

Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 388 APRIL 2018

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inside:

thelist

Your 16-page week
by week listings guide

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EGG-CITING FUN

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What's On

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Wolverhampton theatre announces a Grand programme of shows

A brand new season of West End musicals, gripping dramas, dynamic dance works and one-off concerts has gone on sale at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

Highlights of the programme include the return of smash-hit musical *The Bodyguard*, a major new production of *Doctor Dolittle The Musical*, Belinda Lang and Oliver Cotton in *Duet For One*, Doreen Tipton's brand new live show, Doreen's *Big Top*, the National Theatre presenting their production of *Macbeth* and appearances by Joe Pasquale and Russell Watson... For further information and to book tickets, visit grandtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01902 429212.

Festival welcomes international cartoonists

The Shrewsbury International Cartoon Festival makes a welcome return on Saturday 21 April.

This year's get-together features workshops, talks, exhibitions, a trail around the town and demonstrations by 30 international cartoonists. For more information, visit shrewsburycartoonfestival.wordpress.com



A Christmas wind in the willows at the New Vic...

Staffordshire's New Vic Theatre will stage a brand new adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind In The Willows* for Christmas 2018. Adapted by New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins, the show will run from Saturday 17 November to Saturday 26 January 2019. Commenting on the announcement, Theresa said: "The wit and charm of Kenneth Grahame's novel is such a delight. No matter how many times I read it, it makes me chuckle. And Toad's zest for adventure I've found utterly irresistible!"

For more details about the production and to book tickets, call 01782 717962 or visit newvictheatre.org.uk.

Jellyfish invasion at the National Sea Life Centre

A brand new permanent exhibition at Birmingham's National Sea Life Centre has opened in time for Easter.

Jelly Invaders features five different jellyfish species from across the world - from the bizarre freshwater upside-down jellyfish to the glittering 'sea nettle' variety from the Indo-Pacific.

Commenting on the new attraction, curator Jonny Rudd said: "Jellyfish are actually older than dinosaurs, as it's believed they first swam in our oceans some 500 million years ago. With more than 350 different species, there's a lot to uncover!"

For further information or to pre-book tickets, visit sealife.co.uk/birmingham.



Stand up and be laughed at in comedy challenge

The Wolverhampton Stand-up Comedy Challenge is returning on Thursday 26 April as part of the Black Country Business Festival (23 April - 4 May).

The comedy challenge provides local business comedy first-timers with the opportunity to try their hand at performing in front of a live audience.

Tickets and further details are available at standupchallenge.co.uk/wolverhampton

Shropshire's Atlantic Ladies in brand new show

After 60 days at sea, Shropshire's 'Atlantic ladies' have finally completed their record-breaking row across the ocean.

They've been relating their stories in exclusive detail to Chris Eldon Lee (author of *Silhouette* and *Ursula Queen Of The Jungle*). Chris' in-depth musical play about their adventures is to be premièred at the Wightman Theatre in Shrewsbury from 26 to 29 September. Tickets for the show are on sale now.



After-hours fun in the Black Country

The Black Country Living Museum is next month opening its doors after hours, to provide 'an atmospheric evening of industrial demonstrations, good food, living history and more'.

Visitors to the Red By Night evening will be invited to step inside period houses and shops to discover how Black Country folk used to live.

The event also features street entertainment and the chance to try the museum's 1930s-style fish and chips!

Red By Night takes place on Saturday 19 May. For more information, visit bclm.com or call 0121 520 8054.



Let there be light in Ironbridge Gorge

The iconic Iron Bridge at the Shropshire World Heritage Site of Ironbridge Gorge is set to be illuminated all year round as part of Telford's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The illumination of the bridge is an initiative that Telford & Wrekin Council has been working on for some time.

Commenting on the news, Councillor Rae Evans, cabinet member with responsibility for tourism, said: "We want a lighting scheme that will really enhance the Iron Bridge and its status as one of the UK's top heritage attractions, and that will really help to showcase to the world what we have here in the borough."



Festival seeks young musicians for its Launchpad stage

Shrewsbury Folk Festival has put out a call for young musicians to showcase their talents at this year's event.

Sponsored by What's On Media Group, the festival's Launchpad initiative is looking for solo performers and groups aged 16 to 26, who live in Shropshire, Mid Wales or the West Midlands, to pitch for one of the places available to perform on stage. Each of the successful candidates will be expected to perform a 30-minute acoustic set at least three times over the festival weekend (24 to 27 August).

The selected musicians will receive a free ticket to the festival, on-site camping and a contribution to travel expenses.

The first Launchpad event took place at last year's festival and was a big success. "Festival-goers really enjoyed watching the acts," says director Sandra Surtees. "For many of the performers, it was the first time they'd ever had the opportunity to take part in an event like ours. We're inviting applications from any performers in the folk, roots or acoustic genre who'd like to take part this year."

To apply, send a short biography, links to performances (Soundcloud, YouTube etc) and your contact details to jo@shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk before 31 May. Only selected performers will be contacted.

Colour fun run at Hawkstone



Hawkstone Park is hosting a special three-kilometre Colour Run on Saturday 1 September. The event is a fundraiser for Hope House, a charity for children who're affected by conditions so serious that it's not expected they will live beyond early adulthood. For more information about how to contribute and participate, visit hawkstoneparkfollies.co.uk

Food celebrated at 'field to fork' festival

Shropshire's Harper Adams University is hosting a celebration of food this month.

The Field To Fork Festival, taking place in Newport on Saturday 28 April, features 'a host of entertainment to inspire, educate and enjoy'. The event includes live music courtesy of Dirty Rockin' Scoundrels, Woo Town Hillbillies, Bouncing Betty, The Reverie and Groove Dynamite. Kids entertainment includes soft archery, a school of coding, an exotic zoo, crafts, soft play and performances from Professor Panic. A farmers market, 'tasty' street food, machinery displays and an education area also feature.

For more information, visit fieldtoforkfestival.com



What's On Readers' Awards

WINNERS announced...

With over 50,000 votes cast in the **What's On Readers' Awards 2018** - we are delighted to announce your winners...

Midlands Large Theatre



WINNER Birmingham Hippodrome
RUNNER-UP Wolverhampton Grand

Best Touring Musical

WINNER Jersey Boys
RUNNER-UP Billy Elliot

Best Touring Play

WINNER The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time
RUNNER-UP Shirley Valentine

Best Touring Company



WINNER The Fizzogs
RUNNER-UP Motionhouse

Best Home-Produced Show In The Midlands

WINNER Nativity! The Musical - Birmingham Repertory Theatre
RUNNER-UP Alice in Wonderland - The Old Rep

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Best Kids Show

WINNER Gangsta Granny
RUNNER-UP The Snowman

Best Festive Show

WINNER A Christmas Carol - The RSC
RUNNER-UP The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe - Crescent Theatre

Best Pantomime In The Midlands 2017/18



WINNER Jack and The Beanstalk - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
RUNNER-UP Cinderella - Birmingham Hippodrome

Best Panto Dame

WINNER Ian Adams - Jack and The Beanstalk at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
RUNNER-UP Sam Rabone - Aladdin at Lichfield Garrick Theatre

Best Amateur Dramatic/Operatic Group

WINNER West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS)
RUNNER-UP Mad Cow Productions

Best Amateur Production

WINNER Hairspray - Get Your Wiggle On
RUNNER-UP Present Laughter - Mad Cow Productions

Best Dance Production

WINNER Birmingham Royal Ballet's The Nutcracker
RUNNER-UP Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes

Best Classical Production inc Opera

WINNER CBSO Spectacular Classics
RUNNER-UP Birmingham Bach Choir: Handel's Messiah

Best Orchestra/Choir

WINNER Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra
RUNNER-UP CBSO

Best Midlands Arts/Cultural Festival



WINNER Birmingham Weekender
RUNNER-UP Lichfield Fuse Festival

Best Exhibition

WINNER Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2017 - Wolverhampton Art Gallery
RUNNER-UP Quentin Blake: Inside Stories - Compton Verney Art Gallery

Best Independent Cinema

WINNER Electric Cinema - Birmingham
RUNNER-UP Light House Media Centre - Wolverhampton



Best Midlands Music Venue

WINNER Symphony Hall, Birmingham
RUNNER-UP Genting Arena, Birmingham

Best Midlands Music Festival

WINNER Lichfield Festival
RUNNER-UP Shrewsbury Folk Festival

Best Midlands Musician

WINNER Laura Mvula
RUNNER-UP Scott Matthews

Best Midlands Live Band

WINNER UB40
RUNNER-UP Black Sabbath

Best Midlands Retail Shopping Centre

WINNER Bullring, Birmingham
RUNNER-UP Grand Central, Birmingham

Best Midlands Chef



WINNER Glynn Purnell (Purnell's, Bham)
RUNNER-UP Adam Stokes (B'ham)

Best Midlands Street Food Vendor

WINNER The Meat Shack
RUNNER-UP Bournville Waffle Co.

Best Midlands Comedian

WINNER Joe Lycett
RUNNER-UP Greg Davies

Best Midlands Comedy Night

WINNER Comedy Carousel at The Glee Club, Birmingham
RUNNER-UP Funhouse Comedy

Best Midlands Food Festival

WINNER Lichfield Food Festival
RUNNER-UP Ludlow Food Festival

Midlands Entertainment Personality of the Year Award

WINNER Julie Walters
RUNNER-UP Doreen Tipton

and the winners in your region...

Wolverhampton & Black Country

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

WINNER Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Best Live Music Venue

WINNER Wolverhampton Civic Hall

Best Visitor Attraction

WINNER Black Country Living Museum

Best Event

WINNER Artsfest, Wolverhampton

Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

WINNER Wolverhampton Museum & Art Gallery

Best Independent Restaurant

WINNER Mad O'Rourkes Pie Factory, Tipton

Best Independent Cafe/Coffee Shop

WINNER The Old School Tea Rooms, Essington

Staffordshire

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

WINNER Lichfield Garrick

Best Live Music Venue

WINNER Victoria Hall, Stoke

Best Visitor Attraction

WINNER Lichfield Cathedral

Best Event

WINNER The Cathedral Illuminated at Lichfield Cathedral

Best Festival

WINNER Lichfield Food Festival

Best Independent Cafe/Coffee Shop

WINNER The Apple Tree, Barton Marina

Shropshire

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

WINNER Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Best Live Music Venue

WINNER Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

Best Visitor Attraction

WINNER Ironbridge Gorge Museums

Best Event

WINNER Shrewsbury Flower Show

Best Festival

WINNER Shrewsbury Food Festival

Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

WINNER Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

Best Independent Restaurant in Shrewsbury

WINNER The Peach Tree

Best Independent Restaurant in Telford

WINNER Hundred House Restaurant

Best Independent Restaurant in North Shropshire

WINNER The New Inn, Baschurch

Best Independent Restaurant in South Shropshire

WINNER The Kings Head, Bridgnorth

Best Independent Cafe/Coffee Shop

WINNER Crystal's Cupcakes, Telford

Best Retail Store

WINNER Battlefield 1403 Farm Shop

Martine McCutcheon

talks music, motherhood and soaps...



Having found fame as Tiffany Mitchell in EastEnders, Martine McCutcheon released her platinum-selling debut solo album - and number one single Perfect Moment - back in 1999. This month, the Love Actually star visits the Midlands following the release of Lost And Found - her first album in 15 years. Lauren Foster caught up with Martine ahead of her tour...

You're bringing your new tour to various Midlands venues. What can audiences expect from your show?

It's an intimate night with me on a music and conversational level. It'll basically be talking through the years, what inspired me to make the different choices that I made along the way, which songs have got a reputation for being one thing but in fact meant something else, and just a real insight into me, my life and my music over the years. I've got an acoustic band, and it's very much about the music and my journey. It's something I'm really excited to do; I've never done anything like it before.

You co-wrote a host of songs off new album Lost And Found with your husband. Was working together always on the cards?

I was concentrating on wanting to be a mum, and that was my main focus, so I never thought it would happen when it did. Because I'd grown up in the public eye, I needed time out to take stock. He told me to write all my thoughts down during this time, and I did. Then it became more musical, and I'd hear stuff that he was doing, love it and want to do a song. The album was never meant to be for public consumption. The music was just to help me get through a difficult time and also to celebrate when I felt like I was ready to go and grab life again. It only took off because he played it to somebody in the industry and they said they knew a label that would want to sign it. It was quite scary to think that all these personal things were going to be out there - but at the same time, what's lovely is that people have since got in touch and made the songs their own, through their own experiences.

And it's your first album in 15 years..

Yeah, and I didn't think there'd even be one - what a lovely surprise! I thought I'd be focusing on TV work, and maybe the music side of things might have gone for me. I'm 41, and it's very much a young person's game - unless you're the Rolling Stones or something. It's hard to stay relevant in your

own little way, but I just want to do my thing because I love it. I do it because it's part of who I am, and if people buy into that, lovely.

What are you looking forward to the most about being back on tour?

I'm a real people person, and I love feeding off the atmosphere of people; the public have so much good will for me. When I've been the critics' star one minute and their least favourite person the next, the only thing that's stayed constant is the public, who I very much feel part of - I feel like a very normal person who does a very unusual job. So it's lovely to feed off the energy of the people I meet. They make me feel a million dollars.

Aside from your music career, you're best known for playing Tiffany in EastEnders and Natalie in Love Actually. Do acting roles still interest you?

Yeah. I did a movie last year with Alan Davies called The Bromley Boys - it's out for cinema release later this year. It's set in the early '70s; Alan is playing the dad of a young boy and I'm playing the mum. He falls in love with football, he's very lonely, doesn't really have any friends, and it's about how he establishes a little life for himself through the most rubbish football club ever - Bromley. It's a really sweet story.

Do you prefer acting or singing?

For me, it's all linked. I feel like I'm a storyteller, and whether that's through music or acting, I'm happy just to be that person. It sounds a bit cheesy, but I've always felt that I'm there to help people switch off from their everyday lives. I feel like that's my purpose in this lifetime, and if that's through five minutes of song or a couple of hours of a movie, then great, my job is done.

Would working in soap again interest you?

Yeah, I think that soap is the hardest thing I've ever done. You don't have the luxury of time or a big budget, but it's quite nice to just get on with it. When you're doing movies or dramas, you're sat in a Winnebago for hours on end, just waiting for the next scene, in

which you might only have one line or something. I love the process of filming a soap, and I've got such amazing memories. The only thing is, it's such a different time now. Soap was so exciting then, and such a big thing in people's lives because there was no reality TV - I just don't know whether people feel as attached to soaps as they used to. I don't know if it would be like going back to uni or going back to school but with none of the same people there. It would feel weird.

Who have you most enjoyed working with?

The person I loved working with most in my TV career would probably be Barbara Windsor. She's an amazing teacher and she has your back. She chooses her friends within the industry very carefully, but when she's got your back, she's so loyal. She was so 'pro me' that I adored her and still do. I'd say in movies, it's got to be Hugh Grant because he championed and believed in me. In music it would be Andrea Bocelli - he was spintingling to be on stage with; I had goosebumps all over. I felt like I was going to burst into tears on stage because I was so emotional. He's just a real star!

How is motherhood treating you?

It's amazing! It's been the best thing that's ever happened to me. I love the fact that children help you rediscover a zest for life, an innocence and an excitement for everyday things. Just the love - the love is just out of this world. I always knew I wanted it, so I feel very grateful to have it.

What does the future hold for Martine McCutcheon?

I just want to keep doing what I love. Hopefully doing what I love makes people happy and will touch people in some way. That's all I want to do in my lifetime.

.....

Martine McCutcheon performs at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Sat 14 April; The Core, Solihull, on Wed 18 April; Regal Cinema, Evesham, on Wed 16 May and Palace Theatre, Redditch, on Thurs 17 May

WORLD CLASS ENTERTAINMENT



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WED 4 APR

REGENT THEATRE



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REGENT THEATRE



CHANNEL 5 FAVOURITES
MILKSHAKE! LIVE

FRI 6 APR

REGENT THEATRE



THE ROD STEWART STORY
**SOME GUYS HAVE
ALL THE LUCK**

THU 17 MAY

REGENT THEATRE



BASED ON THE HIT PODCAST
**MY DAD WROTE
A PORN LIVE**

FRI 20 APR

REGENT THEATRE



STARRING DOMINIC HALPIN &
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FRI 18 MAY

REGENT THEATRE

**DUSTY & THE SHADES
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MACCA: THE CONCERT WED 28 MAR **VH**

BACK TO BACHARACH FRI 30 MAR **VH**

ODYSSEY & JAKI GRAHAM SAT 31 MAR **VH**

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES SAT 7 APR **VH**

GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND SUN 8 APR **VH**

**MERCURY: THE ULTIMATE
QUEEN TRIBUTE** SAT 14 APR **VH**

SWING WITH LAUGHTER FRI 20 APR **VH**



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REVIEW: The Queen's Cantonese Restaurant

Exceptional Chinese cuisine at Wolverhampton favourite

Family-run business The Queen's Cantonese Restaurant is one of the most popular eateries in Wolverhampton, with nearly 30 years' experience in serving traditional Cantonese dishes in a relaxing environment.

Situated in the city centre, just a stone's throw away from the train station and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, the restaurant works on a simple principle: source the finest ingredients and have them cooked by the best chefs.

Having heard nothing but glowing reviews, and being huge fans of Chinese cuisine, my partner and I were beyond excited to be making our Queen's Cantonese debut.

On arrival, we were warmly greeted by restaurant manager Karl Chan and shown to our table. We ordered two pints of lager and eagerly perused the delicious-sounding menu. Knowing that we would enjoy and devour every single thing available, it was quite a challenge deciding which dishes to order.

The easy part was the soup. Not wanting to break with tradition, I ordered chicken & sweetcorn - my partner, sweet & sour. As expected, they were both exemplary. I find with sweet & sour soup that it can vary hugely in taste and quality from place to place. The Queen's Cantonese has got it absolutely spot on. Both myself and my partner agreed that it was the nicest one we'd ever had.

Amongst the starters were the usual suspects: aromatic duck pancakes, pork yuk-shung and crispy fried spring rolls and rain-bow chicken, stuffed crab's claw with minced prawns and grilled satay king prawns. Wanting to try as much as possible, we opted for the mixed seafood platter combination.

Chopsticks at the ready, we hastily tucked into the mouthwatering plate of food before us. Comprising scallops served in a soy broth, the largest mussels I've ever seen, crispy squid served with sweet chilli sauce, soft coated prawn balls and,

without a doubt, the most delicious prawn toast that either of us had ever had the pleasure of eating, the platter proved to be a truly fantastic starter. Every element was stunning. The mussels were meaty, the scallops cooked to perfection and of a decent size, and the squid, soft and ever so tasty. Forever greedy, we also ordered a portion of steamed pork dumplings, which were, unsurprisingly, fantastic.

Moving on to the main course, we selected sizzling fillet of beef and chicken in oyster sauce and fried spicy squid stuffed with minced prawns, accompanied by a side of chicken chow mein and egg fried rice. The beef and chicken were cooked to perfection. Soft to the bite and showcasing a beautiful flavour, it was another dish to shout about. The seafood offering was, again, very tasty, and something I've never before ordered from a Chinese restaurant. Packed full of flavour and showcasing just the right amount of heat, it's certainly something that I'd order again.

A tad more than 'suitably full', we decided that we'd probably have to give dessert a miss. Fifteen minutes later, after having given our food chance to settle, we changed our minds, opting to share some coconut ice cream and croquantes - meringue and ice cream balls coated in crunchy nuts. The flavour of the latter wasn't dissimilar to a Ferrero Rocher (which could never be a bad thing). The ice cream was the perfect contrast to the salty food devoured beforehand.

Alongside the main menu, The Queen's Cantonese has a more traditional Chinese menu which includes such delicacies as marinated spicy pigs stomach, chicken feet, a wide selection of steamed dim sum and fish dishes. However, we weren't aware of this until after we'd eaten. Being quite adventurous diners, we would've been keen to try out some of the venue's more traditional dishes. That said, everything we did consume was absolutely fantastic, so we were in no way disappointed.

Karl and his team played a big part in ensuring our Queen's Cantonese experience was as successful as it was. Friendly and knowledgeable, they welcomed us into their restaurant with open arms and couldn't have done more for us during our time there. The food was exceptional, and I certainly wouldn't think twice about paying the restaurant a second visit the next time I'm in Wolverhampton.

Lauren Foster

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

The Queen's Cantonese
41 Queen Street
Wolverhampton
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Tel: 01902 713399

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Sweet days ahead for Lichfield's dessert fans

A popular Midlands eatery chain is to open a branch in Lichfield. Little Dessert Shop, which has outlets across the West Midlands, is all set to open a new store on the city's Bore Street. The menu includes crepes, milkshakes, sundaes, smoothies, waffles, brownies and bakes.

Birmingham theatre offers a Wicked menu!

To mark the return to the venue of award-winning musical Wicked, Birmingham Hippodrome Head Chef Mel has created a specially themed menu for visitors to enjoy. Mel's green menu features asparagus wrapped in Parma ham, devilled whitebait with charred lime and a torn mozzarella salad with basil oil, and a special Elphaburger, featuring a unique charcoal sesame bun, avocado salsa and more.

Wicked runs at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 4 to Sunday 29 April.

Wolverhampton set for its first cocktail festival

Wolverhampton is set to host its first-ever cocktail festival this summer. Due to take place on Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 August, the event will feature a menu of more than 1,000 cocktails created by award-winning mixologists, a selection of street food and cocktail masterclasses. The venue is yet to be announced.



Shrewsbury restaurant given refurbishment and rebrand

Shrewsbury restaurant The Porter House has reopened as Darwin's Kitchen. Having undergone both a refurb and a rebrand, the venue's menu features kitchen sharing platters, open sandwiches, small plates 'from the vegetable patch, the sea and the land', chef's plates and a from-the-grill section. Highlights include Welsh black fillet steak with mushroom duxelle and garlic butter, tempura of cavolo nero with tomato and chilli jam, salt & pepper squid with crispy gnocchi, wild garlic and lemon aioli, and sticky pomegranate belly pork with creamed potatoes, rainbow chard, black cabbage and spiced granola. Darwin's Kitchen also boasts four boutique rooms, including one luxurious suite and three superior double rooms.

Ironbridge Gorge venue to host its first street food festival

One of Ironbridge Gorge's most popular museums is to host its first street food festival next month. Taking place in the Engine Shop at Ennui on Saturday 5 May, Feast will showcase a wide selection of tasty street food, local craft beer and prosecco, all provided by a variety of pop-up vendors. There will also be hands-on activities and entertainment for both adults and children to enjoy, with music provided by local acoustic groups. Admission to Feast is £1 per person, with free admission for children under 16 when accompanied by an adult. For further information, visit ironbridge.org.uk



TELFORD IS 50!

On the 29th of November 2018, Telford will be 50. The date marks a milestone in the ongoing development of the Shropshire town, as both a visitor destination and a place to live.

And as with all good 50th birthday celebrations, the party will not be confined to just one date. The council has been busy programming a series of events to bring together the community and attract visitors from further afield.

Named after one of Shropshire's most famous sons - civil engineer Thomas Telford - and known throughout the world as the birthplace of industry, Telford continues to make its mark as a place of innovation, invention and technology. The town's rich heritage, numerous achievements and promising future will all be celebrated in Telford50.

From festivals and carnivals to community get-togethers and festive activities, there'll be plenty of events with which people can become involved.

Spring Into Park kicks off the celebrations on 22 April, the day before St George's Day, when

Telford Town Park comes to life with a full range of activities and entertainment. Attractions at the free-to-attend event include St George and his dragon, jousting knights, a mini circus tent, archery & outdoor sports, a bouncy castle village, a vintage funfair, a dog show... and camel racing! Telford's scientific, technical, engineering and manufacturing strengths will also be in evidence, as will a food and craft offering (although visitors are more than welcome to take along a picnic).

On 12 and 13 May, Telford's celebrations reach for the skies at the Telford Balloon and Kite Fiesta. Weather permitting, the event will see an array of balloons floating above the borough at various intervals throughout the two days. When not in the air, some of the balloons will be tethered in QEII Fields In Trust Town Park for all to admire. During the evening of Saturday the 12th, 10 lit balloons will take to the sky, casting a 'night glow' over the town - again, weather permitting. The festival also invites kite enthusiasts to join The Midlands Kite Flyers at the Rugby Club, where they'll be running huge professional kites. Don't worry if you don't

have your own kite - there'll be a quantity available to borrow and an opportunity to make your own.

There's enormous fun to be had on 15 July, courtesy of the Carnival of Giants. Celebrating people, places, heritage and the town's 'bright future', this colourful event honours both famous and unsung 'giants' of Telford's past and present with a colourful parade. The route leads from Addenbrooke House on Ironmasters Way through to Telford Town Park.

Continuing the outdoor theme, August sees a number of big names perform in a 1,000-seater big top tent in the QEII arena. Shows announced so far include Russell Watson (on the 4th), Scheherezade and 1001 Nights (5th), Sounds Of The '60s (6th), Supersonic '70s Show (7th), Dara O'Briain (8th), Boyzlife (10th), Al Murray (11th), S Club, 5ive and East 17 (15th), Collabro (16th) and Doreen's Best Naughty Bits (17th).

For full details of all events featuring in Telford's birthday celebrations, visit telford50.co.uk



Also happening as part of Telford50...

GET SNAPPED!

Photographer Brian Homer and his team are looking to capture local residents for an archive of 'Telford people in 2018'.

The team will install pop-up photo booths at various venues across the town. Willing participants will be invited to press the trigger to take their own portrait. Each participant will get an instant print copy of their photo to take away, and images will later feature in a final exhibition.

Locations, dates and times are available at telford50.co.uk

TURNING JAPANESE

Telford Sakura Festival brings a touch of Japan to the town's Maxell Cherry Garden on 21 April.

A ticketed event, this evening festival (5pm- 9pm) sees the gardens illuminated with lanterns and coloured lights. Japanesque Duo and the Taiko West Drummers provide the event's music.

Origami demonstrations, silhouette cutting and a range of Japanese street food also feature.

WALK THIS WAY!

An annual event on the Telford calendar, the Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival features 53 walks over nine days in and around the famous World Heritage site.

Catering for all abilities, walks range from short ones of two and four miles to all-day treks.

All walks are free. However, pre-booking is essential as numbers are limited.

For more information, visit ironbridgewalking.co.uk

A big happy birthday to Shropshire's newest town...



#Telford50

BRANCH OUT

Featuring live music, rides and a selection of food, Branches In The Park's aim is to reach out and raise awareness of mental health and addiction-recovery issues.

Taking place from 11am to 6pm on 6 May, Branches will have stalls with service providers in attendance, allowing the public to find out more about the services available in Telford and Wrekin.

There will also be arts & craft tables for children, and mental health first-aid tents for people in need of support.

FAMILY RAVE

This critically acclaimed, award-winning family event (The Place, Oakengates, 27 May) sees rave legend Glenn Aston in charge of the decks.

The gig also features a multisensory dancefloor, a glitter cannon, bubbles, giant bouncy balloons and the famous parachute dance.

Aside from joining in with the action on the dancefloor, young visitors can busy themselves with themed crafts, a giant colouring mural and a creative playdough area.

WWII WEEKEND

Set against the backdrop of the Ironbridge Gorge, this annual event uses civilian, Allied and Axis re-enactors to recreate the experience of life during World War Two, on both the home front and in occupied Europe.

Programming for the Dale End Park event includes a talk by Rusty Firmin on the Iranian Embassy Siege (Friday 25 May) and a Grand 1940s Dance on Saturday the 26th.

For further details, visit ironbridgeww2weekend.co.uk



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*Advance Purchase for 4 tickets can be for any 4 people and are only available to purchase until Thursday 31st May 2018



JAKE SHEARS

talks Birmingham Pride, his new memoir and going it alone

Best known as lead singer of millennium pop group Scissor Sisters, Jake Shears is now going it alone. A headliner at next month's Birmingham Pride, Jake recently took time out of his busy schedule to talk to What's On about collaborations, making his Broadway debut, writing his memoir and why he's so excited to be performing songs from his new album in front of Midlands audiences...

What does it mean to you to be performing as one of the headliners at this year's Birmingham Pride, Jake?

For me to be able to perform at Pride with a full band is really exciting, as it's something I don't get to do very often. The majority of Pride events aren't equipped to hold a whole band - they're usually PA gigs, which means people perform with just a mic to a pre-recorded track. This is one of the first Prides at which I've played. I've done City Mardi Gras, but that was DJing, and I did a performance with Courtney Act, but it was more of a dance performance. What's also exciting is I'll be performing my new stuff. So far I've just done one concert in London with this material, so I'm looking forward to playing new music to people who haven't heard it. And I love Pride season - it's a blast! I'm honoured to be able to do it in Birmingham - it's going to be a lot of fun.

What can audiences expect from your solo performance?

You know, I just do my thing. I'm still finding my footing with this new stuff and with being a solo performer. The gigs I've done so far have been an absolute blast; it's been so much fun. At first I was kind of nervous. The first couple of times I performed, I was like, "Wow, this is so weird, to do this without Scissors - like, where's Ana?", but I got the hang of it real quick, and I think people are going to be very entertained.

On a scale of one to 10, how flamboyant will your performance be?

Oh, a 10. I'm excited to dress up again - it's been a while since I've donned the sequins.

Who are you most looking forward to seeing at Birmingham Pride?

Beth Ditto is going to be there too, isn't she? That's going to be fucking awesome. It's always been my dream to do something with her. We got to play with Beth once at a Lovebox Festival; I love her so much. I think she and I would make a great pair, playing back to back. I've always wanted to go on tour with her - a co-headline with me and Beth Ditto would be a fucking sicko tour.

What do you enjoy most about performing in the UK?

It's awesome to play the UK. We have a history, and it feels like UK audiences have been with me (The Scissors) since the

beginning. I'm hoping me being back will conjure up a lot of good memories for people, and that makes me happy in a very specific way.

Who would you cite as your all-time biggest musical influence?

I would have to say Bowie, just because I started to listen to him at such a young age. My first fantasy about performing came about while listening to his music. He's still my main inspiration, and I always go back to him. My number two would have to be Paul Williams - he's a songwriter who did the Buggy Malone movie. His musical style has always been a massive influence on what I do.

Of all the artists you've collaborated with - either in a performing or writing capacity - who's been the most memorable?

There are so many. I think getting to write with Bryan Ferry and then going to London and recording with Roxy Music was massive. I am a huge Roxy Music fan and a huge fan of Bryan Ferry's, so to get to watch his process, and to watch the band's process, was something I will never forget. I've had lots of experiences of great collaborations, but that was one where I was like, "How did this even happen?"

At what age did you realise your future lay in performing?

I was 22, and it was around the time that the Scissors were a three-piece. Comfortably Numb had been released and was getting plenty of airplay. I was at Sonar in Barcelona, and one of my favourite DJs, Tiga, played one of the songs from the single. I remember that night having this full sensation of knowing this was going to be my life - this was the path I was on; one I was excited to be on. Before then, I was just kind of throwing things at a wall. There was a time when I thought I was going to be a horror novelist, and it wasn't until we put out our first music that I realised there was a lot of potential in what we were doing.

You recently made your Broadway debut as Charlie Price in the acclaimed musical Kinky Boots. How did that come about, and what new skills have you had to learn for the role?

They called me up and asked if I was interested - and of course I was. I was also really scared because I've not really done

anything like it before. I did a play a couple of years ago in Los Angeles, but I'm not an actor. Well, I wasn't an actor; I am now. The thought of it all was so frightening but at the same time exciting. I like to put myself in situations that make me a little bit uncomfortable, and I like to be in a little bit over my head, as I was when we began rehearsals. There were moments where I was like, I don't know if I'm going to be able to do this. I wasn't quite sure if it was within my capabilities. It's turned out to be one of the joys of my life. I've now been doing the show for three months, and it's something I will never forget. It's given me a new kind of confidence, and I've learned so much from all the people around me. I've realised that not only can I do this but I actually love doing it. The process has given me a lot of insight into musical writing. I've written a couple of scores. I love writing musicals, and this is something I now want to continue doing. I've learned a lot from being on the other side, and being inside a great musical. It's been an amazing experience, and I'm going to be really sad without it in my life, for a while at least...

Prior to Kinky Boots, we'd not heard from you in a while. What had you been up to?

For a couple of years, I was just searching around. I wrote a book, which is soon to be released in the UK, and my album is done and mastered - in the can, as they say. I recorded it in New Orleans, in Kentucky, and I reckon it's one of the best things I've ever made. I wanted to hide away and get some really good work done. I didn't want to re-emerge until I had some really good stuff to show for it. I am really, really proud of all of the stuff I've gotten done in the last couple of years. I've worked really, really hard on it. I'm so excited, and it's surreal to now be sharing it with the world. I think this album is going to blow people away. I'm hoping people are really going to love it.

Your memoir, Boys Keep Swinging, is a candid account of fame, success, music, sex and sexuality. What was the most challenging aspect when writing this?

Just getting through the hard parts and doing some form of self-examination whilst I was writing it. Also, the realisation of the memories which are lost. There's so much I remember and so much that I don't, and that's a kind of sad feeling. The hardest part was that first draft - just spitting it out. You know it's garbage and you have to keep



writing it, even though you know it's just a mess. That was definitely the hardest part. Once I'd finished a big chunk, say 350 pages, I could go back to the beginning and then really start writing it. That was a lot more fun.

You came out to your parents at the age of 15. Reflecting on that time, what advice would your 39-year-old self offer to a 15-year-old Jake Shears?

I probably would've waited. I came out at school before I came out to my parents, and if I'd known the sort of heat I would get, I probably would've waited a couple of years. When young people come to me and ask for coming-out advice, I kind of grill them a little bit on where they're living, what their parents are like, what their school environment is like. I often tell kids to sit on it for a second because I think not every environment is a perfect one to come out in. Coming out at school when I was 15 was not the most brilliant of ideas, I have to say. So I would've told myself to wait a minute. But I did it, and it kind of shaped who I am now, so I don't regret it.

Next year marks the 20th anniversary of your arrival in New York. Tell us about your first impressions of the Big Apple?

It was so overwhelming. I couldn't sleep at night because I was just so excited. It seemed there was just so much possibility, and it was just fun. There was so much to do. You could get by without a lot of money - there were

cute little pizza places where you could hang out and spend a whole evening drinking wine without breaking the bank. There were so many amazing people around. Downtown was pretty vibrant, and it was interesting because when I got here, Rudy Giuliani was mayor and everybody was grousing about how he was cleaning up the city. They were all talking about 'how the city was over', but I didn't think that was necessarily the case. The city is so different now. Manhattan itself has become so commercialised, and it's prohibitive to live here for a lot of people. Everything is very expensive, and so a lot of stuff has moved over to Brooklyn - a lot of the nightlife at least. I haven't really been able to partake in the nightlife since I've been here because I've been doing the show, and those two don't really go hand in hand. It was an exciting time in New York, and it seemed as though the possibilities were endless. I felt a kind of freedom I hadn't felt anywhere else.

You hit 40 later this year. How do you plan to celebrate?

I'm going to do a big party. I haven't had a big birthday party in a long time. I plan on being in New Orleans and having all my friends over for a huge party.

You released your first single in five years with the Scissor Sisters in 2017, five years after your last gig as a band. Are there any plans to re-form?

No, I don't think so. I've got too much on my

plate at the moment. I think this is what I'm doing now, and I think when people hear this album, they'll understand why. It definitely feels the start of a new chapter for me. Maybe some day we'll do something, but at the moment, I don't necessarily feel like I've got anything to say through that filter. We had a great run and we had a lot of fun. We had a solid 10 years and made a lot of great memories. I think writing the book was sort of a good way for me to put a cap on it for now, and move forward. I'm ready to do my own thing now.

Finally, where do you see yourself as a performer in 10 years' time?

I love having multiple projects going on. I want to keep writing. I'm going to turn my hand to fiction for a while, and see where that takes me. I'm going to write another musical, and I want to keep making albums. So I hope in 10 years' time there's a handful of Jake Shears' albums, a couple of shows and God knows what else. I like to stay busy.

.....

Jake performs at Birmingham Pride on Sunday 27 May. He'll also be chatting about his memoir, *Boys Keep Swinging*, at Birmingham Town Hall on Sat 5 May.



the faaaaaabulous

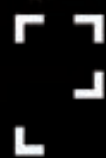
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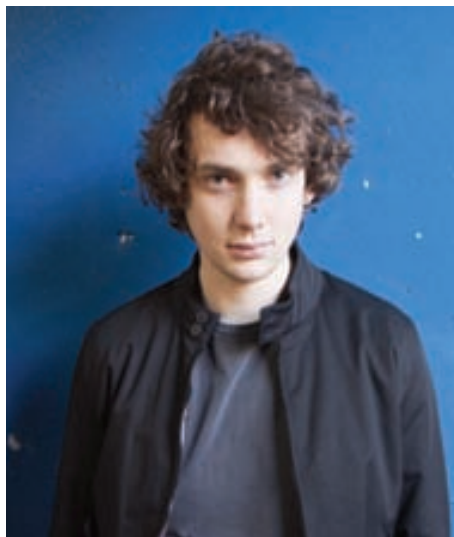


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Dan Owen

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 11 April

Local lad Dan Owen returns to Theatre Severn this month for a special event in support of Mayor of Shrewsbury Jane Mackenzie's charity, Shropshire Recovery Partnership. "I'm thrilled that Dan's chosen to support my charity," says Jane, "helping people living in Shrewsbury to recover and turn their lives around. We're all immensely proud of Dan, and I'm delighted that Theatre Severn is supporting us to showcase his incredible talent in this way."



Zervas & Pepper

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 11 April

Touring with their six-piece band, singer-songwriters Zervas & Pepper return to Henry Tudor House this month to showcase their latest offering, *Wilderland*. Written in the rocky mountains of Colorado, expect wild tales, soaring harmonies, open tunings and psychedelic leanings from this phenomenally talented duo.



Miranda Sykes

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 27 April

After a career spanning more than 20 years, leading folk musician Miranda Sykes is returning to her roots. The acclaimed singer

and bassist of Show Of Hands is touring as she started out: one woman with one bass and one guitar.

Sykes will be playing songs from new album *Borrowed Places* when she makes a welcome return to the Guildhall this month.

The Dead Daisies

The Robin, Bilston, Mon 9 April

The Dead Daisies are an Australian-American rock band and musical collective formed in 2012 in Sydney and Los Angeles. Influenced by 1970s and early '80s hard rock, their sound recalls The Faces, Bad Company and Foreigner, comprising bluesy riffs, muscular vocals and powerful melodies.

Since exploding onto the scene, they've taken the music world by storm, releasing three albums to date and touring with some of the biggest names in rock, including ZZ Top, Aerosmith, Lynyrd Skynyrd and KISS.

Ferocious Dog

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 5 April

Ferocious Dog are a full-on six-piece band who encompass folk infused with rock, reggae and Celtic vibrations. Popular for their high-octane live performances, their songs are deeply personal and connect with audiences across both the UK and Europe.

Alex Ohm

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 6 April

Having gigged across the world with former band The Lines - and played support slots for the likes of Ian Brown, The Charlatans and Peter Doherty - singer-songwriter Alex Ohm has become a renowned name on the local music scene.

His single, *Through The Storm*, taken from his debut EP - *At First A Drop, Then A Flood* - became the soundtrack for the John Lewis promotional video for their flagship Birmingham store last year.





CBSO: Shostakovich's Tenth

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 April

Young British conductor Nicholas Collon (pictured) is the man with the baton for this presentation of Shostakovich's musical epic - a piece described by the Soviet authorities at the time as 'an optimistic tragedy'. Works by Ravel - Oiseaux Tristes and Alborada del gracioso - and Benjamin Britten - Les Illuminations - complete an imaginative programme. Collon and the orchestra are joined for the concert by soprano Sophie Bevan.

Ilker Arcayürek Schumann And Schubert

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 15 April

'An afternoon of really compelling music-making' is how the publicity for this show reads - and it's a description that's likely to be right on the button.

Ilker Arcayürek, the tenor who made such an enormous splash at the 2015 Cardiff Singer of the World competition, here displays his phenomenal talent by performing works by Germany's two greatest-ever romantic songwriters.

He's joined on piano by the ever-impressive Hartmut Höll.



CBSO Friends

Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 13 April



Current and previous section principals of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra here come together to present an evening of high-quality musicmaking. Pieces by Hungarian composers Rosza, Kodaly and Dohnanyi all feature in the programme, as does the darkest yet possibly best loved of Beethoven's early string trios. Zoe Beyers (pictured) plays violin and is joined by Adam Romer on viola and Richard Jenkinson on cello.

Ensemble 360

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, Mon 30 April

With a fast-growing reputation for their ability to engage with different audiences and age groups, Ensemble 360's musicians share the belief that concerts should be informal, friendly, relaxed and, where possible, performed 'in the round'. Their latest New Vic performance sees them presenting a programme that features works by Brahms and Schoenberg.



European Union Chamber Orchestra

St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury, Sun 15 April

Boasting some of the continent's finest young professional players, EUCO is very much a musical ambassador for the European Union.

Since its formation in 1981, the orchestra has toured extensively, both across Europe and further afield. Along the way they've performed with a wealth of distinguished classical artists, including Nicola Benedetti, Julian Lloyd Webber and Alina Ibragimova.

This Shropshire Music Trust concert sees EUCO joined by trumpeter Crispian Steele Perkins (pictured) for a programme featuring Purcell, Haydn, Respighi and Mozart



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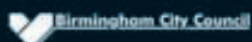


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THE FAAAAAABULOUS CERI DUPREE

Having played Ugly Sister Voluptua in Birmingham Hippodrome's Christmas pantomime version of Cinderella, female impersonator extraordinaire Ceri Dupree this month returns to the venue with his one-man, 21-woman show, featuring impersonations of some of the world's most iconic divas...

From Camilla Parker Bowles and Cilla Black, to screen icons of Hollywood and pop princesses old and new, Ceri's inimitable delivery, energy and style bring together hilarious comedy, fantastic showmanship and more than a sprinkling of Las Vegas-style glitz and glamour! As Ceri says, "If it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing!"

We caught up with him to discover more about the fabulous females past and present who feature in his latest lavish stage offering...

Who first inspired you to go into showbusiness?

Well, when I was a little boy, I had three idols - Stanley Baxter, Dick Emery and Danny La Rue - and I loved them all. I suppose it was through my parents taking me to pantomimes from an early age that I started to think, I want to do that one day. I wanted to be a costume designer too, but I'm wearing the costumes now. Actually, I still design them, but I get to wear them as well!

You're well known for being one of the UK's leading female impersonators. How does that differ to 'drag' in your eyes?

I always say I'm a female impersonator because I'm first and foremost an impressionist. I don't have a 'character', like Paul O'Grady or Barry Humphreys - I impersonate internationally recognised female artists, soap stars, comedienne and famous personalities across the board. I've impersonated Lily Savage, I've impersonated Dame Edna, don't get me wrong, but as part of a repertoire of impersonations! That's the fundamental difference.

What's been the most memorable venue you've performed in?

There have been lots, but I would have to say Athens in Greece. I performed to 2,000 people in a nightclub there. They wanted me to do the singer Nana Mouskouri, who's a real icon in Greece. I was sending her up in a very tongue-in-cheek way, but I thought to myself, if I do this here, they'll kill me, as she's so revered!

Anyway, we put her into the show (somewhere in the middle, so as not to draw too much attention) and it went down an absolute storm, - so much so that the following night I opened the show as Nana! The more I sent her up, the more they laughed!

Do you have a favourite female in your repertoire?

I have lots. Interestingly, the audience favourites are often not my favourites. I like the old stars, like Mae West, Bette Davies and Marlene Dietrich. I suppose the more current ones are people like Joan Collins, Cher, Bette Midler and Lady Gaga.

The audience favourites tend to be Tina Turner, Amy Winehouse and - believe it or not - Camilla Parker Bowles. She's like the Wicked Queen in pantomime. They all start booing when she enters the stage. Audiences love to hate her, I suppose.

And, you wouldn't necessarily expect it, but I still do Gladys Pugh from Hi-De-Hi and audiences lap it up. Even younger audience members who wouldn't necessarily remember her still seem to find it funny!

If you could travel back to any showbiz era, which would it be?

It would have to be the 1970s because that's when showbusiness was really out there. We only had three channels on the television, and there was no such thing as Twitter or Facebook. You had variety, you had a lot more people who would go to the theatre. You had summer seasons that ran for 20 to 24 weeks. It was a great time to be performing! I didn't start until 1982/83, but I would've loved to have been around in the heyday of the big cabaret clubs and large-scale variety entertainment. Oh, and there was also glam rock in the 1970s!

Who's currently on your wish list to impersonate?

The one I'm working on at the moment is Cilla Black. I did her years and years ago, but then of course she sadly died, and I didn't want to put her back in the repertoire straight away as it would've been in bad taste. Time has moved on enough now for us to do an affectionate send-up or a tongue-in-cheek tribute, as I like to think of it. It's very difficult these days to find the stars to do. Our television now is full of reality shows. My pet hate is the term 'reality TV star'; you're not a star. Shirley Bassey's a star! Tom Jones is a star! Why would I want to impersonate someone like Gemma Collins?! Having said all that, I would love to do someone like Paloma Faith, as she's amazing, so watch this space!

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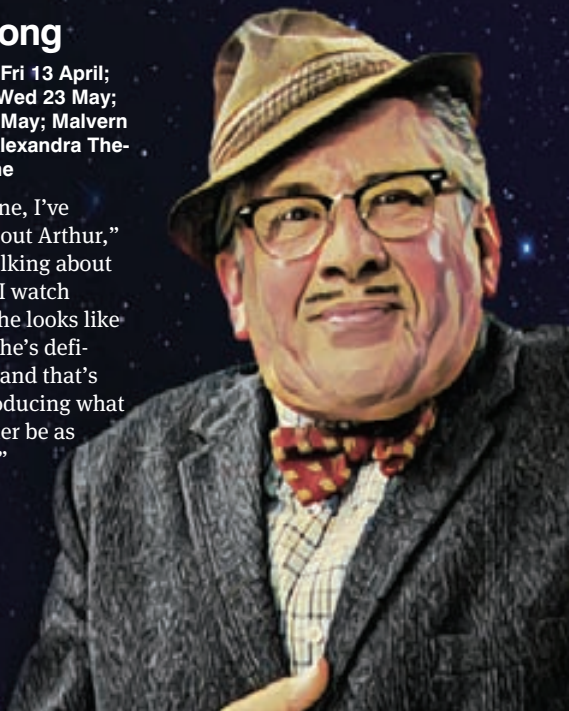
The Faaaaaaabulous Ceri Dupree Show visits Birmingham Hippodrome on Fri 27 & Sat 28 April.

For tickets, call 0844 338 5000 or visit birminghamhippodrome.com

Count Arthur Strong

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 13 April; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 23 May; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 31 May; Malvern Theatres, Sat 16 June; New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 17 June

"With each live show I've done, I've found out a little bit more about Arthur," explains Steve Delaney, in talking about the character he created. "If I watch footage from the early days, he looks like the bones of something, but he's definitely continued to develop, and that's very important. Simply reproducing what I've done before would neither be as much fun nor as interesting."



Tez Illyas

MAC, Birmingham, Tues 24 April

"You've got to be self-aware if you want to be a successful comedian," says Blackburn funnyman Tez Illyas. "It's really important that you discover what works for you and then hone that. Trying to be somebody you're not just doesn't work."

Tez's jokes include: "I love being British. If you're not British, you're missing out, because there are so many benefits to being British. Literally. There are so many benefits. Just learn how to fill out a form, and it's brilliant. I don't call them benefits, obviously, I call them reparations, but nevertheless they're great."



Iliza Shlesinger

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 18 April

"Women want to be treated as equals, and we want feminism to be a thing, but it's really difficult when every woman makes the same point about her vagina, over and over," said American comedian Iliza Shlesinger in a recent and hugely controversial interview with US online magazine Deadline Hollywood. "I think I'm the only woman out there that has a joke about World War Two in my set. I think 'shock value' works well for women, but beyond that, there's no substance. I want to see what else there is with such complex, smart creatures. That's why women like Tina Fey do well. It's smart, and men can laugh at it too. I consider myself one of those comics, and quite frankly, I'm appalled by what's expected of women, and what women offer in response to that."



Tiff Stevenson

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 24 April; The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Sun 29 April

She may not be the most inventive of comedians, but 2011 Show Me The Funny contestant Tiff Stevenson more than makes up for a lack of imagination with her charming personality and engaging style of delivery. She's been described as 'a breathing version of Heat magazine', is appealingly self-disparaging and ensures that her audience never has to wait too long for a punchline.

An example of her style of humour is as follows: "You can tell how good a medical person is in bed depending on which area of medicine they work in. The paramedics obviously like a quick 'get in and out', the GPs cover a lot of areas but don't really know what's going on, and the surgeons like to go in there, rummage around, mess things up and then leave something behind that shouldn't have been there."



Patrick Monahan

The George Hotel, Lichfield, Thurs 5 April;
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 28 April

Half-Iranian, half-Irish standup comic Patrick Monahan is no slouch when it comes to bringing up the subject of his own ethnicity on stage - after all, he's got a quality gag about spending all of his holidays in customs, and he's not afraid to use it! "I guess I like to think that maybe I'm breaking down stereotypes," explains Patrick, who's eager to make it clear that his comedy isn't just political. "The comedians I most admire are the ones who can play to everybody. I think it's important to look for positive stuff in life. Focusing on the bad stuff all the time would mean that the only people who'd come to my shows would be the ones who thought the end of the world was nigh!"



John Robins

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa,
Wed 4 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Wed 25 April

Honesty, charm and lightning-quick improvisation are among the qualities John Robins brings to the party whenever he hits the road with a brand new tour. This latest live show, The Darkness Of Robins, should certainly be one worth catching, having bagged the coveted Edinburgh Comedy Award at the 2017 festival.



Russell Peters

 Arena Birmingham, Tues 24 April

Having been responsible for the highest ever attendances at a comedy show in Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, South Africa, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and his home country of Canada, it's fair to say Russell Peters has got more than a couple of lame gags stuffed up his comedy sleeve. One of the highest earners on the US laughter circuit, Peters uses observational humour to highlight racial, ethnic,

class and cultural stereotypes, and often refers to his own life experiences growing up in an Indian family.

Jokes include: "Every group is racist. White folks will see a group of Indian people and they're like, 'Look at all those brown people, they're probably all very happy together.' Then you get in that group and like, 'Hey, you from India? I'm from India. What part? No, not that part. Go to hell, you dirty bastard.'

Lou Conran

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 7 April

'Imagine visiting your favourite friend/aunty/spinster/woman of independent means,' urges the publicity for Lou Conran's touring show. 'She's a touch eccentric and always "alright". Until last year, when it wasn't alright and it all went a bit wrong. With lessons learned, a bit of self-discovery and some painful yet funny situations, this is a story about life and, ultimately, death. But in a positive, uplifting sort of way...' Lou's latest show, I Love Lou C, tells the real story of her experiences with baby loss. By her own admission, it's not the most obvious subject around which to base a comedy show, but she's keen to 'lift the taboo and open the discussion on a subject that the majority of us still struggle to deal with'.

Although she's faced her fair share of criticism for seemingly making light of her baby's death, her show received rave reviews at last summer's Edinburgh Festival, with critics hailing it a work of groundbreaking standup.





RETURN TO OZ

Hit musical Wicked - telling the story of how The Wizard Of Oz's Wicked Witch of the West turned bad - makes a welcome return to Birmingham this month. What's On caught up with Michael McCabe, the man who originally brought the show to the UK...

Despite a staggering 110,000 people having seen Wicked The Musical when it last visited Birmingham back in 2014, there's clearly still a hunger in the city and wider Midlands region for a show that's won over 100 major awards. And so, to the delight of many, it returns to the Hippodrome this month for a three-week run.

Since last visiting Brum, the production has been transported nearly 12,000 miles in 13 articulated lorries by road, air and sea, delighting regional audiences across the UK. The London production, meanwhile, continues to pull in the crowds too, and has been playing at the Apollo Victoria Theatre for 12 years.

Wicked The Musical is essentially a prequel to The Wizard Of Oz, focusing on what made the Wicked Witch of the West bad. The legendary Judy Garland film will be 80 years old in 2019, yet the musical is very much 'in the present'. "When I saw the show on Broadway, it felt at the time - and remains - so fresh and contemporary," says producer Michael McCabe, the man who brought Wicked to the UK. "It's very much a modern musical, in that its cleverness is so much based on the characters that you know and are familiar with, but everything that happens to them is new.

"The idea that you can take this beloved story and turn it on its head just seems so intriguing. There's such a fascination with the whole idea of prequels, where you find out what decisions led the characters to be who they become. I found that so engaging."

Michael greatly hoped that UK audiences would feel the same way about Wicked as he did, and his gamble in bringing the show to these shores has most definitely paid off. But did he anticipate the success Wicked has achieved in the UK? "No, not in one's wildest dreams! It wasn't until audiences started watching the show that I realised their reaction was exactly the same as mine. People make an incredibly emotional connection to Wicked. The roar of the audiences is still the thing that I find so meaningful after 12 years of doing this. I still stand at the back and listen to the way they react. It's extraordinary."

Wicked is a show to which people return time and again, but also one that continues to attract new audiences. "No long-running production could do what it does without people coming back more than once. I think there's something about Wicked that people want to share in; the emotion that they feel with others. It's an experience that people find unforgettable."

So will the new touring version of the show differ in any way from the one that visited Birmingham back in 2014? "It's the same production, with all of the same high production values. This was a commitment we made right from the beginning; that it wouldn't be a cut-down version of the show." There is, however, a new cast...

"With each new cast comes new levels, layers and interpretations. We're very, very lucky that we keep finding extraordinary people. Helen (Woolf), who is Glinda, has been with us in various guises for some time - in the

original tour and in the West End - whereas Amy Ross, playing Elphaba, is brand new to us."

As with any show, running a tour and a London production simultaneously is a challenge - but there are definite advantages... "The tour has ended up being a roadshow for the London production. It feeds the interest enormously and, inevitably, marketing a show all over the country has led people to London."

A staggering 8.5 million people - across almost 5,000 performances - have so far seen Wicked in the capital, making it the seventh longest-running show currently playing in the West End.

And with the equivalent of one-tenth of the entire population of Birmingham catching the last tour, it's obvious why Michael is happy to be bringing the show back to the city. "The Hippodrome is truly one of the most beautiful theatres in the country. Because it's so alive with resident companies, you feel like you're a part of something very much more than just a theatre building. Birmingham is such a huge city - you're benefiting from so many different types of people and age groups. The support for theatre in Birmingham is very humbling."

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Wicked The Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 4 to Saturday 28 April



Fat Friends The Musical

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 3 - Sat 7 April

He's best known, of course, for bowling out the Aussies, but former England cricket star Andrew 'Freddie' Flintoff is here hoping to bowl over a whole new audience as he makes his stage debut in the theatrical version of Fay Mellor's hit television series.

Just like the TV show, the production focuses on a group of pals who're keen to drop some pounds and get into shape. Appearing alongside Freddie is the winner of BBC One's I'd Do Anything talent show, Jodie Prenger, X Factor success story Sam Bailey, Atomic Kitten's Natasha Hamilton, Emmerdale star Natalie Anderson and Coronation Street legend Kevin Kennedy. An evening of high-energy feelgood fun seems a guarantee.

Trump - The Musical!

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 27 - Sun 29 April

Having previously presented Boris The Musical!, it would seem that the highly rated Blowfish Theatre are choosing to specialise in shows about modern-day political figures who sport ludicrous blond hairstyles. A satirical, songtastic extravaganza (so say Blowfish themselves), Trump - The Musical! finds 'the power-crazed narcissist' hoping to get re-elected in 2020. Expect 'raucous' comedy, original music and 'one truly awful wig'...



The King Lear

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Wed 25 April



Potent, accessible theatre is the name of the game when Shifting Sands take to the stage. The critically acclaimed ensemble here blend physical theatre, clowning and vibrant storytelling to recount the tale of Shakespeare's famous tragedy, albeit with the significant difference that this version is set in a pub. When landlord Mr Lear demands to know which of his daughters loves him the most, he unleashes a tidal wave of frustration and jealousy that will change his life forever...

Romeo And Juliet

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 21 April - Fri 21 September

Widely regarded as Shakespeare's fifth tragedy, this story of a forbidden and secret love tends to fair less well critically than the rest of the playwright's high-profile works. Nonetheless, its popularity is ensured by its timeless themes and its regular appearance as a study text on the national curriculum. This latest version of the play is 'set in a world very like our own'.





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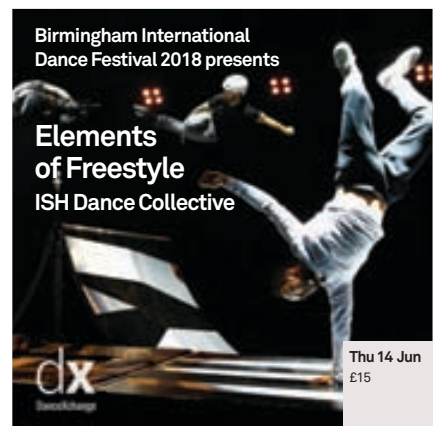
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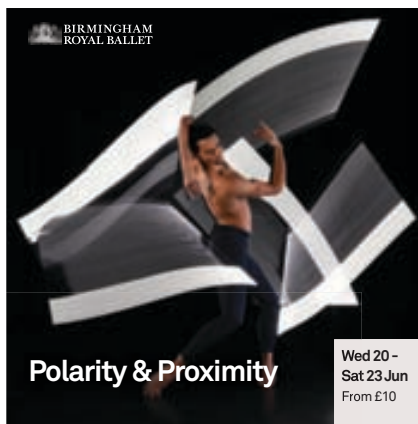
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Brighton Rock

The REP, Birmingham, Tues 10 - Sat 14 April

This new adaptation of the famous Graham Greene novel tells the story of Pinkie, a razor-wielding teenager who spirals towards self-de-

struction after murdering a rival gang member in the seaside town of Brighton - and who then marries the waitress who witnessed the incident in order to keep her quiet.

The show has been written by Bryony Lavery and is a co-production from Pilot Theatre and York Theatre Royal.



Are You Being Served?

Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 April

Ambient Night Productions here provide a trip down memory lane for fans of the long-running BBC TV comedy series of the same title. The show is one of the newest in a now-significant line of television sitcoms to be adapted for the stage, following in the laughter trail of other top-rated telly favourites such as *Birds Of A Feather*, *Dad's Army* and *Porridge*.

Macbeth

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Tues 18 September

"For me, *Macbeth* is scenes from a marriage as much as it's about a traitor," says Christopher Eccleston, who takes the title role in this latest version of Shakespeare's blood-spattered tragedy. "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."



A Streetcar Named Desire

Malvern Theatres, Tues 10 - Sat 14 April

Tennessee Williams' absorbing story is best known, of course, from the 1951 movie starring Vivien Leigh and Marlon Brando. Pride, jealousy and lust are on a collision course when the fragile and fading *Blanche DuBois* visits her sister, *Stella*. While there, she finds herself tormented by her brutish brother-in-law, *Stanley Kowalski*. As tensions mount, *Blanche* soon finds her life beginning to fall apart around her...

Private Lives

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 April

Written in 1930, *Private Lives* is one of Noel Coward's sharpest comedies. It tells of a divorced couple - *Amanda* and *Elyot* - who meet each other again on their second honeymoons in *Deauville*, and begin to consider dumping their new loves to try and rekindle their relationship... Typically replete with devastating one-liners, *Private Lives* is a cynical portrayal of married life, infidelity, selfishness and insecurity, and is here presented by London Classic Theatre.



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**SOME MOTHERS
DO AVE EM**

Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em, the '70s sitcom which made Michael Crawford and Michele Dotrice household names, has now been carefully recreated for the stage, with comedy star Joe Pasquale starring as the accident-prone Frank Spencer and Sarah Earnshaw as his long-suffering wife, Betty. What's On caught up with writer and director Guy Unsworth to find out more, ahead of the show stopping off in the Midlands next month...

Working together on Spamalot in the West End two years ago, Guy Unsworth recalls how actor and comedian Joe Pasquale blew up an electric fan in a bid to mend it. Inadvertently creating a moment that was straight out of Some Mothers (a BANG! followed by the smell of singed hair and a look of electrified bewilderment on Joe's face), the idea for Joe to play Frank in a stage version was born, and Guy and Joe joined forces to drive the project forwards.

Writing the script was a particular privilege for Guy, who, after studying Industrial Economics at the University of Nottingham, won the Directors Guild of Great Britain award for Best New Director. Following postgraduate training and the mentorship of leading theatre directors on numerous productions in the West End and at the Royal Shakespeare Company, he is now regarded as one of theatre's brightest young talents. A huge fan of British comedy and with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject, Guy says that he had clear ideas about the Some Mothers stage play from the outset.

"I was very keen that it shouldn't just be a re-run of old episodes, so it's based on a particular point in Frank's life, when Betty was trying to tell him she's pregnant. I knew it had to be something written specifically for the stage - something that would work in a theatre. What we have now is quite a traditional British farce, with surprises. It is two hours in real time, set one evening when they're expecting people for dinner. Chaos ensues!"

Agreeing that there seems to have been a developing trend for theatrical comedies in recent times, Guy explains why that might be. "We've spent a lot of time in the last few

years discussing what we shouldn't be laughing at. Watching something that makes us laugh and feel warm is a reaction to that, I think."

And with Joe playing the hapless Frank, it seems that laughter is guaranteed. "I loved working with Joe on Spamalot. He's just a fantastic spirit in a room; such a hard worker and great natural comedian, but also a technician. He, I'm glad to say, likes working with me too. I wouldn't do this without him."

So will Joe's Frank be a carbon copy of Michael Crawford's original character?

"Michael was brilliant; iconic. It's difficult to imagine another Frank Spencer, so it needed somebody who was really going to make Frank their own. Joe is perfect. Interestingly, the role of Frank was originally offered to Norman Wisdom before Michael Crawford. Norman was 57 at the time, so while Joe is older than Michael, he's not as old as Norman was when he was considered for the part."

With an impressive and diverse CV, what other ambitions might Guy be harbouring? "I grew up in Southport, Lancashire, and I was lucky to have a popular theatre close to home. I don't come from a politics background or an English literature background, but from a love of theatre and, specifically, watching theatre. It doesn't matter what; Shakespeare or a brand new comedy, it's about the quality for me. Entertainment has developed a slightly negative connotation in recent years, but it used to be a treat, and that's what I feel it should be - a great night out."

Certainly Some Mothers sounds like it ticks that box. Joining Joe will be Susie Blake as

Mrs Fisher, Frank's disapproving mother-in-law, Moray Treadwell as Mr Luscombe, David Shaw-Parker as Father O'Hara and Chris Kiely as Desmond. Playing Frank's long-suffering wife, Betty, is Joe's Spamalot co-star Sarah Earnshaw. "Box office ratings at panto time show us that family entertainment is popular, so I'm glad we're doing something that everyone can enjoy together. We live in a divided world in many ways, and theatre is a chance for different groups of people to come together and experience something at the same time. With Netflix and TV 'on demand', we never really sit down and watch something together. I love that electric feeling you get when a theatre is full and the show is about to start."

Guy laughs at the suggestion that he could write more '70s sitcoms as stage shows - Terry And June The Musical, perhaps?

"Not quite yet! These shows take a long time to develop. We said early on that we wanted time to get Some Mothers right, and it really has been a labour of love. We are devoted to it."

With tickets shifting faster than Frank Spencer on roller skates, the mood music suggests the show will amass new devotees at every performance of every date of the six-month national tour. "People should come because it's a great celebration of that period of time for all the family. It's got some great '70s music in it and is simply a feelgood, funny and nostalgic trip to the theatre with a really great cast."

Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em shows at
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tues
15 to Sat 19 May.



Turn Of The Screw

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 10 - Sat 14 April

Written by Tim Luscombe, this is a stylish stage adaptation of Henry James' gothic classic, the story that provided the original inspiration

for Susan Hill's *The Woman In Black*.

A young governess hired to care for two children at a remote country estate begins experiencing eerie visions of a man and woman wandering through the house - and soon becomes convinced that the youngsters in her charge are aware of the ghostly presence too...

This Restless State

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 7 April

Obligations to the past, present and future are contemplated, as a single performer takes the audience on 'an imaginative and sonically rich journey spanning three time periods'. A highly personal examination of family, nationhood and belonging, the show has been inspired by a collection of interviews with young Europeans.



Beautiful: The Carole King Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 24 - Sat 28 April



Touring to the Midlands on the back of Olivier Award-winning West End success, *Beautiful* boasts a playlist of Carole King's most famous songs. Brontë Barbé takes the title role in a show that features, among other famous numbers, *You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman*, *Take Good Care Of My Baby*, *You've Got A Friend*, *So Far Away* and *Locomotion*.

12 Million Volts

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 28 April

"Expect holograms... sort of," say award-winning theatre company The Outbound Project of their latest production. "And pigeons with lasers coming out of their eyes... pretty much. Oh, and more lighting tricks than we ever thought we would get into one show!" It's clear, then, that if an evening of innovative stage performance is a floater of your boat, you need look no further than 12 Million Volts. Aside from the above-mentioned theatrical magic, the show tells the story of Nikola Tesla - the world's smartest man (at least according to Einstein). "But there are always three sides to every story," say The Outbound Project. "One person's side, the other person's side - and the truth..."



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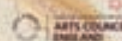
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The Twisted Tale Of Hansel And Gretel

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 4 - Sun 8 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 11 - Thurs 12 April; Malvern Theatres, Tues 17 - Wed 18 April

This imaginative take on the famous Brothers Grimm tale is produced by Birmingham Hippodrome with participants from BecauseWeCanCanCan, who work closely with the theatre to support emerging performers with learning disabilities. With live music, 'hilarious performance and a mesmerising design' all featuring, expect to be told the famous story of two children's journey deep into the forest - but not quite as you know it...



Peppa Pig's Adventure

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sat 7 - Sun 8 April; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 6 - Thurs 7 June

If you've taken your little ones to any of the previous Peppa Pig stage shows - and enjoyed the experience of watching them having a fantastic time - you'll already know that this latest production is well worth catching. Peppa's getting ready for an exciting camping trip into the woods. But no adventure would be worth having without brother George and her school friends, including Pedro Pony, Suzy Sheep and Gerald Giraffe...

Easter Bunny's Eggs Factor

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 2 April; The Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 4 April; Mitchell Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 13 - Sat 14 April

If your youngsters have previously enjoyed Marty MacDonald's Farm and Santa's Christmas Wish, they'll be pleased to know that this 'most chocolatey Easter show ever' comes from the very same team. Suitable for children aged two to seven, the production features plenty of songs and a post-show 'meet, greet and treat' with the Easter Bunny himself.

The Sagas Of Noggin The Nog

MAC, Birmingham, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 April

Now here's one for the grandparents as well as the kids! The Viking story of Noggin The Nog comes from the same children's television stable as Bagpuss, The Clangers and Ivor The Engine, and first delighted TV-watching youngsters back in the late 1950s. This new stage version is presented by Third Party Productions and is suitable for children aged four-plus.

You've Got Dragons

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 11 April; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 14 April

This intergenerational show, featuring creative captioning, interwoven BSL and audio description, takes a look at what a young child can do if they have 'a bad case of the dragons' - namely, unhappy dreams, a swirly tummy and a feeling of being prickly. Taking Flight theatre company is the ensemble behind this new stage adaptation of the popular book by Kathryn Cave.

Milkshake! Live Tour

Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, Tues 3 April; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 6 April

If your kids love Channel Five's Milkshake!, then they're sure to enjoy this high-energy live version. Milkshake! favourites Little Princess and Scruff, Noddy and Tessie Bear, Roary and Big Chris, Fifi and Bumble and B1 & B2 - the Bananas In Pyjamas - have all hit the road for a tour that's promising to bring to life all the familiar magic from the hugely popular television series.

Dear Zoo

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 3 - Wed 4 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 6 - Sat 7 April

First published in 1982, Rod Campbell's lift-the-flap book has delighted generations of children and accumulated in excess of eight million sales worldwide. This first-ever stage version of the story features child-friendly puppets, music and lots of audience participation.



Ready Steady Lift Off!

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Mon 2 - Sat 7 April



Youngsters here get the chance to join the Creative Learning Team to explore a selection of space-related activities designed by the University of Warwick's Physics department. The show offers kids the chance to find out what it's like to work in space and learn how to make a rocket out of a film canister. And if those two assignments aren't enough to keep them busy, they can always make a scale model of the solar system using playdough!

Horrible Histories: More Barmy Britain

The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Sun 22 - Mon 23 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 30 May - Sat 2 June



If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then Barmy Britain is a show 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 show also invites its audience 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 its publicity says, it's 'a truly horrible history of Britain - with all the nasty bits left in!'

Morgan & West: More Magic For Kids

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 8 April; Number 8, Pershore, Wed 11 April; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Thurs 12 April; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 26 May

Whether you're five or 105, a lover of brain-busting illusion or a fan of good old-fashioned tomfoolery, this brand new show is definitely the one for you, according to its presenters. A time-travelling Victorian magic duo, Morgan & West promise to 'unload another boxful of bafflement and impossibility where magic and silliness abound'.



Tiddler And Other Terrific Tales

Birmingham Town Hall,
Fri 30 March - Tues 3 April



Freckle Productions here bring together a host of colourful characters from four books by Gruffalo creators Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Live music and puppetry are combined in a show that promises to take its audience under the sea, out on the farm and into the jungle.

Captain Flinn And The Pirate Dinosaurs 2: The Magic Cutlass

MAC, Birmingham, Fri 13 April

Award-winning children's ensemble Les Petits Theatre here present an action-packed sequel adventure that sees Flinn's kidnapped friends being forced to hunt for the Magic Cutlass by the tyrannical Mr T-Rex.

Cue the ever-heroic captain, and a dangerous rescue mission that could well see his timbers being comprehensively shivered...





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**DINOSAUR
EGG TRAIL**
Thinktank Science
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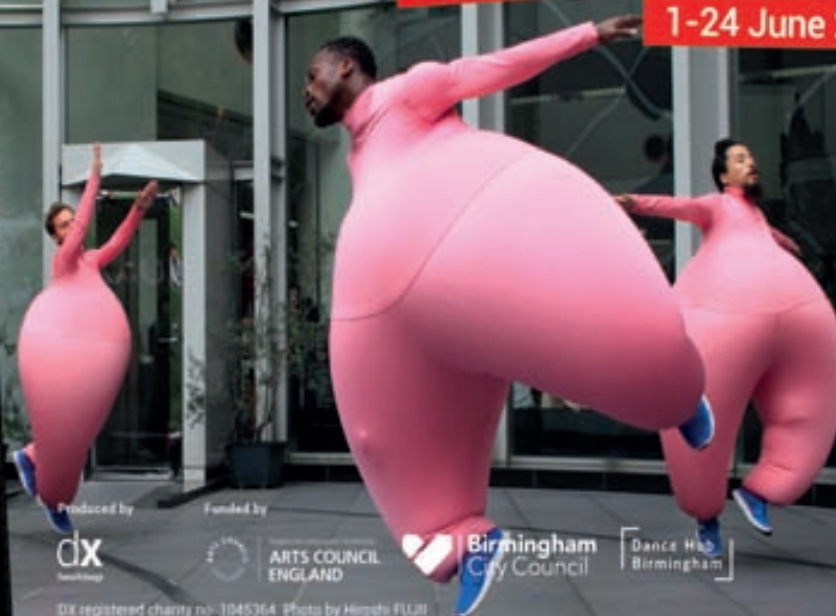
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1-24 June 2018



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Michael Clark Company

The REP, Birmingham, Tues 24 April

Hailed as British dance's true iconoclast, Michael Clark here presents 'to a simple, rock'n'roll...song', a triple bill of works, performed by 'a company of fearless and other-worldly dancers', that made such an impression when first performed at the Barbican in 2016 that it earned an Olivier Award nomination.

The evening's performance begins with a reflection on Erik Satie and his influence on Clark's mentors past and present.

This is then followed with a show of high-energy choreography presented to the punk rock of Patti Smith's landmark album, *Horses*.

An 'iridescent tribute to David Bowie' rounds off a production that further benefits from Charles Atlas's 'scintillating' lighting design, featuring a stage adaptation of his multi-channel video installation, *Painting By Numbers*.



The Little Mermaid

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 19 April;
The Core Theatre, Solihull, Wed 30 May;
Palace Theatre, Redditch, Sat 2 June

The always-good-value Ballet Theatre UK are the company behind this imaginative retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's famous tale.

Exploring the nature of longing, how making choices can have lasting consequences, and how goodness can be rewarded in the most unexpected of ways, the story finds the Little Mermaid falling head over tail for a human prince and deciding to give up everything in order to win his love.

The show is a Ballet Theatre UK world premiere.



About The Elephant

MAC, Birmingham, Sun 29 April

The subject of fake news is very much on the agenda in this playful and thought-provoking UK premiere from two bright new talents.

Questioning how people negotiate manipulated information to arrive at the truth, and asking how they address issues that they'd rather not face, *About The Elephant* is performed by two BBC Young Dancer 2015 stars - kathak artist Vidya Patel and contemporary dancer Connor Scott.

The duo are accompanied by composer, producer and multi-instrumentalist Shammi Pithia, who will be performing original live music during the show.

Remembering Fred

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 21 April;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 25 April;
William Aston Hall, Wrexham, Thurs 26 April

Strictly Come Dancing's Aljaz and Janette are the high-energy performers here paying tribute to the one and only Fred Astaire. With more than 50,000 people having watched this hit show last year, there's little wonder it's back on the road in 2018, complete with classic songs written by George & Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin and Cole Porter. The dance routines and staging are new too, as is the inclusion of numerous interviews with the man himself. Top hats and white ties are optional!



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Richard Thompson

Electric Trio

STEELEYE SPAN

TURIN BRAKES

Jon Boden & The

Remnant Kings

SHOW OF HANDS

Daoirí Farrell Trio

Gretchen Peters

★ Daoirí Farrell Trio ★ Peter Knight's Gigspanner Big Band
★ The Fitzgeralds ★ Shoglenifty with Dhun Dhora ★ Skerryvore
★ Guo Yue & Joji Hirota with members of London Taiko Drummers
★ The Mighty Doonans ★ Fisherman's Friends ★ Rusty Shackle
★ Peter Knight and John Spiers ★ Johnny Coppin and Phil Beer
★ State of the Union ★ Brooks Williams Trio with special guests
★ O'Hooey and Tidow ★ Megson ★ Blowzabella ★ Mankala
★ The Wilson Family ★ Midnight Skyracer ★ Yola Carter Band

plus many more! see website for latest...

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// BEDLAM // COMMITTEE BAND
// VERTICAL EXPRESSION
// KIRKOPHANY // OUT OF HAND

Callers:

Jo Freya, Phil Bassendale
Nick Walden
John Kirkpatrick

www.shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Avengers: Infinity War CERT tbc

Starring Robert Downey Jr, Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, Benedict Cumberbatch, Chris Pratt
Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo (USA)

The cast that is listed above is just the tip of the iceberg of this massive, massive movie. One source put the budget of the two-part Marvel epic at \$1billion, but we refuse to believe this, just as we refuse to believe the reported \$200million that Robert Downey Jr is being paid to reprise his role as Iron Man. But we do suspect that this is the most

expensive film ever made. Following Avengers Assemble and Avengers: Age Of Ultron, the ultimate crime-fighting team is faced with stopping the heinous goal of Thanos (Josh Brolin) to bend universal reality to his will, thus ending all life as we know it. To help thwart Thanos's plans, Iron Man and Thor (Chris Hemsworth) reach out to Peter Quill (Chris Pratt), Drax the Destroyer (Dave Bautista) and Gamora (Zoe Saldana) from the Guardians Of The Galaxy franchise for a bit of extra muscle. You might have to book your tickets now.

Released Fri 27 April

Film highlights released in April...

A Quiet Place CERT tbc

Starring Emily Blunt, John Krasinski, Noah Jupe, Millicent Simmonds
Directed by John Krasinski (USA)

Silence is truly a virtue in this chiller in which a nuclear family live in a remote outpost in fear of their lives. An unknown menace has materialised, a predator that hunts by sound. For the record, Krasinski, the film's star and director, is the real-life husband of Emily Blunt.

Released Thurs 5 April



The Hurricane Heist

CERT 12a (103 mins)

Starring Toby Kebbell, Maggie Grace, Ryan Kwanten, Melissa Bolona, Ralph Ineson, Ben Cross
Directed by Rob Cohen (USA)

Recently, a number of films have exploited the dramatic vagaries of climate change. And there have been a goodly number of heist thrillers, too. This action-drama combines the two genres, in which a gang of hackers attempt to break into a Treasury facility under cover of a hurricane.

Released Fri 6 April

Death Wish CERT 15 (107 mins)

Starring Bruce Willis, Vincent D'Onofrio, Elisabeth Shue, Dean Norris, Kimberly Elise
Directed by Eli Roth

When the wife and daughter of a Chicago surgeon (Willis) are brutally attacked in their own home, the latter decides to take the law into his own hands. Soon, he gets a taste for vengeance and his deeds become a media sensation. Based on the 1974 film of the same name that starred Charles Bronson.

Released Fri 6 April



Film highlights released in April...



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Let The Sunshine In

CERT 15 (123 mins)

Starring **Juliette Binoche**, **Gérard Depardieu**, **Josiane Balasko**, **Xavier Beauvois**, **Philippe Katerine**, **Bruno Podalydès**, **Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** Directed by **Claire Denis** (France)

In essence a romantic comedy, Claire Denis's acclaimed film is considerably more besides. There is romance, and humour, but this story of a Parisian divorcee (Binoche) looking for a second chance at love is full of poignant observation and joie de vivre. The critics positively swooned over it when it played at Cannes last year.

Released Fri 20 April

120 Beats Per Minute

CERT 15 (143 mins)

Starring **Nahuel Pérez Biscayart**, **Arnaud Valois**, **Adèle Haenel**
Directed by **Robin Campillo** (France)

Set in Paris during the 1990s and based on the filmmaker's own experience, this drama takes us back to the dark days of the Aids epidemic. In particular, the film focuses on the activist outfit ACT UP and its attempt to combat the French government's inertia. Winner of the Grand Prix at last year's Cannes shindig, as well as winner of the French Oscar for best film.

Released Fri 6 April



Thoroughbreds

CERT 15 (93 mins)

Starring **Olivia Cooke**, **Anya Taylor-Joy**, **Anton Yelchin**, **Paul Sparks**, **Francie Swift**
Directed by **Cory Finley** (USA)

Amanda and Lily are the thoroughbreds in question, a couple of blue bloods from Connecticut. Reunited after a breakdown in their friendship, the girls embark on a hideous plan, prompting IndieWire to dub the film,

'Heathers meets American Psycho'. In his last film before his death, Anton Yelchin plays the drug dealer Tim.

Released Fri 6 April



Wonderstruck

CERT PG (116 mins)

Starring **Oakes Fegley**, **Julianne Moore**, **Michelle Williams**, **Millicent Simmonds**, **Tom Noonan** Directed by **Todd Haynes** (USA)

Based on the novel by Brian Selznick, the film marks the reunion of Julianne Moore and director Todd Haynes, who previously worked together on *Safe* (1995) and *Far From Home* (2002).

Released Fri 6 April



Love, Simon

CERT 12a (112 mins)

Starring **Nick Robinson**, **Josh Duhamel**, **Jennifer Garner**, **Katherine Langford**, **Alexandra Shipp** Directed by **Greg Berlanti** (USA)

Simon Spier (Robinson) has his hands full. He's not only desperate to find out the identity of the anonymous classmate he's fallen in love with online, but of the blackmailer who's threatening to 'out' him to the entire school.

Based on the novel *Simon vs The Homo Sapiens Agenda* (2015) by Becky Albertalli.

Released Fri 6 April



Ghost Stories

CERT 15 (98 mins)

Starring **Andy Nyman**, **Paul Whitehouse**, **Alex Lawther**, **Martin Freeman**, **Nicholas Burns**
Directed by **Andy Nyman** and **Jeremy Dyson** (UK)



Adapted by Andy Nyman and Jeremy Dyson from their own play, this three-part chiller is already causing shock waves among horror fans. Nyman recreates his original role as professional sceptic Phillip Goodwin, whose whole belief system is shaken by a trio of unsolved cases concerning the occult.

Released Fri 6 April

Rampage

CERT 12a (107 mins)

Starring **Dwayne Johnson, Naomie Harris, Malin Åkerman, Joe Manganiello, Jake Lacy, Jeffrey Dean Morgan**
Directed by **Brad Peyton (USA)**

Loosely based on the video game, this Planet Of The Apes clone stars The Rock as the muscular primatologist Davis Okoye. A clandestine genetic experiment transforms Davis's pet gorilla into a giant, raging beast, while transmogrifying other creatures, too. Expect some CGI.



Released Fri 13 April

Truth Or Dare

CERT tbc

Starring **Lucy Hale, Tyler Posey, Violet Beane, Nolan Gerard Funk, Hayden Szeto**
Directed by **Jeff Wadlow (USA)**

A group of young friends embarks on the titular game when 'something' starts punishing those who refuse to fulfil a dare - or who tell a lie. From the writer-director of Kick-Ass 2, which is a good thing.

Released Fri 13 April

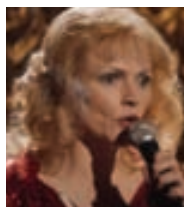


Funny Cow

CERT 15 (103 mins)

Starring **Maxine Peake, Paddy Considine, Tony Pitts, Alun Armstrong, Stephen Graham, John Bishop** Directed by **Adrian Shergold (UK)**

Stand-up comedy has provided fertile material for such films as Lenny, The King Of Comedy and Punchline, with Tom Hanks. But Funny Cow is set in the working men's clubs of northern England and the protagonist is a woman (Maxine Peake). She's certainly got plenty of raw material to work from. And there are songs, too.



Released Fri 20 April



The Guernsey Literary And Potato Peel Pie Society

CERT tbc

Starring **Lily James, Michiel Huisman, Glen Powell, Jessica Brown Findlay, Katherine Parkinson, Matthew Goode, Tom Courtenay, Penelope Wilton**
Directed by **Mike Newell (UK/USA)**

The title is a bit of a mouthful, but that didn't stop a certain Exotic Marigold Hotel from attracting a huge audience. Here, a writer (Lily James) forms a close correspondence with the inhabitants of Guernsey in the Channel Islands, while putting their experiences dur-

ing the Nazi occupation onto paper. The film is based on the 2008 bestselling novel of the same name by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, which was inspired by real events. As a director, Mike Newell has a pretty good track record, including such titles as Dance With A Stranger, Enchanted April, Four Weddings And A Funeral and Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire.

Released Fri 20 April

Tully

CERT 15 (96 mins)

Starring **Charlize Theron, Mackenzie Davis, Mark Duplass, Ron Livingston**
Directed by **Jason Reitman (USA)**

From Diablo Cody, the Oscar-winning writer of Juno, Young Adult and Ricki And The Flash, this promises much.

Tully (Mackenzie Davis, from Blade Runner 2049) is a "night nanny" who helps out the hard-pressed Marlo (Theron), mother of three. She is a gift from Marlo's brother... Expect a lot of laughs, and some tears.

Released Fri 20 April



Every Day

CERT 12a (97 mins)

Starring **Angourie Rice, Justice Smith, Debby Ryan, Maria Bello, Owen Teague**
Directed by **Michael Sucsy (USA)**

It's not easy, but 16-year-old Rhiannon (Rice) manages to fall in love with the same person every day, although that 'soul' keeps popping up in different bodies. Based on the romantic fantasy novel by David Levithan.

Released Fri 20 April



WHEN RANI MET RAJ

A classic French farce is given the Bollywood treatment in Nigel Planer's new touring show, *The Game Of Love & Chai*.

What's On caught up with the play's director, Jatinder Verma...

Mention farce to many people and what might spring to mind is an image of Brian Rix with his trousers around his ankles, as doors fly open and slam shut all around him, on the stage of the Whitehall Theatre in the 1950s and '60s.

In the 1970s, Fawlty Towers elevated farce to an art form, while Benny Hill's rather implausible popularity in the United States was based on elements of the genre that were incorporated into his routines. By the '80s, farce had become a staple ingredient of TV comedy, with the anarchic sitcom, *The Young Ones*, drawing heavily from the tradition to create some of TV's most hilarious moments.

Some of the show's most farcical scenes featured Neil, the long-haired hippie character played by Nigel Planer, so it's rather fitting that his new play, *The Game Of Love & Chai*, is an adaptation of Pierre de Marivaux's 1730 comedy farce, *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hazard* - albeit relocated to a modern culture far away from its original Parisian setting.

The Tara Arts production of the play shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, this month, and Jatinder Verma, co-founder of the company and the play's director, is pleased to have collaborated with Planer. "This is Nigel's version of the classic French farce, and it's been a delight working with him. I think he's done a very, very good job in terms of adapting it to an Asian setting."

The strapline for *The Game Of Love & Chai* is *When Rani Met Raj* - yet this only reveals part of the plot. In true farce tradition, before they meet and without each other's knowledge, Rani swaps places with Sita, her cousin, while Raj makes a switch with Nitin, his driver.

Confused? You won't be, according to Verma. "The premise is, 'Okay, I want to disguise myself to find out if the person I'm going to marry is genuine'. Then you add to that premise another one, which is that the person who they're supposed to be getting married to has exactly the same idea!"

As the events unfold in front of a British Asian family backdrop, Verma sees many parallels with modern society: "In an Asian setting, it gets closer to the heart of Marivaux. In the 18th century, marriage was a business, and the jeopardy that a woman faced was that her entire possessions would be given over to the man.

"That's not that far away from the modern notion of marriage - certainly amongst Asians. The stakes for women are much greater once you put it in this sort of setting. It seemed to make more sense that she's so determined to see if the person actually loves her, rather than loves the fact that she's rich and she's educated."

According to Verma, the play "makes no apology about falling in love, which is very much a part of Bollywood films".

Planer's enthusiasm for Bollywood, arguably India's most famous contribution to pop culture, is not overlooked on stage: "I think what's great is that Bollywood is quite up front and in your face. For Nigel, the comedy that he likes is also in your face, so it seems to me that there's a connection between the two."

In the best tradition of Bollywood movies, *The Game Of Love & Chai* contains its fair share of tunes. "This was the other joy of Nigel's script, that he'd incorporated the

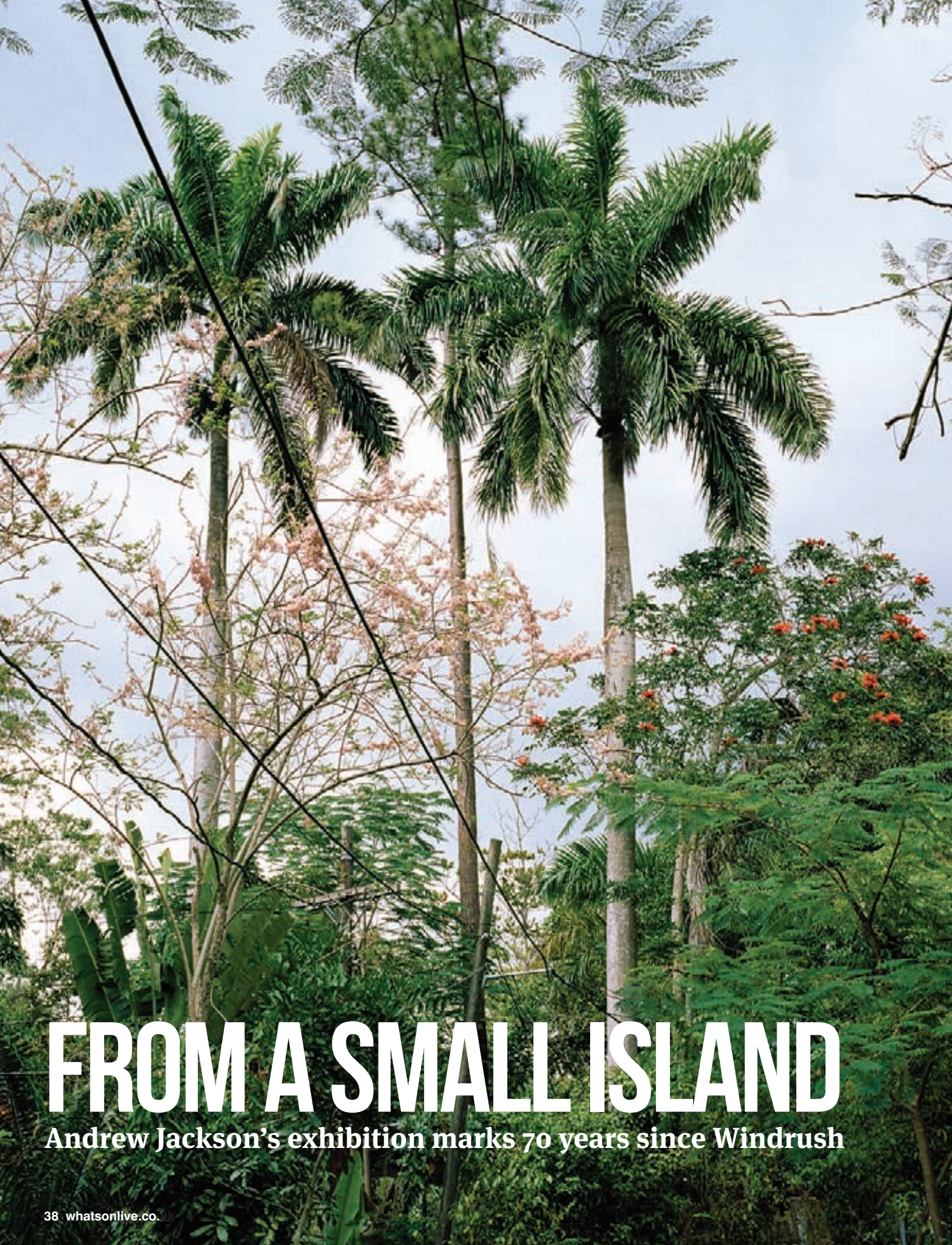
music and the songs in the text. What I find interesting is that in the plays of Moliere and Marivaux there tends to be an interlude, and in a completely different way, we've got those interludes in our version too. The meeting of one pair of lovers is all done through music, because they love singing, so it's very much character-driven."

Of course, Planer's popularity on TV, the West End stage, the big screen and even in the pop charts was always likely to raise the production's profile: "It has obviously meant that there's been a greater amount of publicity, which is all very good, but from my point of view, I think the best thing is that Nigel is such a trouper. He comes to see shows, he's been in rehearsals, he's very prepared to move things around, and is very supportive. He has a number of 'groupies' who like *The Young Ones*, and that's great - a number of them have come to see the show."

So what can audiences expect to experience when *The Game Of Love & Chai* rolls into Coventry? "It's a comedy, so they should expect to have a number of laughs. It's beautifully designed and it's got some great song & dance routines. It's all about how tricky the game of love is, so in many ways it's a complete and wonderful antidote to the current doom and gloom of austerity, Brexit and all that. Things are bad enough, but at least for a couple of hours in the theatre, we can think of something else."

.....

The Game Of Love & Chai shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 April



FROM A SMALL ISLAND

Andrew Jackson's exhibition marks 70 years since Windrush

On 22 June 1948, HMT Empire Windrush docked at Tilbury, bringing with her 492 Jamaican passengers, the first in a whole new wave of migrants to make the journey from one tiny island nation to another, attracted by new citizenship rights conferred on Britain's former colonial subjects.

Seventy years on, those who made that long sea crossing are now woven into the fabric of British cultural life, along with their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. Yet far from being resolved, the questions around race, identity and nationality that they grappled with continue to be a focus for intense and often heated debate today.

In *From A Small Island*, a new exhibition commissioned by MAC Birmingham to coincide with this year's Windrush anniversary, Birmingham-born photographer Andrew Jackson uses his own family's experiences as a starting point to explore the subject of migration. Between visits to Jamaica and the US, Jackson found time to tell us more about the show, ahead of its opening in May.

"We're at a pivotal time in Britain where in the last few years, migration has been ever-present on the political scene, clouding the Leave vote, among other things," he says. "I like to see this exhibition as opening a window for discussion. I'd seen lots of work about migration before, but it always seemed to be presented as a problematic, short-term thing. There was hardly anything about what happens to migrants when they stay in a country as they age and get older."

Despite its weighty and politically charged themes, the project was initially borne out of something at once more personal and more universal.

"Growing up I'd heard a lot of stories about Jamaica, but when you're a kid, you kind of mentally switch-off: 'Oh no, not that story again!' But as you get older, you suddenly become more aware that your parents aren't going to be around forever.

"Whenever I bought new equipment I'd always used my family as amateur models, but it wasn't until my dad got very ill that I

thought about the fact that I hadn't seriously documented or recorded their stories.

"I became interested in the ways in which shifting geography impacts upon the psychology of the individual. I think for many migrants like my mum, on some level, it's almost as though they've never landed. They're always somewhere out at sea."

Given its visible presence and historical importance for both Britain and Jamaica, it's no surprise that the sea features prominently in Jackson's photographs, serving as a potent metaphor for isolation, change and yearning for something out of reach. At the same time, however, many of the images also firmly anchor their human subjects on the land.

"One of the mottos of Jamaica is that it's the Land of Wood and Water, so there are elements of that within the work. I was also thinking about the reasons why black people were brought there in the first place - they came over the sea as well as leaving by it, and they were brought to work the land, so the human body is placed in direct connection to the landscape in my work."

That complex link between people and place not only begs the question of what happens to a person when connections are cut, but also of what happens to the place they leave behind.

"I began to wonder what effect that generation leaving might have had on Jamaica - if there was a brain-drain and all the brightest and youngest people left. I think for my parents, it's a place stuck in time - one that in many ways ceased to exist for them when they left. My mum never went back, she never saw her brother and father again, never attended any funerals. Of course, like all families, we have our own folklore that's been passed down, so part of me wanted to go and check the veracity of those stories."

Unsurprisingly, when Jackson visited Jamaica for the first time, in 2017, what he saw there didn't quite match up to what his parents had described.

"What's interesting is that I initially saw going to Jamaica as a way of connecting to my

parents, but when I came back and told them about it, I realised that my experiences were starting to override and erase their own. Thinking about how those stories had sustained them over the years, it felt strange coming back and telling them that it wasn't like that any more, like I was loosening their grip on the space."

But it's not just the journey of that generation 'slipping away' that Jackson seeks to document. The story of *From A Small Island* is an intergenerational one, exploring how attitudes and perceptions both change and stay the same.

"For much of my youth, I guess the myths around Jamaica had sustained me too. Growing up, I think perhaps I didn't feel entirely British or really wanted here. At school, people would say I was Jamaican or West Indian or Afro-Caribbean - I was never just British. So mentally, you retreat to that place, maybe as a place of safety.

"But of course, when I actually went out to Jamaica, people started telling me I was English. My nickname there was English - which of course I am. So even as a second-generation migrant, I can feel something of that dislocation my parents felt."

Moreover, in today's increasingly globalised and super-connected world, it's a feeling that more and more people may be able to identify with.

"Whether you're going from Jamaica to Britain or just moving down from Scotland to a new job in London, you're effectively leaving one space where you have one defined identity and moving to another space to create a new one. Ultimately, I guess it's about exploring the nature of belonging, and why it matters to us."

.....

From A Small Island runs from Saturday 5 May until Sunday 8 July as part of MAC Birmingham's Beyond Windrush season. Admission is free from 11am to 5pm Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holidays.



Rie Nakajima: Cyclic

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham,
until Sun 3 June

"I work and communicate with architectural environments, and there is always something new to discover with sounds and objects," says experimental artist Rie Nakajima. "I would like to make this exhibition flexible and open, with the potential to change and transform at any moment."

A Japanese artist working with installations and performances that generate sound, Nakajima produces pieces using a combination of kinetic devices, musical instruments and found objects.

This Ikon exhibition consists entirely of new work and includes a number of performances in collaboration with other artists.

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Vanley Burke: Photographing Birmingham

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 1 July

"I'm delighted that this collection has found a permanent home with Birmingham Museums," says Vanley Burke, in talking about his exhibition of photos documenting 40 years of African Caribbean experience in the city. "The photos reflect an important era of migration and settlement in Birmingham, and it feels only

right that the people represented in the images and their families can appreciate them for many years to come. In fact, I feel like the photos belong to the people of Birmingham, as so many people feel connected to the stories and experiences documented in them. I'm very pleased they will now be part of the city's collection."

Consequence Of War 1918 - 2018

Lichfield Cathedral,
Mon 16 April - Sun 24 June

This major exhibition contemplates themes of war and peace throughout art and history.

Featuring work by internationally renowned artists including Henry Moore, Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, the collection explores the impact of World War One, focusing on the immediate aftermath of the conflict and the quest for long-lasting peace over the subsequent century.

Other exhibits on show include original work by the Cathedral's artist-in-residence, Peter Walker, items from the Staffordshire Regiment Museum, Military Valour awards and trench art.



Above: Henry Moore: Mother and Child 1949 bronze (LH 269b) Photo: Michael Muller Reproduced by permission of The Henry Moore Foundation'

Created In Conflict: British Soldier Art From The Crimean War To Today

Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
until Sun 10 June

Produced in partnership with the National Army Museum, and aiming to challenge perceptions about war and behaviour, Created In Conflict showcases the diversity of artwork made by British Armed Forces personnel. In the process, the exhibition contemplates subjects such as patriotism, loyalty and the treatment of veterans. The show features loans from the V&A, the Imperial War Museum and the Museum of Military Medicine.

Deeper In The Pyramid

Grand Union, Birmingham, until Sat 21 April



Melanie Jackson's expansive new work features animation, sculpture, a filmed performance and a publication in a graphic-novel format. The artist's publicity for Deeper In The Pyramid describes the piece as taking its viewers 'on a journey of lactic abstractions, through the webs of bio-invasion and collective fantasy that interconnect various life forms through milk, its technologies and representations.'

Melanie's previous works have included large gateway sculpture, bespoke street furniture and integrated art with landscape. Her pieces are produced in many materials, among them glass, fabricated and cast metals, real and pre-cast stone and timber.



MSA British Touring Car Championship

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Traditional Victorian Easter Activities

Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire
Fri 30 Mar - 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.

Family fun at Birmingham Museums

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Thinktank, Aston Hall, Sarehole Mill, Blakesley Hall & Museum Of The Jewellery Quarter

Birmingham Museums are offering families 'a jam-packed schedule of delights and surprises' this Easter holiday.

Visitors to Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery can uncover a treasure trove of history, courtesy of a range of object-handling sessions. There's a visit from the Easter Dinosaur to enjoy at science museum Thinktank, and an opportunity 'to get lost in Wonderland' thanks to a fairytale takeover at Aston Hall.

And that's not all. Visitors to Sarehole Mill can enjoy an Easter trail or a spring-themed craft activity, while Blakesley Hall is holding workshops designed to 'unleash your inner Easter artist'.

A family-friendly guided tour of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory provides visitors with the opportunity to delve deeper into the history of the Jewellery Quarter.



Easter Fun Days

Severn Valley Railways, Bewdley, until Sun 15 April



It's full steam ahead for family fun on the Severn Valley Railway this school holiday.

Attractions include the chance to find the Easter chicks hidden around the Engine House. There's also an introduction to kids origami, Easter card making and colouring-in, and the opportunity to enjoy Easter afternoon tea for two. Easter weekend itself sees Ronnie Crackers making balloon animals and Dippy The Clown holding circus-tricks workshops.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Mon 2 - Fri 6 April

There's plenty to see and do at Birmingham's Botanical Gardens during the Easter holiday, with popular clown Bibbly Bob and the Easter Bunny both on hand to crank up the fun.

Activities to enjoy include drop-in arts & craft sessions, face-painting and a chocolate workshop. Visitors can also meet a variety of interesting animals, including the corn snake, a giant land snail, a panther chameleon, a gargoyle gecko and a bearded dragon.

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Saturday Night
**RED HOT
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Egg-citing Easter Activities

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, until 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 - participate 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.

Royal Eggstravaganza Easter Treasure Hunt

Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire, until Mon 2 April

Eastnor Castle's ever-popular Easter egg hunt makes a welcome return, with participating families challenged to follow the map and solve the clues to work out which famous Royal Wedding couples the bunnies are dressed up as. Other attractions to enjoy at the venue include the Knight's Maze, a junior obstacle course, an adventure playground, a new rope swing route, a treetop walkway and a woodland play area.



Burton's Children's Easter Festival

Various venues, Burton-upon-Trent, until Wed 11 April

"Back for our third year and bigger and better than before, this year's event is all about big tops, bunting and making memories!" say the organisers of Burton's Children's Easter Festival. "We're bringing some of the best circus performers to the town, as well as lots of fun activities to make, see and do." The popular event this year includes an Easter egg trail, cinema screenings of Lego Movie and The Goonies, a host of workshops to enjoy, and the chance to meet & greet the Red Power Ranger.



Operation Earth

Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Mon 2 - Fri 13 April



Described by its organisers as 'the ultimate interactive experience', Operation Earth is an exploration of environmental science, providing youngsters with plenty of information about how they can help to keep the planet healthy.

Activities include an indoor nature survey, air analysis and a microscopic look at 'the world around us'.

Children can also get creative with a themed craft and borrow one of the event's fun-filled backpacks, specially designed for youngsters aged between three and seven.

Cadbury Easter Egg Hunts

Various National Trust sites, until 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.

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at Enginuity**

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The largest mechanical puppet ever constructed in Britain. Come and see this amazing giant in action, the star of two spectacular events.

MAN ENGINE

**BLISTS HILL VICTORIAN TOWN
SATURDAY 14 APRIL 2018**

The Afternoon 10am - 4.30pm

Pre-booking highly recommended. Passport tickets not valid. 25% discount off daytime admission for Passport ticket holders.

The Afterdarker 6.30pm - 10pm

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Official partners

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Kidtropolis

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Sun 8 April

Listening, learning, engaging and exploring is very much the name of the game at Kidtropolis.

The three-day event features favourite children's characters, much-loved brands, 'exciting entertainment and a host of amazing activities'.

My Little Pony favourite Twilight Sparkle is on hand to meet & greet visitors, while fans of Nickelodeon's smash-hit series The Thundermans are sure to be delighted by the fact that series star Kira Kosarin is putting in an appearance.

Also in attendance is the Julia Donaldson/Alex Scheffler creations of Stick Man and the Gruffalo.

A jungle slide, ferris wheel bouncer, roller disco and Legoland discovery centre further add to the fun.



St George's Day Celebration

Tamworth Castle, Sat 21 April

Tamworth Castle goes medieval to celebrate the patron saint of England, presenting a day of entertainment that includes a selection of living history experiences.

Visitors can have a go at doing the laundry, learn about medieval weaponry and armour, or try out some traditional games with the castle's Lady Freville.

Out in the open air, meanwhile, there's the chance to test your archery skills, enjoy the spectacle of a joust, explore a medieval encampment, experience the special atmosphere created by an array of talented street entertainers and encourage your youngsters to busy themselves with numerous children's activities.

The Man Engine

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Sat 14 April

The largest mechanical puppet ever constructed in Britain visits Blists Hill Victorian Town this month. The Man Engine crawls at 4m high and 'transforms' to stand at 11.2m high, powered by Volvo's L220 wheeled-loader.

The team behind the Man Engine have created a bespoke visual, theatrical and aural experience for the Blists Hill stop-off, highlighting the area's status as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.



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Fast & Furious Live

Arena Birmingham, Fri 20 - Sun 22 April

"It's been years in the making," says Rowland French, creative director & executive producer of Fast & Furious Live, the arena tour based on the hit movie franchise. "We are beyond excited to finally show fellow fans what we've been cre-

ating in order to bring Fast & Furious Live to the global stage. With this mix of extraordinary stunts, special effects, cutting-edge 3D-projection mapping - as well as drivers pushing their own limits - every performance will create an unforgettable experience for the live audience. Twenty-three cities across 14 countries is just the beginning for Fast & Furious Live."

Weston Park Horse Trials

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sat 7 - Sun 8 April

"For many riders, Weston Park will be their last outing before Badminton, so we have high hopes for April 2018," says Janet Plant, one of the organisers of this 40th anniversary event. "As usual the April dates will include advanced, intermediate and novice sections.

"We will also be hosting the European Team Preliminary Trial for both the Pony Championships and the under 18 and under 21 Championships, so there'll be plenty of chances to see the rising stars of the future."



AutoScience Activities

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, Tues 3 - Sun 15 April

The science of the automobile comes under the spotlight in a series of fun activities at the British Motor Museum this month.

Visitors can follow the AutoScience Secret Mission Trail around the museum, join one of the family tours and meet the venue's very own 'mad scientist'.

A 25-minute live show provides inspiration for youngsters who fancy putting their design skills to the test in the AutoScience Technics workshops.

Shakespeare's Birthday Celebrations

Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 20 - Sun 22 April

Stratford-upon-Avon is providing plenty by way of entertainment to celebrate what would've been its most famous son's 454th birthday this month.

Taking centre stage is a parade through the streets of the town, with community festivities and street entertainment in evidence across Stratford throughout the day.

For more detailed information about what's happening during the weekend, visit shakespearecelebrations.com



STEMtastic Explorers

Coventry Transport Museum, Wed 18 April

New to the Transport Museum's programme of events, STEMtastic Explorers aims to introduce the world of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) in a fun way. The sessions are led by a member of the venue's learning team, who will guide participating children through different STEM-related themes using a blend of song, stories and experiments.



Slam Dunk

— 20 FESTIVAL 18 —

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THE LAST SHIP

Superstar Sting's first musical, *The Last Ship*, visits Birmingham this month. What's On caught up with him to find out more about a show that's based around a subject particularly close to his heart...



In 2011, it was confirmed that Grammy Award-winning musician Gordon Sumner, better known by his stage name of Sting, was working on his first musical.

Now, in 2018, that musical, entitled *The Last Ship*, is setting sail on a UK theatre tour.

Initially inspired by his 1991 album, *The Soul Cages*, and his own childhood experiences, *The Last Ship* tells the story of how a close-knit community deals with the closure of the Swan Hunter shipyard and the demise of the shipbuilding industry in Tyne and Wear.

"I was born literally within spitting distance of the shipyard," says Sting. "I thought that's where I'd end up because all my family worked there and all of my neighbours worked there - but I didn't want that; I wanted to leave. I escaped and became a musician, but at some point in my life I had to come back, like a salmon who has to go back to the spawning ground to figure out who he is."

Receiving two Tony nominations for Best Original Score and Best Orchestrations, *The Last Ship* features some of Sting's best-loved songs: *Island Of Souls*, *All This Time* and *When We Dance*. Despite being set in Newcastle, the show premiered in Chicago in the summer of 2014, and then moved to the Neil Simon Theatre on Broadway.

"When most plays start out, you think, 'Well, if it ever gets to Broadway, it will be a miracle', so I just started there and worked backwards! I live in New York, I knew a producer who liked the idea of the story, and the theatre was just down the road from where I live. But then I thought it deserved to be seen where it comes from, and that's the north of England."

The ensemble cast is led by Coronation Street, West End and Broadway star Richard Fleeshman as Gideon. Charlie Hardwick, best known for her role as Val Pollard in *Emmerdale*, plays Peggy. Joe McGann (*Elf The Musical* and *The Upper Hand*) is Jackie and Frances McNamee, who recently starred in *Big Fish* in the West End, takes on the role of Meg.

"I've got a fabulous cast of northern actors who understand it in their bones, and it's an emotional rollercoaster ride. I think the play's themes will resonate with people in the north of England because it's really about the industry and the closing of factories and coal mines and shipyards and what happens to communities when they're robbed of their

identity because the work they do is being taken away. That's the serious side of it. It's also a love story, it has some big production numbers and it's an entertaining evening. It's emotional and serious."

The musical is a constant work in progress, despite having been brought to the stage countless times. "For me, art is never finished. You're always tinkering with it, always changing your mind about things - so I will keep tinkering as long as I can, until they lock me out. That's what I do.

"Since Broadway, it's become more political because it's more specific about the actual politics of the time. On Broadway we kind of glossed over that a little more. The story is a little simpler, there are fewer strands - I think it was probably too complicated on Broadway - but I'm very happy with the way it's developed.

"The *Last Ship* is a thank you to the community that formed me; it's a way of paying an emotional debt to the people who brought me up. The characters are either people who existed or composites of people who existed, or people who I knew or people who I've just made up but who're drawn from reality. People have asked if it's biographical for me. There are elements of my own life in there, but it's certainly not my story. There are elements of my own journey."

Being the principle songwriter, lead singer and bassist for new wave rock band The Police from 1977 to 1986, as well as boasting an immensely successful and ongoing solo career, Sting is certainly no stranger to songwriting. "I've always been interested in writing narrative songs, songs that tell a story, and this is just a larger canvas. The difficulty is that each song has to advance the story. You can't have a static song, and that's a very hard discipline. Every song has to fight for its life - every line, every word. It's very demanding, very exacting, but I've had more fun doing this than almost anything else I've done in my life. There has also been some interest from some very, very influential filmmakers, whose names will remain anonymous..."

So would he be keen to embark on a second musical adventure? "I can't imagine anything would be as personal as this, but having got my feet wet, as it were, I'd probably have another go at it. But you know, I have this other job where I make records and sing for money."

Due to be released on 20 April, Sting has produced an album with Jamaican music icon Shaggy that reflects the duo's mutual love of Jamaica. "Everyone loves Shaggy, and it's just a surprise. For me, the most important element in music is surprise. He and I met and did a reggae record together, which no one was expecting."

While a Shaggy collaboration is indeed a surprise, what isn't a surprise is to find that The Police will not be reforming any time soon. "Everything we set out to achieve, we achieved tenfold. You can't step on the same river twice. That's just an exercise in nostalgia, and I'm not terribly nostalgic - I'm living now. I'm curious about now and what's going to happen tomorrow. But going back? I've been there."

.....
The Last Ship stops off at the New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, from Monday 16 to Saturday 21 April



*Your week-
by-week
listings guide*
April 2018

the list

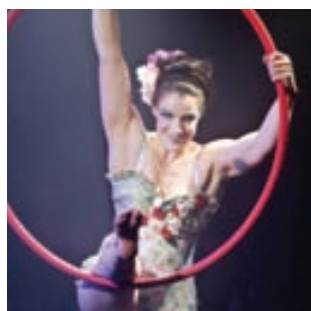


Evita at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury - Tuesday 3 - Saturday 7 April

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

What's On

Sun 1 to Sun 8 April



Très, Très Cabaret at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Fri 6 April

Mon 9 to Sun 15 April



Get Geocaching at Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

Wed 11 April

Mon 16 to Sun 22 April



David Baddiel at Dudley Town Hall

Thurs 19 April

Mon 23 to Mon 30 April



Hazel O'Connor & Cormac De Barra at The Robin, Bilston

Tues 24 April

THROUGHOUT APRIL

Visual Arts

New Art Gallery - Walsall

ARTISTS IN FOCUS Each of the themed collection rooms features multiple works from a single contemporary artist, alongside highlights from the renowned Garman Ryan Collection, until Sun 2 Dec

CORNELIA PARKER: THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER (2015) Cornelia has here re-appropriated a group of found glass photographic negatives of antique silverware, continuing her interest in objects and their histories, the material of silver and the medium of photography, until Sun 2 Dec

Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

OPEN ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION Artwork from both professional and non-professional artists is on display. Prizes will be presented to selected artists, and visitors will get to vote for their favourite piece of artwork, until Sun 22 Apr

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

NEW CREATIVE RAGE Exhibition featuring paintings, photographs, prints and ceramics by members of the progressive LGBTQ artistic community, Sat 28 Apr - Sun 2 Sept

Qube Gallery, Oswestry

NEW OSWESTRY HERITAGE COMICS Qube have teamed up with archaeologist and comic illustrator John Swogger to produce a series of heritage comics, featured weekly in the Advertiser newspaper. The exhibition features artwork created during the project, Thurs 12 Apr - Mon 14 May

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

LEGO - BRICK HISTORY Walk through history in bricks, as Lego enthusiast Warren Elsmore returns with his touring exhibition, until Sun 15 Apr

Weston Park, Shifnal

NEW INTERNATIONAL WATERCOLOUR MASTERS EXHIBITION: DAVID POXON WITH SPECIAL GUESTS The world's leading watercolour masters come to England for the first time, for a unique, contemporary exhibition, Sat 28 Apr - Thurs 31 May

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

NEW SPRING OPEN EXHIBITION 2018 Exhibition of print, mixed-media and

metalwork, Sat 14 Apr - Sat 26 May

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

DIASPORA PAVILION Showcasing the work of 19 artists whose practices respond to the concept of diaspora during the 57th Venice Biennale at Palazzo Pisani a Santa Marina in Venice, until Sun 29 Apr

CLANGERS, BAGPUSS & CO. V&A Museum of Childhood exhibition celebrating classic kids' TV shows, including Bagpuss, The Clangers, Pogles' Wood, Noggin The Nog and Ivor The Engine, until Sun 29 Apr

Other VISUAL ARTS

IMAGINING THE CRUCIFIXION The first part of a two-year creative journey by artist-in-residence Peter Walker, who explores a contemporary interpretation of Christ's journey to the Cross, until Mon 2 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral

CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKERS 2018 Works by Liz Somerville, Angie Lewin, Angela Harding and many others. Also included in the exhibition are ceramics by Rachel Smith, until Sat 28 Apr, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Ludlow

ENCOUNTERS EXHIBITION Exhibition featuring the results of a unique project in which Shropshire artists and poets were paired up to create pieces in response to each other's work, until Sat 28 Apr, VAN Gallery, Shrewsbury

NEW 40 YEARS An exhibition representing 40 years of painting by Ron Satterthwaite, Sat 7 Apr - Sat 7 July, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

NEW A WILDLIFE WANDER ROUND THE WORLD Paintings by David Spencer focused on his interest in wildlife, Sat 7 Apr - Sat 7 July, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

NEW DE FERRERS ACADEMY: LYRICALLY SPEAKING Exhibition by students from the DeFerrers Academy in Burton who have used music as a source of inspiration for their photography, Tues 10 Apr - Sat 19 May, The Brewery Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

NEW CONSEQUENCE OF WAR Exhibition exploring the immediate aftermath of World War One and the quest for peace that followed. Includes works by Henry Moore and Paul Nash, presented alongside Great War artefacts and contemporary footage, Mon 16 Apr - Sun 24 June, Lichfield Cathedral

NEW CURATING DEVELOPMENT Exhibition of art by Filipino migrant workers in London and Hong Kong, Wed 25 Apr - Wed 6 June, Keele University, Staffordshire



From The Jam - The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Gigs

THE TIN TINS RE-UNION

Sun 1 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CLIMAX BLUES BAND

Sun 1 Apr, Lichfield Guildhall

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE

Sun 1 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DEFINITELY MIGHT BE & ADORED

Sun 1 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

BEN SMITH

Sun 1 Apr, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TAMWORTH VOICES

Tues 3 Apr, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

PHILIPPA HANNA

Tues 3 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FINBAR FUREY

Tues 3 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NO AGE

Tues 3 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SAM SMITH

Tues 3 & Wed 4 Apr, Genting Arena, Birmingham

SUN RA ARKESTRA

Wed 4 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

ROMAIN VIRGO

Wed 4 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE HOLLIES

Wed 4 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

BLACK MAGIC - THE LITTLE MIX SHOW

Wed 4 Apr, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

EMBRACE

Thurs 5 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

POP DIVAS LIVE

Thurs 5 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

SPRING SOUNDS

Thurs 5 Apr, The Hive Shrewsbury

GROHLFEST WITH FOOD FIGHTERZ AND NOVANA

Thurs 5 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

FEROCIOUS DOG

Thurs 5 Apr, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FALLEN STATE

Thurs 5 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GREGORY PORTER

Thurs 5 - Fri 6 Apr, Symphony Hall, B'ham

FROM THE JAM

Fri 6 Apr, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

EN VOGUE

Fri 6 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SUBVERT #101

Fri 6 Apr, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THEE HYPNOTICS & BLACK BOMBERS

Fri 6 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHER VS PINK

Fri 6 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

KEVIN ROWLAND

Fri 6 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MEGADETH UK & SHAMTERA

Fri 6 Apr, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

CLARE TEAL

Fri 6 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

ALEX OHM

Fri 6 Apr, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

LET'S HANG ON - THE MUSIC OF FRANKI VALI & THE FOUR SEASONS

Fri 6 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AC/DC EXPERIENCE

Fri 6 Apr, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

WALK LIKE A MAN

Fri 6 Apr, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES

Sat 7 Apr, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE VERVE EXPERIENCE

Sat 7 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND

Sat 7 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HARRY STYLES

Sat 7 Apr, Genting Arena, Birmingham

REAL DIAMOND 2018

Sat 7 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

REBEL REBEL

Sat 7 Apr, Route 44, Birmingham

THE VACCINES

Sat 7 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MERCURY - THE ULTIMATE QUEEN TRIBUTE

Sat 7 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

MAYOR'S ROCK FEST 2018 WITH VOODOO SIOUX

Sat 7 Apr, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

DRAPER AND MAN WITHOUT COUNTRY

Sat 7 Apr, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SOUTH SAT 7 Apr

William Aston Hall, Wrexham

MACKLEMORE

Sun 8 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TOKIO MYERS

Sun 8 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FAREED AYAZ & ABU MUHAMMED SUFI

Sun 8 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

MAGENTA

Sun 8 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

THE OPERA BOYS Fri 6 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock



THE LUDLOW ENGLISH SONG WEEKEND Fri 6 - Sun 8 Apr, various locations, Ludlow, South Shropshire

NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN - UNLEASHED Featuring Kwamé Ryan (conductor) & Karen Gillingham (director). Programme includes works by Mason Bates, Bernstein, John Williams & James Newton Howard, Sat 7 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

KANE BROWN, SLIM, PRINCE ABDI & JUNIOR BOOKER Sun 1 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE COMEDY HUT Tues 3 Apr, The Civic, Stourport

JOE LYCETT Thurs 5 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



KIRI PRITCHARD MCLEAN Thurs 5 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

DOREEN: RISE OF THE YAM-YAM Thurs 5 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ANGELA BARNES, PATRICK MONAHAN, FREDDIE FARRELL & LAURA LEXX Thurs 5 Apr, The George Hotel, Lichfield

JOHN MOLONEY, JENNY COLLIER & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 5 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

JAMIE SUTHERLAND, KAREN BAYLEY,

LUKAS KIRKBY, PHIL CARR & PHIL ELLIS Thurs 5 Apr, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

KUM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY NIGHT Thurs 5 Apr, Stourbridge Town Hall

LOU SANDERS, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & JOSH PUGH Fri 6 Apr, Cherry Reds Cafe-Bar, Birmingham

IMRAN YUSUF, DANNY POSTHILL & SY THOMAS Fri 6 Apr, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

LOU CONRAN Sat 7 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FOIL, ARMS AND HOG Sat 7 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

ARCHIE MADDOCKS, GAVIN WEBSTER, EMMANUEL SONUBI & ANDREW O'NEILL Sat 7 Apr, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 7 Apr, The Old Post Office, Stoke-On-Trent

Theatre

PANTOMANIA A Telford pantomime about Telford and made in Telford by Telford people, until Thurs 5 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

DNA The Young REP presents its version of Dennis Kelly's explosive look at group mentality, until Sat 7 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

LEXICON The UK's leading contemporary circus company return to New-castle-under-Lyme to present the world premiere of their brand new show, until Sat 21 Apr, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE FANTASTIC FOLLIES OF MRS RICH Mary Pix's comedy of manners, combining mischief-making and a mind-bending plot, until Thurs 14 Jun, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI Maria Aberg directs John Webster's tale of revenge, which asks how anyone can survive in a world where masculinity has become toxic, until Fri 3 Aug, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

MACBETH Shakespeare's psychological thriller marks Christopher Eccleston's RSC debut and Niamh Cusack's return to the company, until Tues 18 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

STONES IN HIS POCKETS The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Marie Jones' poignant tragic-comedy, Sat 31 Mar - Sat 7 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CIRQUE DU HILARIOUS Starring Clive Webb and Danny Adams - winners of the Ken Dodd Comedy Award and CFA Best Comedy Award, Sun 1 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CHAMPIONS OF MAGIC Join an award-winning team of liars, swindlers and



Evita - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

cheats for a night of trickery, Mon 2 - Tues 3 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

FAT FRIENDS THE MUSICAL Stage version of Kay Mellor's award-winning TV show. Jodie Prenger, Sam Bailey, Natasha Hamilton, Kevin Kennedy & Andrew 'Freddie' Flintoff star, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

EVITA Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's smash-hit musical, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SOUTH PACIFIC LTC Youth present an amateur staging of Rodgers and Hammerstein's award-winning musical, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Apr, The Brew-house Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

CHIP SHOP CHIPS Theatrical performance exploring love at different ages and celebrating the nation's favourite food, Wed 4 Apr, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

SERVICE! THE LIVE SITCOM Fast-paced, foul-mouthed, relentless comedy set in the restaurant of a four-star hotel, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HARD TIMES Northern Broad-sides present a new adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel, Wed 4 - Sat 14 Apr, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

WICKED Award-winning musical telling the untold story of an unlikely but profound friendship between two young women, Wed 4 - Sun 29 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

DOREEN: RISE OF THE YAM YAM Join the comedy queen of the Black Country as she challenges Darwin with her very own Theory of Evolution, Thurs 5 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE BEE PROJECT Show filled with movement, glitter and friendship, Thurs 5 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

OUTRAGE Uncanny Theatre present a highly visual, interactive response to a world where the most offensive seem to set the agenda, Fri 6 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

THIS IS MARGARET A story of dementia, family and memories, Fri 6 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

TRES, TRES CABARET Stafford's very own burlesque and cabaret night. Strictly over-18s only, Fri 6 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MILKSHAKE! LIVE All-singing, all-dancing stage show for children based on the Channel Four programme, Fri 6 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WICKED WIZARD OF FIZZOG Fizz-zog's Froggatts and Cotterills characters return with a parody of Wicked and The Wizard Of Oz, Fri 6 Apr, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

POLICE COPS IN SPACE Join the award-winning Pretend Men as they present an '80s 'low-fi sci-fi' that's set in 'the most dangerous place on Earth'... Space, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

CHIP SHOP CHIPS Theatrical performance exploring love at different ages and celebrating the nation's favourite food, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Apr, The Wightman, Shrewsbury

WILDVIXEN'S BURLESQUE Hall of Fame Legends Extravaganza, Sat 7 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THIS RESTLESS STATE Fuel Theatre present a highly personal examination of family life, nationhood and belonging, inspired by interviews with young Europeans, Sat 7 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

LES MISERABLES Get Your Wiggle On Teen Musical Theatre Group presents its version of the award-winning musical, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Kids Shows

MILKSHAKE! LIVE All-singing, all-dancing stage show for children based on the Channel Four programme, Tues 3 Apr, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

DEAR ZOO Rod Campbell's children's book is brought to life in a new stage show featuring puppetry, original music and plenty of audience participation, Tues 3 - Wed 4 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

EASTER BUNNY'S EGGS FACTOR Family show for two-to-seven-year-olds, packed with fun, songs, laughter and lots of audience participation. Audience members also get the chance to meet the Easter Bunny and bag themselves an Easter treat, Wed 4 Apr, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

THE SAGAS OF NOGGIN THE NOG Oliver Postgate's iconic creation is brought to the stage in a new piece of theatre for children, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

THE LITTLE MERMAID Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur staging of Disney's underwater adventure, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MONSTERSAURUS Energetic show for younger audiences packed with thrills, spills, magic, mayhem, original music and plenty of audience participation, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HANSEL & GRETEL The award-winning Metro-Boulod-Dodo bring their creative flair and quirky humour to the classic Grimm Brothers fairytale, Wed 4 - Sun 8 Apr, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE OWL WHO WAS AFRAID OF THE DARK Encouraging children to be conquerors! 'Guaranteed to raise smiles and calm the biggest fears', Sat 7 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

PEPPA PIG'S ADVENTURE Brand new live children's show packed with adventure, games, laughs and live music, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MORGAN & WEST'S - MORE MAGIC FOR KIDS Fusion of brain-busting illusion and good old-fashioned tomfoolery, where magic and silliness are the order of the day, Sun 8 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GRANDAD'S ISLAND Benji Davies's award-winning book is brought magically and sensitively to life with songs and laughter, Sun 8 Apr, MAC, B'ham

EASTER BUNNY'S EGGS FACTOR Family show for two-to-seven-year-olds, packed with fun, songs, laughter and lots of audience participation. Audience members also get the chance to meet the Easter Bunny and bag themselves an Easter treat, Sun 8 Apr, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

BALLET CENTRAL Featuring a mixed bill from 'world-renowned choreographers', Fri 6 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE SHAPE OF WATER (15) Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sally Hawkins, Octavia Spencer. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Tues 3 Apr; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, until Wed 4 Apr

LADY BIRD (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Laurie Metcalf. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 5 Apr; Stoke Film Theatre, Tues 3 Apr; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 6 Apr

EARLY MAN (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Tom Hiddleston, Eddie Redmayne. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 5 Apr; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Wed 4 Apr; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Tues 3 Apr; Wern Town Hall, North Shropshire, Sat 7 Apr

PETER RABBIT (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of James Corden, Fayssal Bazzi. MAC, Birmingham, until Thurs 5 Apr; Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 6 - Thurs 12 Apr; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 - Sat 14 Apr

A FANTASTIC WOMAN (15) Drama. Starring Daniela Vega, Francisco Reyes. Foreign language, subtitled. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 5 Apr

FINDING YOUR FEET (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Joanna Lumley, Celia Imrie. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Tues 3 Apr; Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Apr

GOD'S OWN COUNTRY (15) Drama/Romance. Starring Josh O'Connor, Alec Secareanu. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 3 Apr

DESPICABLE ME 3 (U) Animation/Action. With the voices of Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Wed 4 Apr

MONSTER FAMILY (PG) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Emily Watson, Jason Isaacs. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Apr

THE EMOJI MOVIE (U) Animation/Action. With the voices of T.J. Miller, James Corden. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Thurs 5 Apr

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT (15)

Drama/Thriller. Starring Fares, Mari Malek. Foreign language, subtitled. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 5 Apr

COCO (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Anthony Gonzalez, Gael García Bernal. MAC, Birmingham, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Apr

PADDINGTON 2 (PG) Animation/Adventure. Starring Ben Whishaw, Hugh Grant. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Fri 6 Apr

HOW I ENDED THIS SUMMER (12) Drama. Starring Grigoriy Dobrygin, Sergey Puskepalis. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 Apr

BLACK PANTHER (12A) Adventure/Sci-Fi. Starring Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Apr

SWEET COUNTRY (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Bryan Brown, Matt Day. MAC, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Mon 9 Apr

THE DIVINE ORDER (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Marie Leunenberg, Maximilian Simonischek. Foreign language, subtitled. MAC, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Tues 10 Apr

WONDER WHEEL (12a) Drama. Starring Justin Timberlake, Juno Temple. Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 6 - Tues 10 Apr; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 - Thurs 12 Apr

A WRINKLE IN TIME (PG) Family/Fantasy. Starring Storm Reid, Oprah Winfrey. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 6 - Thurs 12 Apr

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (15) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 6 - Thurs 12 Apr

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 6 April, showing at selected cinemas

120 BEATS PER MINUTE (15)

A QUIET PLACE (tbc)

DEATH WISH (18)

GHOST STORIES (15)

LOVE, SIMON (12a)

THE HURRICANE HEIST (12a)

THOROUGHBREDS (15)

WONDERSTRUCK (PG)

Events

FESTIVAL OF POWER An action packed Easter weekend of family Drag Racing entertainment including Top Fuel Dragsters, Nitro Funny Cars, Jet Cars

and National Drag Racing. Plus all things powerful off track including Monster Trucks, Stunt Displays and more, until Sun 1 Apr, Santa Pod Raceway, Wellingborough

CADBURY EASTER EGG HUNTS All participants will be rewarded with a sure-to-be-delicious Cadbury treat at the end of each completed hunt, until Mon 2 Apr, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills, Church Stretton, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

MCE INSURANCE EGG HUNTS CHAMPIONSHIP The 2018 British Superbike Championship kicks off at Donington Park this Easter weekend as home hero Leon Haslam gears up to take on arch rival Shane 'Shakey' Byrne who begins his title defence, until Mon 2 Apr, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

LAMBING LIVE EASTER WEEKEND See the new-born Jacob and Hebridean lambs and learn all about them from the resident farmer, until Mon 2 Apr, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

BRINGING THE PIT TO LIFE Highlighting the newly restored Racecourse Colliery which tells the important story of coal mining at the heart of industrialisation in the Black Country, until Mon 2 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

INSOMNIA62 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, until Mon 2 Apr, NEC, Birmingham

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA With daily bonnet competitions plus an Easter egg hunt around the venue, until Mon 2 Apr, Cadbury World, Birmingham

BURTON CHILDREN'S EASTER FESTIVAL A brand new family festival for Burton-upon-Trent delivered by East Staffordshire Borough Council's Cultural Services, the Children's Easter Festival will see a whole host of events for children of all ages and their families, until Wed 4 Apr, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

EASTER HALF TERM Easter family fun including a trail around the grounds and craft activities for children, until Sun 8 Apr, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham

EASTER FUN ON THE FARM Meet the Easter bunny, join a fun Easter egg quiz trail, take part in egg & spoon races and create springtime crafts down on the farm this Easter holiday, until Wed 11 Apr, Lower Drayton Farm, Nr Penkridge

EGG HUNT Join in this fun hunt but don't forget to record the egg locations on the quiz sheet - as you will hand in the sheet to receive a small prize, until Wed 11 Apr, Tamworth Castle

EASTER EGG HUNT An eggsciting Easter egg hunt around the museum - find all the letters and win a prize, until Sat 14 Apr, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

EGG-CITING EASTER ACTIVITIES Hop on over to find a cracking programme of Easter fun ready and waiting, until Sun 15 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

EASTER AT WARWICK CASTLE Celebrate the 950th anniversary of William the Conqueror's motte and bailey castle on the site, until Sun 15 Apr, Warwick Castle

EASTER DINO EGG HUNT The Easter Bunny doesn't visit Thinktank, but the Easter Dinosaur does and they have left large Dino eggs hidden around the museum, until Sun 15 Apr, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

EASTER HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN Enjoy two exclusive stage shows on your visit this Easter, until Sun 15 Apr, Cadbury World, Birmingham

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA Eggstordinary games and fun at Easter time including the Great Egg Hunt and lamb feeding, until Sun 15 Apr, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SPRINGTIME AT SHUGBOROUGH Make the most of the spring season with nature inspired activities and trails, including Explorers' Map, full of 50 Things fun, and canoeing sessions on the River Sow, until Sun 15 Apr, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Stafford

EGG-CELLENT EASTER AT DRAYTON MANOR PARK 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, until Sun 15 Apr, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

ASTON IN WONDERLAND: A FAIRY TALE TAKEOVER Meet lots of your favourite story book characters including Alice, the Hatter, and the angry Queen as you explore this spectacular building, Sun 1 Apr, Aston Hall, Birmingham

EASTER SUNDAY AT BOTANICAL GARDENS Celebrate Easter Sunday at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens for a day packed full of fun, Sun 1 Apr, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

MOTORFEST This popular and hugely well attended fixture on the classic vehicle calendar will welcome classic cars, motorcycles, military 4x4s, performance cars, classic commercials, tractors and stationary engines, Sun 1 Apr, Weston Park, Staffs

MEDIEVAL MERRIMENT The hall will be filled with Medieval music and dancing, talented re-enactors will demonstrate the arts of archery and cookery in the Middle Ages, Sun 1 - Mon 2 Apr, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

100 YEARS OF THE RAF FESTIVAL Celebrate the foundation of the RAF in its centenary year with nostalgic activities for the whole family to enjoy, Sun 1 - Mon 2 Apr, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

TRADITIONAL VICTORIAN EASTER ACTIVITIES 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, Sun 1 - Sun 15 Apr, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire

EASTER HOLIDAYS AT BOTANICAL GARDENS A variety of fun activities to get involved with across the Easter holidays including arts and crafts, an Easter Bonnet Parade and chocolate workshop, Mon 2 - Fri 6 Apr, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

OPERATION EARTH SHOW Weekdays during Easter, take part in Operation Earth, an exciting new family show exploring the amazing stories and science of the environment, Mon 2 - Fri 13 Apr, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

THE BIG TREE CLIMB Join The Great Big Tree Climbing Company who'll be on hand beside the mansion to show you how to safely climb (with harnesses) one of our oak trees. Enjoy the view of the grounds from above and then zip line back down from the canopy, Tues 3 - Wed 4 Apr, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

CLAY CHICKS WORKSHOPS Drop-in workshops where visitors can make a clay chick and decorate with feathers to take home, Tues 3 - Thurs 5 Apr, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

EASTER CRAFT ACTIVITIES This Easter school holidays why not join in with some fun Easter themed craft activities at Blakesley Hall on a Tuesday and Thursday, Tues 3 - Thurs 12 Apr, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

THE ADVENTURES OF MRS TIGGY-WINKLE TRAIL Relive the magical story and reconnect with nature as Croft starts to spring to life, Tues 3 - Sun 15 Apr, Croft Castle, Nr Leominster

FEATHERS AND FLIGHT TRAIL Families will need to be eagle-eyed as they pass through the hangars in search of the answers to six tricky aircraft and bird themed questions, Tues 3 - Sun 15 Apr, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

GET GEOCACHING Explore Attingham as you hunt for hidden geocaches around the grounds, Wed 4 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

LITTLE SKIPPERS - EASTER FUN Get crafty to create a flower for the spring garden, make yourself some bunny ears then put on your explorer's pith helmet and binoculars to tackle the Easter Egg themed wildlife hunt, Wed



Shropshire Scale Model Show - RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

4 - Thurs 5 Apr, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust, Dudley

WILD TIMES: BACK TO NATURE Join WildLife Survival School for an hour of fun around the campfire and handcraft something to take home, Thurs 5 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

LITTLE TREKKERS A fun and informative spring walk for all the family led by the expert ranger guides, Thurs 5 Apr, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills, Church Stretton, Shropshire

FAMILY FUN DAY Take a family friendly guided tour of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory and then enjoy a fun craft activity in the Education Space, Thurs 5 Apr, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

EAGLES AT EASTER An array of birds of prey including Hawks, Buzzards, Falcons, Owls and a Bald Eagle, along with their handlers will be on site all day to meet with visitors, Thurs 5 Apr, RAF Cosford

TREE CLIMBING WITH THE BIG TREE CLIMBING COMPANY Once you're kitted out, you'll get an opportunity to see the 1,200 acre estate from a different perspective, Thurs 5 - Fri 6 Apr, Erdig Hall, Wrexham

ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE SPRING FAIR The largest vetted art, antiques and interiors fair outside of London, bringing together over 160 specialist dealers showcasing over 30,000 pieces including furniture, ceramics, jewellery, paintings, sculptures, bronzes and more, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Apr, NEC, Birmingham

TUNNEL TEDS A day to bring your furry friend along for a ted-tastic day of bear-themed fun on and around the canal, Fri 6 Apr, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

KIDTROPOLIS Kidtropolis a place for children to play and have fun and for

parents, grandparents and carers to make fun filled memories, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Apr, NEC, Birmingham

GO CANOEING! Take a turn on the man-made river behind the Mansion in a canoe seeing the gardens from a new perspective, Sat 7 Apr, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS - A DRAMATIC, COSTUMED EVENING TOUR OF ATTINGHAM Let Lord Berwick take you back in time for an exciting private tour of the stunning ground floor of Attingham Mansion, Sat 7 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

HSCC HISTORIC CAR CHAMPIONSHIP The Historic Sports Car Club arrive at Donington Park this weekend transporting the circuit back in time for two days of classic and historic racing, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Apr, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND The return of our popular model railway exhibition, alongside opportunities for you to peep behind the scenes, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Apr, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

FALCONRY DISPLAYS AT TRENTHAM Heritage Falconry will be at Trentham this Easter Holidays showing off these magnificent birds, answering your questions and performing static bird displays, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Apr, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

PCA SAXON CLASSIC The very first PCA bodybuilding event of the 2018 bodybuilding calendar, Sun 8 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

SHROPSHIRE SCALE MODEL SHOW Thousands of modelling fans from across the country will descend on the RAF Museum Cosford for the annual Shropshire Modellers' Show, Sun 8 Apr, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

Gigs

NIGHT RIOTS Mon 9 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ROY ORBISON IN DREAMS Mon 9 Apr, Genting Arena, B'ham

MYRKUR Mon 9 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NERINA PALLOT Mon 9 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE LOWEST PAIR Mon 9 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PEACE Mon 9 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ASTON MERRYGOLD Tues 10 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JCM Tues 10 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

JETHRO TULL 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Tues 10 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ZERVAS AND PEPPER Wed 11 Apr, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

THE LOST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JAKE THAKRAY Wed 11 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

DAN OWEN Wed 11 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KIM WILDE: HERE COME THE ALIENS TOUR Wed 11 Apr, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

JASPER CARROT'S STAND UP AND ROCK Wed 11 - Sat 14 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUSIC Thurs 12 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

A 60S NIGHT OUT Thurs 12 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AYANNA WITTER-JOHNSON Thurs 12 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GUNS OR ROSES Fri 13 Apr, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

JANIS JOPLIN & FRIENDS IN THE WOODSTOCK EXPERIENCE Fri 13 Apr, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

3 GENERATIONS OF SKA Fri 13 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BAD MANNERS Fri 13 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

LES MCKEOWN'S BAY CITY ROLLERS Fri 13 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ROXY MUSIQUE Sat 14 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

THE KITCHEN COLLECTIVE Sat 14 Apr, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

JANIS JOPLIN & FRIENDS IN THE WOODSTOCK EXPERIENCE Sat 14 Apr, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

GIRLS ROCK! FESTIVAL Sat 14 Apr, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

DARREN (808 STATE), DJ NIPPER AND ROBBIE AVERY Sat 14 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE JULIAN SIEGAL QUINTET Sat 14 Apr, The Hive, Shrewsbury

THE MGM MUSICALS Sat 14 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Sat 14 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

MERCURY - THE ULTIMATE QUEEN TRIBUTE Sat 14 Apr, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ELKIE BROOKS: PEARLS GREATEST HITS TOUR Sat 14 Apr, Birmingham

ham Town Hall

NEW ORLEANS HEAT Sat 14 Apr, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

NASHVILLE Sat 14 Apr, Genting Arena, Birmingham

MARILLION Sat 14 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIGFOOT Sat 14 Apr, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

MARTINE MCCUTCHEON Sat 14 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LABOUR OF LOVE - UB40 TRIBUTE Sat 14 Apr, Dudley Brewhouse Blues Club

LIONS OF DISSENT Sat 14 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ARCADE FIRE Sun 15 Apr, Genting Arena, Birmingham

ANDREW W.K. Sun 15 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SEYES Sun 15 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

RAYMOND FROGGATT Sun 15 Apr, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

SPEAK, BROTHER Sun 15 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE WHITNEY HOUSTON SHOW Sun 15 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

HEATHER SMALL Sun 15 Apr, William Aston Hall, Wrexham



Heather Small - William Aston Hall, Wrexham

Classical Music

DANIEL MOULT ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Handel, Mozart, Liszt, Whitlock, J. Van Oortmerssen & Wammes, Mon 9 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CONVINO Music from the courts of Europe featuring Catriona McDermid (bassoon), Katie Cowling (oboe/recorder) & Johann Löfving (theorbo), Mon 9 Apr, The Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury

LINES/REDGRAVE/MCCARTHY TRIO Featuring Timothy Lines (clarinet), Rose Redgrave (viola) & Eliza McCarthy (piano). Programme includes new works by James Abel, Luke Harrison, Millicent James, Henryk Golden, Ka Kwok, Oliver Mack and Kailan Barton-Porte, Wed 11 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RUDOLF BUCHBINDER: SCHUMANN Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Rudolf Buchbinder (piano). Programme includes works by Wagner, Schumann & Beethoven, Thurs 12 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO FRIENDS Featuring Zoe Beyers (violin), Adam Romer (viola) & Richard Jenkinson (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Rosza, Kodaly, Dohnanyi, Fri 13 Apr, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE WIND ORCHESTRA Featuring Keith Brion (conductor). Programme comprises works by Sousa, Fri 13 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EUROPEAN UNION CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Featuring Crispian Steele Perkins (trumpet). Programme includes works by Purcell, Respighi, Haydn, Annd Disley-Simpson & Mozart, Sun 15 Apr, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

PRO YOUTH PHILHARMONIA Inaugural concert, Sun 15 Apr, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ILKER ARCAYIÜREK: SCHUMANN AND SHUBERT Also featuring Hartmut Höll (piano). Programme includes works by Schumann & Schubert, Sun 15 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

Comedy

ALUN COCHRANE Wed 11 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MILTON JONES Thurs 12 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

ALUN COCHRANE Thurs 12 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JARRED CHRISTMAS, THE NOISE NEXT DOOR & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 12 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TONY LAW Fri 13 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEIN'S FAMILY GIFTSHOP Fri 13 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

SIMON CLAYTON, JARRED CHRISTMAS, THE NOISE NEXT DOOR & LAURA LEXX Fri 13 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

CARL HUTCHINSON Fri 13 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SIMON EVANS 14 Apr, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

JARRED CHRISTMAS, SIMON CLAYTON, LAURA LEXX & COMIC TBC Sat 14 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GUZ KHAN, STEPHEN BAILEY, KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN & ALISTAIR WILLIAMS Sat 14 Apr, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

CARL HUTCHINSON Sat 14 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 14 Apr, The Old Post Office, Stoke-On-Trent

ALUN COCHRANE Sun 15 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

NOEL & GERTIE The story of a 54 year friendship between Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence, Mon 9 - Sat 14 Apr, The Oldbury Rep

VAMPIRE'S ROCK: THE GHOST TRAIN Steve Steinman ramps up the vamp in this sequel show, Tues 10 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

TURN OF THE SCREW Henry James' classic ghost story, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MACBETH The National Production Company presents its version of Shakespeare's famous bloodfest, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Apr, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

BRIGHTON ROCK Pilot Theatre and York Theatre Royal bring the dark underworld of Graham Greene's classic novel to the stage in this new adaptation by acclaimed writer Bryony Lavery, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

LOVEHARD: TALES FROM THE ELSEWHERE Double act Lovehard present their brand new show, Wed 11 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

T J HIGGS PSYCHIC MEDIUM SHOW Wed 11 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

LEAVING Immersive experience which promises to change the way in

which we think about young people in care and beyond, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

THE DRESSING ROOM New comedy from Bobby Ball - who also stars, alongside Tommy Cannon, Stu Francis and Johnnie Casson star, Thurs 12 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TRACEY COLLINS: WORK IN PROGRESS The award-winning Tracey Collins (Tina Turner Tea Lady) invites audiences to meet cabaret comedy characters including Young Whippersnapper, Audrey Heartburn and Barber Streisand, Thurs 12 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE RESISTABLE RISE OF ARTURO UI Newman University present Bertolt Brecht's parable of the rise of Hitler, Thurs 12 - Fri 13 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

STAGE DOOR JOHNNY: LESS MISERABLE Enjoy an evening of standards from the world of musical theatre, 'lovingly shredded, ripped off and potentially ruined for good!' Fri 13 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE TIME MACHINE Rebecca Vaughan presents Elton Townend Jones' radical new interpretation of the HG Wells classic, in which a Victorian time traveller transcends the ages - from the fall of man to the end of the world, Sat 14 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PALS Dark, poignant comedy following the story of two innocent and enthusiastic men who volunteer their services to Britain after Kitchener's call for a New Army, Sat 14 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE FAAAAAABULOUS CERI DUPREE SHOW Female impersonator Ceri presents a brand new show, complete with costumes, routines, jokes and songs, Sat 14 Apr, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Kids Shows

JUSTIN'S BAND Join Justin and his friends on a musical journey, singing lots of songs and learning about musical instruments along the way, Tues 10 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

LIBRARY LION Children's story featuring songs, laughter and lots of interactive learning games, Tues 10 - Thurs 12 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

MORGAN & WEST: MORE MAGIC FOR KIDS Join the time-travelling musicians as they return to the stage with a show full of crazy capers for the young, old and everyone in between, Thurs 12 Apr, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

CAPTAIN FLINN AND THE PIRATE DINOSAURS - THE MAGIC CUTLASS

Les Petits returns to the high seas with its highly anticipated sequel, based on the award-winning book by Giles Andreae and Russell Ayto, Fri 13 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

THE TWISTED TALE OF HANSEL AND GRETEL The award-winning Metro-Boulton-Dodo join forces with Open Theatre Company to bring their 'creative flair and quirky sense of humour' to the famous fairytale from the Brothers Grimm, Sat 14 Apr, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

THE AMAZING BUBBLE MAN Featuring the Amazing Bubble Man and all manner of, er, bubbles! Sat 14 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

YOU'VE GOT DRAGONS Taking Flight Theatre present a touching exploration of the dragons we all face, Sat 14 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE NOSE THAT NOBODY PICKED Mountains of mucus, toe-tapping tunes and two nostrils full of magic are the order of the day in this stage adaptation of David Parkin's much-loved book, Sun 15 Apr, MAC, B'ham

Dance

GIOVANNI PERNICE BORN TO WIN Join the Strictly star for an evening of 'glitzy costumes and amazing routines', Sun 15 Apr, The Place, Oaken-gates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

Events

EASTER FUN ON THE FARM Meet the Easter bunny, join a fun Easter egg quiz trail, take part in egg & spoon races and create springtime crafts down on the farm this Easter holiday, until Wed 11 Apr, Lower Drayton Farm, Nr Penkridge

EGG HUNT Join in this fun hunt but don't forget to record the egg locations on the quiz sheet - as you will hand in the sheet to receive a small prize, until Wed 11 Apr, Tamworth Castle

EASTER EGG HUNT An eggsciting Easter egg hunt around the museum - find all the letters and win a prize, until Sat 14 Apr, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

EGG-CITING EASTER ACTIVITIES Hop on over to find a cracking programme of Easter fun ready and waiting, until Sun 15 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

EASTER DINO EGG HUNT The Easter Bunny doesn't visit Thinktank, but the Easter Dinosaur does and they have left large Dino eggs hidden around the museum, until Sun 15 Apr, Think-

tank Science Museum, Birmingham

EASTER HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN Enjoy two exclusive stage shows on your visit this Easter, until Sun 15 Apr, Cadbury World, Birmingham

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA Eggstrordinary games and fun at Easter time including the Great Egg Hunt and lamb feeding, until Sun 15 Apr, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry

SPRINGTIME AT SHUGBOROUGH Make the most of the spring season with nature inspired activities and trails, including Explorers' Map, full of 50 Things fun, and canoeing sessions on the River Sow, until Sun 15 Apr, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

EGG-CELLENT EASTER AT DRAYTON MANOR PARK Heart-stopping roller-coasters 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, until Sun 15 Apr, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

SURGERY, MEDICINE AND MAGIC IN ANGLO SAXON ENGLAND Choose a battle wound or malady to take to the Wise Woman and see what she would prescribe as a cure... Mon 9 Apr, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

GO CANOEING! Take a turn on the man-made river behind the Mansion in a canoe seeing the gardens from a new perspective, Tues 10 Apr, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Stafford



OSZY OWL PUPPET WORKSHOP Drop-in event where young visitors are invited to have-a-go making a flapping split pin Ozzy Owl puppet inspired by the museum's slipware owl, Tues 10 - Wed 11 Apr, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

LITTLE SKIPPERS - EASTER FUN Get crafty to create a flower for the spring garden, make yourself some bunny ears then put on your explorer's pith helmet and binoculars to tackle the Easter Egg themed wildlife hunt, Tues 10 - Thurs 12 Apr, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

GET GEOCACHING Explore Attingham as you hunt for hidden geocaches around the grounds, Wed 11 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

GO CANOEING! Take a turn on the man-

made river behind the Mansion in a canoe seeing the gardens from a new perspective, Thurs 12 Apr, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Stafford

WILD TIMES: BACK TO NATURE Join WildLife Survival School for an hour of fun around the campfire and handcraft something to take home, Thurs 12 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

LITTLE TREKKERS A fun and informative spring walk for all the family led by the expert ranger guides, Thurs 12 Apr, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills, Church Stretton, Shropshire

FAMILY FUN DAY Take a family friendly guided tour of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory and then enjoy a fun craft activity in the Education Space, Thurs 12 Apr, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

EAGLES AT EASTER An array of birds of prey including Hawks, Buzzards, Falcons, Owls and a Bald Eagle, along with their handlers will be on site all day to meet with visitors, Thurs 12 Apr, RAF Cosford

VOICES OF WOMEN IN THE GREAT WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH An exciting conference organised by the Women's History Network Midlands Region, exploring women's experiences during the war and in the years that followed, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

ARCHERY AT TRENTHAM GARDENS Try your hand at a spot of archery this Easter Holiday - the experts will be on hand to give you tips and advice at these taster sessions, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Apr, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

MAKE A WOODEN BUNNY WORKSHOP Get into the spirit of spring and create a bunny decoration for your home or garden at the Make a wooden bunny workshops, Sat 14 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

TUNES FROM THE TRENCHES Step aboard the special electric trip boats which will transport you deep into the underground tunnels of Dudley to the magnificent Singing Cavern for an hour of musical entertainment, Sat 14 Apr, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

THE MAN ENGINE The largest mechanical puppet ever constructed in Britain will be paying a visit to Blists Hill Victorian Town, Sat 14 Apr, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire

THE FAST SHOW The first performance and modified car event on the calendar, Sun 15 Apr, Santa Pod Raceway, Wellingborough

WILDFAMILIES DISCOVER Join Staffordshire Wildlife Trust in the Natural History Gallery to find out more about local wildlife, Sun 15 Apr, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

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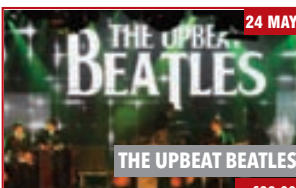
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WED 11 APR. BY JOHN WATTERSON
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THU 12 APR.
FRED ZEPPELIN

FRI 13 APR. SKA VS REGGAE
BAD MANNERS + SPECIAL GUESTS
THE PIRAGONS WITH OSSIE HOLT

SAT 14 APR.
COUNTERFEIT STONES

SUN 15 APR. TRIBUTES TO YES
SeYes
DAVID UNLIT, STEVE GARNER, PATE GREENWOOD
LUCAS BRADSHAW, NOEL TOWNS

MON 16 APR.
US COUNTRY MUSIC LEGEND
PHIL VASSAR

WED 18 APR. 40TH ANNIVERSARY
DEAN FRIEDMAN
"WELL, WE'VE SAID THE ROCKING CHAIRS TOUR"

THU 19 APR. BLUES CARAVAN
BERNARD ALLISON, VANJA SKY, MIKE ZITO

FRI 20 APR. EUROPE'S PREMIER TRIBUTES TO
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MONEY FOR NOTHING

SAT 21 APR.
T.REXTASY
"GET IT ON"

SUN 22 APR. INTERNATIONAL PROG
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MON 23 APR. FAREWELL TOUR
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TUE 24 APR. ALL SEATED SHOW
HAZEL O'CONNOR & CORMAC DE BARRA

WED 25 APR.
BRIAN KENNEDY

THU 26 APR. + SILENT JACK
MORETALICA
TRIBUTE TO METALLICA

FRI 27 APR. + SAVANNAH
THE SUPERSKAS

SAT 28 APR.
TRIBUTE TO **UB40**

SUN 29 APR. THE SPIRIT OF RUSH
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What's
on...



Sunday 15 April, 3.00pm
GIOVANNI PERNICE



Friday 20 April, 7.30pm
THE QUO EXPERIENCE



Sunday 22 & Monday 23 April,
Sun 2pm & 5pm, Mon 10am & 2pm
HORRIBLE HISTORIES: MORE BEST OF BARMY BRITAIN



Saturday 28 - Sunday 29 April,
2.30pm & 7.30pm
MADE IN DAGENHAM: THE MUSICAL



Wednesday 2 May, 7.30pm
AN AUDIENCE WITH THE REVEREND RICHARD COLES



Thursday 13 May, 7.30pm
THE KEEP IT COUNTRY SHOW



Wednesday 9 May, 7.30pm
AN AUDIENCE WITH SIMON KING



Wednesday 16 May, 7.30pm
WALK RIGHT BACK - THE STORY OF THE EVERLY BROTHERS



Thursday 17 May, 7.30pm
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Gigs

GOAT GIRL Mon 16 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TAYLOR BENNETT Mon 16 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PHIL VASSAR Mon 16 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

AQUILLO Mon 16 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE HOMESICK Mon 16 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DUA LIPA Tues 17 Apr, Genting Arena, Birmingham

THE WHITE BUFFALO Tues 17 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TRIVIUM Tues 17 Apr, O2 Academy, B'ham

LISA STANSFIELD Tues 17 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CASEY Wed 18 Apr, The Asylum, Birmingham

LIGHTYEAR, LOBSTER & BLACK MARKET BEAT Wed 18 Apr, The Flapper, Birmingham

GRANT LEE PHILLIPS Wed 18 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DEAN FRIEDMAN'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY Wed 18 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

SAVAGE MESSIAH Wed 18 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE STREETS Thurs 19 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE HERBALISER Thurs 19 Apr, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

BERNARD ALLISON, VANJA SKY & MIKE ZITO Thurs 19 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN: DAMNED DEVOTION TOUR Thurs 19 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

HAWKLORDS Thurs 19 Apr, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke-on-Trent

SUBMOTION ORCHESTRA Thurs 19 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

UGLY KID JOE Thurs 19 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAKEMAN Thurs

19 Apr, MAC, B'ham
SNOWPOET Thurs 19 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE QUO EXPERIENCE Fri 20 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

ULTIMATE COLDPLAY Fri 20 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

LOTTO BOYZZ Fri 20 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

SOME ENCHANTED EVENING Fri 20 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

AIDAN O'ROURKE & KIT DOWNES Fri 20 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALEXANDER O'NEAL Fri 20 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

DUETS FOR DJANGO Fri 20 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

LOBSTER SHACK Fri 20 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DAN REED Fri 20 Apr, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke-on-Trent

ISAAC GRACIE Fri 20 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

INTO THE SHADOWS Fri 20 Apr, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

MALLORY KNOX Fri 20 Apr, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE COMMANDMENTS Sat 21 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

WANNABE - THE SPICE GIRLS SHOW Sat 21 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS Sat 21 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

LOST HORIZONS Sat 21 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND Sat 21 Apr, Route 44, Birmingham

DIRTY DC Sat 21 Apr, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke on Trent

WINTER WILSON Sat 21 Apr, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

FAITH EVANS Sat 21 Apr, O2 Institute, Birm-

ingham

COASTS Sat 21 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAJOR TOMS & DJ GROOVE CAT Sat 21 Apr, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

TAX THE HEAT Sat 21 Apr, The Flapper, Birmingham

RACHEL NEWTON Sat 21 Apr, The Hive, Shrewsbury



MADDY PRIOR WITH GILES LEWIN AND HANNAH JAMES Sat 21 Apr, Lichfield Guildhall

TREXTASY Sat 21 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

INTO THE SHADOWS Sat 21 Apr, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

VALOUS, WHORE NO MORE, THE LOVED... Sat 21 Apr, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

KIM WILDE: HERE COME THE ALIENS TOUR Sat 21 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

CALUM SCOTT Sun 22 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LUCY DACUS Sun 22 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MYSTERY, PRESTO BALLET & MIDNIGHT SUN Sun 22 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

BANGLA NEW YEAR: POHELA BOISHAKH Sun 22 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

FM Sun 22 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE BIG BAND Sun 22 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

RHINO'S REVENGE Sun 22 Apr, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke-on-Trent

REJJIE SNOW Sun 22 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

LONDON BRIDGE TRIO Featuring David Adams (violin), Kate Gould (cello) & Daniel Tong (piano). Programme includes works by Fanny Mendelssohn & Schumann, Tues 17 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

SAINT-SAËNS' ORGAN SYMPHONY Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Harish Shankar (conductor), Boris Giltburg (piano) & Darius Battiwalla (organ). Programme includes works by Ravel, Prokofiev & Saint-Saëns, Wed 18 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: DEBUSSY AND RODRIGO Featuring Andrew Griffiths (conductor) & Pedro H. da Silva (guitar). Programme includes works by Debussy, Rodrigo & Bizet, Wed 18 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

CAMERATA CHOIR Featuring Tuan Yi Koh, King Chan & Darrel Chan (conductors). Programme includes works by Arvo Part, Rachmaninov, Schubert, Bruckner, Tallis & Weelkes, Thurs 19 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PETER DONOHUE: MOZART PIANO CYCLE RECITAL Thurs 19 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



SHREWSBURY SCHOOL MUSICIANS IN CONCERT Fri 20 Apr, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

SCHUBERT'S TROUT QUINTET Featuring Robert Markham (piano), Jonathan Martindale (violin), Christopher Yates (viola), Kate Setterfield (cello) & Anthony Alcock (double-bass). Programme includes works by Bridge & Schubert, Fri 20 Apr, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

SALISBURY CONCERT BAND Sat 21 Apr, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow, South Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS' SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) & Richard Harwood (soloist). Programme includes works by Dvorak, Berlioz & Sibelius, Sat 21 & Sun 22 Apr, The Bramall, B'ham

THE ENGLISH PREMIERE OF DEWI SANT BY KARL JENKINS James Lewis conducts his Birmingham choirs - Birmingham Canoldir Male Choir, Midlands Hospitals' Choir and Phoenix Singers Birmingham, Sun 22 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

ILIZA SHLESINGER Wed 18 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVE FULTON, SUSIE MCCABE & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 19 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

ROBIN INCE Fri 20 Apr, MAC, B'ham

DAVE FULTON, SUSIE MCCABE, DAN THOMAS & ANDRE VINCENT Fri 20 - Sat 21 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROBIN INCE Sat 21 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton



NICO YEARWOOD, NICK PAGE, LUKE TOULSON & COMIC TBC Sat 21 Apr, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

JONNY AWSUM, CHRISTOPHER MACARTHUR-BOYD, PAT CAHILL & DAMION LARKIN Sat 21 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 21 Apr, The Old Post Office, Stoke-on-Trent

SEVERN JESTERS #58 Sun 22 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

ON THE TRACK University of Wolverhampton Musical Theatre students present an original musical mystery thriller set in the 1930s, Mon 16 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE LAST SHIP UK premiere of Sting's personal, political and passionate musical - an epic tale of community, hope and a great act of collective defiance, Mon 16 - Sat 21 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's award-winning musical, Mon 16 - Sat 21 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

A NEED TO KILL University of Wolverhampton Musical Theatre students present an original murder-mystery set in the 1930s, Tues 17 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ALL SHOOK UP Musical theatre Stafford present a performance inspired by and featuring the songs of Elvis Presley, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MRS WARREN'S PROFESSION Stoke Rep Players present an amateur staging of George Bernard Shaw's play, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Apr, Stoke

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Hawkstone Park EVENTS



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Easter Egg Hunt
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Friday 27th April
Wham Tribute
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Saturday 16th June
Alice in Wonderland Theatre Production
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25 April, 8pm
Jeremy Hardy Live
 Tickets: £14 £10 Sat Mt



26th April, 7.30pm
Chris Ronald
 Tickets: £8, £10 otd



2nd May, 7.30pm
 Once upon a Wednesday
Jan Blake - Old Women
 Tickets: £6, £8 otd



10th May, 8pm
Simon Evans: Genius
 Tickets: £14



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THIS HOUSE Critically acclaimed play providing an often amusing insight into the workings of British politics, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Apr, The REP, B'ham

THE GLASS MENAGERIE Brand new version of Tennessee Williams' famous 'memory play', Tues 17 - Sat 28 Apr, The Wightman, Shrewsbury

THE TOWN THE GREAT WAR BUILT - WW1 PROJECT Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre present a devised piece, Wed 18 - Fri 20 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GYPSY QUEEN The story of 'Gorgeous George' O'Connell, a bare-knuckle fighter and traveller whose foray into the world of professional boxing puts him on a collision course with his roots, his identity and his greatest fear... Wed 18 - Sat 21 Apr, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

EDUCATING RITA Willy Russell's classic comedy, Wed 18 Apr - Sat 5 May New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

DAVID BADDIEL - MY FAMILY: NOT THE SITCOM Much-acclaimed show about memory, ageing, infidelity, dysfunctional relatives, moral policing on social media, golf and gay cats, Thurs 19 Apr, Dudley Town Hall

ARE YOU BEING SERVED Ambient Night Productions present a new staging of the popular sitcom, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE FULL MONTY Mad Cows Productions present an amateur staging of the Tony Award-winning musical, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SWING WITH LAUGHTER British entertainers Jimmy Tarbuck OBE and Kenny Lynch OBE swap their golf clubs for a night of comedy and music in the company of talented friends, Fri 20 Apr, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SKIN DEEP THE MUSICAL Musical revue about body image, diets, the gym, selfies, Botox and nip'n'tucks, Fri 20 Apr, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

MY DAD WROTE A PORNO LIVE The team behind the smash-hit 'cultural phenomenon' take to the road, Fri 20 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SOME ENCHANTED EVENING The Arcadians present a fully staged, all-singing, all-dancing concert featuring many of musical theatre's best-known numbers, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

SING-A-LONG THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Sat 21 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROMEO AND JULIET Contemporary production of Shakespeare's famous love story, Sat 21 Apr - Fri 21 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre,

Stratford-upon-Avon

OLIVER SAMUELS & VOLIER MAFFY JOHNSON IN FRENEMY Family comedy exploring the most testing of friendships, Sun 22 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STARS

Stage 2 presents a staging of Ger-vase Phinn's sequel to the much-acclaimed A Wayne In A Manager, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO SWALLOWED A FLY The People's Theatre present a new young persons pantomime, Sun 22 Apr, MAC, B'ham

HORRIBLE HISTORIES Education and entertainment combine as favourite characters from 'our barmy past' take to the stage, Sun 22 - Mon 23 Apr, The Place, Oakengates, Telford

Talks

THE GREAT GAMBO: THE PROFESSOR OF POP Paul Gambaccini reveals how a boy from the Bronx wound up as the UK's Professor of Pop, Wed 18 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SHEILA'S M.H.S MENTAL HEALTH SHOW Humorous show explaining why life's too serious to be taken seriously, Sat 21 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

BREATHE (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Andrew Garfield, Claire Foy. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 16 Apr

THE SQUARE (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Claes Bang, Elisabeth Moss. Stoke Film Theatre, Tues 17 Apr

REBECCA (PG) Drama/Mystery. Starring Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine. Mitchell Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs, Tues 17 Apr

SWEET COUNTRY (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Bryan Brown, Matt Day. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 19 Apr

THE COMMUNE (12) Drama. Starring Ulrich Thomsen, Fares Fares. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 Apr

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT (15) Drama/Thriller. Starring Fares, Mari Malek. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 20 Apr



Blood Brothers - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE (15) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Dante Pereira-Olson. Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Apr

I, TONYA (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Margot Robbie, Allison Janney. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 20 Apr; No8, Pershore, Sat 21 Apr

THE ICE KING (12a) Documentary. MAC, Birmingham, Fri 20 - Mon 23 Apr

ISLE OF DOGS (12a) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Bryan Cranston, Yoko Ono. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 20 - Thurs 26 Apr

120 BPM (BEATS PER MINUTE) (15) Drama. Starring Nahuel Pérez Biscayart, Arnaud Valois. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 20 - Thurs 26 Apr

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 20 April, showing at selected cinemas

FUNNY COW (15)

LET THE SUNSHINE IN (15)

THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL PIE SOCIETY (tbc)

TULLY (tbc)

Events

TRANSPORT DRIVING EXPERIENCE EVENING As the museum closes for the day it's time to get behind the wheel, you'll have the place to yourself to discover the quirks of driving the museum's vintage cars, Thurs 19 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

MIDDLEPORT POTTERY'S BEER FESTIVAL Returning with more beer, cider,

wines and the odd gin, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Apr, Middleport Pottery, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent

ST. GEORGE'S DAY To celebrate the patron saint of England, the Castle is holding a truly Medieval experience, Sat 21 Apr, Tamworth Castle

TELFORD SAKURA FESTIVAL As part of the Telford 50th anniversary celebrations, the Friends of Telford Town Park are bringing a taste of Japan to Telford, Sat 21 Apr, Telford Town Park, Shropshire

SHREWSBURY CARTOON FESTIVAL Unique outdoor event which attracts an army of professional cartoonists from all over the UK and abroad. The festival also features cartoon workshops for aspiring cartoonists and exhibitions of themed cartoons, Sat 21 Apr, The Square, Shrewsbury

AVIATION EDUCATION CONFERENCE This brand new conference will see youth and education experts join forces to inspire the next generation, Sat 21 Apr, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

SPRING INTO THE PARK Celebrate St Georges Day in style with a host of magical activities and entertainment, Sun 22 Apr, Telford Town Park, Shropshire

ST GEORGE'S DAY CELEBRATIONS A day full of medieval re-enactment, children's entertainers, face painting and crafts, Sun 22 Apr, Dudley Zoological Gardens

SMOKED Many moons ago, George slayed a huge angry dragon, became a hero and a knight, then found a lonely orphaned egg! Realising his terrible mistake, Saint George put down his sword and devoted his life to raising the parentless baby. Meet them both as we celebrate St George's Day at the museum, Sun 22 Apr, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent



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Mon 23 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JON BODEN Mon 23 Apr, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



THE GRANDMOTHERS OF INVENTION Mon 23 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

WILL HEARD Tues 24 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHASING DRAGONS & THEIA Tues 24 Apr, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

ANDY IRVINE Tues 24 Apr, Black Park Chapel, Chirk, Clwyd

HAZEL O'CONNOR & CORMAC DE BARRA Tues 24 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

AKALA Tues 24 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN Tues 24 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

YOUTH CLUB Tues 24 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DANIEL O'DONNELL Tues 24 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WAYWARD SONS Tues 24 Apr, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

BRIAN KENNEDY Wed 25 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

ADAM FRENCH Wed 25 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BOB BROLLY Wed 25 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

OF MICE & MEN Wed 25 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE LOW ANTHEM Wed 25 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SAM BROOKES Thurs 26 Apr, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

SHARON NEEDLES Thurs 26 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHRIS RONALD Thurs 26 Apr, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

MORETALICA Thurs 26 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

SENSATION Thurs 26 Apr, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

THE MARLEY EXPERIENCE Fri 27 Apr, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

PLAN B Fri 27 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SIMPLY FUSION Fri 27 Apr, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

INTO THE SHADOWS Fri 27 Apr, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

MIRANDA SYKES Fri 27 Apr, Lichfield Guildhall

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN Fri 27 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

MANIC STREET PREACHERS Fri 27 Apr, Arena Birmingham

IVORY WAVE Fri 27 Apr, O2 Academy, B'ham

DIANE SHAW Fri 27 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

WHITE TYGER Fri 27 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

TALON...THE ACOUSTIC COLLECTION Fri 27 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

THE CLAUSE Fri 27 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

DAN SHAKE & HENRY WU Fri 27 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE HOLLIES Fri 27 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LEE MEAD Fri 27 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SOMEONE LIKE YOU Sat 28 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NETHERHALL Sat 28 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BLOOD RED SAINTS Sat 28 Apr, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

GO NOW! THE MUSIC OF THE MOODY BLUES Sat 28 Apr, Festival Dray-

ton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire

COMMON PEOPLE Sat 28 Apr, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CLAIRE-LOUISE ROSSI Sat 28 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TALON - THE ACOUSTIC COLLECTION: IN THE RAW 2018 Sat 28 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JOHNNY 2 BAD Sat 28 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

UK GUNS N' ROSES Sat 28 Apr, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER BIG BAND Sun 29 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

EMMA MCGANN Sun 29 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SARAH MUNRO Sun 29 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TRISTAN MACKAY Sun 29 Apr, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



BRYAN FERRY Sun 29 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LA VILLA STRANGIATO - THE SPIRIT OF RUSH Sun 29 Apr, The Robin, Bilston

THE KING IS BACK Sun 29 Apr, Arena B'ham

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN Sun 29 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WEAPON UK Sun 29 Apr, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

SKINDRED Sun 29 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

MICHAEL ENGLISH AND BRENDAN SHINE Sun 29 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

G3 Mon 30 Apr, Symphony Hall, B'ham

FREYA RIDINGS Mon 30 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Classical Music

STEPHEN HOUGH PIANO CONCERT Pre-eminent British pianist Stephen Hough returns to the Barber Institute for a special performance that launches the programme for the 2018 Birmingham International Piano Festival. Programme includes works by Debussy, Chopin & Beethoven, Wed 25 Apr, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

SIMON TRPČESKI - SCHEHERAZADE Programme includes works by Grieg, Mendelssohn & Rimsky-Korsakov (arr. Paul Gibson), Wed 25 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

SHOSTAKOVICH'S TENTH Featuring Nicholas Collon (conductor) & Sophie Bevan (soprano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Britten & Shostakovich, Thurs 26 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BRAHMS' PIANO QUINTET Featuring Robert Markham (piano), Kate Suthers & Moritz Pfister (violins), Adam Römer (viola), Hetty Snell (cello), Fri 27 Apr, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

SHOSTAKOVICH'S TENTH Featuring Nicholas Collon (conductor) & Sophie Bevan (soprano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Britten & Shostakovich Sat 28 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONIC WINDS CHARITY CONCERT Sat 28 Apr, St John's Church, Hagley, Birmingham

THE LUDLOW ORCHESTRA & LUDLOW CHORAL SOCIETY Featuring Claire Tocknell & Thomas Payne, Sat 28 Apr, St Laurences Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET Programme includes works by Haydn, Bartok & Brahms, Sun 29 April, The Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury



ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE PRESENTS: THE BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC CONCERTO COMPETITION Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor), Sun 29 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ENSEMBLE 360 Programme includes works by Reicha, Schulhoff, Kabelac, Martinu & Janacek, Mon 30 Apr New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Comedy

ED BYRNE Tues 24 Apr, Lichfield Garrick



RUSSELL PETERS Tues 24 Apr, Arena Birmingham

TEZ ILYAS Tues 24 Apr, MAC, B'ham

JEREMY HARDY Wed 25 Apr, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

MICK FERRY, JOJO SMITH & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 26 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

RICK KIESEWETTER, BRETT GOLDSTEIN & CHRIS PURCHASE Fri 27 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MICK FERRY, JOJO SMITH, GEORGE LEWIS & EMMANUEL SONUBI Fri 27 - Sat 28 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

CHRIS WASHINGTON, IAN COGNITO, JEN BRISTER & KANE BROWN Sat 28 Apr, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 28 Apr, The Old Post Office, Stoke-On-Trent

ROUGH WORKS Sun 29 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT BOA Year 13 Acting Pathway present a poignant courtroom drama, Mon 23 - Tues 24 Apr, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

NAVAJOS Joe White's lively and poignant story about 'Us and them', Mon 23 - Thurs 26 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

BEAUTIFUL - THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL Bronte Barbe takes the lead in the hit show about King's remarkable rise to stardom, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT Amateur staging presented by West Bromwich Operatic Society, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LEGALLY BLONDE Bournville Musical Theatre Company present an amateur staging of the award-winning romantic comedy, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE KING LEAR Shifting Sands fuse physical theatre, clowning and storytelling, as one of Shakespeare's most famous characters takes

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charge of a pub, Wed 25 April, Arena Theatre, Birmingham

MY DAD WROTE A PORN LIVE Wed 25 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LA TRAVIATA Ellen Kent's staging of Verdi's love story, Wed 25 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ANNIE WARBUCKS Thomas Meehan's musical continuing the much-loved story of Annie, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Apr, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

A BRAVE FACE Vamos Theatre brings its trademark wordless, full-mask style to a story about war-induced post-traumatic stress, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



MOTHER'S RUIN: A CABARET ABOUT GIN

Sixty-minute theatrical cabaret featuring music originally performed by Amy Winehouse, Nina Simone, Martha Wainwright, The Popes, The Pretenders and more... Thurs 26 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

SERIOUSLY DEAD Crissy Rock, Frazer Hines, Paul Dunn, Billy Pearce and Leah Bell star in a brand new musical comedy set during an ordinary day in the quiet town of Olwinskirk, Thurs 26 Apr, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Ellen Kent present Puccini's heart-breaking story of a beautiful Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant, Thurs 26 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

LORD OF THE FLIES BOA Year 13 Acting Pathway presents a staging of William Golding's dystopian novel, Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Apr, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

ENTANGLEMENT! AN ENTROPIC TALE Opera describing the mysteries of the universe, Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

HI-DE-HI! Amateur stage adaptation of the popular TV series, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Apr, The Belfry Theatre, Welling-



The Faaaaaaabulous Ceri Dupree - Birmingham Hippodrome

ton, Shropshire

TARZANNE Interplay Theatre tell the story of a young girl lost in the jungle as a toddler, Fri 27 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE FAAAAAABULOUS CERI DUPREE

SHOW Female impersonator Ceri presents a brand new show, complete with costumes, routines, jokes and songs, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

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MR JOHN ROBERTSON: THE DARK ROOM (FOR ADULTS) Show inviting audiences to play as contestants in the world's first live-action text-based adventure game, Sat 28 Apr, MAC, Birmingham

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL All-singing, all-dancing comedy about night sweats, hot flushes and memory loss, Sat 28 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

12 MILLION VOLTS Award-winning theatre company The Outbound Project present the story of the world's smartest man... Sat 28 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

MADE IN DAGENHAM - THE MUSICAL Musical theatre based on the true story of the 1968 Ford Sewing Machine Strike, presented by TADLOP (Telford and District Light Operatic Players), Sat 28 - Sun 29 Apr, The Place, Oakengates Theatre Oakengates, Telford

THE THRILL OF LOVE The Crescent Theatre Company present Amanda Whittington's play about Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, Sat 28 Apr - Sat 5 May, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE HYPNOTIST: LIVE & OUTRAGEOUS! Featuring hypnotist Robert Temple, Sun 29 Apr, Crescent Theatre, B'ham

ICONS Aerial show featuring tricks and dance routines, performed in tribute to musical icons past and present, Sun 29 Apr, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

BEYOND THE BARRICADE The UK's longest-running musical theatre concert, featuring past principal performers from Les Misérables, Sun 29 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

A VARIETY PERFORMANCE IN AID OF MOLLY OLLY'S WISHES Starring Gary

Wilmot, Jimmy Cricket and a whole host of variety acts, Sun 29 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows

THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY Theatre for younger audiences and their families, complete with a feast of singalong songs, colourful animal characters and heartwarming family fun, Sun 29 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

STAFFORD GOTTA DANCE 2018 Wed 25 - Sat 28 Apr, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SINERGIA Dance production exploring the inner feelings and emotions of its creator and dancer, Manuel Liñán, one of Spain's most celebrated flamenco dancers, Thurs 26 Apr, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome

TEN Ace Dance And Music present a powerful dance production inspired by global migration, Thurs 26 Apr, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

GRANDE FINALE Hofesh Shechter Company present a bold and ambitious new piece featuring 10 dancers and six musicians, Thurs 26 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

GIOVANNI PERNICE - BORN TO WIN Join the Strictly star for an evening of 'glitzy costumes and amazing routines', Sat 28 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

ABOUT THE ELEPHANT Sampad join forces with MAC to present the UK premiere of a topical new performance by rising stars of dance and music, Sun 29 Apr, MAC, B'ham



Mary Magdalene - on general release

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

MARY MAGDALENE (12a) Drama. Starring Rooney Mara, Joaquin Phoenix. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 23 - Wed 25 Apr

GOING IN STYLE (12) Comedy/Crime. Starring Michael Caine, Richie Moriarty. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 24 Apr

LOVELESS (15) Drama. Starring Maryana Spivak, Aleksey Rozin. Foreign language, subtitled. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 24 Apr

A FANTASTIC WOMAN (15) Drama. Starring Daniela Vega, Francisco Reyes. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 24 - Wed 25 Apr

THE MERCY (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Rachel Weisz, Colin Firth. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 24 & Thurs 26 Apr

JOURNEYMAN (15) Drama/Mystery. Starring Paddy Considine, Jodie Whittaker. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 27 - Mon 30 Apr

WONDERSTRUCK (PG) Family/Mystery. Starring Julianne Moore, Michelle Williams. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 27 - Mon 30 Apr

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 27 April, showing at selected cinemas

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR (tbc)

ISLE OF DOGS (tbc)

READY PLAYER ONE (tbc)

JOURNEYMAN (tbc)

Events

BIG BANG CAMPER & BUS SHOW Three days of VW fun with great racing, music and entertainment at the home of European Drag Racing, Fri 27 - Sun 29 Apr, Santa Pod Raceway, Wellingborough

BIRMINGHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL SPRING EDITION Weekend packed with screenings, performances, debates and author talks, Fri 27 - Sun 29 Apr, various locations in and around Birmingham city centre

FIELD TO FORK FESTIVAL Celebration of all things food, featuring more than 80 food, drink and craft stalls, live music, kids entertainment, hands-on experiences, displays and much more... Sat 28 April, Harper Adams College, Newport, Telford

DUNLOP MSA BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP The BTCC is back for its 60th anniversary season, with some of the closest and most exciting racing you'll see all year, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Apr, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

PAW PATROL VISIT See Chase & Skye who will appear at regular intervals throughout the day at The Engine House, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Apr, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley

PATCHWORK BEAR WORKSHOP Make your own patchwork bear - use your own combination of colours, mix and match patches, Sun 29 Apr, Middleport Pottery, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent



Giovanni Pernice: Born To Win - Lichfield Garrick

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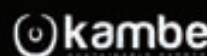
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