERALL: nnnnn

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Leamington Spa
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Solihull's Mell Square welcomes Esabella’s
Solihull shopping centre Mell Square is now home to Esabella’s social eating house. With menus inspired ‘by land, sea and garden’, the venue provides a wide array of imaginative dishes for customers to enjoy. Favourites include crispy goats cheese with pineapple and red pepper, and rump of beef served with truffle cauliflower cheese, bone marrow and cabbage.

Real ale festival fun at Coventry’s rugby club
The annual Coventry Beer Festival takes place at Coventry Rugby Club on 2 & 3 March. The popular event, organised by the Coventry & District branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), will feature 75 real ales and, for the first time, a key cask stand. The festival’s opening times are: midday to 4pm and 6pm to 11pm on the Friday, and midday until 11pm on the Saturday.

New Indian gastro pub to open in Solihull
The team behind Zindiya in Birmingham are to open The Tap & Tandoor in Solihull next month. The new venue, which has been described by its owners as an Indian gastro pub, is set to replace The Saddlers Arms following its closure in May last year. The Tap & Tandoor will serve traditional Indian grilled dishes, curries and a range of craft beers.

Popular burger restaurant & cocktail bar gets the green light to build a rooftop bar in Worcester city centre
Popular burger restaurant & cocktail bar Hanbao have had plans approved by the council to build a rooftop bar in Worcester city centre. Due to open to the public towards the start of the summer, the structure will connect with the current Hanbao premises in Foregate Street and another Grade II building to the rear. Hanbao, which means hamburger in Chinese, boasts a mouthwatering menu of burgers and sides. Favourites include the Hanbao Burger (double marinated patty, sesame seeds, cheese, lettuce, spring onions, red onion, toasted sesame mayo, teriyaki glaze and kimchi paste) and the Odd Future (double patty, glazed donut, cheese, bourbon bacon jam, candied bacon, fresh chilli and baconnaise). For more information or to book a table visit hanbao.co.uk

Lebanese restaurant chain to open premises in Birmingham’s New Street Station
Lebanese chain Comptoir Libanais is opening in Birmingham’s New Street Station this spring. Guests can enjoy delicious food all day, including warm Lebanese wraps, marinated grills, tagines, man’ousha, mezze and mezze platters, breakfast options and much more. A selection of baklava and Lebanese desserts will also be on offer, as well as homemade lemonade, fresh rose mint tea, juices, cocktails and a selection of Lebanese wines and beers, specially imported from the Bekaa Valley... Comptoir Libanais is set to open on Monday 26 March. For more information, visit comptoirlibanais.com
Back in the top 10, success tastes sweeter second time around, reckons the ’80s synth pioneer...

The rise, fall and subsequent rise of Gary Numan is an arc almost Shakespearean in its scope. A London punk, Numan’s early adoption of synthesizers catapulted him to international mega-stardom in the 1980s - but subsequent career decisions, coupled with a critical backlash, led to a rapid and complete decline. Yet Numan soldiered on, his efforts culminating in a run of uncompromising yet increasingly lauded releases that have seen him unexpectedly back in the charts.

Sitting in his Los Angeles home, there’s no one more surprised than Numan that the harsh apocalyptic sci-fi opus Savage (Songs From A Broken World) is his highest-placed long-player since 1981’s Dance, hitting number two on release in September 2017 (nestled between Ed Sheeran and Foo Fighters).

“I’m proud of myself,” he says of his 22nd studio collection. “It’s heavier than normal (chart albums) and it looks at topics that are not usual for chart records. So I’m aware that the avenues to sell it to people are limited - not usual for chart records.

“I’d say that it’s far more difficult to come back from the dead than startin g out - by a factor of 10. My early success came so quickly, it was so special, so life-changing, but I didn’t appreciate it at the time. But this time I do, because I know that it’s so rare.

“From 1990 to 1992, my career was dead and buried. I made Sacrifice at home, on a home studio, without a record label. I thought I’d be going back to doing music as a hobby. It was desperately grim. I hardly had any money, I was in debt. (It’s been) so many, many years to get to number two, I’m so appreciative of it. It’s been the most amazing year - with the album, the [last] tour, which sold out. It’s been going from good, to great, to even better!”

Gary cites the recently repackaged Dance as the point where his career began to slide. Released in 1981 and including the top-10 single She’s Got Claws, the album peaked at number three but failed to sell like its predecessors. Featuring Mick Karn and Rob Dean from Japan, and Queen drummer Roger Taylor, the atmospheric, textured, fluid and daring collection is a far cry from the egotistical hubris of his massive Wembley Arena Farewell Concerts the same year.

“I really liked Dance. When it came out (my record label) Beggars Banquet were not especially happy with it. After Telekon, Dance went sideways. If you’re thinking about a commercial record, that’s not the right way to go. But artistically, it was the right thing for me to do. I wanted the bass guitar to be a melody instrument.

“My life had changed, and when your life changes, your work has to reflect that. I made the record differently; it’s a bit off-the-wall, a bit more experimental. I didn’t want to become stagnant, I didn’t want to be safe, to be famous for doing the same thing again and again.

“Beggars tried to express that it wasn’t the commercial record I needed to keep moving upwards. But I was young. It did okay, it went Silver, but still, it was the beginning of the decline. It dipped and every one after that dipped a bit more. But I loved it, I was proud of it. It was very much what I wanted to do.”

After Dance, Numan went funky, dressed like Mad Max, teamed up with University of Birmingham graduate and Shakatak co-founder Bill Sharpe, got his flying licence, and was widely ridiculed in the British media. For everything.

His rehabilitation, if you will, began in the early noughties. He was namechecked by a younger generation of artists (Beck, NIN, Marilyn Manson, Chicane) and sampled (The Sugarbabes, Basement Jaxx). By the time of 2015’s uncompromising Splinter (Songs From A Broken Mind), Numan’s decision not to succumb to the lure of the lucrative nostalgia/retro market and just roll out those 35-year-old hits made perfect sense. The critical response was uniformly glowing and respectful.

Live, Numan’s not afraid to delve into his back catalogue (Cars, Are ‘Friends’ Electric?, I Die: You Die, etc), but lurching back and forth onstage, his jet-black hair flicking across his face, it’s the recent material which really shines, as he recounts tales of a technology-stripped world decimated by global warming, where cultures merge simply to survive. As he says, it’s a far cry from the boy-meets-girl fluff of your average top-10 hit - but then again, Numan was never your average pop star.

“The things I write about come from the little dark corners of my head. I don’t want to repeat myself. People who’ve been around for a long time often tend to bland out a bit and become more middle of the road, or they hide in nostalgia and live on the back of what they did before. Both of those options are awful. Being proud of your legacy is one thing, but becoming trapped by it is another thing entirely.”

Here’s to the future!

The re-released Dance is available now on double-purple vinyl via Beggars Arkive.

Gary Numan brings The Savage Tour Pt.2 to Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Tuesday 13 March.

whatsonglive.co.uk 15
Ronan Keating
Ricoh Arena, Coventry, Fri 30 March
Ronan Keating gained worldwide attention when his single When You Say Nothing At All was featured in the film Notting Hill. He’s recorded nine albums since 1999 and sold over 20 million records worldwide - and that’s not including the 25 million sold as a member of Boyzone!
He visits Coventry this month with his Keating/Time Of My Life show.
Read our interview with Ronan online at whatsonlive.co.uk

Steven Wilson
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 22 March
Four-time Grammy nominee, multi-instrumentalist and producer Steven Wilson brings his huge global tour to the Midlands.
A must-see event for any progressive rock fan, the show promotes latest album To The Bone and uses ‘driving futurist rock and spectral electronics to elegiac hyper-space ambience and dizzying, squalling guitars’...
So if that’s your thing, you know what to do...

The Urban Folk Quartet
Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 22 March
The Urban Folk Quartet are like no other folk band. With Birmingham’s vibrant and diverse music scene having a significant influence on their work, they dabble in all kinds of sounds, from funk grooves and Middle Eastern melodies to afrobeat and north Indian rhythms. They tug their collective forelock in the direction of more traditional folk too, describing their music as ‘fiddle-led’ and drawing ‘heavily on celtic dance forms and traditional song’.

Magnum
Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 2 March; The Assembly, Leamington Spa, Wed 7 March
British hard-rock legends Magnum visit the Midlands this month as part of their Eternity World Tour, which coincides with the release of brand new offering Lost On The Road To Eternity, their 20th studio album in a 40-year career.
The current line-up is a five piece, incorporating Rick Benton on keyboards, bassist Al Barrow and drummer Lee Morris.

Slim Chance
The Tin Music & Arts, Coventry, Thurs 8 March
Formed by the late, great Ronnie Lane of The Faces and The Small Faces, Slim Chance comprise three original members, including the legendary Billy Nicholls.
The band’s aim is to create a show which celebrates the range of Ronnie’s later music. Expect to hear classics such as How Come, The Poacher, One For The Road, Ooh la la, Debris and more.

Emily Maguire
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 23 March
“Music to me is all about uplifting, comforting and inspiring people,” says singer-songwriter, composer, multi-instrumentalist, poet and mental health advocate Emily Maguire.
Classically trained, as a child, on piano, cello, flute and recorder, Emily taught herself guitar aged 21, when she found herself stuck at home with fibromyalgia. “I started writing songs and the illness suddenly became a complete blessing in disguise, as I had all this time on my hands to write.”
Having released fifth album A Bit Of Blue last year, Emily’s thought-provoking lyrics and expressive vocals make for a stunning live performance.
Jennifer Pike Plays Tchaikovsky
Malvern Theatre, Mon 12 March
A former BBC Young Musician of the Year - winning the title at the tender age of 12 - highly rated English violinist Jennifer Pike here joins the Stratford-upon-Avon-based Orchestra of the Swan to present a programme featuring works by three legendary composers: Prokofiev, Schubert and, as the concert's title evidences, Tchaikovsky.
“I view myself as being a vessel for the composer’s intentions,” explains Jennifer in talking about her approach to musicmaking. “It isn’t the performer who everyone should be coming to enjoy, it’s the composer’s music.”

The Bach Players: Music For Easter
St Mary’s Church, Warwick, Tues 13 March
Making their 11th visit to Warwick in 17 years, the Bach Players get their collective teeth into a programme that features as its centrepiece Boccherini’s Stabat Mater, a work composed in 1781.
The piece is complemented by movements from Haydn’s Seven Last Words and earlier compositions by Johann Fischer.

Omo Bello: La Belle Époque
Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 23 March
Presented as part of a Debussy festival marking the centenary of the French composer’s death, this ‘ravishing all-French recital’ is performed by Franco-Nigerian soprano Omo Bello.
Omo's training in Paris ensures she has a special connection with both Debussy and Fauré, whose Cinq mélodies 'de Venise' is featured in the programme.
The recital also sees her performing works by Jules Massenet and Erik Satie.

Coul Quartet: From Russia With Love
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 8 March
Warwick University’s quartet-in-residence since 1977, Coul have also made a name for themselves in places as far flung as the Americas, Australia, India and the Far East.
This latest offering sees them presenting a celebration of Russian music, with pieces by Stravinsky, Shostakovich and Borodin all featuring.
The programme is completed by a quartet which Beethoven was commissioned to write by a Russian prince, a work that the composer chose to round off with a foot-stamping Russian dance!

Stratford-upon-Avon Symphony Orchestra
Stratford Artshouse, Sun 25 March
Founded more than 50 years ago, the Stratford-upon-Avon Symphony Orchestra present programmes of tuneful music from the 17th century through to modern times. Their programme for this month’s concert comprises Brahms’ St Anthony Variations, Mozart’s Concerto for Clarinet and Mendelssohn’s third symphony. The soloist is Anton Clarke-Butler.
EASTER
AT TOWN HALL SYMPHONY HALL

HARSHDEEP KAUR
WED 28 MARCH
7PM
TOWN HALL

JUSTIN’S BAND
TUE 10 APRIL
11AM & 3PM
TOWN HALL

TIDDLER & OTHER TERRIFIC TALES
FRI 30 MARCH-TUE 3 APRIL
VARIOUS TIMES
TOWN HALL

AYANNA WITTER-JOHNSON
THU 12 APRIL
8PM
SYMPHONY HALL

SISTER ACT
LIVE CHOIR
SAT 31 MARCH
7:30PM & 2:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

THE AMAZING BUBBLE MAN
SAT 14 APRIL
10:30AM
TOWN HALL

FOIL, ARMS AND HOG
SAT 7 APRIL
8PM
TOWN HALL

THE WHITNEY HOUSTON SHOW
SUN 15 APRIL
7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
SUN 8 APRIL
2:30PM & 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

LISA STANSFIELD
TUE 17 APRIL
7PM
SYMPHONY HALL

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MISTRESS AND MISFIT

Comedian Shappi Khorsandí comes to Birmingham
Shappi Khorsandi’s brilliant new show, Mistress And Misfit, focuses on Emma, Lady Hamilton, the mistress and misfit who lit up the gaiety of nations during the Georgian era. The comedian has had a ball writing the show. “It’s about passion and tragedy,” she says. “What better things are there to write comedy about?”

After an acclaimed sell-out run at the Edinburgh Festival last summer, Shappi is now about to embark on her biggest nationwide tour yet, performing Mistress And Misfit at 50 venues around the country. “It’s like skydiving. The adrenaline rush is incredible. It’s probably the only time in my day when I’m utterly focused and have no responsibility to anyone else apart from the audience.

“It’s like a lovely, warm, relaxing bath, but a very high-octane one! You can’t reproduce that feeling. If I haven’t done stand-up for a while, I just have to get back on stage. I need it like oxygen!”

“When you’re a stand-up, people have come to see you and share the experience with you. They can read a book about Emma, Lady Hamilton, but the way I tell her story draws people into my stand-up, which I hope is why they bought a ticket in the first place!”

In Mistress And Misfit, Shappi recounts the largely untold story of England’s unsung heroine, Emma, Lady Hamilton. For too long, she’s been reductively tagged as Nelson’s mistress and a bit of a harlot (you work in a scullery maid to Lady Hamilton. So perhaps my gran was the Emma of her time!)

Women’s lib wasn’t uppermost in people’s minds in Georgian times. Emma moved heaven and earth to drag herself from scullery maid to Lady Hamilton. So maybe she occasionally danced naked on tables to get a jump on her rivals, but who hasn’t done that? As a fellow naked dancer on tables, Shappi is eager to celebrate the woman England betrayed.

“I was fascinated by Emma. She was really clever and compassionate and very hard done by. She was also a master of re-invention and a fantastically creative person. I initially tried to write a novel about Emma, but it was too hard, so I thought I’d do a show about her instead. That was easier and funnier. I relate Emma’s life to modern women and, like all stand-ups, I draw people into the world as I see it, so it’s still a very personal show.”

Shappi has notched up numerous high-profile television appearances during the course of her career, and is also a bestselling author, having released A Beginners Guide to Acting English in 2009 and her critically lauded debut novel, Nina Is Not OK, in 2016. So does she see any similarities between Emma and herself.

“We were both artist’s models. She modelled for great artists, I modelled for GCSE students in Tower Hamlets. I have never worked in a brothel, but I have had moments that I would only tell you about on stage or when very drunk. I will be sharing some of those stories in Mistress And Misfit.”

The comedian, who since 2015 has held the role of President of Humanists UK, also sees many parallels between the attitudes towards women then and now. “Any woman who does anything seen as salacious is still demonised today. That’s a very modern theme. It’s not exclusive to Georgian times.

“In the show, I talk about Emma being married to a man 30 years older than her. If they were from a lower class, women had no financial independence and no options. That happened 200 years ago, but much more recently, my grandmother was married when she was 13 to a man in his 30s. So perhaps my gran was the Emma of her time!

“The term ‘gold-digger’ is still banded about willy-nilly, when we don’t know anything about that woman. Women who are viewed as marrying above their station are still derided. There are massive parallels with today.”

The Establishment closed ranks against Emma after Nelson’s death. “Just before the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson wrote an add-on to his will asking that Emma and his daughter be looked after in the event of his death: ‘that is the only favour I ask of my king and country as I go to fight their battle’.

“But Emma ended her days derelict, penniless and alcoholic in Calais. There was no monument to her. We haven’t been told what a massive impact Emma had on Nelson’s life. Historians have wanted to make Trafalgar about Nelson and not about ‘this harlot’.”

Mistress And Misfit is also full to the brim with wonderfully offbeat facts about Emma, many of which make for hilarious routines. “I did a lot of research to find quirky things that would work in stand-up. For instance, I discovered that there was something called the Harris List, which reviewed all the prostitutes in London. It was like a Trip Adviser of its time for prostitutes. At the time, one in six women in Covent Garden worked as a prostitute. So if you were visiting Covent Garden, you would take along your Harris List to see who tickled your fancy. Crazy.”

For all that, Shappi emphasises that the show is not meant to be a lecture. “It’s not a history lesson. It’s about now. It’s not my intention to make anyone learn anything. It’s up to people if they want to take notes. But if they bring a notebook, that might put me off because I would think they were critics and pick on them!”

Shappi’s already high profile was further enhanced last year by her appearance on I’m A Celebrity. She laughs that one of the knock-on effects of the programme is that it’s made her a better driver.

“I’m not very good at parallel parking. But jumping out of an aeroplane on I’m A Celebrity made me put things into perspective. Now I think, ‘What was I worried about? If someone is beeping their horn as I try to park, they can just wait’.

“I’m A Celebrity makes you really look at life from a different angle. You’re too hungry to think of anything apart from what to do with your life. You have time to figure that out. And financially, it’s meant that I can now afford to lose money putting on my play! As a creative person, I’m happy to do certain well-paid jobs that fund my labours of love.”

Speaking of jobs, what would Shappi be doing if she weren’t a stand-up? “I’d have my own cleaning company. I once was a cleaner. That’s another thing I have in common with Emma because she worked as a cleaner, too!”

Shappi Khorsandi will be at The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, on Sunday 25 March
Flight Of The Conchords
Genting Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 22 March
This New Zealand folk comedy duo stop off in Birmingham as part of a brand new UK and Ireland tour, their first in seven years. The pair have previously billed themselves as ‘formerly New Zealand’s fourth most popular guitar-based digi-bongo acapella-rap-funk-comedy folk duo’. Their show sees them combining witty observation, characterisation and acoustic guitar music to excellent effect.

Rachel Parris
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 30 March
Rachel has passed this way before, as a founder cast member of smash-hit improv show Austentatious, a comedy play presented in the style of Jane Austen. An award-winning musical comic whose name recently appeared on the BBC’s Hot Talent List, Rachel has starred in numerous TV shows, including Murder In Successville, Plebs, The IT Crowd and the satirical Mash Report.
This latest touring show sees her bringing together stand-up with character and musical comedy, as she explores what messed-up message she can offer impressionable young minds when she gives a speech at her old school.

SO Comedy
The Core, Solihull, Thurs 15 March
Welsh stand-up comedian Robin Morgan shares the limelight with local funnyman David Morgan (pictured) in this latest offering from SO Comedy, the live-performance arm of the company behind The Graham Norton Show.

Daliso Chaponda
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 3 March; MAC, Birmingham, Fri 9 March; Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Fri 16 March; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 22 March
Malawian Daliso has blended the slick North American style of comedy he learned while working in Canada with a real talent for brevity, ensuring that his gags, although not one-liners, nonetheless come thick and fast.
Like all good comedians, he can adapt his act to suit his audience - on a previous trip to the Midlands, he performed a filthy set in Birmingham’s Silhouettes Strip Club before heading off to regale family audiences at the Greenbelt Christian Festival!
Jokes include: “I moved to the UK because of the BNP - they said the immigrants were taking all the best jobs and all the best women, and I thought, ‘wow, that sounds like a good deal to me!’”

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Edinburgh favourite Lucy Porter has a mischievous style of comedy that marks her out as a real talent. She's an absolute charmer, but don’t be fooled - her pleasant girl-next-door demeanour conceals a beautifully twisted mind! Highlights of her career include achieving a record score on Celebrity Mastermind, in which her specialist subject was American funnyman Steve Martin.

She returns to the Midlands this month with latest touring show Choose Your Battles. Her big bag of gags includes, “My husband proposed to me over the phone. I said yes straight away, but I should’ve asked who was calling.”

Jonathan Pie
Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 1 March; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 7 March; New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 8 March

The media’s decision to pounce on Jeremy Corbyn in the wake of his first Labour leadership victory lit the torchpaper for actor Tom Walker to create the larger-than-life character of Jonathan Pie. YouTube sensation Pie is supposedly a British political correspondent - but one who likes to rant at the camera.

The media’s savaging of Corbyn pushed Walker over the edge. “I got really annoyed by it,” he admits, “by the ridiculousness of the British press.” But neither Walker nor Pie are so left-wing that they wear blinkers: “I think these days, especially on the left, people go, ‘You either agree with me 100% or you’re on their side’. Anyone who votes Conservative is a bigot and anyone who voted leave is a bigot. So I think the left are in danger of forgetting political nuance. I hope that Pie reminds them of it.”

Ivan Brackenbury
The Bramall, Birmingham, Thurs 15 March

Ivan Brackenbury is an inept hospital radio DJ - and he’s also the creation of former XFM radio presenter Tom Binns. A Jongleurs award winner, Binns created the character relatively early in his career, and has enjoyed great success with him ever since. Brackenbury’s radio roadshow comes complete with inappropriate records and bungled cues.

Ian D Montfort and Rob Mulholland are the other comedians taking to the stage for this latest evening of comedy at the Bramall.

Lucy Porter Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 9 March

Edinburgh favourite Lucy Porter has a mischievous style of comedy that marks her out as a real talent. She’s an absolute charmer, but don’t be fooled - her pleasant girl-next-door demeanour conceals a beautifully twisted mind! Highlights of her career include achieving a record score on Celebrity Mastermind, in which her specialist subject was American funnyman Steve Martin.

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Richard Herring
Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 15 March; Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Thurs 22 March; Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Sat 24 March; Wolves Civic Hall, Fri 27 April; Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 13 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 3 June

Richard Herring has developed a reputation as one of the UK’s most inventive and original comedians, cleverly using real-life trials and tribulations to inform his high-quality line in comic patter.

He’s certainly not a man to shirk big or controversial subjects when it comes to his comedy shows. Previous tours have seen him ponder religion (Christ On A Bike), politics (Hitler Moustache) and penises (Talking Cock). This latest offering finds him contemplating the subject of ageing - and in particular how it feels to have reached his half century.

The show is a sort-of sequel to Oh F*** I’m 40, which, it will surprise nobody to hear, he took on the road a decade ago.
OPERA FOR ALL

Heather Kincaid dispels the myth that opera is elitist by sharing her first experience of the art form - seeing Welsh National Opera’s production of Lohengrin at Birmingham Hippodrome...

Back in 2013, I started reviewing Birmingham Hippodrome shows as part of the theatre’s First Night Blogging scheme. As a lover of the arts in general, opera was always something I’d been curious about, but I’d never quite had the guts to take the plunge and give it a go before, particularly given my lack of knowledge about classical music.

Had I been simply buying my own ticket, the worst my first time could have meant was a potentially unenjoyable night out at the theatre - nothing much to complain about, in the scheme of things. But attending as a reviewer made me nervous. What if I didn’t get what was going on or couldn’t get to grips with the conventions of the form? What if not enjoying it was my fault rather than the show’s? What if, even if I did enjoy it, I then found myself without the technical insight or vocabulary to effectively describe and analyse the experience?

As I’d learned already, however, sometimes the best experiences come out of the situations you’re most unsure about. As a student, I’d actually inadvertently ended up appearing in light, comic opera, tempted by pirate costumes and chocolate money to sign up to my university’s G&S Society without the faintest idea of who or what Gilbert & Sullivan were. In that instance, I’d ended up loving every minute of it and staying for the full three years, despite the fact I still can’t really read music. So in the end, I figured just writing about a show you didn’t know much about couldn’t be half as scary as performing in one!

And boy was I glad I went along! In a way, I guess I got lucky in Wagner’s Lohengrin being my first. I’ve since learned that, while they’re enjoyable enough in their way, the sort of stereotypical stories of tragic romance and fallen women of the ilk of La Traviata aren’t quite so much to my tastes as Wagner’s epic tales of angels, gods and ghost ships - and I have the confidence in the validity of my own opinions to say so.

Musically, nothing could have prepared me for the scale and scope of hearing an opera performed live - if you’ve only ever listened to recordings, you won’t have the faintest sense of how the sound just washes over you and envelopes you. As a friend later said to me when I was lucky enough to experience Mariinsky Opera’s Ring Cycle in full, it “does something to your soul”.

Another thing I’ve learned is not to worry too much about the technical jargon. There is definitely room for experts who specialise in that - but to the average reader of a more general blog or publication, it’s as like as not to be intimidating and off-putting. The job is more to capture a flavour of the show overall: if your audience are people more or less like you, you need to describe what you experienced, and not what you feel as though you should have picked up on. I’m not the first to have said all this, of course - Armando Iannucci is an opera lover, and a passionate advocate of getting more people engaged in conversations around classical music.

Don’t forget there are other aspects to talk about as well. Opera is a dramatic form, specifically designed to bring together all the arts, so don’t feel as though it’s somehow sacrilegious to talk about the acting and the design as well as the orchestra and singing, particularly when it comes to Welsh National Opera (WNO) shows. In years gone by, it’s been more fashionable for operas to be performed more stiffly, with all the emphasis on vocal performance. These days, however, you can expect to see actors as accomplished as any you’d see in a play - they just happen to be able to sing sublimey too!

With WNO, there’s a clear emphasis on directorial vision, inventive set design and coherent, accessible productions. In much the same way as the RSC approaches Shakespeare, they’re not afraid to radically reimagine things in ways that appeal to contemporary audiences, rather than being painstakingly purist. This means their shows always feel fresh and vital, and moreover, everyone has to come in with an open mind: if you’re a newcomer, you’re not the only one who doesn’t quite know what to expect!

Don’t be afraid to trust your instincts - things you’ve already encountered will offer you an in, and it’s interesting to explore how opera has influenced later developments. Wagner’s style is pretty cinematic, while something like The Marriage Of Figaro is farcical, a kind of domestic sitcom, and Bizet’s Carmen is almost proto-musical theatre. WNO embraces the connections too, often staging musicals like Sweeney Todd or Kiss Me Kate as part of operatic seasons.

As with anything, of course, the more you see, the more confident you become, and the better equipped you are to explain your thoughts and opinions. Yet five years later, as a professional arts journalist, my first opera still holds a special place in my heart, remaining one of my favourites that I’ve seen to this day.

WNO this month bring their spring season to the Hippodrome, performing three compelling works: Verdi’s epic La Forza del Destino; Mozart’s brilliant Don Giovanni, based on the legend of Don Juan and set during the Spanish Golden Age; and Puccini’s Tosca, a thrilling story of love, lust, loyalty and corruption.

Welsh National Opera perform their three spring-season shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 6 to Thursday 8 March.

whatsonlive.co.uk 23
The Play That Goes Wrong
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 19- Sat 24 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 27 - Sat 31 March
Mischief Theatre Company’s Edinburgh Festival show returns to the region on the back of a fantastic reputation, a couple of successful West End runs and some really positive reviews from the last time it stopped off in the Midlands.
For those not in the know, the play focuses on the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society’s attempt to put on a 1920s-set murder-mystery.
The only trouble is, the bumbling thespes 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...

Suggs: What A King Cnut: A Life In The Realm Of Madness
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 11 March
After selling out his previous touring production, Madness frontman Suggs here takes a lighthearted look at a career that’s featured plenty of memorable moments - from experiencing vertigo on the roof of Buckingham Palace, to nearly blowing the closing ceremony of the London Olympics.
Oh, and watching his underpants fall to earth on David Bowie’s driveway...

Quartet
The REP, Birmingham, Tues 6 - Sat 10 March
Familiar telly faces Paul Nicholas (Just Good Friends), Wendi Peters (Coronation Street), Sue Holderness (Only Fools And Horses) and Jeff Rawle (Drop The Dead Donkey) star in this revival of Sir Ronald Harwood’s bitter-sweet comedy about four ageing opera singers growing old disgracefully.

City Love
Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 13 - Sat 17 March
Described as a painfully honest tale of two people ‘navigating work, London and life’, Old Joint Stock Theatre and Illuminate Productions’ fast-paced comedy tells the story of a pair of struggling city workers whose mundane lives are transformed by their chance meeting with one another.
NoFit State Circus: Lexicon
New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 28 March - Sat 21 April
NoFit State's show is being presented as a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the first ever circus, created in 1768 by Newcastle-under-Lyme equestrian and cavalryman Philip Astle.
Described by the company as ‘a daring, seductive and utterly contemporary take on circus for a seated audience in the round’, Lexicon brings together ‘vivid storytelling, evocative live music and spectacular physical performance’.
The production is part of a year-long project aiming to ‘enable pioneering work, forge new partnerships, build new audiences and embed circus at the heart of modern-day culture’.

Education, Education, Education
MAC, Birmingham, Tues 20 March
The much-admired Wardrobe Ensemble are the company behind this ‘love letter to the schools of the 1990s’, presenting a show that’s rich in their trademark inventiveness and irreverent humour.
Set in 1997, the play takes a wry look at the world of education in the era of Cool Britannia, focusing on life in a secondary school where chaos and confusion is the order of the day...
Specialising in the exploration of stories that have shaped recent political history, Wardrobe Ensemble were Fringe First award winners at the Edinburgh Festival last summer.

Oedipus And Antigone
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 29 March
Suitably inspired by the critical acclaim they garnered for their 2017 tour of Richard III, Beyond The Horizon once again hit the road, this time with a reimagining of Sophocles’ greatest works.
“Oedipus is a murder-mystery in its most twisted of forms,” explain the company.
“Antigone stands alone against the state, challenging the power of the law with the unwritten law of the gods...”

The 4 Clowns Of The Apocalypse
The Performance Hub, University of Wolverhampton, Walsall, Fri 16 March; Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 18 March; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Tues 20 March; Pentabus Theatre, Bromfield, nr Ludlow, South Shropshire, Thurs 22 March
Absolute Theatre and Portugal’s Teatro do Montemuro are the collaborators behind a show that’s been described as ‘a sensorial, nonsensical delight for the whole family’. When the Horsemen of the Apocalypse gather together to do their worst, they find themselves seriously hampered by some epic-scale incompetence.
Expect an evening incorporating universal destruction, spectacular visuals and the occasional deck chair...
GREAT SHOWS COMING UP AT WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE

TUE 6 MAR
THE LIONEL RICHIE SONGBOOK

SAT 10 MAR
BRIAN CONLEY
STILL THE GREATEST ENTERTAINER* IN HIS PRICE RANGE

TUE 20 MAR
BRENDAN COLE
ALL NIGHT LONG

WED 21 MAR
CLOUDBUSTING
THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH

THU 22 MAR
80'S MANIA

FRI 30 MAR
CHAMPIONS OF ROCK

SUN 1 APR
CIRQUE DU HILOWIOUS
MAGICAL MISCHIEF TOUR

THU 5 APR
DOREEN
RISE OF THE YAM-YAM

SAT 7 - SUN 8 APR
PEPPA PIG’S ADVENTURE

BOOK ONLINE grandtheatre.co.uk • BOX OFFICE 01902 42 92 12
Legally Blonde
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 13 - Sat 17 March; New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 21 - Sat 26 May
Based on the hit movie starring Reese Witherspoon, this critically acclaimed musical follows the story of college sweetheart and homecoming queen Elle Woods, a girl who just doesn't take no for an answer. So when her boyfriend, Warner, announces that he's dumping her for someone more serious, Elle puts down the credit card, hits the books and heads for Harvard Law School.
X-Factor finalist Lucie Jones stars as Elle, with Rita Simons (Roxy Mitchell in EastEnders) and Bill Ward (Emmerdale and Coronation Street) lending heavyweight support.

The Case Of The Frightened Lady
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 19 - Sat 24 March; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 12 - Sat 16 June
After enjoying a hit with their adaptation of Ruth Rendell’s A Judgement In Stone, the Classic Thriller Company now turn their attention to a 1931 play from the prolific pen of Edgar Wallace.
An English writer who went to Hollywood, Wallace was busily penning the screenplay for the classic 1933 King Kong movie when he unexpectedly died from undiagnosed diabetes...
When Inspector Tanner investigates a gruesome murder at an ancestral home, it isn’t long before he realises that nothing is quite as it seems...

Son Of A Preacher Man
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 13 - Sat 17 March
Wolfblood actress Michelle Gaye stars alongside Hollyoaks’ Alice Barlow in a touring show that channels the Swinging ‘60s music of the iconic Dusty Springfield.
Named after the late singer’s 1968 chart hit and directed by Strictly’s Craig Revel Horwood, the show follows the story of three lovesick individuals from different generations who seek solace at the original site of Soho’s legendary Preacher Man hang-out - a once-happening joint where youngsters with fresh ideas, a craving for the latest sounds and an aspiration for love would dance until they dropped...

Evita
Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 20 - Sat 24 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 3 - Sat 7 April
Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice’s third major collaboration opened to rave reviews way back in the late 1970s. It has since garnered a reputation as one of the greatest musicals ever to grace West End and Broadway stages. Telling the real-life story of Eva Peron, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Peron, the show is packed to the rafters with memorable numbers, including On This Night Of A Thousand Stars, Buenos Aires, You Must Love Me, Another Suitcase In Another Hall and, of course, the classic Don’t Cry For Me Argentina.
The Importance Of Being Earnest
Lichfield Garrick,
Tues 27 - Sat 31 March
This famous Oscar Wilde play is a rightly adored work of farce that proudly sits at the very pinnacle of British comic theatre. The story revolves around the attempts of Jack to marry his true love Gwendolen, in spite of the fact that Algernon is masquerading as Jack’s wayward brother Earnest in order to see his exquisite ward, Cecily. Add the ingredient of the redoubtable Lady Bracknell and there’s little wonder that disaster looms large on Jack’s horizon... Familiar television faces Gwen Taylor (as Lady Bracknell) and Susan Penhaligon star in a show that’s visiting Lichfield as part of a UK tour.

FLATPACK FILM FESTIVAL
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PAPER CINEMA
TEENAGE MERMAIDS
BIRMINGHAM 1968
VR ADVENTURES
FILM, AND THEN SOME.
13 – 22 April 2018
Venues across Birmingham
White
The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 9 - Sun 11 March
Scottish theatre company Catherine Wheels have garnered an impressive reputation for the innovative quality of their children's shows - and this eight-year-old offering makes it easy to see why. Cotton and Wrinkle live in an orderly world full of birdsong and birdhouses, where everything is white. But when the colour red makes an unexpected appearance, the friends are faced with the very real prospect of needing to embrace change...

Little Bo Peep
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 10 March
Sea Legs Puppet Theatre’s 10th anniversary show uses puppets, scenery, music and song to bring to life a selection of favourite nursery rhymes. The 45-minute show, accompanied by a 15-minute ‘meet the puppets’ session, is suitable for children aged from two to seven.

Penguin
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 9 March; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 10 March
Masterful theatricals Long Nose Puppets return to the road with an engaging puppet version of the award-winning book by Polly Dunbar. The company are advertising the show as ‘exciting, surreal, full of surprises and laughs’, with lively songs by Tom Gray of Gomez fame thrown in for good measure.

There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly
Malvern Theatres, Sat 10 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 29 April
The People’s Theatre Company reckon they’ve written this show with 102-year-olds as well as two-year-olds in mind, so why not grab your granny en route to the theatre and make it a family occasion? A feast of sing-along songs combines with a colourful collection of animal characters in a show that promises plenty of heartwarming family fun.

Horrible Histories: More Best Of Barmy Britain
Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 8 - Fri 9 March; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 30 May - Sat 2 June
If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn’t you?! - then the Barmy Britain productions are well worth catching. Alongside providing answers to such searching questions as ‘what would happen if a Viking moved in next door?’ and ‘would you stand and deliver to dastardly Dick Turpin?’, the shows also invite their audiences to escape the clutches of Burke & Hare, move to the groove with the partying Queen Victoria and prepare to do battle in the First World War. In short, and as the publicity says, they are ‘a truly horrible history of Britain - with all the nasty bits left in!’

Monstersaurus!
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 31 March - Mon 2 April
Having created a whole world of whacky inventions and incredible monsters, young inventor Monty doesn’t know what to do with them all... The creators of Aliens Love Underpants make a welcome return with this ‘monster-ously good show’, which comes complete with original music and plenty of audience participation.

So You Think You Know About Dinosaurs!
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 1 March
An absorbing experience for dino-loving youngsters is very much on the cards when this interactive, educational and refreshingly entertaining show hits town. Dr Ben Garrod is the dinosaur aficionado imparting a T-Rex-sized heap of fascinating facts about all manner of prehistoric creatures. Film footage from the BBC’s Planet Dinosaur ensures there’s plenty to look at while Dr Ben’s chatting away.
Swan Lake

www.viennafestivalballet.com

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Christopher Eccleston

Shakespeare belongs to me
With a string of high-profile screen roles, awards and nominations to his name, Christopher Eccleston is easily one of the most recognisable and well-regarded actors working in the UK today. It’s somewhat bemusing to realise, then, that it’s only now, at the age of 53, that he’s finally making his RSC debut, as he prepares to tread the boards in Shakespeare’s Scottish play.

If you didn’t know better, you might assume it was a choice - perhaps the Salford council-estate lad simply decided that Stratford-upon-Avon and the Bard weren’t intended for the likes of him. On the contrary, however - this is a life goal that’s taken him decades to realise.

“What a lot of people don’t know about me is that I became obsessed with Shakespeare when I was 15,” says Eccleston. “He’s my favourite writer, and not a day goes by when I don’t quote or read him. In a way, this is the most important role I’ve ever done. I fell in love with Macbeth when I was 17 and playing Macduff in an amateur production. At that time - and this is absolutely true - I decided that my greatest ambition was to play Macbeth with the Royal Shakespeare Company. So it was actually my love of Macbeth that made me follow this career path.”

Few who know anything about Chris Eccleston will be surprised to hear his explanation for what has held him back: he’s never made a secret of how he feels his northern, working-class roots have affected perceptions of him. But these days it’s more than just a class war that he’s fighting: he’s aware of the lack of diversity on all fronts in the British theatre world.

“On one level, Macbeth justifies murdering Duncan to himself because he feels that he would be a good leader who would make the country safe. He’s militarily and politically concerned that Scotland is vulnerable because Duncan is ageing and his regime is allowing them to be attacked by both Norwegians and rebels within their own troops, so he thinks a stern hand is needed.

“But he also acknowledges that he is ambitious, and the woman who loves him encourages him to embrace that. He knows he’s never going to be properly rewarded for his work, because he doesn’t have the blue blood and the old school tie, so if he really wants it, he’s going to have to take it.”

In Polly Findlay’s new production, contemporary parallels for this discontent are emphasised by a modern setting - something she also employed in her last collaboration with Eccleston on Sophocles’ Antigone, in which his performance as Creon attracted comparisons with Tony Blair. It’s understandable that Eccleston shies away from such direct connections. Still, it’s hard to get away from a sense that Macbeth feels particularly timely now, especially given that four new UK productions - a film, an opera and two plays - are all premiering at around the same time this year.

There are other elements at play, however. What’s less often talked about but essential to an understanding of the play is Macbeth’s obsession with the idea of a legacy. Arguably, it’s not so much the initial death of Duncan that causes things to fall apart, but actually the subsequent slaughter of Banquo and attempted murder of his son.

Not content with his own shot at regal glory, the childless Macbeth is consumed by jealousy at the witches’ prediction that his best friend’s offspring will succeed him. This feeds back into the intense domestic relationship at the heart of the story, showing how easily the personal becomes political.

“For me, the play is scenes from a marriage as much as it’s about a traitor. The relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is key. It’s a deep, romantic love, and even in their madness, right up to the end, the most important person in either of their worlds is each other. I think they’ve been devastated by the loss of their children and their inability to have more, and a lot of what happens is them both trying to make each other feel better about that absence of a future.

“We wanted to avoid the misogynistic, unmotivated portrayals of women that you sometimes get with Lady Macbeth - that idea of the female evil and the temptress. Macbeth might have more lines, but Niamh [Cusack] and I are both on the poster and I think the characters are absolute equals.”

Add to this the show’s female director, and it’s broadly young and ethnically diverse cast, and you get the sense that real change is underway. And as Eccleston himself confesses, it’s been a truly democratic rehearsal process in that everyone is happy to ‘steal’ ideas from everyone else.

Macbeth shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Tuesday 13 March to Tuesday 18 September.

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Vienna Festival Ballet
Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 13 March; The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Wed 14 March; Evesham Arts Centre, Mon 2 April; Bedworth Civic Hall, Fri 13 April; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 15 April; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Wed 16 May; Old Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 17 May

Featuring a talented array of young dancers, Vienna Festival Ballet typically spend eight months of the year performing works from their extensive repertoire in venues across the UK.

They’re stopping off in the Midlands on numerous occasions during this month and next, and will be performing either Swan Lake or Sleeping Beauty (check each venue’s website to find out which).

Motionhouse: Charge
Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 13 March

Leamington-based Motionhouse’s multimedia show about energy is the third element of Kevin Finnan’s Earth Trilogy, developing on themes explored in Scattered (2009) and Broken (2011) about man’s relationship with water and the earth.

Making use of digital projections to create an on-stage world in which dancers and images interact seamlessly, the show features six performers using dance and acrobatics to explore the human body, ‘tracing the incredible story of energy in our lives’.

“Charge is an amazing collaboration between artists and scientists,” explains Motionhouse co-founder Finnan. “I find the science behind the show fascinating, and I want to use my inspiration from this to create a presentation for audiences to enjoy - but which also makes them think about the role that energy plays in their lives.”

ACE Dance: Ten
MAC, Birmingham, Thurs 8 March; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 26 April

Humankind’s universal stories are placed under the microscope by Jose Agudo, whose work strikes an overarching tone that’s both epic and poetic. In the process, the choreographer brings ‘hints of Flamenco movement to the contemporary vocabulary underpinned by ACE Dance & Music’s inimitable African style’.

“Ten builds on the themes of spiritual dedication and striving,” explain ACE. “Ultimately, this piece is about humanity’s urge to reach for the power of 10 - the universal symbol of completion.”

Tango Moderno
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 9 & Sat 10 March

“This is our fourth show,” says Flavia Cacace about Tango Moderno, in which she stars with fellow ex-Strictly favourite Vincent Simone, “and every time we put a show together we want the audience to see something not expected, not the same thing that we’ve done before. It was very hard this time, as so much choreography, so many stories and so many ideas have already been done, but we decided to go down the modern route.

“The different thing with Tango Moderno is that normally we’re characters within the story, but this time we thought we’d take a step away from that and actually narrate the story. We have an urban poet who’s also going to be our singer, and together with him, we’re going to help narrate. It’s not really one story, it’s going to be lots of small stories that start in act one and are finished off in act two.”
Performing in my own city has always been important to me, not just as a dancer but as an artist.
Now in its 35th touring year, Transitions Dance Company provides a platform for the next generation of international contemporary dance performers can showcase their talents.

Comprising 14 dancers, the company has just hit the road on an international tour where it will present a triple bill of specially commissioned works by three internationally renowned choreographers - Richard Chappell from the UK, Helsinki-based choreographer and performer Jarkko Partanen, and award-winning Israeli choreographer Hagit Yakira.

Among the company of dancers is Birmingham-born Kieran Lee Covell. Kieran joined in 2017 and is excited about being involved with Transitions as it celebrates its 35th year of touring. “I feel very fortunate and lucky to be a part of this fantastic company,” he says. “It’s been a fun and exciting experience creating the three pieces for our tour, and I look forward to seeing what’s in store when we set off.”

Graduating from Birmingham Ormiston Academy (BOA) with a Professional Diploma in Contemporary Dance, Kieran’s performance repertoire includes acclaimed Motionhouse production The Voyage, Charles Lineham’s Transfer Laban at Canary Wharf, Camilla Isola’s Unravel El Bolero at The Place and Matthew Bourne’s Sleeping Beauty and Swan Lake, both at Birmingham Hippodrome.

On returning to showcase his talents in Birmingham, Kieran says: “Performing in my own city has always been important to me, not just as a dancer but as an artist. The experiences I had in this city have shaped who I am today and got me to this point in time. I’m really looking forward to going back and seeing just how much the dance industry has changed, and also rememniscing about my own journey that started in Birmingham.”

Transitions is promising ‘an engaging and enjoyable night out’ - but what more can audiences expect from the triple bill? “They can expect energy, relationships and a clear sense of story-driven movement material,” says Kieran. “Each company member has embodied the three pieces with their own artistic voice, so it will be interesting to see how each performance evolves over the length of the tour.”

In Richard Chappell’s When Running Starts And Stops, the company fuses classical ballet with martial arts-influenced movement style, using animalistic physicality to explore themes of community, fear, violence and migration.

Jarkko Partanen’s Lovers, meanwhile, marks the choreographer’s first collaboration with the company. Exploring connection, commonality and individual expressions, Partanen organises the performers in such a way as to allow them to act, understand and continue only through touch. The result is a work that’s bizarre, comic and poignant.

Completing the triple bill is Kieran’s personal favourite, Hagit Yakira’s The Ar/ct Of Moving Forward. A ‘simple yet mesmerising’ piece performed by the entire company, it uses the literal and poetic act of forward movement, travelling and time as its focus, and is performed to an original score composed by long-term collaborator Sabio Janiak. “Yakira’s unique and vibrant personality, along with her extensive choreographic knowledge, have not only made me enjoy the piece and process of making it, but inspired me to think about how I can use my own voice to perform, and what performance means for me,” says Kieran.

So with 10 UK dates and several international performances, what is Kieran most looking forward to about touring the triple bill? “Travelling to different locations and experiencing the different atmospheres of each place. I’m also looking forward to experiencing how a professional company tour works, and the different roles and responsibilities that everyone will have during the processes.”

Transitions Dance Company perform at The Old Rep, Birmingham on Tuesday 27 March and Albany Theatre, Coventry, on Friday 18 May.

For full tour information visit trinitylaban.ac.uk/transitionsdc
Film

Film highlights released in March...

Red Sparrow CERT 15 (140 mins)
Starring Jennifer Lawrence, Joel Edgerton, Matthias Schoenaerts, Charlotte Rampling, Mary-Louise Parker, Jeremy Irons
Directed by Francis Lawrence (USA)
Dominika Egorova (Lawrence) was a ballerina before being recruited by the Russian intelligence service Red Sparrow. Now she’s thinking of becoming a traitor...
From the director of I Am Legend and The Hunger Games films.
Released Thurs 1 March

Gringo CERT 15 (110 mins)
Starring David Oyelowo, Charlize Theron, Joel Edgerton, Amanda Seyfried, Thandie Newton, Sharlto Copley
Directed by Nash Edgerton (USA)
An American businessman with calamitous money problems, Harold Soyinka (Oyelowo) finds himself embroiled in a multi-billion dollar scam. Directed and co-produced by Nash Edgerton, the brother of the Australian actor Joel Edgerton.
Released Fri 9 March

Game Night CERT 15 (130 mins)
Starring Jason Bateman, Rachel McAdams, Billy Magnussen, Sharon Horgan, Lamorne Morris, Kyle Chandler
Directed by John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein (USA)
One night a week, a group of friends gathers for an evening of games, when they’re invited to join a murder-mystery party. And the murder is real... From the directing duo behind 2015’s Vacation.
Released Fri 2 March

Tomb Raider CERT 12a
Starring Alicia Vikander, Dominic West, Walton Goggins, Daniel Wu, Kristin Scott Thomas, Nick Frost
Directed by Roar Uthaug (USA)
As the intrepid adventuress Lara Croft, Alicia Vikander leaps into the shoes vacated by Angelina Jolie. A bike courier in East London, Lara decides to ditch her wheels in order to solve the disappearance of her father, who was last seen on a mysterious island off the coast of Japan. Of course, she has no idea what she’s getting herself into...
This time the franchise has a slightly Scandinavian seasoning, as Vikander is Swedish and the director, Roar Uthaug (The Wave, 2015), is Norwegian. Filmed in South Africa, London and Wiltshire. Available in 3D and IMAX.
Released Fri 16 March
Film highlights released in March...

**Journeyman** CERT tbc  
**Starring** Paddy Considine, Jodie Whittaker  
**Directed by** Paddy Considine (UK)  

Spoiler alert: Journeyman is not Rocky. It’s not even Cinderella Man, in which Paddy Considine played the best friend of Russell Crowe’s James J Braddock, the real-life world heavyweight champ. Being Considine’s second film as writer-director, following the stark and uncompromising Tyrannosaur (2011), Journeyman was unlikely to embrace the clichés of the boxing film. The director himself plays Matty Burton, a middleweight boxing champion at the end of his career who is coming to terms with being the father of a baby girl. His wife, the beautiful, sexy and caring Emma, is superbly rendered by Jodie Whittaker, who makes what could have been a one-dimensional trophy wife entirely credible. Considine, who has been a professional actor for almost two decades, knows how to hammer out truthful performances from his cast, and he doesn’t disappoint here. He, himself, is terrific as the charming pugilist, and his dialogue doesn’t hit a false note.  
**Released Fri 30 March**

**You Were Never Really Here** CERT 15 (90 mins)  
**Starring** Joaquin Phoenix, Ekaterina Samsonov, Alex Manette, John Doman, Judith Roberts  
**Directed by** Lynne Ramsay (UK/France/USA)  

As a traumatized war veteran, Joaquin Phoenix won the best actor gong at Cannes last year. The film also nabbed the award for best screenplay and follows the journey that the veteran takes to redeem his soul – by tracking down the abducted daughter of a New York politician.  
**Released Fri 9 March**

**Peter Rabbit** CERT PG (95 mins)  
**Starring** Rose Byrne, Domhnall Gleeson, Sam Neill; with the voices of James Corden, Daisy Ridley, Elizabeth Debicki, Margot Robbie, Sia  
**Directed by** Will Gluck (USA/Australia)  

Margot Robbie, who briefly supplied the voice of Winnie-the-Pooh in Goodbye Christopher Robin (2017), is now the voice of Flopsy in this part-animated, part-live action take on the Beatrix Potter characters. James Corden voices the title role. From the director of the critically derided Annie remake.  
**Released Fri 16 March**

**Pacific Rim: Uprising** CERT 12a  
**Starring** John Boyega, Scott Eastwood, Cailee Spaeny, Charlie Day, Burn Gorman  
**Directed by** Steven S. DeKnight (USA/China)  

The very future of mankind is under threat when the gargantuan sea monsters (the Kaiju) emerge from the depths again, this time accompanied by a massive man-made robot that has switched sides. Oh, gosh. Available in 3D and IMAX.  
**Released Fri 23 March**

**Ready Player One** CERT 12a  
**Starring** Tye Sheridan, Olivia Cooke, Ben Mendelsohn, TJ Miller, Simon Pegg, Mark Rylance  
**Directed by** Steven Spielberg (USA)  

In 2045, a virtual world becomes a battleground as gamers attempt to crack its secret in order to gain its ownership. More dystopia, but with Steven Spielberg behind the camera this should be better than most. One hopes.  
**Released Fri 30 March**
Wilderness
The New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 6 May
Works which engage with the natural world and reflect man’s innate need for solitude are showcased in this new multimedia exhibition, one of several shows in which the gallery is exploring the theme of wilderness. Highlights include filmworks focusing on marginal individuals who’ve chosen to move away from society, ‘living precarious existences in remote places where nature rules’. Barren high-altitude salt deserts, snow-blanketed mountain tops and environments in transition - such as coastlines and volcanoes - are other places and locations brought into view by the contributing artists.
Visual Arts

Pop! British & American Art 1960 - 1975
Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Sun 3 June
This transatlantic showcase of the Pop Art movement’s most iconic artists includes an eight-metre-long fighter plane by James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol’s Campbell’s Soup tin, a lament for Marilyn Monroe by Pauline Boty, Joe Tilson’s iconic images of Che Guevara and prints by Peter Blake.
The show has been developed as a partnership between the Herbert and Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

Langlands & Bell Internet Giants: Masters Of The Universe
Ikon Gallery, Wed 21 March - Sun 10 June
British artists Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell are here celebrating 40 years of working together, presenting a show that explores the profound and increasing impact of global technology companies in the Information Age.
Featuring the iconic new architecture of organisations such as Apple, Facebook, Microsoft and Google, the exhibition includes relief sculptures, installations and portraits.
The show is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring an essay by Anthony Vidler and an interview with the artists by Dr Hans-Michael Herzog.

Working In Colour
The Barber Institute, Birmingham, until Sun 10 June
Presented to complement The Rhythm Of Light - the Barber’s main spring exhibition - Working In Colour explores four centuries of printmaking and colouring techniques. It includes works by artists as diverse as Gillray, Turner, Max Ernst and Edward Lear.
The show contemplates the possible functions, meanings and effects of colourful prints, taking a look at the ways in which they reflect changing artistic and social trends, technologies and audiences.

Ravilious & Co: The Pattern Of Friendship
Compton Verney Art Gallery, Warwickshire, Sat 17 March - Sun 10 June
Watercolours, woodcuts, lithographic prints, wallpaper and fabric design all feature in this touring presentation, which celebrates the work of artist and designer Eric Ravilious (1903-1942). As well as showcasing key works from his career, the exhibition also explores his significant relationships and working collaborations with an important group of friends and affiliates, examples of whose artwork are also included.

Diaspora Pavilion
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 29 April
A group of artists here respond to the concept of diaspora - worldwide communities which have resulted, via descent, from the movement in historic times of people from a smaller geographic locale.
The works on show were last year presented at the 57th Venice Biennale. The exhibition featured nearly 40 artworks which reflected or responded to the relevance of diaspora as a lived-in modern-day reality.
The show featured pieces by 19 artists, seven of whom have contributed to this Wolverhampton exhibition.
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Easter events from around the region

**Egg-citing Easter Activities**
Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 24 March - Sun 15 April
The Black Country Living Museum has good form when it comes to ensuring the Easter hols are an exciting time for visiting families, and this year is no exception. Youngsters and their grown-ups can take the Bunny’s Trail - in the process exploring the venue’s canalside village and solving clues to find a prize - take part in traditional egg rolling competitions, and test their balance in an egg-and-spoon race.
There’s also the chance to learn about Easter traditions in the home, sample a freshly baked hot cross bun and get involved in all manner of traditional street games.
A trip ‘into the thick’ to sample life in an 1850s coal mine, the chance to experience a Victorian school lesson and the opportunity to savour some traditionally cooked fish & chips complete the venue’s Easter holiday entertainment package.

**Easter Dino Egg Hunt**
Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Thurs 29 March - Sun 15 April
Fancy a change of pace when it comes to hunting for Easter eggs? If so, Thinktank Science Museum is the place to head for this holiday because, although the Easter Bunny hasn’t paid a visit, the Easter Dinosaur most certainly has! As a result, there are lots of Dino eggs hidden around the venue - and visiting youngsters are being challenged to find them!
And once they’ve uncovered them all, there’s a small Dino prize to collect in the museum shop.

**Cadbury Easter Egg Hunts**
Various National Trust sites, Fri 30 March - Mon 2 April
Who better to organise an Easter egg hunt (or several) than those lovely people at Cadbury? The chocolate-making Birmingham company are this Easter coordinating more than 250 hunts at National Trust properties across the UK.
And there’s plenty more for families to enjoy on their fun-filled day out, with many of the venues offering ‘games and craft activities galore’.
What’s more, all participants will be rewarded with a sure-to-be-delicious Cadbury treat at the end of each completed hunt.
Easter at Warwick Castle
Warwick Castle, Fri 30 March - Sun 15 April
There’s no shortage of Easter fun to enjoy at Warwick Castle during the holidays. Kids can climb The Conqueror’s Fortress - a specifically designed interactive exhibition - grab their swords and learn tactical defence skills in the all-new Knight’s School, get lost in the Horrible Histories Maze, and face an array of fun challenges including invading a Viking ship and surviving the trenches. And just for good measure, they can also witness the world’s largest working siege machine launch a projectile more than 150ft in the air!

Hawkstone Park
Hawkstone Park is a masterpiece of the School of Naturalistic Landscape. Opened in the 18th century by the owner of Hawkstone Hall mansion, Richard Hill, the venue was Britain’s first tourist park. Stone arches, bridges, walkways and grottoes were added to the natural drama of four rugged, wooded hills. The resultant Gothic fantasyland has been a major visitor attraction ever since, and was lovingly restored in 1993 after years of neglect. English Heritage has awarded Hawkstone Park & Follies with Grade I certification on its Register of Historic Gardens and Parks.

Tamworth Castle
Education and entertainment is the package being offered to families visiting Tamworth Castle this Easter holiday. The educational element is provided by enjoying a walk around the castle, which features displays that take visitors on a journey from Saxon to Victorian times. Items from the world famous Staffordshire Hoard are also available to view. As for the entertainment, there’s the chance to try and find Ruby the Dragon’s eggs for her, as she’s hidden them from the dastardly dragon hunter but now doesn’t know where they are.

Egg-cellent Easter
Drayton Manor Theme Park, Sat 28 March - Sun 15 April
Heart-stopping rollercoasters in the main park and toddler-friendly rides in Europe’s only Thomas Land are among the attractions to enjoy at Drayton Manor Theme Park this Easter. There are special Thomas Land Live Shows during the holiday period too, as well as the brand new James And The Red Balloon ride and all the head-spinning fun of the VertiGO high-ropes adventure course.

Traditional Victorian Easter Activities
Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire
Sun 1 - Sun 15 April
Never let it be said that Ironbridge’s famous Victorian town doesn’t get into the spirit of Easter! The venue’s holiday fun kickstarts on Sunday 1 and Monday 2 April when visitors can watch the unusual Victorian Easter pastime of egg dancing and join in the traditional parade. There’s plenty to do in the two weeks that follow as well. Entertainment on offer includes the chance to watch chicks’ eggs hatch and chocolate eggs being made, and the opportunity to print a poster using a Victorian printing press. A bunny hunt around the town and a trail to solve an Easter anagram further add to the fun.

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Practical Classics Classic Car & Restoration Show
NEC, Birmingham, Fri 23 - Sun 25 March
Midlands Classic Car enthusiasts can really immerse themselves in their passion at this specialist event. Showcasing in excess of 1,000 magnificent motors, the show also boasts live demos, expert tutorials, workshops, celebrity appearances and hundreds of exhibitors selling a wide range of popular products.
Other attractions include an autjumble, a ‘cars for sale’ area, the Practical Classics Live Stage and the UK’s biggest collection of barn find displays.

MCM Birmingham Comic Con
NEC, Birmingham, Sat 17 - Sun 18 March
This well-established event is an absolute must for anybody with an interest in movies, gaming, comics, anime, cult television shows, gadgets, clothing and toys.
It also has an impressive track record when it comes to celebrity appearances. On this occasion, famous faces on show include Guardians Of The Galaxy stars Michael Rooker and Sean Gunn.
“The Midlands holds a special place in our hearts,” says MCM Expo Group CEO Bryan Cooney. “Our company is based here, and we plan on providing an awesome show for the region’s enthusiastic audience of sci-fi, comic book and film fans.”

Disney On Ice: Worlds Of Enchantment
Genting Arena, Birmingham, Wed 28 March - Sun 1 April
Life-sized animated characters from Cars and live adaptations of Toy Story 3, The Little Mermaid and the Academy Award-winning Frozen are among the highlights in this hit Disney On Ice production.
Commenting on the show, producers Kenneth and Nicole Feld said: “Worlds Of Enchantment connects classic and new Disney stories. Audiences will be blown away in Radiator Springs when they encounter the unforgettable crew of animated cars, built ‘to scale’ and live on ice. They will see their all-time favourites like The Little Mermaid and discover the world of Arendelle with Frozen. To be the first to introduce the Frozen story live on ice, and to be entrusted with the beloved Toy Story characters is incredible, and we’re thrilled to be bringing these heartwarming tales to families across the globe.”
Shakespeare Week
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust sites, Stratford-upon-Avon, Mon 12 - Sun 18 March
Shakespeare Week is a national annual celebration of the world’s greatest playwright - and given that the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust co-ordinate the event, it’s no surprise that their various venues are wholeheartedly joining in with the initiative!
Included in their line-up of entertainment and activities are mask and ruff making, face painting, dressing-up opportunities and live dance. ‘Storytelling galore’, Tudor treats, craft activities and performances of the production Caliban In The Rockpool also feature, in what promises to be a splendidly action-packed week of bard-focused fun.

Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships
Arena Birmingham, Wed 14 - Sun 18 March
Now in its 108th year, Yonex is one of badminton’s five ‘majors’, as well as being its oldest and most prestigious competition. This latest edition of the championship features 155 matches, more than 50 hours of live badminton and appearances by the world’s greatest players. In short, it’s a must-attend event for dedicated fans of the sport...

Dungeon Lates
Warwick Castle, Fri 23 March
‘Scary storytelling’ is combined with ‘wicked humour and manic theatrics’ in this all-new 50-minute-long adults-only entertainment blending special effects with live performance art. Participants get to ‘enjoy’ a last supper of Scotch eyes and bird’s legs before embarking on a ‘spine-tingling’ exploration of the castle dungeon. And if the horrors experienced therein happen to leave you with a distinctly dry throat, not to worry - a shot of blood or a refreshing glass of urine - served fresh from a human bladder, no less - should soon see you right!

Ultimate Dubs
Telford International Centre, Sun 11 March
The UK’s largest indoor VAG enthusiasts’ event brings together the ‘ultimate’ WV, Audi, Seat and Skoda show cars from all over Europe. “Whether you’re into stock, old skool, nu wave, custom or tuned cars, there’s sure to be something to your taste at a show that’s not to be missed,” say the event’s organisers. Attractions include detailing & vehicle wrapping demonstrations, racing simulator competitions, BMX freestyling & street dancing, a VW drag racing club display and a Porsche 911 display.

Insomnia62
NEC, Birmingham, Fri 30 March - Mon 2 April
The UK’s biggest gaming festival is now firmly established at the NEC, having outgrown its previous home at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. Insomnia is a four-day event ‘combining all the best bits of video-gaming’ and offering enthusiasts the chance to play an impressive selection of both new and vintage games. Visitors can also meet their favourite YouTube stars and take part in costuming workshops and a cosplay masquerade.
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nec EDITION

6 - 8 APRIL 2018
NEC BIRMINGHAM

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See website for more details.

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the ticket factory

Andy and the Old Socks
Music | Comedy | Theatre | Dance | Film | Events | Visual Arts | and more!

**What’s On**

**Thurs 1 to Sun 4 March**

- Shazia Mirza at Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
  - Fri 2 March

**Mon 5 to Sun 11 March**

- The Wombats at The Empire, Coventry
  - Sat 10 March

**Mon 12 to Sun 18 March**

- Mindgame at Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
  - Wed 14 - Sat 17 March

**Mon 19 to Sat 31 March**

- Turn Of The Screw at Malvern Theatre
  - Tues 27 - Sat 31 March
Visual Arts

Atrix, Bromsgrove

STUDIO 4: FIRE AND ICE Exhibition of striking images by four women artists with an interest in contemporary art, until Sun 1 Apr

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

COMING OUT: SEXUALITY, GENDER AND IDENTITY Ground-breaking exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of male homosexuality in acts in England and Wales. Featuring over 80 modern and contemporary artworks by internationally renowned artists who explore themes of gender, sexuality and identity in art, until Sun 15 Apr

NEW ART WEST MIDLANDS A mixed-media exhibition including painting, sculpture, digital and sound installations, assemblage, photography & prints by 28 selected artists, all of whom are recent graduates from the region’s six university art schools, until Sun 6 May

FORGE MILL NEEDLE MUSEUM, Redditch

NEW REDDITCH MODEL RAILWAY CLUB EXHIBITION Fiftieth anniversary exhibition showcasing the members’ diverse skill and talent in recreating in great detail some of the most iconic railway scenes from the golden era of steam and beyond, Thurs 15 Mar - Sun 18 Mar

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

LIGHTS OF LEAMINGTON In the 1950s, a festival called The Lights of Leamington drew 300,000 visitors to the town. This new exhibition, selected and curated by Birmingham-based artist Stuart Whipp, brings the theme up to date, showing the diverse ways that light runs through the collection at Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum, until Sun 15 Apr

Rugby Art Gallery & Museum

NEW ABOUT FACE: THE RUGBY COLLECTION 2018 The 2018 theme is portraits, telling the story of some of the artists within the Rugby collection, with help from loans from the National Portrait Gallery and The Lowry, Fri 30 Mar - Sat 16 June

The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

NEW IRISH HEART, COVENTRY HOME Explore the unique role that the Irish community has played, and continue to play, in Coventry, through interviews, images and objects, Sat 10 Mar - Tues 10 Apr

The Hive, Worcester

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL IMAGES FOR SCIENCE Exhibition featuring 100 images submitted from over 80 countries and selected by an expert judging panel, until Sun 18 Mar

HEATHER & IVAN MORISON SCULPTURES Heather and Ivan were ‘artists in residence’ at The Hive and University of Worcester in 2017, until Sat 24 Mar

Worcester City Museum & Art Gallery

BENJAMIN WILLIAMS LEADER: BLEST BY THE SUNS OF HOME Exhibition exploring the significance of landscape painting during World War One, when the British countryside became a symbol of hope and national identity at a time of crisis, until Sat 2 June

THE WAR TO END ALL WARS Exhibition exploring how our future was changed forever by the First World War, until Sat 10 Nov

OTHER VISUAL ARTS

CLARE WOODS Renowned British painter Clare has established her reputation with large-scale landscapes painted in household gloss and enamel on aluminium. The artist has recently moved into figurative painting, until Sat 10 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NEVILLE STAPLE - THE ORIGINAL RUDE BOY! The exhibition hopes to show many aspects of a man who has done so much for Coventry music, but also so much for other artists, until Sun 2 Dec, Coventry Music Museum

OTHER VISUAL ARTS

JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW Thurs 1 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

DAMIAN WILSON & ALEX WAKEMAN Thurs 1 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

PLAY ON: LIVE MUSIC Thurs 1 Mar, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

HEATHER & IVAN MORISON SCULPTURES Thurs 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 2 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

PAUL WELLER Fri 2 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

ALEXANDER MCQUEEN & GARETH PUGH Fri 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

“LADIES & GENTLEMEN: THE FULL MOUNTING” Thurs 1 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

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THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS - A FOLK OPERA Thurs 1 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

MARTIN HARLEY AND DANIEL KIMBRO Thurs 1 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DUB PISTOLS Thurs 1 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester

APOCALYPSTICAS Thurs 1 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ABA FOREVER Thurs 1 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

ELECTRIC SIX Thurs 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE JERSEYS Fri 2 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

THE SENSATIONAL 60S EXPERIENCE Fri 2 Mar, NEW Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

RAY ORBISON TRIBUTE Fri 2 Mar, Bedworth Civic Hall

PALE WAVES Fri 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

COME TOGETHER WITH THE Ska 40’s Fri 2 Mar, The Night Owl, Birmingham

WAVE ON WAVE Fri 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DIRTY THRILLS Fri 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BLACk CARROT & EXCLAMATION Fri 2 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

SCOTT BRADLEE & POST-MODERN JUKEBOX Fri 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 2 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

PAUL WELLER Fri 2 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

TABLE SCRAPS Fri 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MAGNUM Fri 2 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Fri 2 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

WRONG JOVI (BON JOVI TRIBUTE) Fri 2 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester

VAMPIRES ROCK Sat 3 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

SATINDER SARTAAJ Sat 3 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE BRITPOP REBOOT 2018 Sat 3 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

FOREVERLAND WITH ARTFUL DODGER Sat 3 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE ‘GEORGE MICHAEL’ TRIBUTE SHOW WITH RANDALL BUTLER Sat 3 Mar, Navelcote Hall

BLACK CARROT & EXCLAMATION Fri 2 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

SCOTT BRADLEE & POST-MODERN JUKEBOX Fri 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ELBOW Sat 3 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

JIVE TALKIN’ Sat 3 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

MUSED (MUSE TRIBUTE) Sat 3 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester

STONE BROKEN Sat 3 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MAELDOL & THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS Sat 3 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DANCE GAVIN DANCE & VEIL OF MAYA Sat 3 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

JUDIE TZEKE Sat 3 Mar, The Mizen, Worcester

REJIE SNOW Sat 3 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HIGH KNOCKS, 28 COSTUMES & LOVE BITES Sat 3 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

HOOKWORKS Sun 4 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS Sun 4 Mar, Malvern Theatres

AMIT DATTAN Sun 4 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

Editors Sun 4 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

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Satinder Sartaaj - Symphony Hall, Birmingham
Thursday 1 to Sunday 4 March

**Classical Music**

**CENTRE STAGE: QUARTET FOR COR ANGLAIS AND STRINGS** Programme includes works by Françaix, Bax, Pas-cucci & Ibert. Thurs 1 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**THE PELLEAS ENSEMBLE** Featuring Luba Tunnecitlive (viola), Henry Roberts (flute) & Oliver Wass (harp). Programme includes works by Bax, Corelli, Ravel, Prokofiev & Debussy. Thurs 1 Mar, Evesham Arts Centre

**BEST OF THE WEST END** Featuring Michael England (conductor), West End vocalists & City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes numbers from Cats, Evita, The Lion King, 42nd Street, Wicked & more... Fri 2 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**EBLANA STRING TRIO** Featuring Jonathan Martindale (violin), Lucy Nolan (viola) & Peggy Nolan (cello). Programme includes works by Purcell, Finzi & Beethoven. Fri 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CONSORTIUM** Recorder quartet performing works by Dowland, Tye, Purcell & Byrd. Fri 2 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**RUSSELL WATSON** An intimate evening with one of the world’s most prominent tenors. Sat 3 Mar, Bedworth Civic Hall

**SINGALONG WITH THE CBSO - BRAHMS’ GERMAN REQUIEM** Featuring Michael England (conductor), West End vocalists & City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes numbers from Cats, Evita, The Lion King, 42nd Street, Wicked & more... Fri 2 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE WINSLOW BOY** Tessa Peake-Jones and Aden Gillett star in a major revival of Terence Rattigan’s classic family drama. Until Sat 3 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**HAMLET** Shakespeare’s tragedy told through the eyes of those who came after him... until Sat 3 Mar, The Blue Theatre, Kidderminster

**WARRICKSHIRE GANGL SHOW 2018** (WAGS) until Sat 3 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**DEE JEFFRY & MR HYDE** Phil Daniels takes the lead in a new version of Robert Louis Stevenson’s gothic thriller, until Sat 3 Mar, Malvern Theatre

**ELEPHANT** A colossus of a production with numbers from Cats, Evita, The Lion King, 42nd Street, Wicked & more... Fri 2 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**AN ACT OF KINDNESS** Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti’s work, which centres on family relationships and lies... until Sat 3 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**DANGEROUS OBSESSION** The Nonentities present NJ Crisp’s psychological thriller, until Sat 3 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**THE PINWHEELS OF AGATHA CHRISTIE’S ELEVEN LOST DAYS** Liz Grand takes centre stage in a one-woman show that re-veals the secret behind one of the biggest and most expensive police hunts in history, Fri 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**Balloons For Sale** Theatre for children aged between two and nine, Sat 3 Mar, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**Vampires Rock, the Ghost Train** Classic rock musical concert featuring a tongue-in-cheek story presented alongside some of the greatest ever rock anthems, Sat 3 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**Sing-A-Long-A Sound of Music** Screening of the classic Julie Andrews musical, complete with subtitles and music to help the audience sing along... Sun 4 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**The Lock In ‘FOLK FAIRY TALE’** The Brecking Tradition Dance Company presents a comical new version of its critically acclaimed dance show, Thurs 1 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**At the Crossroads** Ayeye Dance Group present a theatrical performance based on a novel by Rabindranath Tagore - the story of a woman at the crossroads of the Indian freedom movement, Sun 4 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

**Talks**

**Jack BosseT: From Railways to Royalty** Jack talks about his career as a professional photographer, Sat 3 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**Events**

**IAAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS** Featuring more than 400 athletes from 150 countries, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL** A collection of short films from the world’s most prestigious mountain film festival, Fri 2 Mar, Malvern Theatres, Malvern

**NORDIC WALKING COURSE** Nordic walking is the ultimate complete-body workout and can be enjoyed by any-one at any fitness level, Sat 3 Mar, Packwood House, Solihull

**Shakespeare For All!** Join experts from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust as they read through Shakespeare’s Complete Works, Sat 3 Mar, Stratford-upon-Avon Library and Information Centre

**Women’s Transport History Talk** From Benz to Tesla - discover inge-nious and daring characters whose impact has left a lasting impression on cars today, Sat 3 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

**Medieval Banquet** Experience an immersive evening of ‘enthralling medi-ieval entertainment and hearty food & drink’, Sat 3 Mar, Warwick Castle

**Inside British Motorsport** Fast-paced event looking at employment opportunities in British Motorsport, Sat 3 Mar, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**The Tudor Woman** Celebrate Interna-tional Women’s Day at Blakesley Hall, Sun 4 Mar, Blakesley Hall, B’ham

**Donington Stage Rally** The first round of the Dunlop M C Rally Championship, and also round six of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship in association with MSVR, Sun 4 Mar, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

**Comedy**

**Mark Thomas** Wed 28 Feb - Sat 3 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

**Mike Wilmot, Mandy Knight & Com-edy Caravan with Andy Robinson** Thurs 1 Mar, The Glee Club, B’ham

**Ellie Taylor** Fri 2 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**Shazia Mirza** Fri 2 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**Charlie Baker, Mandy Knight, Mike Wilmot & Pat Cahill** Fri 2 - Sat 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**Stephen Bailey** Sat 3 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**Dane Baptiste** Sat 3 Mar, Artsix, Bromsgrove

**David Trent, Adam Bloom, Mark Simons & Craig Murray** Sat 3 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**Shazia Mirza** Fri 2 Mar, Huntingdon Club, Birmingham

**Ellie Taylor** Thurs 1 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**Mike Wilmot, Mandy Knight & Company** Thurs 1 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**Terra Firma** National Dance Company Wales present a triple bill featuring new works by Marcus Moreau, Mario Bermudez Gil & Green House from the company’s Artistic Director. Caroline Finn, Thurs 1 - Fri 2 Mar, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham

**Macbeth** Ceridwen Theatre Company set Shakespeare’s bloodiest tale amidst the horrors of the battlefields of WWII, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

**Once Upon a Time** The Phoenix Players fuse well-known fairytale charac-ters and famous musical theatre numbers in an original production for audiences young and old, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Mar, Stratford Artshouse, Stratford-upon-Avon

**Forbidden Nights** Two hours of provocative choreography from a cast of acrobats, fire acts and aerial artists, Fri 2 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**The Improv Musical** Musical Theatre Warwick create and perform a one-hour musical, Fri 2 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**Lile Marlene McKenzie uncovers the emotional and physical journey required by many to fit into today’s society, where pressure from the media constantly reinforces the need to conform, Fri 2 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

**Where is Mrs Christie?: The Mystery of Agatha Christie’s Eleven Lost Days** Liz Grand takes centre stage in a one-woman show that re-veals the secret behind one of the biggest and most expensive police hunts in history, Fri 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

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Gigs

MIKE DAWES Mon 5 Mar, The Marrs’ Bar, Worcester
ELLI INGRAM Mon 5 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
SAM FENDER, BROOKE BENTHAM & RICAS Mon 5 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, B’ham
THE WORLD IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE Mon 5 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

BRASS BLAST Mon 5 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry
THE LIONEL RICHIE SONGBOOK Tues 6 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HOPSIN Wed 7 Mar,MAC, Birmingham

JADE BIRD Wed 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KERRY ELLIS Wed 7 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ARCANE ROOTS Wed 7 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HOLDING ABSENCE & LOATHÉ Wed 7 Mar, The Asylum, B’ham

MAGNUM Wed 7 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

JOE DOLMAN Wed 7 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

POKEY LAFARGE Wed 7 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BARN SCOTT Wed 7 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS Wed 7 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HOPSIN Wed 7 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE LOST NOTES Wed 7 Mar, The Red Lion Folk Club, B’ham

JAKE BUGG - SOLO ACOUSTIC TOUR Thurs 8 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PETER KNIGHT & JOHN SPIERS Thurs 8 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

BLANCANGE Thurs 8 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SLIM CHANCE Thurs 8 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

SUGARTHIEF, DRIPI GLOSS & THE ASSIST Thurs 8 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, B’ham

FEROCIOUS DOG Thurs 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MOOSE BLOOD Thurs 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GWENNO Thurs 8 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ELO EXPERIENCE Fri 9 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Fri 9 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

SATINDER SARTAJA Fri 9 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ROY G HEMINGS’ HIGHS OF MOTOWN Fri 9 Mar, Atixx, Bromsgrove

MAJID JORDAN Fri 9 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SILENT DISCO Fri 9 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BAREFOOTIN’ Fri 9 Mar, The Night Owl, B’ham

BROKEN ENGLISH Fri 9 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY Fri 9 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

OUTURY Fri 9 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham

THE ANY WINEHOUSE EXPERIENCE - A.A.K.L IONES Sat 10 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ASTROID BOYS Sat 10 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

AS MAMAS, THE LIZARDS & LYGIO Sat 10 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

H.E.R. Sat 10 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JULIE JULY BAND (TRIBUTE TO SANDY DENNY) Sat 10 Mar, Number 8 Community Arts Centre, Worcester

WILLLOW Sat 10 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE WOMBATS Sat 10 Mar, The Empire, Coventry

CASSETTE DAYS Sat 10 Mar, Kasbah, Coventry

SEMIRANDE Sat 10 Mar, Malvern Theatres

SKA-WADDY Sat 10 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Keresley, Coventry

TEMPLE BLACK’S ALBUM LAUNCH PARTY! Sat 10 Mar, Scruffy Murphy’s, Birmingham

BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS Sat 10 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC Sat 10 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

BRIT FLOYD Sat 10 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BEE GEES FEVER Sat 10 Mar, Albanney Theatre, Coventry

KNOXVILLE HIGHWAY Sat 10 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE MACHINE RAGES ON Sat 10 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester

THE OVERTONES Sat 10 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MOTOWN DIVA’S SHOW WITH THE DREAMETTES Sat 10 Mar, Nailcote Hall, Berkswell

THE HARRINGTONS Sat 10 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

THE WAILERS Sat 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

A COUNTRY NIGHT IN NASHVILLE Sat 10 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

SATYRICON Sun 11 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND Sun 11 Mar, Alabany Theatre, Coventry

GET STONED Sun 11 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

TOM MISCH Sun 11 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Mar, The List Warwick/Worcs 5-11 March.qxp_Layout 1 21/02/2018 12:04 Page 1

Classical Music

ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE CHAMBER CHOIR Featuring Paul Spicer (director) & Callum Alger (organ). Programme includes works by Britten, Leighton, MacMillan & JS Bach, Mon 6 Mar, St Albans Cathedral

NIGEL MORRIS (conductor) & Andrew Ivanov (piano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Clurilonis, Chopin & the world premiere of Joe Cutler’s Elsewhereness, Sun 11 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy

JONATHAN PIE Wed 7 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RUSSELL BRAND Thurs 8 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JONATHAN PIE Thurs 8 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BARBARA NICE & SHAZIA MIRZA Thurs 8 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove

DAVE JOHNS, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVE JOHNS, NIGEL NG & COMICS TBC Fri 9 - Sat 10 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CRAIG CAMPBELL Sat 10 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BARNSTORMERS COMEDY NIGHT Sat 10 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove

JON RICHARDSON Sat 10 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

PATRICK LIVE AT THE SANDY HOLES HOTEL Sun 11 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove

Theatre

WE ARE THE LIONS, MR MANAGER! The story of Jayaben Desai, the inspirational leader of the 1976-78 Grunwick Film Processing Factory Strike, Mon 5 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

SUPERPOSITION Playful journey of discovery about science, sensuality, spirituality, and how the body ‘magically mirrors the universe through the constellation of particles twirling within us’, Tues 6 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO Welsh National Opera perform a new staging of Verdi’s epic opera. Sung in Italian, with English and Welsh surtitles, Tues 6 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

MY FAIR LADY Amateur staging presented by Knowle Musical Society,
Tues 6 - Sat 10 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull
THRFLLER LVE Journey through the magic of Michael Jackson’s 45 year musical history, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
QUARTET Paul Nicholas, Wendi Peters, Sue Holderness & Jeff Rawle star in Ron Harwood’s bitter-sweet comedy concerning four ageing opera singers residing in a magnificent retirement home in Kent, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Mar, The REP, Birmingham
NINA - A STORY ABOUT ME AND NINA SI-MONE Backed by a band, Olivier Award-nominated actress Josette Bushell-Mingo (Disney’s The Lion King) mixes story and song as she draws together tales from the life and career of Nina Simone, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Mar, Malvern Theatres
MAGBETH The Young Worcester Repertory Company present Shakespeare’s darkest play, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Mar, Swan Theatre, Worcester
SLEEPING TREES: WESTERN? The Sleeping Trees find themselves slowly crisping under the sun of the Wild West as gunslingers Harry Sudds takes on bulls, scorpions and many other animals largely found in America, Wed 7 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham
OUT OF CHAOS MAGBETH Wed 7 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury
DON GIOVANNI Welsh National Opera transport Mozart’s comic opera to the Spanish Golden Age. Sung in Italian, this staging of Tim Norton’s tale of in-"}

**Monday 5 - Sunday 11 March**

**Dance**

**VIRAGO** Sonia Sabri Company explore the ‘light vs dark’ and ‘real vs fairy-tale’ versions of female existence, Wed 7 Mar, Artsix, Bromsgrove
**TEN** Ace Dance present a full-length dance production inspired by global migration, Thurs 8 Mar, MAC, Birmingham
**A POSITIVE LIFE** Immersive theatre experience, based around the subjects of sex, love & relationships and inspired by the interpersonal stories of five characters, Fri 9 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry
**SPIRIT OF INDIA** Dance show celebrating India’s spirituality, mythology, rich history, diverse culture, colourful festivals, flamboyant weddings, music, dance and Bollywood, Sun 11 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**Events**

**STAR VEHICLE STORIES** Get to know the star vehicles of the collection through interactive stories, songs and hands-on experiences, Mon 5 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum
**STEMTASTIC EXPLORERS** Introducing the world of science, technology, engineering & maths (STEM) in a fun way, Wed 7 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum
**WOMEN’S TRANSPORT HISTORY TALK** From Benz to O’Neil - discovering ingenious and daring characters whose impact has left a lasting impression on cars today, Thurs 8 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum
**CRUFTS** The world’s biggest dog event, featuring ‘the best in breed’ shopping and hundreds of canines for you to meet!, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Mar, NEC, Birmingham
**CANDELEIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS** Fri 9 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs
**NEW PLACE AT NIGHT** Experience the caverns in a new way, without leaving the Portal building. Featuring virtual reality presentations, a live presenter and genuine handling objects, Fri 9 Mar, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust
**BEHIND THE SCENES TOURS** Sat 10 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome
**NEW PLACE AT NIGHT** Special after-dark tour of Shakespeare’s New Place. Sample a wide range of specially commissioned talks and workshops, from photography and calligraphy to historical fashion, Sat 10 Mar, Shakespeare’s New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon
**VINTAGE IN THE VILLAGE** Welcome in the spring season with ‘a burst of vintage fabulousness and treat yourself to a whole new wardrobe’, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Mar, FarGo Village, Coventry
**Gigs**

**AT THE DRIVE-IN** Mon 12 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**JOE BROWN** Mon 12 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**JACKSON LIVE IN CONCERT** Tues 13 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**NATHAN LAUBE** Tues 13 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**GARY NUMAN** Tues 13 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**AS IT IS** 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**PETE OXLEY AND NIC SYMPHONY HALL, BIRMINGHAM**

**ODYSSEY** Wed 14 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**SMS ROCK & POP** Wed 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JOE BROWN** Wed 14 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**STEVEN WILSON** Thurs 15 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**PATSY CLINE AND FRIENDS** Fri 16 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**VARIOUS MANX & KASIA STANKIEWICZ** Fri 16 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**FRED ZEPPELIN** Fri 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE KING ELVIS PRESLEY** Fri 16 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**STEAMCHICKEN** Sat 17 Mar, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**TURIN BRAKES** Sat 17 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**THE BACH PLAYERS: MUSIC FOR LIVES ON** Sat 17 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**MARK BEBBINGTON & COULL QUARTET** Sat 17 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**BOOGIE NIGHTS WITH HEATWAVE AND ODYSSEY** Wed 14 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**JOAN BAEZ** Wed 14 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**PETE OXLEY AND NIC MEIER QUARTET** Wed 14 Mar, Stratford Arts House, Stratford-upon-Avon

**FEEDER** Wed 14 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**ALL TIME LOW** Thurs 15 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**FIELD MUSIC** Thurs 15 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ALABASTER DEPLUME** Thurs 15 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

**SMS ROCK & POP** Thurs 15 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**ALABAMA 3** Thurs 15 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**STEVEN WILSON** Thurs 15 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**FRED ZEPPELIN** Fri 16 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester

**TURNER BRAKES** Fri 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE FOOD FIGHTERZ** Fri 16 Mar, Route 44, Birmingham

**CALTON KELLY** Fri 16 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

**MIST** Fri 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**TOMMY FLEMING** Fri 16 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**TOM GRENNA** Sat 17 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BIG GIRLS DON’T CRY** Sat 17 Mar, Bedworth Civic Hall

**SOMEONE LIKE YOU - THE ADELE SONGBOOK** Sat 17 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**CRAOGH RUA** Sat 17 Mar, Huntintonton Hall, Worcester

**SPACE** Sat 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**STEAMCHICKEN** Sat 17 Mar, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**BOB LOG III** Sat 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE BACH PLAYERS: MUSIC FOR LIVES ON** Sat 17 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE KING ELVIS PRESLEY** Sat 17 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**KARKOSA** Sat 17 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham

**SOJBHAN MILLER** Sun 18 Mar, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**THE BACH PLAYERS: MUSIC FOR LIVES ON** Sun 18 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MARK BEBBINGTON & COULL QUARTET** Sun 18 Mar, Malvern Theatres

**Skid Row - The Kasbah, Coventry**

**Classical Music**

**LUNCHEON ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Corelli (arr. T Billington), Stanley, J.MacMillan & Lizst, Mon 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: JENNIFER PIKE PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY** Also featuring David Curtis (conductor). Programme includes works by Prokofiev, Schubert & Tchaikovsky, Mon 12 Mar, Malvern Theatres

**PETE DONOHOE PLAYS SHOSTAKOVICH** Featuring Jason Lai (conductor). Programme includes works by Prokofiev, Shostakovitch & Schubert, Tues 13 Mar, Stratford Arts House, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE BACH PLAYERS: MUSIC FOR EASTER** Featuring Rachel Elliott (soprano), Nicolete Moonen & Anna Curzon (violins), Anne Schumann (viola), Kinga Gaborjans (cello & gamba) & Sarah McMahon (cello). Programme includes Boccherini’s Stabat Mater & movements by Haydn & Johann Fischer, Tues 13 Mar, St Mary’s Church, Warwick

**GOVERN** Tues 13 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE BACH PLAYERS: MUSIC FOR LIVES ON** Sat 17 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE BACH PLAYERS: MUSIC FOR LIVES ON** Sun 18 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE OF LONDON** Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Catherine Ardidge (presenter), Sun 18 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**MODERN DEBussy** Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchesra. Programme includes works by Debussy, Stravinsky & Tarkunimis, Sun 18 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CHANDOS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: TITAN** Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor) & Aynin Onc (piano). Programme includes works by Berioz, Rachmaninov & Mahler, Sun 18 Mar, Malvern Theatres

**THE SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE OF LONDON** Featuring Simon Blenden (violin), Douglas Pateron (viola), Jane Salmon (cello), Peter Buckoke (double bass) & William Howard (piano). Programme includes works by Hummel, Mozart & Schubert, Sun 18 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**SHREWSBURY SCHOOL ORCHESTRAS & CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENT A GALA CONCERT** Sun 18 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**Comedy**

**RICHARD HERRING** Thurs 15 Mar, Huntington Hall, Worcester

**JO ENRIGHT, CHRIS KENT & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 15 Mar, The Glee Club, B’ham

**ANDREW LAWRENCE** Fri 16 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**GEOFF NORDST** Fri 16 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RUSSELL WATSON: CANZONI D’AMORE** Fri 16 Mar, Malvern Theatres

**CBSO: SENSUAL DEBussy Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), the CBSO Youth Chorus & Birmingham University Singers. Programme includes works by Debussy, Szymanowski & Wagner, Sat 17 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY** Programme comprises Haydn’s The Creation, Sat 17 Mar, Worcester Cathedral

**STRATFORD UPON AVON CHORAL SOCIETY** Programme comprises Off’s Carmen Burana & Poulenc’s Gloria, Sat 17 Mar, Stratford Arthouse, Stratford-upon-Avon

**DEBussy’s LEGACY** Featuring Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. Programme includes works by Boulez & Tristan Murray, Sun 18 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**Worcs 12 - 18 March.qxp_Layout 1 21/02/2018 12:11 Page 1**
ADAM BLOOM, CHRIS KENT & COMIC TBC  
Fri 16 Mar, The Glee Club, B’ham

STAND UP COMEDY SHOWCASE  
Fri 16 - Sat 17 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

BOBBY MAIR  
Sat 17 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

HARDEEP SINGH KOHLI  
Sat 17 Mar, Autumn, Bromsgrove

THEATRE

UP’N’UNDER  
John Godber’s award-winning comedy, performed by a cast of deaf and hearing actors using British Sign Language and spoken English, Mon 12 - Wed 14 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS - THE MUSICALC  
Satirical celebration of musical theatre, Mon 12 - Thurs 15 Mar, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

THE WINDOW  
Poignant new drama which tells the true story of a Coventry family’s experience of WWI, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE JUNGLE BOOK  
The Children’s Touring Partnership present a new adaptation of Rudyard Kipling’s family classic, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Mar, Malvern Theatres

SWEENEY TODD  
Amateur staging of Stephen Sondheim’s critically acclaimed work, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE KITE RUNNER  
Much-acclaimed play based on Khaled Hosseini’s haunting tale of a friendship which spans cultures and continents, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

HOW TO SURVIVE A POST-TRUTH APOCALYPSE  
An epic adventure through a wonderland of lies, factions and Wikipedia facts’ in a show ‘for anyone who’s ever said they read the terms and conditions’, Wed 14 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

A BRAVE FACE  
Fully masked theatre company Yamos tackle the emotional subject of post-traumatic stress, Wed 14 Mar, MAC, Birmingham

ELECTRA  
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Theatre Company presents its version of Sophocles’ tale of lust, vengeance and murder, Wed 14 - Sat 17 Mar, Crescent Theatre, B’ham

OUR COUNTRY’S GOOD  
The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Timberlake Wertenbaker’s famous play, Wed 14 - Sat 17 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

MINDGAME  
A mind-bending psychological thriller from the pen of Anthony Horowitz, Wed 14 - Sat 17 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

CAROUSEL  
Ashwood Bank Operatic Society present an amateur staging of Rodgers & Hammerstein’s much-loved musical, Wed 14 - Sat 17 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

RHINOCEROS  
Birmingham Royal Conservatoire Theatre Company presents its version of Eugène Ionesco’s post-war avant-garde drama, Wed 14 - Sat 17 Mar, The Old Rep, B’ham

CIRQUE BERSERK!  
Evening of ‘thrills and skills’ combining ‘contemporary circus-style artistry with adrenaline-fuelled stunt action, Wed 14 – Sun 18 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, B’ham

LITE  
Marlene McKenzie uncovers the emotional and physical journey required by many to fit into today’s society, where pressure from the media constantly reinforces the need to conform, Thurs 15 Mar, MAC, B’ham

HONEY  
Reaction Theatre Makers present Tiffany Hoskins’ exploration of life in the Welsh mountains, where bees, bomb disposal and autism are all wrapped up in folk music, Thurs 15 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WHERE IS MRS CHRISTIE?: THE MYSTERY OF AGATHA CHRISTIE’S ELEVEN LOST DAYS  
Liz Grand takes centre stage in this one-woman show, which reveals the secret behind one of the biggest and most extensive police hunts in history, Thurs 15 - Fri 16 Mar, Malvern Theatre

NAPOLÉON DISROBED  
Comic alternative history from Told By An Idiot, based on Simon Leys’ novel, The Death Of Napoleon, Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

WHEN WE WERE MARRIED  
A mind-bending psycho-thriller, inspired by Agatha Christie, Wed 14 - Sun 18 Mar, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO  
A satirical celebration of musical theatre, Sat 17 Mar, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

THE 4 CLOWNS OF THE APOCALYPSE  
A ‘sensorial, nonsensical delight for the whole family’, brought to the stage by Portugal’s Teatro do Montemuro and the UK-based Absolute Theatre, Sun 18 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

CRIMES UNDER THE SUN  
A mind-bending psychological thriller, the story of a writer of glossy true-crime paperbacks who visits an asylum in the hope of interviewing a notorious serial killer. But all is not what it seems... Get yourself a good night’s sleep beforehand because you’ll need to stay sharp and alert to get the most out of this hugely entertaining show, a clever creation from Horowitz that comes complete with black comedy and red herrings...

Centre Connections Company presents a brand new play about remembering, bravery and growing up, Sat 17 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

I BELIEVE IN UNICORNS  
The Olivier Award-nominated Wizard Presents brings bestselling children’s author Michael Morpurgo’s story to life, Sat 17 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS - THE MUSICALC  
Satirical celebration of musical theatre, Sat 17 Mar, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

THE SPARK OF LIFE  
A ‘sensorial, nonsensical delight for the whole family’, brought to the stage by Portugal’s Teatro do Montemuro and the UK-based Absolute Theatre, Sun 18 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

Ballet presents a choreographed version of the classic fairytale, Tues 13 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

BALLET BC  
Canada’s leading contemporary dance company presents an evening of work from three internationally celebrated artists, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

BRENDAN COLE: ALL NIGHT LONG  
Join the ex-Strictly star as he takes to the stage with a cast of guest dancers, a 14-piece band and singers, Fri 16 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DANCE

CHARGE  
Motionhouse present an ‘electrifying’ dance-circus, inspired by the role of electricity in the human body, Tues 13 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY  
Vienna Festival

Monday 12 - Sunday 18 February
**Jane Eyre – an Autobiography**

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“Truly extraordinary... one of the most exciting young performers on the British Stage” (British Theatre Guide)

**A Brave Face**

A brave and bold exploration of traumatic stress, an unseen and often unrecognised injury of war, and the impact it can have on even the closest of families. With compassion and fearlessness, Vamos brings its trademark wordless full mask style to a story that needs to be told.

**COMING SOON:**

Where’s Mrs Christie, Eblana String Trio, You’ve Got A Friend, Dane Baptiste, Patrick, Roy G Hemmings, Barnstormers, The Dancing Club, Honey, Andrew Lawrence, Van Kuijk String Quartet, Hardeep Singh Kohli, Macca, Emily Maguire, Soul Manifesto, George Egg Genius Connected, Complete Madness...

**MARCH 2018**

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**Monday 12 - Sunday 18 February**

**Film**

**INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:**

- **THE POST** (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks. Number 8 Pershore, Mon 12 - Tues 13 Mar
- **THE MERCY** (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Rachel Weisz, Colin Firth. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Mon 12, Wed 14 - Thurs 15 Mar; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 16 Mar
- **JOURNEY’S END** (12a) Drama/War. Starring Sam Claflin, Paul Bettany. Number 8 Pershore, Wed 14 - Thurs 15 & Sat 17 Mar

**MOUNTAINS MAY DEPART** (12A) Drama/Romance. Starring Tao Zhao, Yi Zhang. Number 8 Pershore, Thurs 14 Mar

**THE SHAPE OF WATER** (15) Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sally Hawkins, Octavia Spencer. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Thurs 15 - Fri 16 Mar

**THE GREATEST SHOWMAN** (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Rebecca Ferguson, Hugh Jackman. Malvern Theatres, Fri 16 Mar

**I, TONYA** (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Margot Robbie, Allison Janney. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Fri 16 Mar

**LA RÈGLE DU JEU** (PG) Comedy/Drama. Starring Marcel Dalio, Nora Gregor. Foreign language, subtitled. Malvern Theatres, Sat 17 Mar

**LA GRANDE ILLUSION** (U) Drama/War. Starring Jean Gabin, Dita Parlo. Foreign language, subtitled. Malvern Theatres, Sat 17 Mar


**Events**

- **STAR VEHICLE STORIES** Get to know the star vehicles of the collection through interactive stories, songs and hands-on experiences, Mon 12 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

- **SHAKESPEARE WEEK** Hands-on family activities at Shakespeare’s Family Homes, taking place as part of the nationally celebrated Shakespeare Week, Mon 12 - Sun 18 Mar, Stratford Upon Avon

- **THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW** A haven for knitting, cross stitch, paper crafting, stitching, jewellery & dressmaking enthusiasts, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

- **MCM BIRMINGHAM COMIC CON** Another ‘fun-filled celebration of geeky goodness’, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

- **CHEESE AND CHUTNEY** ‘Celebrating everything cheese’ and featuring plenty of stallholders, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Mar, FarGo Village, Coventry

- **THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW** Ideal for amateur and professional photographers alike, Sat 17 - Tues 20 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

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Coming soon...

Thurs 1 Mar 7.30pm Age 10+
The Wind in The Willows - A Folk Opera
Musical adaptation of this classic tale using music and song.
£12, £10 conc.

Warm Up Talk: History of the Violin by Sue Heap
Tues 6 Mar 7.30pm Age 16+
£10 conc.

Fri 9 Mar 8pm Age 16+
Patrick Live at the Sandy Holes Hotel
Seaside cabaret legend Patrick recreates his summer shawl
Comedy drama performed by Dan Negley.
£12, £10 Conc.

Wed 14 March 7.30pm
Boogie Nights
Heatwave and Odyssey Live
A return to the glory days of disco, funk and soul.
£30

Thu 15 Mar 8pm Age 12+
SO Comedy at The Core
Live comedy featuring TV's David Morgan & Welsh Stand up Robin Morgan.
£12

Thurs 5 Apr 1.30pm Age 4+
Hoot Owl - Master of Disguise
Original songs, colourful puppets and fun animation
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Wed 18 April 7.30pm
Martine McCutcheon
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Gigs

KNOWER Mon 19 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
OUTLYA Mon 19 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
DAMIEN DEMPSEY AND HIS BAND Mon 19 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
ANNE-MARIE Mon 19 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
PYRAMID CHOIR 2018 Tues 20 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch
ZAK ABEL Tues 20 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham
MOYA BRENNAN Tues 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham
YES - 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Tues 20 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
VÖK Tues 20 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
YOUNG FATHERS Tues 20 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
CLOUD RUSTLING - A TRIBUTE TO KATE BUSH Wed 21 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
MT. WOLF Wed 21 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
PALOMA FAITH Wed 21 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham
KAST OFF KINKS Wed 21 Mar, Stratford ArtsHouse, Stratford-upon-Avon
BETH NIELSEN CHAPMAN Wed 21 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
RAE MORRIS Wed 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

OMO BELLO - LA BELLE ÉPOQUE featuring Omo Bello (soprano) & Jeff Cohen (piano). Programme includes works by Jules Massenet, Debussy, Faure & Erik Satie, Fri 23 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
CBSO: SACRED DEBUTSY Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Julian Wilkins (organ) & the CBSO Chorus, Sat 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR featuring Paul Spicer (conductor) & Martin Rawles (organ). Programme includes works by William Byrd & John Donne, Sat 24 Mar, St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham
MALVERN FESTIVAL CHORUS Sat 24 Mar, Great Malvern Priory
CBSO EXOTIC DEBUTSY Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor). Programme includes works by Debussy (orch.Mathiesen), Britten, Ravel, Debussy, Sun 25 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: TOMBEAU DE DEBUTSY Programme includes works by Dukas, Goossens, Bartok, Ravel & Satie, Sat 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
CBSO: NATURAL DEBUTSY Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Marie-Christine Zupancic (flute). Programme includes works by Debussy & George Benjamin, Sun 25 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: SLAVONIC MASTERS Featuring Richard Laing (conductor) & Zoé Beyers (violin). Programme includes works by Dvorak, Prokofiev & Tchaikovsky, Sun 25 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

Comedy

TOADALLY FREE COMEDY! Mon 19 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, B’ham
IAN STIRLING Wed 21 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
JOHN ROBINS Wed 21 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

WHERE’S MY IGLOO GONE? Children’s show which journeys into an Arctic world of soaring snow geese, pet husky dogs and starry nights, Mon 19 Mar, The Dome, The Bramall, University of Birmingham
SHRINKING ATLAS New work devised and performed by the Young REP satellite companies, Mon 19 - Tues 20 Mar, The REP, Birmingham
THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG Fawlty Towers meets Noises Off in an award-winning smash-hit comedy, Mon 19 - Sat 24 Mar, Belgrave Theatre, Coventry
JESUS MY BOY John Dowie’s humorous one-man, one-act play, Tues 20 Mar, Malvern Theatres
EVIITA Smash-hit musical starring Madalena Alberto in the role of Eva Perón, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
EDUCATION EDUCATION EDUCATION The Wardrobe Ensemble pay tribute to the schools of the 1990s’ Cool Britannia era, Tues 20 Mar, MAC, B’ham

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Thomas Bock
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Monday 19 - Sunday 25 March

**Dance**

**PASHA & ANYA: MAGIC OF HOLLYWOOD**
An evening of sequins, glitter and glamour in the company of the 2014 Strictly winner and his long-time partner, Wed 21 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**TORO: BEAUTY AND THE BULL**
DeNada Dance Theatre present Spanish choreographer Carlos Pons Guerra’s gender-questioning Hispanic take on the fairytale Beauty And The Beast, boldly dealing with the eroticism of the original story, Thurs 22 - Fri 23 Mar, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome

**Film**

**INDEPENDENT Listings:**

**THE SHAPE OF WATER (15)** Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sally Hawkins, Octavia Spencer. Number 8 Community Arts Centre, Worcestershire, Mon 19 - Tues 20 & Thurs 22 Mar

**I, TONYA (15)** Biography/Comedy. Starring Margot Robbie, Allison Janney. Rose’s Theatre, Tewkesbury, Mon 19 - Tues 20 & Thurs 22 Mar


**LADY BIRD (16) Comedy/Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Laurie Metcalf. Rose’s Theatre, Tewkesbury, Fri 23 Mar

**THE NUT JOB 2 (U) Animation/Action.**

With the voices of Will Arnett, Maya Rudolph, Rose’s Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sat 24 Mar

**THE SHAPE OF WATER (15)** Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sally Hawkins, Octavia Spencer. Number 8 Pershore, Sat 24 Mar

**ROMEO AND JULIET (PG)** Drama. Starring Leonard Whiting & Olivia Hussey. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 24 Mar

**NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:**
Released from Fri 23 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

**PROUD MARY (tbc)**

**UNSALE (tbc)**

**PACIFIC RIM: UPRISING (tbc)**

**A WRINKLE IN TIME (tbc)**

**Events**

**STAR VEHICLE STORIES** Get to know the star vehicles of the collection through interactive stories, songs and hands-on experiences, Mon 19 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

**THE W FACTOR** Chance for budding stage stars and history lovers of any age to ‘audition’ for a cameo in a performance of Wicked, Warwick, Mon 19 Mar, Number 8 Community Arts Centre, Worcestershire

**2018 GYMNASICS WORLD CUP** Male gymnasts go for glory on the floor, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars and high bar; elite women wow the crowds as they compete on vault, uneven bars, beam and the floor, Wed 21 - Thurs 22 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**THE NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATION SHOW** Ideal show for anyone planning an extension, a remodelling of the internal layout of their home or a new kitchen overlooking a landscaped garden, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**MURDER MYSTERY AT THE BACK TO BACKS** The venue hosts its first ever murder-mystery event, Fri 23 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

**DUNGEON LATES** Blending scary storytelling with wicked humour and manic theatrics, this gory production is strictly an adults-only affair, mixing special effects with live performance art, Fri 23 Mar, Warwick Castle

**PANORAMA TOWER OPEN DAY** Enjoy 360-degree views from the balcony of the tower, Fri 23 Mar, Croome Park, Worcestershire

**INDEPENDENT GIN FESTIVAL** Fri 23 - Sat 24 Mar, FarGo Village, Coventry

**PRACTICAL CLASSICS CAR & RESTORATION SHOW** Show featuring all aspects of classic motoring, including barn finds discovered after many years of storage and restorations just getting back on the road, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**CREATE AN EASTER RAG WREATH** Learn how to make your own Easter decoration and find out why rag rugs were so popular with back-to-back families, Sat 24 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

**MINATURA** Specifically aimed at the scales favoured by the dolls’ house hobby, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**THUNDERSPORT GB CLUB BIKE CHAMPIONSHIPS** Featuring complex two-wheeled machines and examples of technical innovation, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Mar, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

**EASTER HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN** Enjoy two exclusive stage shows, Sat 24 Mar - Sun 15 Apr, Cadbury World, B’ham
BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME
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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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64 whatsonlive.co.uk
**Gigs**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CYCLES OF TRIO</td>
<td>Mon 26 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOYLE</td>
<td>Mon 26 Mar, The Asylum, B’ham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>DODIE</td>
<td>Tues 27 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE RAT PACK LIVE FROM LAS VEGAS</td>
<td>Tues 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>FALL OUT BOY</td>
<td>Tues 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE YOUNG’UNS</td>
<td>Tues 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham</td>
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<td>SHIFA: RACHEL MUSB</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNFLOWER BEAN</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Roux’s, Birmingham</td>
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<td>THE RAT PACK LIVE FROM LAS VEGAS</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>TALK, CAPSIZE &amp; BRU</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Hare &amp; Hounds, Redditch</td>
<td>Redditch</td>
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<tr>
<td>JULIE JULY BAND (TRIB-UTE TO SANDY DENNY)</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa</td>
<td>Leamington Spa</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNKE L STORY (50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR)</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>THIRTY SECONDS TO EARTH</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE MEZZOS IN CONCERT</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE VIOLETTE</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Palace Theatre, Worcester</td>
<td>Worcester</td>
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<tr>
<td>OH MY GOD! IT’S THE RAT PACK</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Hare &amp; Hounds, B’ham</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNFLOWER BEAN</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Alex Theatre, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIRCUS</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, Arena Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPLETE MADNESS</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham</td>
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<td>Wed 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Wed 28 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham</td>
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<td>THE 1990’S</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham</td>
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<td>MODS VS ROCKERS</td>
<td>Wed 28 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tamworth</td>
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<td>Wed 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham</td>
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**Classical Music**

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<tr>
<td>THOMAS TROTTER LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT</td>
<td>Fri 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAHLER'S FIRST WITH MIRGA FEATURING MIRGA GRAZINYTE-TYLA</td>
<td>Fri 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOOD FRIDAY BACH ST MATTHEW PAS- SION FEATURING EX CATHEDRA CHOIR</td>
<td>Fri 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG</td>
<td>Fri 30 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham</td>
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<td>MARLON DAVIS, DAMIAN CLARK &amp; COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON</td>
<td>Thurs 29 Mar, The Glee Club, B’ham</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEPHEN BAILEY</td>
<td>Fri 30 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>RACHEL PARIS</td>
<td>Fri 30 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARLON DAVIS, DAMIAN CLARK CRAIG DEELEY &amp; ANDREW WATTS</td>
<td>Sat 31 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAMIAN CLARK, RICH WILSON, PIERRE HOLLINS &amp; IAN SMITH</td>
<td>Sat 31 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>TURN OF THE SCREW</td>
<td>Thurs 27 Mar, Sat 31 Mar, Malvern Theatre</td>
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**The List Warwicks/Worcs 26-31 March**

*Monday 26 - Saturday 31 March*

*The list*

*Gigs*

*Classical Music*

*Comedy*

*Theatre*
THE WAR OF THE WORLDS The critically acclaimed Pantaloons recreate deadly heat-rays, giant fighting-machines, squidy-tentacled Martians and interplanetary warfare on an epic scale!, Thurs 29 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

TESTOSTERONE Rhum & Clay present a gender-transition story inspired by the narrative of The Wizard Of Oz and drawing influences from iconic movies, pop culture and pulp fiction, Thurs 29 - Fri 30 Mar, MAC, B’ham

THE WICKED WIZARD OF FIZZOG John Dowie’s humorous theatreCompany presents its version of The Wizard Of Oz and the promise of ‘one extraordinary show’, Tues 27 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows
TIDDLER & OTHER TERRIFIC TALES A whole host of colourful characters from Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler’s much-loved tale are brought to life via live music and puppetry, Fri 30 Mar - Tues 3 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

MONSTERSAURUS Thrills, spills, magic and mayhem abound, with original music and plenty of audience participation, Sat 31 Mar - Sat 7 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham
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GUEST DJ SET FROM GRAHAM CRABB

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