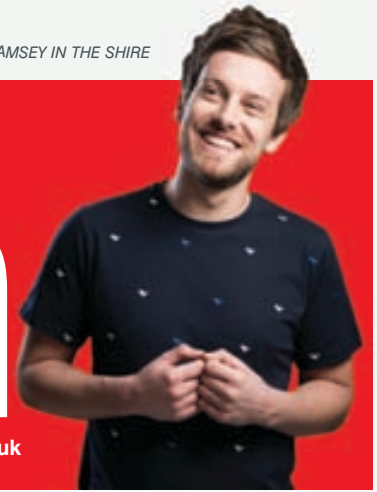


Shropshire

ISSUE 389 MAY 2018

What's On

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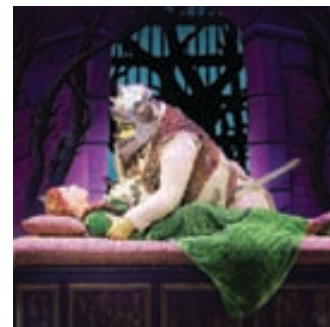
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Steampunk magic at Blists Hill Victorian Town

Grab your goggles and come dressed in your steampunk finery for the second Steampunk Weekend Festival at Blists Hill Victorian Town, near Ironbridge, over the weekend of 23 & 24 June.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museums have teamed up with the organisers of massive Lincoln steampunk festival Asylum to bring the two-day event back to Shropshire.

Festival attractions will include eclectic market stalls, exhibitions, talks and shows celebrating all things steampunk. For further information, call the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre on 01952 433 424 or visit ironbridge.org.uk.

Cockney rebel Harley to headline folk festival

Rock icon Steve Harley will headline this year's Shrewsbury Folk Festival.

Best known from his work with Cockney Rebel, with whom he enjoyed number one hit Make Me Smile (Come Up & See Me), Harley will perform on the first day of the event. This year's folk festival takes place from Friday 24 to Monday 27 August. For more details about the 2018 line-up and to book tickets, visit shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk



Bake Off star set to make his Shropshire debut

The runner-up in last year's Great British Bake Off will be the star guest at this year's Newport Show, which takes place on 14 July. Steven Carter-Bailey will give two 45-minute presentations in the event's food theatre.

Other attractions at the show include a street food market, live music, family entertainment, vintage vehicle displays, a countryside retail village and fairground rides.

Soap favourites to star in Grand's in-house show

Two popular TV soap stars will take the lead roles in Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's in-house production of Ladies' Day.

Cheryl Fergison, best known for playing Heather Trott in EastEnders, will share the bill with Deena Payne, who starred as Viv Hope in Emmerdale.

The show also features the music of the legendary Tony Christie, best known for his recording of Is This The Way To Amarillo. An exuberant comedy about four likely lasses on a day trip to the races, Ladies' Day shows at the Grand from Friday 13 to Saturday 28 July. For tickets, call 01902 42 92 12 or visit grandtheatre.co.uk.



Strictly stars Neil & Katya create exclusive show for 2018 Lichfield Festival



Strictly Come Dancing stars Neil & Katya Jones will create an exclusive show for this year's Lichfield Festival.

The popular pair are headline performers at the 11-day event, which takes place at a variety of venues around the city from 4 to 14 July.

Commenting on the 2018 edition of the festival, its Guest Artistic Director, Damian Thantrey, said: "Within Lichfield's trademark eclectic mix of classical music, folk, jazz, comedy, dance and theatre, we're particularly delighted to have woven into the festival a season of events to mark the centenary of women's suffrage - #ExtraordinaryWomen - which will celebrate the craft of female writers, artists and composers, as well as works written specifically with a woman's voice in mind."

For more information about the line-up and to book tickets, visit lichfieldfestival.org

The Pink Cottage opens its doors at Weston Park

Weston Park country estate on the Shropshire-Staffordshire border has opened a new holiday property ideal for two people.

The charming and quirky Pink Cottage is nestled in the heart of the Capability Brown-created Temple Wood and was, for many years, the much-loved retreat of 18th century socialite Lady Bridgeman.

The Pink Cottage is the latest of Weston's many follies and houses to be transformed into a luxury holiday property, each with its own varied character. A holiday at the newly available property costs from £408 for a three-night stay. For more information or to book a break there, visit Weston-park.com

Going quackers in Ironbridge

Ten giant painted ducks are coming to Ironbridge this month (5 May to 8 July).

The ducks, which will form a trail around the town for people to follow, are the idea of local resident Julie Ward.

Julie was able to finance her project after securing an £18,000 grant from Telford & Wrekin Council's Pride In Your High Street Fund, an initiative aimed at boosting local high streets and attracting visitors. Sponsorship proceeds will be split equally between Severn Hospice & Jayne Sargent Foundation. The ducks will then flock to Southwater, Telford, where they'll be in residence from 14 to 29 July.



More stars announced for the Shrewsbury Flower Show

Rastafarian musician and entrepreneur Levi Roots and Food Unwrapped presenter Matt Tebbutt will both be making appearances at this year's Shrewsbury Flower Show, which takes place in the town's Quarry Park on Friday 10 & Saturday 11 August.

Horticulturalists Joe Swift and Penny Meadmore are also contributing to this year's event.

The 2018 edition of the show features headline acts The Abba Reunion Tribute and Red Hot Chili Pipers. Other attractions include 12 hours of arena entertainment and a spectacular firework display on both days of the event. For more information, visit shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk

Region set to benefit from new railways

The West Midlands region is set to benefit from seven new railways, one of which would serve West Midlands Safari Park.

The multi-million pound proposals rest on the outcome of 'feasibility assessments' currently being undertaken. If the project gets the green light, it would also mean 20,000 extra seats and standing room being made available for an additional 50,000 peak-time passengers in and around Birmingham.



Strictly star Debbie to cast her spell over Wolverhampton panto

Strictly Come Dancing star Debbie McGee has joined the cast for the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's 2018/19 pantomime, *Sleeping Beauty*. Debbie, who starred in the 2017 series of the hit BBC One celebrity dancing show, will join returning panto favourites Doreen Tipton and Ian Adams in the sure-to-be-spectacular production, running at the Grand from Saturday 8 December to Sunday 13 January.

Commenting on the news, Adrian Jackson, the theatre's chief executive & artistic director, said; "Debbie will certainly add extra sparkle to this year's pantomime, and I know she will cha-cha-charm audiences when she waltzes into Wolverhampton this festive season."

Tickets for *Sleeping Beauty* can be booked by calling 01902 429212 or visiting grandtheatre.co.uk.



Les Misérables returning to the region

The phenomenal Les Misérables is making a welcome return to Birmingham Hippodrome next year.

Cameron Mackintosh's hit musical, based on the novel by Victor Hugo and written by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, will visit the Hurst Street venue from 2 April to 11 May.

The part of Jean Valjean will be played by Killian Donnelly, who is currently starring in the role in the West End production.

Les Mis has been seen by over 120 million people worldwide in 45 countries and 22 languages.

The epic show features a raft of now-classic songs, including I Dreamed A Dream, On My Own, Stars, Bring Him Home, Do You Hear The People Sing?, One Day More, Empty Chairs At Empty Tables and Master Of The House. Tickets for the show's Hippodrome performances are on general sale from 21 June and can be purchased by calling 0844 338 5000 or visiting birminghamhippodrome.com

Council funding for four Lichfield arts projects

Lichfield District Council, in partnership with Swinfen Broun Charitable Trust, has awarded a total of £134,000 to four Lichfield City public art projects.

The projects which will benefit are: a permanent public sculpture of St Chad at the city's cathedral; a performance space in St Mary's in the Market Square; a metal sculpture based on the work of Erasmus Darwin; and a puppet parade through the streets during the Lichfield Festival.



Circus fun in the Potteries!

A colourful circus concert by a world-renowned ensemble of South American performers is taking place in Newcastle-under-Lyme's Clough Hall Park this month.

Circolombia's Acéléré show combines 'an intense, Latin-styled uptempo soundtrack with jaw-dropping contemporary circus acts'.

The production takes place at the venue from Thursday 10 to Sunday 13 May.

For more information, visit appetitestoke.co.uk

Fundraising with Fun Family 5 walk

Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity is calling on people to get involved in its second annual Fun Family 5 five-kilometre walk.

Taking place in Sutton Park on Saturday 16 June, the event will raise vital funds for the sick children and families at the hospital, and aims to raise in excess of last year's near-£20,000 total.

To sign up for the event and receive a fundraising pack, visit bch.org.uk/Event/fun-family5

Hit movie The Hunger Games in concert

Blockbuster movie The Hunger Games is being screened at Birmingham's Symphony Hall this summer, complete with live musical accompaniment from a full symphony orchestra.

The hit movie, which stars Jennifer Lawrence and Woody Harrelson, will be screened in HD on Sunday 15 July. For more information, visit thsh.co.uk



Storytelling, protest art and 'enormous amounts of Lego' combine...

A combined storytelling and protest art project 'about cities, public money and the possible end of life as we know it' is being presented in Wolverhampton this month.

Entitled Nuketown, the project sees writer/performer Jack Dean working with town planners, architects, live feeds and 'enormous amounts of Lego' to build a brand new model city.

The event takes place at the Arena Theatre on Saturday 19 May. For more information, visit wlv.ac.uk

Dudley's Sir Lenny stars in Birmingham Conservatoire's opening festival

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's opening festival is now under way. A 15 month-long event, the festival features performances by, among many others, Dudley-born Sir Lenny Henry, Julian Lloyd Webber, Peter Donohoe, Nitin Sawhney and Jennifer Walshe. The event's programme also includes the Flatpack Film Festival and the Supersonic Festival. For more information, visit bcu.ac.uk/opening-festival



Series of events to commemorate WWI anniversary

Wolverhampton is set to mark the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day (11 November 1918), which brought to an end the First World War, with a number of commemorative events.

The extensive programme will include a series of themed exhibitions and displays of memorabilia and art. Commenting on the initiative, Keith Ireland, Managing Director of the City of Wolverhampton Council, said: "We have a duty to educate today's generation about what the country went through, and it's important that as a city we remember this terrible conflict and the sacrifices that were made a century ago."

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JASON MANFORD - MUDDLE CLASS FRI 25 MAY **VH**

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STEFANIE POWERS ON

Best known from hit 1980s TV series *Hart To Hart*, Stefanie Powers talks to *What's On* about her current role, starring as Helene Hanff in an adaptation of *84 Charing Cross Road* which this month visits Wolverhampton...

In these days of Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat, the thought of communicating by letter may seem like an alien concept. But for Helene Hanff, author of the 1970 novel *84 Charing Cross Road*, the stage version of which opens in Wolverhampton this month, this was how she satisfied literary urges that couldn't be met on the other side of the Atlantic.

84 Charing Cross Road focuses on the epistolary relationship between Hanff and Frank Doel, manager of Marks & Co, the London book shop that shipped titles to her Manhattan home for two decades.

In this production, Clive Francis plays the part of Doel, while Stefanie Powers takes on the role of Hanff. The two actors are reprising their roles following the play's run in Cambridge 18 months ago.

According to Powers, they're hoping to give the piece a contemporary tweak: "At the time the play was written [in 1981], the book was a bestseller, and the adaptation played for audiences that had read the book - but today, that's no longer relevant. We need to bring some freshness to it that will make it more relevant."

The play sees each of the characters reading their respective letters. Unlike in other two-handers, the pair never interact. For Powers, this has created a curious on-stage chemistry with Francis: "There's an extremely unusual rapport there, because we can't look at each other on the stage, but I can feel that he's there."

For Powers, it's not the first time she's faced the challenge of performing a two-handed piece in the theatre. She appeared with Robert Wagner, her co-star in hit 1980s TV series *Hart To Hart*, in *Love Letters* by AR Gurney in the 1990s.

"People always said, 'Oh, *Love Letters* is like *84 Charing Cross Road*, and in a certain way I suppose it is, but in very different circum-

stances, as the two actors who read the letters were sitting side by side at a table on a stage."

84 Charing Cross Road covers the post-war years from 1949 to the end of the 1960s, an era that fascinates Powers. "I think it's a lovely snapshot of the period, of what was going on in both of their lives, what was going on in their time zones, and the changing times as they're reflected upon by these two people. So it's a very nostalgic piece and not without ironic humour."

The play explores the cultural divide that exists between Britain and the US, an aspect of the script that appealed to the California-born Powers. "I think there's a great deal of humour, so I think it will make an awful lot of people chuckle. The journey that these two people are on can be related to by all ages and all demographics, and the humour comes naturally out of the human condition and the circumstances."

As a lover of book shops who admits that she "can't leave without buying", Powers finds the musty attraction of second-hand emporiums irresistible. "One of the advantages of owning books that have been read before is that it's always fascinating when you open a book that's been nicely bound and it falls open to places which the previous reader has either bookmarked or read most often."

For many readers of *84 Charing Cross Road*, the fact that Hanff and Doel only ever communicate by letter is the enduring appeal of the story, as they might well have enjoyed similar relationships with pen friends in far-flung parts of the world.

Powers recognises the benefit of sharing ideas globally in her role as president of the William Holden Wildlife Foundation. She set up the charity to continue the conservation work of long-time partner Holden following his untimely death in 1981.

"We have a pen pal programme, and it's an

interesting exercise for the kids in the scheme, who don't have smart phones, who don't take selfies, who live, for the most part, in houses that don't have electricity and water and walk to school on dirt roads. It's been extraordinary over the years since we started the programme to see just how much of an effect it's made on the children who participate."

Of course, for many theatregoers, it will be Powers' portrayal of Jennifer Hart in *Hart To Hart* that will have lured them to the box office: "It's flattering. I had the good fortune of being in front of the public at a time when people had tremendous loyalty to the actors they saw on television. It was a much smaller world with fewer choices. It was on Sunday evenings in the UK and whole families would be sitting around the television. It was a different world and we didn't have 200 channels to surf."

And it appears that the chemistry which Powers enjoyed on screen with co-star Wagner remains as strong as ever: "We still make each other laugh. There's an invisible button that we seem to press in each other. It's wonderful. I adore him, and he's a treasure in my life."

Powers recalls a childhood photograph snapped at her dance class that includes two friends who would eventually form even stronger links with Wagner: "Jill (St John), Natalie [Wood] and I were in the same ballet class, and I have a photograph of us. There's Natalie, looking absolutely gorgeous, and Jill - but it's quite extraordinary that those three girls in that photograph were all married to Robert Wagner. I was his television wife and the other two girls were his real wives. Isn't that crazy?!"

.....

84 Charing Cross Road runs at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 29 May until Saturday 2 June

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Whitchurch food fest back for a fifth year

Whitchurch's free-to-enter Food & Drink Festival returns to the town's Civic Centre on 19 & 20 May.

Back for the fifth year, the event showcases more than 80 trade stands, supported by an artisan craft market in Whitchurch high street.

This year's line-up of experts includes celebrity chef and TV personality Rosemary Shrager alongside local chefs Brian Mellor, Stuart Collins and James Sherwin.

Bank holiday beer festival fun in Codsall

Start the bank holiday the right way at Codsall Station Beer Festival, taking place from 3 to 7 May at Holdens Codsall Station Pub. The event features more than 30 real ales and ciders, on-site catering and live music.

Shropshire restaurant serves up taster menu

Wild Shropshire has recently dropped its 'pop-up' status and become permanent resident at Ternhill Farm House in Market Drayton.

Having recently featured on BBC's Countryfile, the restaurant's aim is to serve a multi-course surprise tasting menu based on Shropshire Terroir.

The featured dishes boast produce grown or foraged by Wild Shropshire or supplied by local artisan producers.

Available on Fridays and Saturdays, the menu costs £40 per person, with pre-booking essential. To reserve a table, visit wildshropshire.net



The Great British Food Festival returns to Weston Park

This month sees the return of the Great British Food Festival, taking place at Weston Park on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border over the bank holiday weekend (26 - 28 May).

Promising to be bigger and better than ever before, the event this year features more food & drink stalls, a chef demo marquee, a bake stage and a new drinks stage. Crowd favourites the Great British Cake Off and the Man V Food Challenge stage will also be back, as will live music and kids activities. The show's line-up of experts includes Jane Beedle, Marcus Bean and James Sherwin. To purchase tickets, visit greatbritishfoodfestival.com

Cider and sausage festival heading for Battlefield 1403

A cider and sausage mini-fest is taking place at Shrewsbury's Battlefield 1403 on Saturday 26 May.

The event promises to be 'a delicious combination of flavoured sausages - lovingly hand-made at Battlefield 1403 using locally sourced ingredients - and locally produced cider'.

Pick up your 'passport' on arrival and taste your way 'around the world' via sausage-inspired dishes. Collect stamps for each one you try - a full passport will get you a free drink!

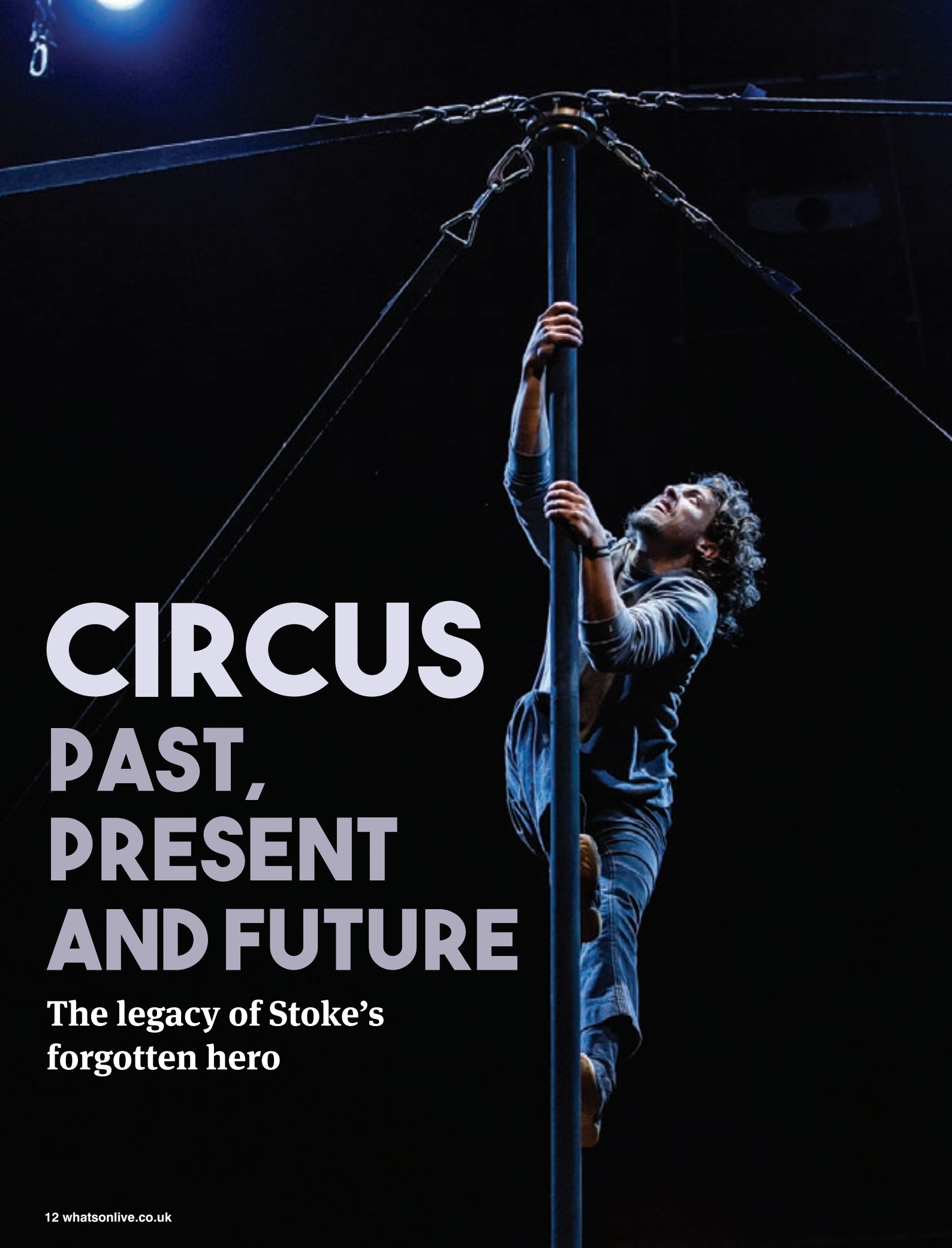
Tickets cost £15 and include the taster dishes, taster passport and live music.

Children's tickets are £5 per child (up to 12 years old).

Book via info@battlefield1403.com.

Vegetarian options will be available.





CIRCUS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

**The legacy of Stoke's
forgotten hero**

He ought to be up there with those other famous sons of Stoke: Arnold Bennett, Josiah Wedgwood and Robbie Williams.

In his day, he was the toast of royalty right across Europe. Charles Dickens, Jane Austin and William Makepeace Thackeray all made mention of his achievements. Millions of people all over the world have been entertained by his invention. His legacy has recently been celebrated in Paris and Monte Carlo, where a memorial has been placed in the Princess Grace Gardens.

And now, finally, in his home town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Philip Astley is no longer a forgotten man. A statue that once lay locked up in a shipping container has been dusted down and put on display; a shopping centre has been named after him; a steel impression of a ringmaster has been erected on George Street; and months of celebrations will leave no one in doubt about the importance of 'the founder of modern circus'.

Roll up! Circus 250 is well under way.

It was 250 years ago, in 1768, that entrepreneur Philip Astley created a circle on the ground measuring 42 feet in diameter and filled it with equestrians performing breathtaking displays. He drew quite a crowd. Everybody who was 'anybody' rode a horse back then because there was no alternative. But nobody in the audience had tried such risky and heart-stopping tricks as these; standing, facing backwards, on a cantering horse's back, or riding at speed, wearing a swarm of bees on either arm. According to the London Gazetteer, Astley himself would "simultaneously ride three horses" whilst performing even more death-defying feats.

Within a couple of years, to keep pace with public demand, Astley had considerably broadened the scope of his show, pulling in acrobats and jugglers from the world of theatre, tightrope walkers from the market place, and, from pantomime, a clown called Mr Merryman. All these elements of circus already existed, of course, but he was the genius who blended them into the entertainment we know and love today.

He must have been a most imposing man. He had been a sargent major with the newly formed 15th Light Dragoons - the first Light Cavalry Regiment of the British Army - and was decorated as a gallant war hero. Contemporary accounts reckon he was six feet six inches tall and needed an enormous steed. He was a giant with "the proportions

of Hercules", sitting on top of a giant horse. He also had "the voice of a centaur" as loud as 50 men; which came in handy once he'd invented the role of the red-uniformed ringmaster.

Astley's family lived just off the Ironmarket in Newcastle-under-Lyme, and it is believed he arrived into the world on 8 January 1742. He became an apprentice cabinet maker to his father, Edward. But it seems the lad wanted a more exciting life than that and ran off to join the army. And now a new play - Astley's Astounding Adventures - to be performed at the New Vic Theatre in his home town in July, will tell his tale. The theatre is billing it as their "most ambitious production to date". Written by Stone-born author Frazer Flintham, it is to be directed by New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins, who's been researching Astley's life story.

"Having been taught specialist skills in his cavalry training," she says, "he set up a riding school to teach the gentry how to be flashy on the back of a horse. Astley had a real sense of what audiences wanted." Spotting the commercial potential of what he was doing, he named his new public entertainment Astley's Amphitheatre. He even employed his wayward father as a hostler, but Edward plotted with a colleague to do the dirty on his son and set up a rival concern - for which they borrowed the Roman name 'circus'.

"It was a rip off," says Theresa, "but it was the best thing that could have happened to further the art. The play will show how the two rivals spurred each other on to 'top' each other's shows. Astley even progressed as far as staging the Battle of Waterloo in the circus ring."

The New Vic has featured circus skills in its shows before. Big-top expert Vicky Amedume orchestrated flying actors in productions about Dracula and Peter Pan, and she's back to co-direct this new play.

"Astley's Astounding Adventures will feature four professional circus performers and regular New Vic actors executing circus and clowning skills," says Theresa. For the soft-hearted, there's also a love story in the play - Astley's beau, Patti, is the girl with the bees.

It was Astley who predetermined the precise size of every circus ring.

"He discovered that a 42 feet diameter ring (12.8 meters) was the ideal size for a horse to get up to the gallop," says former circus

artiste Andrew Van Buren, who is co-ordinating the celebrations. "That diameter makes the best use of centrifugal force to aid you to stand on the back of a horse," adds Theresa, "so that has become the standardised size of every circus ring since."

Presumably Astley discovered the perfect dimension by falling off rather a lot.

"Astley constructed 19 wooden amphitheatres all over the world - like wooden circus tents," explains Andrew. "For example, he built one in Paris at the invitation of King Louis XIV. But then the French Revolution kicked off and he escaped to London. He returned to find his amphitheatre was still standing and that Napoleon had been using it as a barracks. So, like any good businessman, he charged Napoleon back-rent - and got his money."

The New Vic is one of Britain's most famous 'theatres in the round', but its stage is rather smaller than a circus ring. So they are working up designs for gilded carousel horses rather than real ones.

And they also have another challenge to tackle... Astley's worst enemy wasn't his rivals, but fire. His roofed amphitheatres had to be illuminated. The one in Paris was lit by 2,000 candles and - like many of his wooden constructions - it disastrously burnt to the ground.

The New Vic production promises to reproduce that particular theatrical spectacle - but hopefully without having to call the fire brigade.

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Circus Past, Present And Future events include: Circus!, an outdoor photographic exhibition in association with the Victoria & Albert Museum, on display at Red Lion Square until Sat 4 August; Circolumbia's Acéléré, which stops off at Clough Hill Park from Thurs 10 to Sun 13 May; Astley's Astounding Adventures - a story that charts Astley's rise to stardom, at the New Vic Theatre from Sat 7 to Sat 28 July, and Cabinet Of Curiosities - a playful circus adventure for younger audiences, also at the New Vic Theatre, from Wed 18 to Fri 27 July. On 4 August, a professionally led community performance, Roll Up! Roll Up!, in partnership with the Philip Astley Project, will form part of AstleyFest in Lyme Valley Park.

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Pride 2018

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SATURDAY 26TH MAY

#BEYOU

HSBC UK MAIN STAGE

BETH DITTO JAX JONES LOUISA STEFFLON
LOUISE KELLI-LEIGH KIM PETRAS MNEK DON

DANCE ARENA

LOW STEPPA CLINTON SHAWE
REDLIGHT SPECIAL GUEST **FLAVA D** LISA SHARRED SUM CELLAR
THE ACID EXPERIMENT ANTI-X DAVEY BOY JOE HUNT YAN
FELTON FEAT. KAISHA SMITH

THE MANCHESTER AIRPORT CABARET STAGE

THE D.E. EXPERIENCE LORRAINE BOWEN SANDRA GINNY LEMON
KELLY WILDE BAGA CHIPZ TANYA HYDE SUM TING WONG MISS THUNDERPUSSY SHANIA PAIN MISS PENNY
DAVE LYNN AND MAISIE TROLETTE TWIGGY LOLA LASAGNE

THE FUTURE STAGE

BIG FREEDIA BEEP ME 911 HARD C*CK LIFE JAYDONCLOVER ALLIE X TSAR B
KARTEL BROWN UNPRONOUNCEABLE DUPE'S DEN JAMAAL MONARCH I'M NOT OKAY KILL GLASS
MS BANKS

HSBC UK MAIN STAGE

SUNDAY 27TH MAY

RUDIMENTAL DJ SET **JAKE SHEARS** OF SCISSOR SISTERS
COURTNEY ACT HOWARD JONES

THE BIG GAY DAYTIME PARTY! FEAT. LIVIN' JOY FT LUZAHN, KYM MAZELLE, ROZALLA, RACHEL MCFARLANE, BABY D, WE LOVE POP, GLITTER SH*T,

DANCE ARENA

GORGON CITY DJ ZINC TOM SHORTERZ HOOKER CLUB 02:31
LOVE MUSCLE JAMIE BULL (HOMOELECTRIC)

THE MANCHESTER AIRPORT CABARET STAGE

VICKY JACKSON AS PINK KELLY O'BRIEN IN THE DOLLY SHOW GLITTER LIPS CHAMPAGNE SHIRLEY ROSE GARDEN
DRAG WITH NO NAME TOTALLY TINA MARTHA D' ARTHUR AMY LA QUEEFA MYRA BURDIS SANDRA MISS MARTY DIVINE MISS M

THE FUTURE STAGE

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Birmingham Pride

Birmingham Gay Village, Sat 26 - Sun 27 May

Birmingham Pride attracts more than 50,000 visitors per year and boasts a diverse array of activities and entertainment, including music, cabaret, dance and a hugely popular carnival parade. This year's two-day celebration is based around the theme



of Be You. Tickets are available from birminghampride.com.

2018 line-up includes: Courtney Act (pictured), Beth Ditto, Jake Shears, Rudimental (pictured), Jax Jones, Stefflon Don, Howard Jones, Gorgon City, Louisa, Kim Petras, Mnek, Louisa Redknapp, Twiggy, Tiara Thunders and Miss Penny.



Staffs Fest

Lower Drayton Farm, Staffordshire, Fri 25 - Sun 27 May

Beginning as a small-scale blues festival in Stafford, this 'great-value-for-money' event has expanded year on year to encompass an exciting array of rock, reggae, soul and blues acts. In addition to enjoying live, loud and local music, visitors can take a stroll through the nearby woods, enjoy a guided tour of the farm on Farmer Ray's tractor trailer, and vote for the winner of the Star of Staffs competition, open to budding musicians aged 14 to 18. All tickets include free onsite camping, but rooms are also available in the farmhouse B&B for those who prefer their indoor comforts.

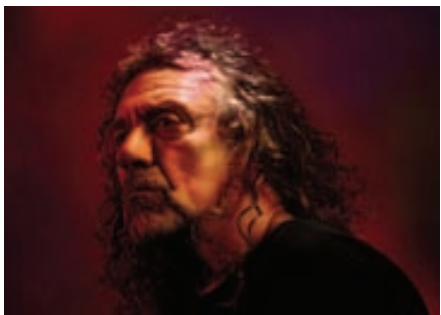
2018 line-up includes: The Rock Dogs, Cold Flame, The Gabbidon Band, Voodoo Stone, Slyder, Shallow Boys, The Sick Notes, Bloke, Pistol Pete Wearn, Pig-Man & The Rubber Band, Ged Wilson, Judy Emeline, Bobby KP Woods and The Spirit Drummers.

Bearded Theory

Catton Park, South Derbyshire, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 May

Taking place in the grounds of Catton Hall in the heart of the National Forest, the 10-year-old Bearded Theory has been rapidly gaining a reputation as one of the UK's best independent festivals. Ever expanding to meet demand, the award-winning event features fantastic acts spread across six stages - including a dance tent, a cinema and a comedy & cabaret area - as well as a superb Children's Village, top-notch facilities and an award-winning bar with affordably priced drinks.

2018 line-up includes: Robert Plant & The Sensational Space Shifters (pictured), Jimmy Cliff, Blossoms, Sleaford Mods, Jake Bugg, Jesus & Mary Chain, Fun Lovin Criminals, The Coral, Milburn and Gentleman's Dub Club.



Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Various venues arounds Cheltenham, Wed 2 - Mon 7 May



With 20,000-plus music fans attending the event each year, Cheltenham has become one of the country's best-loved jazz festivals. Showcasing its trademark mix of international icons, up-and-coming artists and unique performances, the festival includes Jamie Cullum and Moira Stuart among its legion of fans.

2018 line-up includes: Randy Crawford, Beth Hart, Caro Emerald (pictured), Christian McBride Big Band, Kamasi Washington, Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, Portico Quartet, Imelda May, China Moses, Gilles Peterson & Jordan Rakei and Corinne Bailey Rae.

Slam Dunk Festival

NEC, Birmingham, Mon 28 May

Showcasing the best in contemporary emo, punk and ska, this three-stop touring festival returns to Birmingham's NEC for the third time since its move from Wolverhampton. Linked to the Leeds-based club nights and indie record label of the same name, Slam Dunk takes place over the May bank holiday weekend and boasts more than 40 acts across multiple stages. DJ sets, exclusive signings and a riotous afterparty also feature.

2018 line-up includes: Good Charlotte, Jimmy Eat World, Pvriz (pictured), Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Taking Back Sunday, Sleeping With Sirens, State Champs, Creeper, Every Time I Die, The Skints, Four Year Strong, Thursday and Zebrahead.





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FRIDAY 29TH JUNE 2018

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Adult: £25.00 per person
Child: £20.00 per person
On the gate admission prices:
£30.00 per adult & £25.00 per child

FOLLIES FEST FAMILY DAY SATURDAY 30TH JUNE 2018



Tickets: Advance Purchase for 4: £99.00*
Adult: £29.00 per person | Child: £24.00 per person
On the gate admission prices:
£35.00 per adult & £30.00 per child

JOLAN GIDNEY-CRAIGEN • PAUL AKISTER
TRIBUTES: ED SHEERAN • ADELE • TAKE THAT • LITTLE MIX
ALEX OHM • AIMEE JAY SAX • JACK IN A BOX • PHOEBE D'ABO



A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS



SUNDAY 1ST JULY 2018

Tickets: Advance Purchase for 4: £83.00*
Adult: £25.00 per person
Child: £20.00 per person
On the gate admission prices:
£30.00 per adult & £25.00 per child

For more information or to purchase tickets please visit: www.hawkstoneparkfollies.co.uk/tickets

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

The Slow Readers Club

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Thurs 17 May; The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 26 May

Comprising Aaron Starkie (vocals), Kurtis Starkie (guitar and vocals), James Ryan (bass) and David Whitworth (drums), Manchester band The Slow Readers Club specialise in a dark and brooding indie electro sound that's drawn comparisons with Interpol, The Killers and The National.

Having received acclaim from Steve Lamacq, Peter Hook and Eddy Temple Morris, to name but a few, the four-piece visit the Midlands this month in celebration of new album *Build A Tower*.



Remi Harris Trio

George Hotel, Lichfield, Wed 16 May

Showcasing gypsy jazz, blues, electronic and world music, Remi Harris returns to the region this month following a triumphant performance at the city's 2017 Blues & Jazz Festival. Having quickly established himself as one of Britain's finest guitarists, Harris showcases creative compositions and new arrangements of music by Django Reinhardt, Jimi Hendrix, Wes Montgomery and Charlie Parker.



Hannah Sanders & Ben Savage

Biddulph Arms, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 16 May; The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sat 19 May

"I often think of folk music in cinematic terms," explains Ben Savage. "Scene-setting, emotional backdrops and detail are important, but choices around what you present in front are huge. I think a lot on what notes need to be there; what they're actually doing to people, and to the song;

the song is most important to me." Sounding classically timeless yet feeling refreshingly unique, Ben and Hannah uncovered their shared musical passion at their local folk club in Cambridge, and have been working together ever since.

Calan

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 9 May; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 2 June



Vibrant five-piece Calan have certainly found their musical niche, showcasing a unique instrumental blend of accordion, fiddle, guitar, Welsh pipes, Welsh harp and the percussive sound of the Welsh clogs. Taking a contemporary approach, they breathe new life into old traditions.

UK Subs

The Robin, Bilston, Thurs 3 May

With 2016 marking their 40th anniversary, UK Subs, led by 70-year-old Charlie Harper, represent the true spirit of punk rock.

With a new lineup in place - of Charlie, Steve Straughan on guitar, Alvin Gibbs on bass and Jamie Oliver on drums - the band continue to entertain, enlighten and enthuse audiences around the world. Expect to hear classics from albums such as *Brand New Age* and *Crash Course*, as well as tracks from more-recent offerings *Yellow Leader* and *Ziezo*.

Bryde

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 23 May

One half of South Wales indie-pop duo Paper Aeroplanes, Sarah Howells brings her new solo project to Shrewsbury this month. With high-profile support from Radio One's Huw Stephens and a 'hottest track' accolade from the *Sunday Times*, she'll be playing numbers from forthcoming album *Like An Island*, as well as songs from her two EPs.





Lee Mead

James Rampton talks to Lee Mead about his new album Lee Mead – 10 Year Anniversary and his tour Lee Mead – 10 Years – The Anniversary Tour.

Looking back on the last decade, how would you encapsulate it?

I'm very happy with the way my career has gone. I don't feel that I have had to compromise along the way. I've been approached a few times to do reality TV and I love watching some of those shows, but I'm not sure I would do very well on something like I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! The idea of eating crocodile testicles is not on my agenda! Touch wood, I like to think that over the last 10 years I've made the right career choices.

When you won the role of Joseph on the TV show Any Dream Will Do, how did you feel?

Weird things go through your head when Graham Norton says, "The winner is..." I was thinking, "If I don't win this, I don't care because I've had the most wonderful experience." Then Graham said, "3 million people have voted."

Did it feel like fate that you won Any Dream Will Do?

Yes. If I may say so, it did feel like it was my time. Everything came together. Joseph was the first show I'd seen. It was my favourite show and had always been part of my life. I simply love performing it.

What will the show "Lee Mead – 10 Years – The Anniversary Tour" consist of?

I'll be doing more than 20 songs. I really believe in giving people their money's worth. I'll be doing the songs that have had an impact on me over the last 10 years - for instance, I'll be performing Maria from West Side Story which is one of, if not the, greatest musical ever written. I thought it would be really nice to perform my own take on that particular song.

You also have a new album out - tell us about the songs you have chosen on your new album?

Amongst the tracks are Dancing Through Life from Wicked, Hushabye Mountain from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Close Every Door from Joseph, Bring Him Home from Les Miserables, and As Long As You're Mine, a duet with Rachel Tucker from Wicked. I loved working on the album.

Are you looking forward to reconnecting with your very loyal fans on tour?

Absolutely. Every singer needs that support. If you're lucky enough to have it, then it's fantastic. People come to see me from LA, Norway, Holland. There are about 400 of them who are hard-core fans. They come lots of times to every show I am in.

Now you're starring in Holby City. How did you land that role?

I was a guest in an episode of Casualty, playing Harry, a schoolteacher. Afterwards I got a handwritten letter from Oliver Kent, the executive producer. He wrote, "We were so impressed with what you did. You were such a gentleman on set. We'll keep our eye on you." I thought, "Yeah, you hear that all the time." But two years later, the producers asked, "Could you come and audition? We have a character called Lofty who we think might be up your street." Within two weeks, I was in Cardiff filming my first scene with Derek Thompson. He's a lovely guy and has become a close friend.

The opportunity to move over to Holby which is filmed close to London has been fantastic as it allows me to spend more time with my daughter Betsy. I see my life as a pyramid, and Betsy is at the top of that. I'm fortunate in that I have a very busy career. It's great to have work, but if ever I feel I'm not getting the balance right, I check myself and get back to the idea of the pyramid. Betsy always comes first.

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Lee Mead brings his 10 Years - The Anniversary Tour to Malvern Theatres, Worcester on Sunday 20th May and Palace Theatre, Redditch on Sunday 28th October.



BBC Philharmonic

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 11 May

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concert-goers with works from its impressive repertoire. This latest concert sees Ben Gurnon conducting the orchestra as they perform Beethoven's Seventh. Music by Wagner and Mozart also features.

Benjamin Grosvenor & Friends

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 26 May

The winner, aged 11, of the keyboard section of the BBC Young Musician of the Year 2004 award, Benjamin Grosvenor is a still-rising star of the UK's classical music scene.

The evening's programme features pieces by Schubert, Brahms and viola player Brett Dean, who also performs in the concert.



Llyr Williams: A Schubert Experience

Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire, Sun 27 May



Hailed for performances displaying impressive musical insight, breathtaking virtuosity and profound understanding, pianist Llyr Williams here explores Schubert's piano repertoire in two concerts - one in the afternoon, the second in the evening, with a complementary talk taking place between the two.

The Opera Boys

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 26 May

Crossover artists are big business nowadays, so there's little wonder that The Opera Boys are enjoying such a successful career. They're significantly assisted along the way, of course, by their remarkable talent, their classically trained voices combining in a powerhouse of vocal harmony to deliver a winning blend of opera, pop and everything in between.



Joseph Calleja and the CBSO

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 25 May

Malta's superstar tenor, Joseph Calleja (pictured), has been attracting comparisons with the young Luciano Pavarotti and boasts an impressive fanbase, a good number of whom will no doubt be making the journey to Symphony Hall for this mouthwatering concert.

Alongside the ever-wonderful City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Calleja performs a programme featuring pieces by, among others, Verdi, Massenet and Puccini. Andrew Greenwood conducts.



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SHERYL CROW
TUE 19 JUNE 7:30PM
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**GRETCHEN
PETERS
WITH VERY
SPECIAL GUEST
KIM RICHEY**
FRI 25 MAY 8PM
TOWN HALL



**TRAVIS -
THE MAN WHO
IN CONCERT**
MON 25 JUNE 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**RUPAUL'S
DRAG RACE
WERQ THE
WORLD TOUR**
SUN 27 MAY 9PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**CAITLIN MORAN
HOW TO BE
FAMOUS**
THU 28 JUNE 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



**A CHANGE IS
GONNA COME**
TUE 29 MAY 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



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**GRAHAM NASH
AN INTIMATE
EVENING OF
SONGS &
STORIES**
THU 26 JULY 7:45PM
TOWN HALL



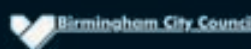
**NOUVELLE
VAGUE**
MON 11 JUNE 7:30PM
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BURKE -
THE TRUTH
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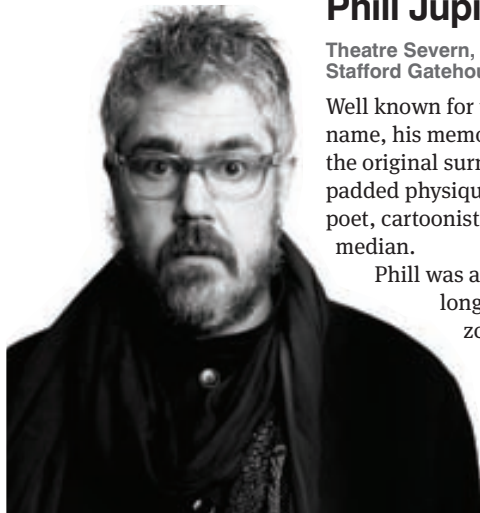
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Chris Ramsey

Dudley Town Hall, Fri 18 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 23 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 25 May

As well as being a highly rated stand-up on the UK comedy circuit, Geordie boy and one-time Newcastle United supporter Chris (he can't be bothered supporting them anymore) has also developed an impressive telly career, appearing on shows including 8 Out Of 10 Cats and South Shields-set sitcom Hebburn. Gags include: "My venue for the Edinburgh Festival is a portacabin; it's literally a portacabin! I'm a Geordie, in a portacabin. I was going to call the show Auf Wiedersehen Pet Live".



Phill Jupitus

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 12 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 13 May

Well known for the unusual spelling of his Christian name, his memorable surname (an anglicised version of the original surname Šeputis) and his impressively padded physique, Phill Jupitus is an actor, performance poet, cartoonist and podcaster as well as a stand-up comedian.

Phill was also a team captain on BBC Two's long-running music quiz Never Mind The Buzzcocks, his other work includes television's QI and BBC Radio Four's I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue.

He describes his latest touring show, Juplicity, as 'containing adult themes and situations, but delivered childishly'.

Simon Evans

The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-on-Trent, Thurs 10 May; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Tues 22 May

The late Caroline Aherne considered Simon Evans 'an absolutely brilliant comedian' - and judging by the popularity of his shows over the last few years, hers was by no means a lone voice in the wilderness. Best known from shows such as The News Quiz, The Unbelievable Truth and Armando Iannucci's Charm Offensive, Evans is undoubtedly one of the most exciting and distinctive talents to emerge from the UK comedy circuit in recent times.



Suzi Ruffell

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 20 May

Gay, quirky and delightfully self-deprecating, Suzi Ruffell is making good progress in the challenging world of stand-up comedy. Presenting an unquestionably likeable persona, she imbues her act with an impressive dynamism - although critics point out that she'd probably benefit from developing a 'unique selling point'. As well as being a comedian, Suzi's also a writer, contributing to shows including 8 Out Of 10 Cats, The Last Leg and Stand Up For The Week. Away from comedy, she lists her 'likes' as 'cooking' and 'those cats with no hair'.



The Indians Are Coming

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 14 May

This touring show features some of India's most accomplished comedians, with the Chuckle Singhs (pictured) acting as hosts for the night.

Performers include Jay Sodagar, who describes his act as "social conscience comedy", and Rahul Kohli, an up-and-coming Geordie Asian who combines fierce political satire with surreal storytelling.



Alfie Moore

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 5 May

Staunch Sheffield socialist Alfie Moore is a master raconteur and a very funny man. He's also a serving police officer. Indeed, referencing his two careers, his website advises that 'if you would like to see Alfie live', your options are either to 'catch him at one of his gigs' or 'drive to Scunthorpe and park on a double yellow line'. Alfie made it to week five of ITV's Show Me The Funny back in 2011, and is a much-in-demand after-dinner speaker. Jokes include: "I'm in a same-sex marriage... the sex is always the same."



Shazia Mirza

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 11 May;
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 26 May

Shazia Mirza is one of the UK's most creative female comedians - and she's a Brummie too! Muslim Shazia's not averse to treading a delicate line when it comes to her material. Her post-9/11 joke, "My name's Shazia Mirza - at least, that's what it says on my pilot's licence", marked her out as a comedian happy to balance on the very precipice of acceptable humour.

Other examples of her style and content in-

clude: "My parents really want me to get married. But Muslim men don't want to marry me because... I speak", and "My dad said if I went out with a black man, he'd burn me. Which would be good, because then I'd be black too".

Not to everyone's taste, obviously, but then which comedian ever could be? Her latest stand-up offering is *With Love From St Tropez*, a show which takes a look at lies and truth, nudity and the periodic table, and the merits or otherwise of daring to wear 'more than dental floss on a French beach'...

Michael McIntyre

Arena Birmingham, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 May

For some, the very sight of Michael McIntyre is enough to make their blood pressure soar. For others - included among whom are those who ensure his tours are always a sell-out - he's one of the funniest comedians of the modern era. Like him or hate him, there's certainly no getting away from McIntyre - and with DVDs of his stand-up shows having sold in excess of three million copies, it's fair to assume he'll be popping up all over the place for many a year to come.

He's here making a Midlands stop off with his Big World Tour.





AN OFFICER & A GENTLEMAN

The iconic 1982 Richard Gere movie *An Officer And A Gentleman* has been turned into a touring musical. We speak to Jonny Fines, who gets to don that legendary white suit in the drama-packed production hitting Birmingham this very month...

What was the first musical you saw?

My dad was a teacher and took his school to see Jason Donovan in *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. I think I tagged along and saw that. I think it was in Leicester at DeMontfort Hall.

Was theatre a big part of your childhood?

My parents are both quite musical, plus I've got a sister who's in the industry. We always did acting and singing lessons, and my sister danced too. It all kind of went from there, really. When I was about 10, they saw something in the paper for *Oliver!* at the town hall in Loughborough, which is where I'm from, and I went and auditioned for it. I got the part and that's where it all started. After that, it was the only option for me.

What was your first professional acting job?

The UK tour of *The Sound Of Music* in around 2010, which, weirdly, Jason Donovan ended up doing as well.

Was that quite a nervewracking experience for you?

Oh god, yeah! I went to the School of Acting for three years, and they train you for auditions and to get a job, but you never expect it to happen so quickly. I was really lucky, as it was one of the first auditions I went to. Then I went back for a few recalls and finally ended up getting the phone call. There's nothing that can prepare you for the realisation that something you love doing is actually your job now! It was also quite nervewracking being thrown in with a lot of experienced actors. It was quite daunting for a lad of 21 who'd not done it before.

Did it teach you things you hadn't learned at acting school?

Oh yeah - 100% more. I'm sure any actor will tell you that you learn on the job. I most certainly learned a lot more in a short amount of time. I think college can prepare you for the auditions but not for the industry. You learn thick and fast with it.

Were you already aware of the story of *An Officer And A Gentleman*?

I knew the iconic theme. I knew of the white uniform and he sweeps the girl off her feet, and I think I'd seen a *Friends* episode where they referenced it. I didn't know the story, though. I actually workshopped the musical about two years ago when they first thought of it. Before the workshop started, I watched the film and can absolutely understand why it's such a cult movie.

Can you tell us a bit about your character, Zack?

Zack is fascinating. He's got a lot of pent-up frustration that he's held down for a long time. He's got a fractured relationship with his father - they don't really get on - and his mother died when he was very young. I think he's been repressing all of these feelings for a long time and goes to join the army. That's what he wants to do; he wants to fly jets. That's when he meets Paula, and it's the first time he's ever connected with a woman on

that kind of level. It makes him feel things he's never felt before, and feeling those emotions is strange for him. He starts as a bit of a loose character but becomes stronger throughout the journey.

Was it a challenge to relate to him?

Everyone experiences hardships in their lives; his were pretty individual. It's always hard approaching a completely new character that's got such a detailed past - so yeah, I did find it quite difficult. Luckily, we've got a wicked crew around us to help with all that. They take the time to help us bed it in and think about where we need to go. The script for the musical is written by Douglas Day Stewart, who wrote the original screenplay for the film. He's been here for the entire process and always helps out when needed. The part of Zack was originally about himself, so it was really helpful to have him there to give you the right answer.

How does the story in the musical differ from the film?

There are slight changes, small adaptations but nothing big. If you know the story of the film, it follows a very similar path. People want to see their favourite movie on stage, so we try to give them the story that they want to see. So yeah, there are slight differences but nothing major.

Have you worked with any of the cast before?

Yes, I've worked with quite a few of them previously. George Ioannides and Keisha Atwell I've worked with on Grease and Annie in the West End, which has just finished. I've worked with the production team a lot too: Nikolai Foster the director, George Dyer, Sarah Travis the musical supervisor.

How have you and Emma Williams managed to capture the romance in the musical?

Emma is so open and such a lovely person, as well as a brilliant actor. It's been so easy. We

talked about it all and spent a lot of time discussing how we feel comfortable in the part, and what we feel is the right way to go with it. It's quite an intimate time in rehearsals. When you spend that amount of time with someone, you just become comfortable together. It's such a strange thing. We had to do a photoshoot just after we'd met for the first time. You meet and they say, "Right, you're in love", and that's weird. Being open in that kind of environment is key, and Emma most definitely is. We went for it from day one and said that if something didn't feel right, we'd address it there and then. It's been amazing, and she's so great in the part too.

There are a lot of fantastic '80s hits in the production. Which is your favourite?

Toy Soldiers and Family Man, probably the least well known ones in the entire show! The arrangements that George Dyer has done are amazing. They have a bit of a darker twist so that they fit in with the narrative.

Why should people come to see An Officer And A Gentleman?

It's a brilliant night out. The story is brilliant. It's a tried-and-tested Oscar-winning film, and I've not met anybody yet who hasn't said what a great night they've had. I think if you go to the theatre to enjoy yourself, it's difficult not to enjoy this show. It's got drama, with rock hits, happiness and sadness. It ticks pretty much every box for a good night out; there's nothing else quite like it.

Do you enjoy touring?

It's interesting. I've toured and worked in places across the country quite a few times. It's nice to have a residency, but it's also nice to see the world, or, specifically, England. There are so many places I'm looking forward to returning to, Birmingham being one of them. They're just great cities. If you're not working there, you might not get to see them all. I have a four-week-old little girl, which

might make life a little difficult, but it's just something we have to adapt to. My partner and the baby will come to five or six venues, and I can commute a few as well. That's nice for them, too - that they can get out of the house and come to some nice places.

What challenges have you overcome in your career?

The industry as a whole is a difficult place. There are so many young people who want to do it for a living, but it's hard to get into. For instance, there's no job security. Once one contract finishes, you might not get another. The most difficult thing is trying to maintain a career that is constant. That's something that you're never prepared for. I remember when I got my first job, I thought I was set for life and I'd just keep falling into work. I thought it would get easier and easier, but it's not the case. You've really got to want it and keep working on your technique, and never let that drop. Being constantly employed is certainly a challenge. You've always got to learn new skills.

Looking ahead, are there any particular roles that you'd like to play?

I like creating new roles. Sure, it's brilliant when you go into a production that's been running for a long time, but for me, creating a new character - whether on TV or in the theatre - is what I like to do. So I think anything new is great. As long as I'm creating, I'm happy.

.....

An Officer And A Gentleman The Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 15 until Saturday 19 May, and then at Nottingham Theatre Royal from Monday 23 until Saturday 28 July. Visit officerandgentlemanmusical.com to book tickets.

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The Magic Flute

Following their critically acclaimed English language reimaginings of *La Bohème* and *Carmen*, the Olivier Award-winning OperaUpClose now take on *The Magic Flute* in an innovative new production headed for the Belgrade Theatre next month.

Running in Coventry for one night only, this innovative reworking of Mozart's much-loved flight of fancy uses new orchestration with electronic & urban sounds, stylish design and a poetic new libretto by Glyn Maxwell bring the story firmly up-to-date. Ahead of its arrival on Saturday 12 May, director Valentina Ceschi tells us more about what to expect from the production...

"Its youthful energy is exhilarating!" she exclaims. "For me it was all about harnessing this energy and bringing it to today's audience. We did an early R&D with some singers from a group of young people from Soho Young Company. It was important for me that this version of ours appealed to the new generation."

First staged at London's Soho Theatre, the production shifts between states of confused reality and disturbed dreams, recasting the hero, Tamino, as a young man dazzled by the world of the rich and famous. Invited behind the velvet rope at London's "most exclusive" nightclub, *The Queen of the Night*, he has little time for beggars, paparazzi, or even his girlfriend, Pamina.

At the end of the night, following a blazing row, the couple head to bed, only to relive the events and encounters of the evening in dreams made extraordinary by the lateness of the hour, their befuddled senses, and of course, a touch of magic.

"I always thought the story in the original was problematic," says Ceschi. "I don't think I've seen one version where I understood the plot or thought the characters' journeys really made sense. Setting it in a dream (or various people's dreams) meant we didn't have to solve all the problems in the original, but it solved a few and freed us up to have a bit of fun.

"In our version, just like in the original, there are forces of 'good' and 'evil' that play upon

mortals, manipulating them and their desires. In this version, our hero, Tamino, is drawn to the flickering neons of the night, attracted like a moth to the life of the rich and famous. In the original, Tamino finds true love at the end of his quest. In our version, he realises it was there all along, he just needed to think he'd lost it to realise how much it meant to him in the first place."

There could hardly be a better time to bring a show like this to Coventry. Recently named as UK's next City of Culture in 2021, the city's whole campaign for the title hinged upon its youthfulness, creativity and diversity – all very much in keeping with the OperaUpClose ethos.

If you're unsure about opera or classical music, this is a company that prides itself on the accessibility of its productions. Aiming to provide an entry point for even total opera newcomers, the company revitalise established classics to create visceral theatrical experiences that feel relevant to contemporary audiences from all walks of life. Just take Valentina herself as an example.

"I don't have any formal music training," she confesses. "I read music but not very well. I mostly rely on what I hear. I've grown up with a love and understanding of music from my family for which I am very grateful, but our big thing as a family was musicals like *Guys and Dolls* and *Singin in the Rain*."

"I approach directing opera in very much the same way as directing theatre, making sure the storytelling is clear and the audience have a good time. There are more limitations in opera but those restrictions can be strengths and opportunities for invention and fun. I've learnt that the music, much like the text of a play, usually has all the answers you need. So when in doubt, go back to what the music is telling you."

"I would say, like Shakespeare, if done well, opera is no different to any other genre, and after that short shock of, 'Gosh, it's people singing instead of talking!' it feels very normal. I'd also say if you like musicals you'll probably like opera."

All this is not to say, of course, that there isn't plenty for opera enthusiasts to enjoy. This is still a high-quality interpretation of a classic by a hugely acclaimed company – one that aims to remain faithful to the composer's original vision, while at the same time offering established audiences a different way of looking at the work.

"People who know the opera really well already have a very particular experience. You can hear them recognising references and being tickled by the innovations we've made in our new version. It's like a spot that difference puzzle for them – they feel complicit in the process somehow, and it becomes a fun game."

In fact, as Ceschi herself argues, in some ways, there's a greater "authenticity" to this production than there is to some more high-profile operas nowadays. For one thing, the mischievousness of her direction and Maxwell's writing are very much in keeping with the irreverent spirit of a composer well known for his colourful personality. For another, opera hasn't always been the way we tend to imagine it today.

"I got involved with [OperaUpClose] a few years ago when I worked on reviving *La Bohème*. This production made me fall in love with the company. It was in a tiny theatre above a pub and part of it was even performed in the pub itself during the interval.

"I loved the intimacy and the impact the music and the singing can have when you are up close. Opera really started in much smaller spaces than the big opera houses, so there is also an authenticity to what we do. We aren't as radical as people think."

.....

The Magic Flute is at the Belgrade Theatre for one night only on Saturday 12 May. Tickets are available to book now by calling the box office on 024 7655 3055, or by visiting www.belgrade.co.uk, where prices are even cheaper



An Officer And A Gentleman The Musical

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May

An Officer And A Gentleman was the movie that really made a star of Richard Gere. Thirty-six years after the film hit the big screen, this high-energy musical version promises to win the movie a whole new

set of fans. Boasting unforgettable 1980s anthems including Girls Just Want To Have Fun, Livin' On A Prayer, Heart Of Glass, Material Girl and The Final Countdown, the show world premiered recently at Leicester's Curve theatre, and has proved so popular with audiences that an extra matinee performance has been added to its run at the Hippodrome.

Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 1 - Sat 5 May

Doctor Jekyll is not himself! Robert Louis Stevenson's classic gothic novella tells the tale of a brilliant but obsessive scientist whose sadistic alter-ego wreaks havoc across Victorian London.

This dark, twisted tale of love, redemption and the seductive power of evil stars Quadrophonia and one-time EastEnders favourite Phil Daniels as the man of science struggling to control his evil other-self...



Our Country's Good

The REP, Birmingham,
Wed 23 May - Sat 2 June



Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company here team up with Ramps On The Moon - a consortium dedicated to integrating disabled and non-disabled performers and practitioners - to present a show about Australia's first theatrical production. In the late 18th century, a group of convicts and a young officer in a prison colony rehearse and perform a play, despite the very real possibility that their leading lady may soon be hanged...

Goldilock, Stock & Three Smoking Bears

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Wed 23 - Fri 25 May

This well-reviewed alternative comedy takes the much-loved fairytale about a blonde girl's run-in with a family of bears and adds in a liberal dose of inspiration from Guy Ritchie's 1990s gangster movie, Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels.

Blending songs and in-jokes with rude'n'racy humour, the show finds silver-tongued heroine Goldilock on the run from a pack of bears and a far-from-happy gangster.

Expect multiple plot threads and plenty of cockney chit-chat...





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FEELING GREEN

Amelia Lily joins the cast of the smash-hit musical Shrek

What do you hope to bring to the role of Princess Fiona?

So many incredible females have taken on the role and have put their own stamp on it and I'd love to do the same. I'm quite young, only being 23, so I definitely want to bring a young essence to the part and just have fun with it.

What do you think the musical offers that the film doesn't?

You really feel like you're a part of the stage production. The beauty of Shrek is that it's suitable for anyone of any age but when you go and watch something live, you feel more involved and, as an audience member, it's so important to feel like you're a part of the show.

You've been on tour as both a musical theatre performer and as a solo artist, what do you most and least enjoy about touring?

My least favourite part is travelling! Travelling tires you out and when you're doing eight shows a week, the last thing you want to be is tired. Saying that, I find touring really exciting because you get to see all these different places around the country.

If you could play any other character in the show, who would you want to play?

It would have to be Donkey. When I was younger, he was always my favourite in the film, with Eddie Murphy bringing so much humour to the character. I've been quoting his scenes since I was a little girl so it would definitely have to be him. I've known Marcus for years who's playing Donkey on the tour, I'll have to ask him one day if he wants to swap roles one evening!

How does it feel to be joining the tour of Shrek the Musical?

Shrek is such an upbeat and energetic show and I'm really looking forward to it because it's so iconic. Shrek is famous all around the world and to step into a role like Princess Fiona is just amazing. It's a dream come true for me and I think I'm going to have such a laugh on stage.

Was a stage career something you ever envisaged after your success on the X Factor?

Before I entered the X Factor, I was looking to go to drama school so a stage career was always on the cards. The fact that the X Factor happened was a blessing in disguise as it got my foot in the door and gave me so many opportunities. Now, to be able to go down the route that I always planned has just been incredible. This is my fourth musical and I'm very grateful I was able to do both music and musical theatre.

How would you describe the show to someone who hasn't seen Shrek on stage before?

If you want to go to the theatre and leave with a smile on your face and have a blast all the way through, then this is the show for you. You don't even have to be a Shrek fan - it's an amazing piece of theatre, and I've never heard a soundtrack like it. It's one of my favourite musical theatre soundtracks and it appeals to all ages.

What's your favourite moment or song in the show and why?

The first time I heard 'I Think I Got You Beat' I couldn't stop laughing because Princess Fiona and Shrek have a burping and farting competition. I was in hysterics and, to be

quite honest, I don't know how I'm going to do that without laughing on stage, so that's definitely one of my favourite songs. I love the whole soundtrack and I think it's very rare to love every song equally.

Why should everyone come and see Shrek the Musical?

We've got an incredible cast and I feel so lucky to be working with them and the director, Nigel Harman. It's a great company with so much talent and so much joy as well. This is such a big show and for me, it's a dream come true. I can't wait to get on the road and have the best time.

Do you have any other projects in the pipeline?

Shrek is taking up most of my time from now until the end of the year. No doubt I'll start a Christmas panto at the end of the year but this is definitely my main priority right now.

What drew you to the part of Princess Fiona?

What I love about Princess Fiona is that she is not your average princess. She wears the iconic green dress but still has this tomboy element to her character which I relate to. I remember watching Shrek for the first time and loving her unpredictable nature. Shrek is not your average fairytale yet it's set in this fairytale land with lots of famous fairytale characters. I would definitely say I'm like Fiona in many ways and I can't wait to wear a princess frock every night AND burp on stage!

.....
Amelia Lily stars as Princess Fiona in Shrek The Musical, which will be at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent from Wednesday 2nd - Sunday 13th May



Crazy For You

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 8 - Sat 12 May

Just because Crazy For You plays to the old-fashioned strengths of the great American musicals doesn't mean that it's a tired, dated period piece. Quite the opposite, in fact. Indeed, even audiences with a painful aversion to hearty women in gingham dresses, grinning tap

dancers and people who want to 'do the show right here', will be won over by the hit musical's tongue-in-cheek charm.

Based on George and Ira Gershwin's original *Girl Crazy*, the show's masterful score features some real all-time greats, including I've Got Rhythm, Embraceable You and Nice Work If You Can Get It. Tom Chambers and Claire Sweeney star.

The Magic Flute

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 12 May



Mozart's final masterpiece tells the story of two young lovers who, on a perilous journey through a mysterious land of sorcerers and magic, find themselves being assisted by a curious cosmic character who dresses as a bird... The production is being presented by the award-winning OperaUpClose, a talented ensemble who've been garnering plaudits like they're going out of fashion since bagging a coveted Olivier Award back in 2011.

The Damned United

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 20 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 21 May; The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Thurs 7 June

A brilliant turn from Michael Sheen as Brian Clough in the film version of David Peace's clever novel was somewhat undermined by the curious decision to cast chubby-looking actors as Leeds United's legendary footballers.

Red Ladder Theatre Company, producing this touring stage adaptation in association with West Yorkshire Playhouse, will be hoping to avoid any such unwelcome distractions. Clough famously hated Leeds United, and Leeds United famously hated Clough. So the decision in the summer of 1974 to make him their manager was not only a curious one but also doomed to failure. This is the story of his 44 days in charge...



The Complete Works Of Shakespeare (Abridged)

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 11 May; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Fri 8 June; The Old Rep, Birmingham, Tues 24 - Sat 28 July

Now if you feel you really should pay heed to the works of the world's greatest ever playwright but just don't fancy hour upon hour spent listening to some terribly earnest actors thee-ing and thou-ing in your general direction, then this is the show for you!

All of Shakey's 37 plays are covered in the blink of an eye, allowing you not only to become very learned very quickly, but also to get down the pub in time for last orders!

Love, Bombs And Apples

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Mon 21 - Tues 22 May

Award-winning playwright Hassan Abdulrazzak's new one-man comic play focuses on four men from different parts of the world, all of whom are experiencing a moment of revelation in their lives... The show scored a big hit at last year's Edinburgh Festival, and visits the Midlands as part of a UK tour.

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A WORK OF ART

Diane Parkes chats to Denis Lawson ahead of Art arriving at the Birmingham Hippodrome



The play Art was a huge hit in the late 1990s into 2000. Written by Yasmina Reza and first performed in France, it was translated by Christopher Hampton and opened on London's West End in 1996 to huge acclaim and a string of awards.

It features three men who have been friends for 25 years but whose friendship is suddenly rocked by one piece of art. When Serge buys a huge white canvas, he expects Marc and Yvan to share his appreciation but is shocked to discover they don't like it.

So much so that what begins as a discussion over a painting soon descends into a full-on argument in which all the hurts and slights of their decades of friendship bubble to the surface.

It's been nearly 20 years since Art last came to Birmingham but it's now on tour again with a cast featuring Nigel Havers as Serge, Denis Lawson as Marc and Stephen Tompkinson as Yvan.

And Denis is the first to admit that although he loves the play he's not so sure the character of Marc is very loveable.

"Marc is a pain in the neck," laughs Denis before trying to explain his character's behaviour. "Marc is quite highly strung, I feel, a bit neurotic, intelligent and a little bit out there.

"But first of all, we have to remember that it's originally a French play so the characters are French and Parisians. Marc thinks of himself as an intellectual and in France that is a very particular thing with so-called intellectuals held in very high regard. So Marc has this thing about himself as an intellectual and he's very particular.

"The play is very much about the relationship these men have, this 25-year friendship, and because his great friend Serge buys a work of art which Marc disapproves of, they have this massive crisis of their friendship."

And the differences in their characters emerges as the drama progresses

"It's interesting that this is a play about male friendship written by a woman," Denis observes. "In terms of the context of the play their relationship feels very real.

"It's a very natural piece in a lot of ways. I mean how do we all view things? We all view objects or so-called works of art in different ways. From movies and plays to sculpture and art, we have different views on it depending on who we are. That's part of being human.

"Art very engrossing. It's not a long play, it's about an hour and 20 minutes, but for actors it's really very intense and full-on but also very funny. It just draws you right in because the writing is so good."

Denis, first saw Art on the West End in the 1990s when the roles were played by Albert Finney, Tom Courtenay and Ken Stott.

"I saw the play when it was first done and I thought it was wonderful then," says Denis. "It never occurred to me that I might be in it though. But that's what I love about this career, things come at you from left field and then you think 'yes, I really want to do this'.

"I had never actually sat down and read the play but when they asked me to do it I read it and I realised it was such a beautiful piece of writing. For me, it always stems from the script itself so it felt like a natural thing to do. Saying yes was a very easy decision to make."

Denis was also pleased to be working alongside Nigel Havers and Stephen Tompkinson.

"I knew Nigel Havers and Stephen Tomkinson and have a lot of regard for them both. I've worked with them both in the past – Stephen and I did a piece called Lucky Jim on television and Nigel and I worked briefly together on something called Brian Pern about an ageing rock band. In fact Nigel and I have gigged together – he was on keyboards and I was on bass!"

Nigel toured with the show in 2000 when he played Serge to Barry Foster's Marc and Roger Lloyd Pack's Yvan.

"Nigel has done this play more than anyone else in the world I think," laughs Denis. "And that's a tribute to the play. He just loves doing it. And I understand that. It's a blast to do, it's so satisfying."

Seventy-year-old Denis first began his acting career in 1969 and has played countless varied roles from Shakespeare to Star Wars over the ensuing decades. Taking the part of X-wing pilot Wedge Antilles, he was in the three films of the original Star Wars trilogy and has appeared in television shows including Robin Hood, Hornblower, Marchlands, New Tricks and Bleak House.

But despite a long career in theatre, television and film, the spring tour of Art is the first time Denis has been on stage in Birmingham.

"I've worked in Birmingham a lot with Pebble Mill. I did a few television programmes in Birmingham and I'm very fond of

Birmingham but I've never been on stage there so I'm looking forward to coming," he says.

"We get this constantly when we tour – we walk into these fantastic theatres we've not been into before. It's part of the interest in doing this, to walk into a new space every week – I'm really enjoying it."

The national tour began in February and Art comes to Birmingham Hippodrome on May 21-26.

"The response so far on the tour has been wonderful," Denis says "One of the pleasures of this play is that audiences really respond to it. It's so funny we always get a really strong reaction. Every night it's my character who starts the play and I just can't wait to get going - it's like getting onto a fast moving train."

"I hadn't been on stage for a few years now and I'm very pleased to be back on. And I've always had a thing about comedy. It was comedy which first drew me to want to be an actor – it was entertainers and comedians. So my favourite stage experience is comedy.

"To get up in front of 800 or 1,200 people and make them laugh a lot for an hour and a half is so satisfying. It is also quite hard though, I think comedy is the hardest thing to do because you have to concentrate so hard on keeping the timings and also keeping it realistic."

With a work of modern painting being the catalyst in Reza's play, the conversation turns to Denis's response to art.

"I have bought original art and sculpture although nothing to the expense of this particular work of art which is huge. I do have one big slightly abstract piece which I'm very fond of," says Denis. "Personally I quite like modern art. I go to a lot of different exhibitions which I enjoy a lot. I'm very drawn to the Impressionists and onwards from there."

But Denis says his response to art might differ from his character's.

"If one of my friends had paid a lot of money for a painting I would certainly say it was fantastic!" he laughs. "I would be very nice about it because what does it matter to me? I'm not going to go into someone else's house and say 'that's awful, what have you done?' I would never do what Marc does."

.....
Art plays Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 21st until Saturday 26th May.



Thoroughly Modern Millie

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 22 - Sat 26 May;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 26 - Sat 30 June

Emmerdale and Strictly favourite Hayley Tamaddon stars in this latest stage version of the hit 1967 film. Set in Manhattan during the Roaring '20s, the show tells the story of Millie Dillmount, a young woman who

arrives in New York from Kansas in search of wealth, excitement and a man to marry. Deciding to stay at the Hotel Priscilla, she meets its proprietor, the eccentric Mrs Meers, before embarking on a series of riotous and not altogether planned adventures, all of which are pleasingly punctuated by dazzling musical numbers and stunning dance routines.

Monty Python's Spamalot

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Tues 15 - Sat 19 May



This award-winning rip-off of classic 1975 movie Monty Python And The Holy Grail continues to delight Python fans across the globe. Telling the tale of King Arthur and his hapless Knights of the Round Table as they head out on a quest for the elusive Holy Grail, the show is written by Python legend Eric Idle and bagged the Tony Award for best new musical back in 2005. Expect misfit knights, killer rabbits, dancing

nuns and ferocious Frenchmen, not to mention a mainly new score co-written by Idle that includes Life Of Brian classic Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life.

Hound Of The Baskervilles

Stafford Gatehouse, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is one of literature's most enduring characters, The Hound Of The Baskervilles his most famous adventure. Yet no matter how many actors don the deerstalker and solve the mystery of the monstrous moorland beast, the story remains a popular choice for both stage and screen adaptation.

This latest version offers another always-welcome opportunity to return to the lonely wasteland of the desolate moors...

Love From A Stranger

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,
Tues 15 - Sat 19 May

With highly acclaimed versions of Gaslight and Dial M For Murder under her belt, direc-

tor Lucy Bailey once again takes up the reins, this time to present a little-known work by Agatha Christie and Frank Vosper.

A whirlwind romance sees Cecily Harrington recklessly abandoning her old life to settle in the remote and blissful surroundings of a country cottage. But this being an Agatha Christie story, all is not quite as it seems... Edges of your seats for this one, ladies and gentleman, and brace yourself for a typically Christie 'twist in the tail'.



What The Ladybird Heard

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 May; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 12 - Wed 13 June

This stage adaptation of the book by Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks finds Hefty Hugh and Lanky Len attempting to steal the farmer's prize cow. But the pair soon find out that the best-laid plans of mice and crafty robbers can sometimes be undone by the tiniest and quietest of creatures - in this particular case, one very small ladybird...



Sarah & Duck's Big Top Birthday

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 13 May; The Old Rep, Birmingham, Mon 14 - Tues 15 May

Young fans of BAFTA award-winning CBeebies programme Sarah & Duck are sure to cry fowl (geddit?) if you fail to take them along to this live version of the show.

Puppetry, storytelling and music are imaginatively combined as seven-year-old Sarah and her somewhat manic companion set out on another adventure. This one sees them planning a birthday party for Scarf Lady, ably assisted in their endeavours by fabulous friends The Ribbon Sisters, The Shallots, Flamingo & John and Umbrella.

A Heart At Sea

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 23 - Sat 26 May

Original songs, 'stunning' visuals, echoing soundscapes, tiny boats, performing puppets, salty sea captains and great big beards are all combined to excellent effect in this whale of a tale from the ever-impressive Half A String theatre company.

Running for 50 minutes and suitable for youngsters aged seven and older, the show tells the story of a boy who bottles up his heart and throws it into the sea...

Pinocchio

Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Sat 26 May - Sat 9 June

The legendary tale of the wooden boy with a disappointing propensity for telling porky pies - to the detriment of his fast-growing proboscis - is here presented by Blue Orange Arts. Toymaker Geppetto wants a son, and is granted his dearest wish by the Blue Fairy (well, kind of!) in the form of Pinocchio. Problem is, Pinocchio is a magic boy puppet without any strings. To become a real boy, he must show kindness, bravery, loyalty and honesty - all of which is easier said than done when all he really wants to do is have fun with his friends...

Mr Silly Pancake And The Land Of Cake & Biscuits

MAC, Birmingham, Sat 26 - Sun 27 May

The title says it all: Mr Silly Pancake pays a visit to the Land of Cake & Biscuits. And your youngsters are invited to join him. Original music and puppetry are combined in a show that sees our hero and his young audience visiting Jelly Fields, Marshmallow Castle and Milkshake River. Let's just hope the sugar police aren't visiting MAC over the weekend!



Hoot Owl: Master Of Disguise

Stourbridge Town Hall, Sat 12 May

Yet another kids' theatre company that understands the merit of combining original songs with colourful puppets, Proon Productions here tell the twit-twooingly splendid tale of a hoot owl who fancies himself a master of disguise, using clever camouflage to conceal his real identity from the tiny animals he plans to greedily gobble up. The only problem is, there's a possibility he's not quite as clever as he thinks he is... Suitable for children aged four-plus.

Dinosaur World Live

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 19 - Sun 20 May
The Place In The Park, Telford, Shropshire, Tues 7 - Wed 7 August

Not surprisingly being advertised as a 'dino-mite' adventure, Dinosaur World Live provides audience members with the chance to meet a host of impressive creatures - including, of course, every child's favourite flesh-eating giant, the Tyrannosaurus Rex.



Ready Steady Whatever The Weather

Birmingham Hippodrome, Sat 30 June

Award-winning theatre company M6 are the talented people behind this humorous and highly visual production for the very young. A 2016 Off West End Theatre Awards winner, the show focuses on the little man and woman who inhabit 'a weather house that sits on a quiet wall', along the way asking the question, what would happen if they magically came to life?

Horrible Histories: More Barmy Britain

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 30 May - Sat 2 June

If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then the Barmy Britain shows are well worth catching. Alongside providing answers to such searching questions as 'what would happen if a Viking moved in next door?' and 'would you stand and deliver to dastardly Dick Turpin?', the shows also invite their audience to escape the clutches of Burke & Hare, move to the groove with the partying Queen Victoria and prepare to do battle in the Great War. In short, and as their publicity says, they are truly horrible histories of Britain - 'with all the nasty bits left in!'



UNDER THE SEA

Discover what lies beneath the water's surface at
Birmingham's National Sea Life Centre





Merlin Entertainment owns some of the biggest and best attractions the UK has to offer, including Thorpe Park Resort, Shrek's Adventure! London, Alton Towers, Chessington World of Adventure and Legoland Windsor, to name but a few.

It also owns Birmingham's National Sea Life Centre, which opened in 1996.

Located near the city's Brindleyplace, the venue houses more than 2,000 species from around the world and contains a one million litre ocean tank! Money is regularly invested in the attraction, the aim being to add at least one new exhibit annually. But doing so is a tall order. In 2014 the venue acquired the popular Penguin Ice Adventure. Costing £2million to build, the exhibit is home to 18 Gentoo penguins. Last year's new addition was Octopus Hideout, featuring Beverley, the venue's resident Giant Pacific Octopus.

Exciting new exhibits for 2018 include the interactive Piranha Tunnel and Jelly Invaders. The latter features a variety of breeds from across the world, including the moon jellyfish, the fascinating upside-down jellyfish and the ghost-like Atlantic sea nettles.

Both new areas are included within the general admission fee. The only additional

cost is an optional one - a behind-the-scenes tour that's well worth the money for the extra sights you're shown and the expert knowledge provided by a tour guide.

There's so much for the whole family to enjoy. People are advised to book their tickets in advance (particularly during weekends and school holidays) and to allow at least two hours to get the most out of the attraction.

Visitors can venture through the UK's only fully transparent 360-degree underwater tunnel, along the way enjoying views of 40-year-old Molokai the Giant Sea Turtle and a Bowmouth Guitar Shark, an attention-seeking diva called Beyonc-ray!

The centre dedicates a lot of time and hard work to its Breed, Rescue And Protect conservation project. This includes running programmes to help sustain endangered species, nursing sick creatures back to health before returning them to the wild, and campaigning to protect the marine environment from exploitation or destruction. There's currently a tank in the Jelly Invaders area which houses nothing other than a number of plastic bags. This is to highlight just how much these bags can look like jellyfish, and the danger they can cause to underwater creatures who mistake

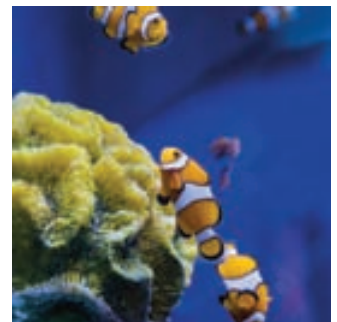
them for their food.

Other National Sea Life Centre highlights include the 4D cinema, the zebra shark in Shark Lagoon, the Clownfish Kingdom tunnel - a favourite with children who like Disney's Finding Nemo - and the UK's only tropical Ocean Tunnel, featuring darting sharks, gliding rays and rescued turtles.

There's so much that goes into the upkeep of the centre. Every fortnight, a fresh batch of sea water is brought up from the South Coast, and every three months, a new shipment of seaweed arrives. The cleaning and maintenance of the tanks happens sporadically during visiting hours. Likewise, there are allotted feeding times during the day, so if you want to see the inhabitants dining, plan your visit with this in mind. The centre also has a soft play area for children to enjoy.

Curator Jonny Rudd has been at the centre for just under a year and has a great many plans for the venue. Although most of these remain under wraps. Watch this space for news of more exciting developments!

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For more information and to book tickets, visit visitsealife.com/birmingham



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Photo: Franka Pothoff



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BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

For the full festival programme,
1-24 June, see bidf.co.uk

ATOMOS

Company Wayne McGregor
Fri 1 & Sat 2 June
New Alexandra Theatre



BOOK NOW at bidf.co.uk
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ELEMENTS OF FREESTYLE

ISH Dance Collective
Thurs 14 June
Birmingham Hippodrome

Festival Producer



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Celebrating Birmingham Year of Movement 2018



Windrush: Movement Of The People

MAC, Birmingham, Fri 4 - Sat 5 May

“This is an uplifting dance production that’s not only enjoyable,” says Sharon Watson, artistic director of Phoenix Dance Theatre, “but will shine a light on an important era of the history of black people here in the UK. It highlights both the struggles and good times the Jamaican community experienced during those early years.”

Phoenix’s contemporary dance piece celebrates the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the UK’s first Caribbean migrants, transported to the country on board the SS Empire Windrush. Presented against an uplifting soundtrack of calypso, jazz, blues, gospel and reggae, the piece is a lively celebration of the rise of multi-cultural Britain... The evening also includes performances of Calyx, by Sandrine Monin, and Shadows, by Christopher Bruce OBE.



Jasmin Vardimon Company: JV2

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Wed 2 May

Founded in 1997, the Jasmin Vardimon Company tour both nationally and internationally, performing at theatres throughout the UK, across Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the United States. The company combine physical theatre and quirky characterisation with innovative technologies, text and (of course) dance, to create widely accessible, socially relevant art. This new triple bill sees work by the award-winning Vardimon presented alongside pieces by two highly rated emerging choreographers, Yunkyung Song and André Rebelo.



Balletboyz: Fourteen Days

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 9 May;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 14 May

Balletboyz is a company of male dancers who combine muscle with grace to present a distinctive style that fuses energetic dance with music and film.

This latest touring show features works created in the space of just 14 days by choreographers including Javier de Frutos and Craig Revel Horwood. The show also features the Russell Maliphant-choreographed *Fallen*, a work that won the National Dance Award for Best Modern Choreography in 2013.

Palmyra

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Tues 8 - Wed 9 May

The horrors of the conflict in Syria take centre stage in this thought-provoking new work by Bertrand Lesca and Nasi Voutsas. The pair have previously toured with Eurohouse, a playful and highly acclaimed satire on the European Union.

Moving gracefully from the humour of that earlier work to the tragic subject matter of this latest offering, the duo explore the notion of revenge and the politics of destruction. Along the way, they invite their audience ‘to step back from the news and look at what lies beneath - and beyond - civilisation’.



GET DANCING!

with Birmingham International Dance Festival



Artistic Director Lucie Mirkova tells all...

The sixth Birmingham International Dance Festival (BIDF) takes place next month, and for 24 days will be doing its best to get the people of the city up and dancing.

A programme of theatre performances will be supported by extensive outdoor activities - the majority of which are free - spilling out onto Victoria Square and other city locations. "We want to open up new and surprising ways for the people of the Midlands to experience dance," says Lucie Mirkova, Artistic Director at DanceXchange - the Birmingham-based dance house which produces the festival.

Well versed in every aspect of dance, this is Lucie's first festival in this role, having previously worked as Executive Producer for the company. Having "danced before I could walk", Lucie's passion for the art form shines through. "It's part of my life. Dance is an amazing experience. It gives you the freedom to express yourself in so many ways..."

Originally from Prague, Lucie founded a community dance company before studying choreography at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, going to work as a producer for dance company DOT504. Moving to the UK in 2010, Lucie pursued her love of dance from another angle, undertaking an MA in Arts Management & Policy before moving to Birmingham.

With Lucie at the helm and her 'partner in crime' Paul Russ, the festival's Associate Artistic Director, programming for this year's festival sees a shift towards a more international outdoor content, and more opportunities for people to take part.

"We wanted to open up the dialogue between national and international practices, and BIDF is the perfect place to make this happen.

What's also very exciting is the Midlands made programme, new commissions and presentations created by artists living and working in the Midlands. This is about how we bring local artists together and nurture their talents."

Drawing audiences from across the Midlands

and beyond, the festival aims to show choreographic practice at its best, pushing the boundaries of dance as a contemporary art form. So what does Lucie think is the most adventurous aspect of this year's programming?

"New Creation, by Cecilia Bengolea & Florentina Holzinger, which hasn't premiered yet."

Described as a 'collaborative experimentation, reflecting on the interface of nature and the artifice of the human body', New Creation is a brave move for the festival, but one which Lucie is confident will pay off. "We know the artists previous work. Although they aren't too well known in the UK, they are internationally so it's very exciting."

Alongside UK star choreographers like Wayne McGregor (Atomos at New Alexandra Theatre, 1 & 2 June), audiences will enjoy a programme of work from numerous international artists. These include at The Patrick Studios an immersive virtual reality experience VR_1 from Company Gilles Jobin & Artanim (Switzerland); Guide, a dreamy audio visual experience by Vera Ondrasikova & Collective (Czech Republic) which fuses the past with the present; and at Midlands Arts Centre Only Bones, a display of physical buffoonery from the Kallo Collective (Finland/New Zealand).

Challenging preconceived ideas about what dance is, the programme also features performances that people might not normally associate with a dance festival. Take ISH Dance Collective, for example. The Dutch company brings Elements of Freestyle.

Dominating Birmingham Hippodrome's main stage on 14 June will be four skating ramps which will be constructed and deconstructed in numerous formations while performers demonstrate their skills in breakdance, inline skating, skateboarding, freerunning, BMX, and freestyle basketball.

"It's a culture," says Lucie. "It's about breaking barriers and realising that dance can be many things."

For 10 days Victoria Square in the heart of the city will be transformed to create a fresh and vibrant festival vibe, with a wonderful pro-

gramme of exciting acts, activities and workshops suitable for any age with food and drink provided by local foodie favourites and live music each evening from Hare & Hounds of Kings Heath. The programme kicks off on 1 June with the first visit to the city of the incredible Morning Gloryville with their high-energy empowering morning sober rave suitable for everyone.

An event on the scale of Birmingham International Dance Festival doesn't happen without support from numerous partners. New additions to the partner programme for 2018 are Colmore Business District, as Festival Square Sponsor, and West Midlands Railway, who've jumped on board as Official Travel Partner.

"I think it's great that these big organisations see dance as a way to promote Birmingham as a destination, driving more people to visit our vibrant city."

Birmingham is increasingly recognised as a city that's good at delivering outdoor festivals which is very appealing for partners to be part of."

Before BIDF 2018 has even got off the ground, Lucie is giving thought to the next festival and beyond. "You're always thinking about future programming and making connections. It's surprising how long it takes to negotiate those big gigs. I'm already in conversation for 2020 and 2022, to tie in with the Commonwealth Games. I'm talking to people about work that combines sports with dance."

For now, though, it's all about 2018 and making sure that everything runs smoothly. Fingers crossed, then, that all goes well in terms of the one thing that festival organisers can't influence - the British weather.



Birmingham International Dance Festival takes place in the venues, streets and squares across Birmingham from 1 to 24 June. A programme of outdoor activities will take place at Victoria Square from 1 to 10 June. Visit bidf.co.uk for details

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS...

IN THEATRES

Elements of Freestyle - ISH Dance Collective Thurs 14 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

Challenging the notion of what can be presented on a traditional stage, on 14 June ISH Dance Collective will bring vert ramps and extreme sports to the stage of Birmingham Hippodrome in Elements of Freestyle. A UK premiere, the show will feature a dynamic fusion of live music, dance and theatre with break dance, inline skating, free running, skateboarding, BMX and freestyle basketball. Age 8+



Atomos - Company Wayne McGregor Fri 1 & Sat 2 June, New Alexandra Theatre

Atomising bodies, movement, film, sound and light morph into miniature shards of intense sensation in a cutting-edge work by contemporary choreographer Wayne McGregor. Ten incredible dancers perform McGregor's unique style - sculptural, rigorous, jarring and hauntingly beautiful. 3D glasses are available to watch part of this cutting-edge show. Age 8+



Morning Gloryville - Fri 1 June, Victoria Square

Opening the Festival Square on 1 June is Morning Gloryville, the original morning ravers. The event, part exercise craze, and

part mass party, is a city premiere in collaboration with firm favourites from the local music scene and a big headline DJ, to be announced soon. Suitable for all ages.

Face In & Let's Talk About Dis - Candoco Dance Company Wed 13 & Thurs 14 June, MAC, Birmingham



Renowned contemporary dance company of disabled and non-disabled performers, Candoco presents a brand new double bill of dramatic and powerful choreography. Yasmeen Godder's new work, Face In, is loud, vibrant and intoxicating whilst Hetain Patel, the artist behind the TED Talk 'Who am I? Think Again', gets you thinking about political correctness in his playful and charming piece Let's Talk About Dis. Age 10+

VR_1 - Cie Gilles Jobin & Artanim Fri 1 to Mon 4 June, The Patrick Studio

A fun, unforgettable, immersive Virtual Reality experience. Ideal to share with friends and family. Tracked by an optical motion capture system, five participants at the same time become their own avatar, physically moving in a virtual environment, meeting five virtual dancers. Age 8+



OUTDOORS

The Midlands Made commissions will take over Victoria Square from 4-8 June, a new strand for BIDs 2018, with new commissions created by artists living and working in the Midlands including Andy Ingamells, Rebecca Randall and Mickael Marso Riviere. Age All (check individual shows for age guidance)



Family weekend at MAC, Birmingham, Sat 16 & Sun 17 June

Enjoy a host of performances and activities for all the family at Midlands Arts Centre on 16 and 17 June. TPO bring two amazing shows for the youngest dance fans including the magical interactive theatre experience *Kindur* which sees the audience take on the role of sheep and *Mini* bringing everyday situations to life through dance. The weekend also features work by Rosie Kay Dance Company, 2Faced Dance Company and Candoco Dance Company. From Age 2+ (check individual shows for age guidance)



Victoria Festival Square

Victoria Square in the heart of the city is transformed for ten incredible days creating a fresh and vibrant festival vibe right on your doorstep. Expect the best outdoor national and international talent, constantly challenging perceptions and dance forms

with a lightness of expression and highly arresting and visually stunning performances from the funny and original AIR which sees four dancers perform dressed in inflatable latex suits to Simple Cypher's *Roll Up, Roll Up* which combines hip hop and circus.

ON TOUR AND UNUSUAL SPACES

DeepSpace - James Batchelor and Collaborators Fri 22 & Sat 23 June, Quantum Exhibition Space, The Works



Combining dance, sound and installation, Deepspace is a mesmerising, intimate performance that examines our curiosity for the unknown. Playing at the intersection of art and science, the body is taken to the extremities of remoteness and proximity, connectedness and isolation, certainty and uncertainty. This is an immersive work where the audience moves through the space with the dancers. Age 8+

Origami – Satchie Noro and Silvain Ohl - Fri 22 & Sun 24 June, location tbc

Watch out for the spectacular *Origami*, an elegant large-scale performance which will be wowing audiences at outdoor locations around the city between 22 to 24 June. Satchie Noro and Silvain Ohl, were inspired by the ancient art of Japanese paper folding to transform a 40-foot shipping container into a shape-shifting performance space. Age 5+



For all Birmingham International Dance Festival listings visit www.bidf.co.uk



DEADPOOL 2

IN LOCAL CINEMAS FROM 15 MAY 2018

Deadpool 2 CERT tbc

Starring **Ryan Reynolds, Josh Brolin, Morena Baccarin, Julian Dennison, Zazie Beetz, TJ Miller**
Directed by **David Leitch (USA)**

Nobody expected the original *Deadpool* (2016) to be such a huge success, but the self-knowing, violent and witty superhero movie accumulated an international gross of more than \$783million.

Ryan Reynolds returns as the irreverent Wade Wilson, the disfigured mercenary who recovered from cancer to become a mocking, sarcastic, self-healing crime-fighter. Here, Wade - aka *Deadpool* - rounds up a posse of mutants to combat the time-travelling cybernetic badass 'Cable' (Josh Brolin). Brolin, who plays the despotic Thanos in *Avengers: Infinity War*, has already signed up to play Cable in a further three *Deadpool* sequels. Let's hope the first film's fondness for British cultural references continues unabated.

Released Tues 15 May



EDITOR'S CHOICE

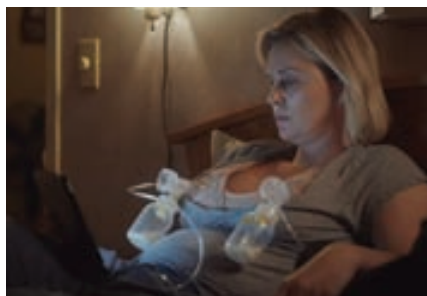
Film highlights released in May...

I Feel Pretty CERT 12a (110 mins)

Starring **Amy Schumer, Michelle Williams, Emily Ratajkowski, Rory Scovel, Aidy Bryant, Naomi Campbell** Directed by **Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein (USA)**

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and, following a fall, Renee Barrett (Schumer) believes she is a stunner. Thus transformed, Renee sets out on a new path of confidence and self-belief. Interesting premise.

Released Fri 4 May



Lean On Pete CERT 15 (112 mins)

Starring **Charlie Plummer, Chloë Sevigny, Travis Fimmel, Steve Buscemi, Steve Zahn**
Directed by **Andrew Haigh (UK)**

Shot in Oregon, this British drama stars Charlie Plummer as a restless fifteen-year-old who befriends the eponymous racehorse and decides to rescue him from the slaughterhouse. Adapted from the novel by the alt-Country guitarist Willy Vlautin.

Released Fri 4 May



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 4 May

Film highlights released in May...



Redoubtable CERT 15 (108 mins)

Starring Louis Garrel, Stacy Martin, Bérénice Bejo, Grégory Gadebois, Micha Lescot, Jean-Pierre Mocky Directed by Michel Hazanavicius (France/Myanmar/Italy)

From the director of the Oscar-winning *The Artist* (2011) comes another film exploring the rich canvas of cinema. Here, Hazanavicius focuses on the French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard (Garrel), and in particular on his liaison with the actress Anne Wiazemsky (Martin), on whose memoir the film is based. Initially as playful and free with the grammar of cinema as Godard's own work, *Redoubtable* soon descends into domestic tedium as Godard renounces his earlier work

and searches for a more profound way to express his political angst. Thus, the director becomes cruel, selfish, insensitive, sour and ungracious - in short, an existential caricature. Stacy Martin is delightful as his young gamine wife and there are some amusing, meta moments, but not enough to relieve the ultimate monotony of this strangely petulant character assassination.

Released Fri 11 May

On Chesil Beach

CERT 15 (110 mins)

Starring Saoirse Ronan, Billy Howle, Emily Watson, Anne-Marie Duff, Samuel West, Adrian Scarborough
Directed by Dominic Cooke (UK)

When Florence and Edward fall in love during the summer of 1962, neither are prepared for the impact on their liaison that the sexual revolution will have. From the 2007 Booker-nominated novel by Ian McEwan.

Released Fri 18 May



CRITIC'S CHOICE



Life Of The Party

CERT 12a (105 mins)

Starring Melissa McCarthy, Gillian Jacobs, Maya Rudolph, Julie Bowen, Jacki Weaver
Directed by Ben Falcone (USA)

When her husband dumps her, Deanna (McCarthy) decides to go back to college and ends up in her own daughter's class. College, Deanna realises, is wasted on the young... The producer-director is Ben Falcone, husband of Melissa McCarthy, with whom he co-wrote the screenplay.

Released Fri 11 May

How To Talk To Girls At Parties

CERT 15 (103 mins)

Starring Elle Fanning, Alex Sharp, Nicole Kidman, Ruth Wilson, Matt Lucas, Stephen Campbell Moore
Directed by John Cameron Mitchell (UK/USA)

An alien tourist, Zan (Fanning) finds herself stuck in the most dangerous place in the universe: Croydon in south London. Nicole Kidman plays the punk party animal 'Queen Boadicea'. Based on the 2006 short story by Neil Gaiman.

Released Fri 11 May



Sherlock Gnomes

CERT U (86 mins)

With the voices of James McAvoy, Emily Blunt, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Mary J Blige, Johnny Depp, Michael Caine, Maggie Smith
Directed by John Stevenson (UK/USA)

When certain garden ornaments go missing, Gnomeo and Juliet turn to the eponymous sleuth to help track down the culprit. A sequel to *Gnomeo & Juliet* (2011), the cartoon is the first fully animated feature from Paramount Animation. The American reviews were not charitable, though. In 3D.

Released Fri 11 May

Entebbe CERT 12a (107 mins)

Starring **Rosamund Pike, Daniel Brühl, Eddie Marsan, Ben Schnetzer, Lior Ashkenazi, Denis Ménochet** Directed by **José Padilha (UK/USA)**

Rosamund Pike and Daniel Brühl take up arms to hijack the Air France Flight 139 from Athens to Uganda in the fourth film to chronicle the historic hostage crisis. Eddie Marsan co-stars as Shimon Peres under the direction of José Padilha (Elite Squad, RoboCop, etc).

Released Fri 11 May



Breaking In CERT 15 (88 mins)

Starring **Gabrielle Union, Seth Carr, Ajiona Alexus, Christa Miller, Billy Burke** Directed by **James McTeigue (USA)**

Moving into her late father's Malibu mansion with her two children, Shaun Russell (Gabrielle Union) becomes the unwitting target of four career burglars. But you really shouldn't mess with Shaun... From the director of V for Vendetta.

Released Fri 11 May

The Cured CERT 15 (93 mins)

Starring **Ellen Page, Sam Keeley, Tom Vaughan-Lawlor** Directed by **David Freyne (Ireland/France)**

After the zombie apocalypse, a miracle antidote has rendered the cannibalistic harmless – or, at least, most of them. But the former zombies are finding it hard to re-adjust to normal life, particularly due to the pressures of prejudice and their own disturbing memories... The US reviews have been highly favourable.

Released Fri 11 May



Submergence CERT tbc

Starring **James McAvoy, Alicia Vikander, Ha-keemshady Mohamed, Alexander Siddig, Alex Hafner, Charlotte Rampling** Directed by **Wim Wenders (USA/France/Spain)**

Two lovers find themselves in different parts of the world following a romantic Christmas together. As Danielle prepares to explore the ocean floor in a submersible, James is barricaded into a small room in Africa by jihadist fighters. Based on the novel by J.M. Ledgard.

Released Fri 18 May



Solo: A Star Wars Story

Starring **Alden Ehrenreich, Woody Harrelson, Emilia Clarke, Donald Glover, Thandie Newton, Paul Bettany** Directed by **Ron Howard (USA)**

The milking machine of Lucasfilm Ltd continues apace with this stand-alone instalment of the Star Wars saga. Alden Ehrenreich plays Han Solo as a young man, long before he joined the Rebellion and met Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia. The London-born Emilia Clarke plays Qi'ra, Han's romantic interest, following in the footsteps of fellow English roses Daisy Ridley and Felicity Jones. In 3D.

Released Thurs 24 May

The Breadwinner

CERT 12a (93 mins)

With the voices of **Saara Chaudry, Soma Bhatia, Noorin Gulamgaus** Directed by **Nora Twomey (Canada/Ireland/Luxembourg)**

Based on the children's novel by Deborah Ellis, this Oscar-nominated cartoon features Parvana, a young girl living in Kabul, Afghanistan, under control of the Taliban. In order to provide for her family, she disguises herself as a boy and sustains herself with the fantastical stories she invents. Executive produced by Angelina Jolie.

Released Fri 25 May



Show Dogs CERT PG (92 mins)

Starring **Will Arnett, Natasha Lyonne, with the voices of Ludacris, Jordin Sparks, Stanley Tucci, Alan Cumming** Directed by **Raja Gosnell (USA)**

Max is a Rottweiler who values his machismo reputation. But he's a police dog and when he's ordered to go undercover as a tartered-up show dog, he has to suffer the consequences. From the director of Scooby-Doo and The Smurfs.

Released Fri 25 May



John Piper

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre,
Coventry, Tues 1 May - Thurs 21 June

Official war artist during the Second World War, John Piper visited Coventry the day after the Blitz to make a series of drawings of the ravaged city, in particular of the cathedral and other gutted churches. He returned to Coventry in the 1950s, when he was commissioned, along with Patrick Reyntiens, to design a huge stained glass window for the city's new cathedral.

Given these strong connections to Coventry, it's entirely welcome but not at all surprising that this Tate Liverpool show - the first major exhibition of Piper's work since 2003 - is visiting Warwick Arts Centre.

The display also includes a number of the artist's idyllic images of pre-war rural Britain and a selection of his post-war romantic landscapes.

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Mad King / Fat Knight

PACCAR Room, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 19 May - Sun 23 September

Widely regarded as one of the finest stage actors of his generation, Sir Antony Sher has also made a considerable impact as an artist - and now, for the first time ever, the RSC is hosting an exhibition of his work. The Cape Town-born Sher has taken inspi-



ration from the rehearsal room and on-stage performances to create a visual account of his experiences as an actor. Featuring more than 40 pieces - bringing together large-scale oil paintings with drawings and doodles - the exhibition offers an insight into Sher's preparation for two of his most memorable roles: King Lear and Sir John Falstaff.

Miss Black And Beautiful

MAC, Birmingham, until Sun 1 July

An exhibition of photographs taken by the late Raphael Albert, Miss Black And Beautiful documents numerous black British beauty pageants organised by Albert from the late 1960s onwards. The pageants were a celebration of the 1970s' 'Black is beautiful' aesthetic, the most notable among them being the annual Miss West Indies In Great Britain contest.



Men Of The Docks

Barber Institute, Birmingham, until Sun 9 September

Despite his significant standing in the US, early 20th century painter George Bellows remains a relatively unknown artist here in the UK - a perhaps unsurprising fact given that there are only two of his paintings in British public collections.

One of them, Nude, Miss Bentham, is a 1906 artwork acquired by the Barber in 2015. The other, Men Of The Docks, painted six years afterwards and hailed for its radical urban subject matter, is currently on loan to the Barber from the National Gallery. The two paintings will hang side by side during Men Of The Docks' stay in Birmingham





DIPPY THE ROCK STAR!

After more than 100 years in London, Dippy the Diplodocus is travelling around the UK and spending the summer in Birmingham...

The Natural History Museum's iconic Diplodocus cast - fondly known as Dippy - is currently on tour, and as of 26 May he'll be on display at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG) for the second leg of his road trip.

Tickets to see Dippy are completely free, and there are extensive additional activities taking place during his stay too, including group sleepovers, curator-led tours and even an opportunity to 'dine with Dippy'.

Anticipation of his arrival is building around Birmingham, with more than 76,000 tickets already booked.

"People just love dinosaurs," says Gurminder Kenth, manager at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. "They're so fascinating; they're impressive to look at, and there's just so much to learn from them."

Some visitors may remember the much-loved papier-mâché T-Rex that used to be on display at the museum. With that in mind, Gurminder was keen to make sure that Birmingham was a stop-off destination on Dippy's tour.

Not only have BMAG had to meet the Natural History Museum's credentials to secure Dippy's visit, getting him into the exhibition space will be a significant task. At an impressive 21.3 metres long, 4.3 metres wide and 4.25 metres high, Dippy is expected to take nine days to install, with help from the Natural History Museum's own technical team. It may sound like quite a feat, but with everything having run smoothly in Dorset (the first stop on Dippy's tour), Gurminder doesn't have any concerns. In fact, she's confident that Dippy will look better at BMAG than he ever has before. "Here at Birmingham we differ from the Natural History Museum and Dorset County Museum in that we have a low roof, so I think Dippy will look much bigger and very impressive in our space."

But Dippy certainly won't be on his own in Birmingham. The exhibition in the Gas Hall

will be focusing on the idea of birds as living dinosaurs - as Lukas Large, curator of Natural Science at Birmingham Museums Trust, explains: "We'll be looking at the evolution of birds from their dinosaur ancestors into the animals that we see today, and encouraging people to look at birds in a different way, to get out into nature and engage with wildlife."

Thanks to funds from Friends of Birmingham Museums, BMAG was able to carry out the necessary conservation work on its bird collection, which hasn't been out on display for about 20 years. The birds will now be meeting their 'distant cousin' Dippy.

So it looks like BMAG is fulfilling the Natural History Museum's precedent in encouraging visitors to explore nature, and drawing attention to an array of biodiversity. "That's what's so great about Dippy's tour," adds Gurminder. "Each venue is able to put their own stamp on the exhibition. There'll be different interpretations and different storylines using Dippy, so there'll be a lot of learning throughout the whole tour, which I think is really exciting."

But with Dippy's stay at BMAG coinciding with the May half term and the summer holidays, there's limited opportunity for school trips and events. For this reason, the museum will be focusing on family programmes throughout Dippy's time at the venue. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience what it's like to be a palaeontologist in the giant sand pit, or enjoy fun activities in the Dippy Family Room.

But it's not all just for kids. Lukas himself will be giving tours of the exhibition, and there'll be additional talks from paleontologists Professor Richard Butler and Dean Lomax.

So what is it about Dippy that makes him so iconic? "He's been at the Natural History Museum for over a hundred years," explains

Lukas. "Generations of people have seen him and they always remember him." "It's like Dippy is a rock star," Gurminder adds, "and the people of Birmingham are so excited to see him."

Since his time at the Natural History Museum, Dippy's had a makeover. Those who're familiar with the Diplodocus may notice a few changes, the most notable being his new hands. "The Diplodocus that Dippy is cast from didn't actually have hands when it was found," explains Lukas, "so examples had to be used from a different skeleton. But since digging up more Diplodocus skeletons, we now know what Dippy's real hands would've looked like."

And this isn't the first time that changes have been made to Dippy since his installation in the Natural History Museum. Previously, his tail used to lie flat on the ground; now it's raised, to reflect how a Diplodocus would have used it to balance. "The Natural History Museum used to keep spare parts when Dippy's tail was on the ground, because pieces kept disappearing," Lukas reveals.

With Dippy being such an impressive installation wherever he's displayed, it's hardly surprising that visitors want to take a souvenir home with them. So what does Birmingham have on offer for its Dippy-adoring public? "We're selling a Diplodocus pin badge online, and quite a few of those have already gone," says Gurminder. "There's also the Dippy cuddly toy, which is in high demand at Dorset, and we can't wait to get our hands on that!"

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Dippy visits Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery from 26 May to 9 September. Tickets and more info is available at birminghammuseums.org.uk/bmag/what-s-on/dippy-on-tour-a-natural-history-adventure

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The Handmade Fair

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, Fri 11 - Sun 13 May

Kirstie Allsopp's Handmade Fair makes a welcome return to Warwickshire after its hugely successful Ragley Hall debut last spring. Bringing together Britain's best handmade products, crafts supplies and artisan foods, the show also takes place at Hampton Court Palace, where it's already enjoyed four highly successful years.

Visitors to the Ragley show can learn how to make something for themselves or upcycle a piece they already own.

The show's attractions include the shopping villages, which are 'full to the brim' with handmade products of the highest quality and an impressive range of tools and materials.

There's also the Super Theatre, skills workshops and light creative sessions to enjoy, all hosted by some of the UK's most renowned experts.

This Morning Live

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 May

Inspired by ITV1's This Morning programme and returning for a second year, this four-day lifestyle show features appearances by Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby (pictured), the presenters of the popular daytime television series.

The event boasts numerous lifestyle elements, including fashion & style, food & drink, home, gardening, pets, beauty, and health & wellbeing.

Commenting on the show, ITV's Daytime Managing Director, Emma Gormley, said: "With our fantastic presenting talent and the wonderful mix of content that we'll be taking on the road, this event promises to delight fans of the show across the country."



The Baby Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 18 - Sun 20 May



Sleep-deprived new parents would do well to call on their reserves of energy and get along to this popular show. Widely considered to be the UK's leading pregnancy and parenting event, The Baby Show brings together leading retailers and brands, includes one-to-one demonstrations and provides the opportunity to 'touch, feel and compare' items, enabling shoppers to make an informed decision about their purchases. The show also comes complete with a host of facilities to help you have a hassle-free day.

Oh, and on the Saturday there's a special live screening of Harry and Meghan tying the knot, meaning you can combine baby shopping with royal wedding watching!

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Queen Victoria's Birthday

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire, Sat 26 & Sun 27 May

While our current Queen is celebrating her 92nd birthday, the good folk of Blists Hill are putting out the bunting in honour of another long-reigning monarch. This year's birthday bash for Queen Victoria features a special parade (taking place on both days) and the chance for visitors to try their hand at a range of fun activities using Victorian techniques - candle dipping in the goods shed, anyone? A trip to the pub to toast Her Majesty and a tasty portion of traditional fish & chips should ensure you're splendidly replete as well as delightfully entertained.

Elizabethan Pageant

Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, Sun 6 & Mon 7 May

Queen Elizabeth I herself (not to be confused with our current queen, of course) will apparently be in attendance at this event. And why the devil wouldn't she be, given that it's being advertised as 'the ultimate party palace, featuring a feast of entertainment fit for the Virgin Queen!' Highlights include a colourful procession, impressive horsemanship, falconry displays and storytelling sessions.



Donington Historic Festival

Donington Park, Fri 4 - Sun 6 May

Donington Historic Festival is firmly established as a major fixture on the international historic racing calendar. Featuring hundreds of world-class racing cars, huge numbers of classic car club displays and a wealth of off-track entertainment, the three-day event is this month taking place for the eighth year.



Makers Central

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 5 - Sun 6 May

This brand new event for the maker community brings together crafters, inventors, hobbyists and artists. In attendance at the show will be maker stars from YouTube and social media, while visitors can also watch some top-class demonstrations, try their hand at making, purchase tools and equipment, and check out a range of beautifully handcrafted goods.



Shakespeare Family Homes

Shakespeare's Family Homes, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 26 May - Sun 3 June

There's a fun programme of activities to enjoy at Shakespeare's family homes this half term. Visitors to Shakespeare's Birthplace can be drawn by a caricature artist (but with a Tudor twist!), while anybody attending Shakespeare's New Place can pass judgement on some of the bard's most famous characters, deciding whether they're a supervillain or a hero. Drop in at Hall's Croft if you fancy becoming a fairy or a sprite, while Anne Hathaway's Cottage is the place to head for if you'd enjoy making a bird feeder from recycled materials in the family activity tent. Mary Arden's Farm, meanwhile, is hosting Woolly Week, allowing visitors to try their hand at spinning wool and making a Tudor braid to take home.

Droitwich Spa Food and Drink Festival



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Shropshire Kids Festival The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Sat 19 & Sun 20 May

'Education through fun' lies at the heart of this high-energy festival, with plenty of arts & crafts events and workshops allowing children to get hands-on while they learn. Other popular attractions include 'a battalion of inflatables' for youngsters to bounce around on, a monster obstacle course and some 'not to be

missed' foam parties. Donkey rides, active storytelling, a chance to check out solar activity with the Shropshire Astronomical Society, and a sure-to-be-popular family circus - providing the opportunity to juggle, stilt-walk and unicycle - further add to a weekend of top fun.



Ludlow Spring Festival
 Ludlow Castle, Shropshire,
 Sat 12 & Sun 13 May

Now in its 10th year, this popular festival ably illustrates why Ludlow is one of the country's most reputable foodie towns. The two-day event features more than 200 beers alongside an array of food stalls, with vendors offering delectable delights ranging from artisan flours to charcuterie, award-winning cakes, gourmet sausage rolls and local cheeses. The Marches Transport Festival and a wealth of musical entertainment complete the weekend's programme of attractions.



Telford Balloon and Kite Fiesta

Telford Town Park, Sat 12 & Sun 13 May

Weather permitting, a host of hot-air balloons will take to the skies at this month's Telford Balloon & Kite Fiesta. And Telford residents should be particularly vigilant on the Saturday night, when a number of balloons will be transformed into beautiful floating lanterns to create a special 'night glow'. Acrobatic aerial displays with stunt kites and large-scale kites also feature at this year's event. Balloon flights courtesy of Virgin will be available over the weekend. They are also offering discounted vouchers to purchase with TELFORD50 code until 31 May. Flights can be taken any time during the next 18 months.

Shropshire County Agricultural Show

Greenhouse West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury, Sat 26 May

An event that first took place in the late 19th century, the Shropshire County Agricultural Show is an annual celebration of the local rural community, highlighting the role it plays in people's daily lives. Attracting thousands of visitors each year, the show boasts a wide selection of local produce and a range of live entertainment and music.

Castle Quest

Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire, Mon 28 May - Fri 1 June

If you're a family of riddle-solvers who enjoy have-a-go challenges, Tamworth's Castle Quest is definitely an event for you. Questers test their wits to unravel puzzles from the clues presented, then use the knowledge they acquire to finish the game. But that's not the end of the challenge. The ultimate trial comes afterwards - namely, to walk the Quest grid blindfolded!

The Staffordshire County Show

Staffordshire County Showground, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 May

Staffordshire's annual two-day county show makes a welcome return, complete with its usual eclectic mix of attractions and entertainment. The main-ring programme of events features displays from the JCB Dancing Diggers, the Rockwood Dog Display Team and young farmers floats. Highlights elsewhere at the Showground include falconry, horse shoeing, donkey rides and sheepdog and duck displays.





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Malvern Spring Festival

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 May

One of the venue's first major shows of the year, the RHS Malvern Spring Festival is described as 'opening the door to the summer season'. Visitors can enjoy a walk around the show gardens, gain inspiration from exhibitors in the floral marquee and access hints and tips via a range of talks and demonstrations.

Fascinating stats connected to the show include the fact that the festival site is the size of a staggering 40 football pitches, while on average visitors consume around 18,000 cups of tea and 6,000 pieces of cake every year. So if all that strolling around leaves you needing a breather, it's safe to assume the festival's light refreshments are well worth sampling - so many thousands of tea drinkers and cake eaters surely can't be wrong!

Georgian House Party

Aston Hall, Birmingham, Sat 12 May

Visitors to this event are being invited to 'party like a Georgian', as Aston Hall celebrates its 400th anniversary. Highlights include 'exciting' sword fight duels, the chance to learn the art of fan flirting, an opportunity to experience what went on in coffee houses and an insight into the secret messages a beauty patch could convey.



First World War Activities

RAF Museum, Cosford, Sat 26 May - Sun 3 June

Half-term highlights at Cosford museum include a range of World War One-related activities. As well as the chance to gain an insight into the life of an RAF pilot during the Great War, visitors can take part in drop-in virtual-reality sessions, viewing the content of a World War One aircraft. There's also a 'spot the slang' trail to follow, highlighting the wartime use of slang by service personnel from different countries and backgrounds.

Red By Night

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 19 May

The Black Country Living Museum this month opens 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!



The Coventry Steampunk Carnival

Coventry Transport Museum, Sat 19 - Sun 20 May

A subgenre of science fantasy that reimagines modern technology powered by 19th century steam, steampunk is all the rage nowadays. So why not get along to this three-day event and find out what all the fuss is about. There's plenty of live entertainment to enjoy, including performances by the splendidly named Ichabod Steam And His Animatronic Band. Shopaholics, meanwhile, are sure to find something to their liking in the steampunk market.



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IMPERIGON STAGE

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NORTHLANE

COMEBACK KID **CROWN**

COUNTERPARTS

THE DEVINEARS **PRADA**

ASTROIDBOYS

BRUTALITY **LOATHE**

SIGNATURE STAGE

AS IT IS

MEVSHERO

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BROADSIDE

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CANTSWIM **WOES**

THE ROCK SOUND BREAKOUT STAGE **PALAYE ROYALE**

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Your week-
by-week
listings guide
May 2018

the list



Shrek The Musical at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent - Wed 2 - Sun 13 May

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

What's On

Tues 1 to Sun 6 May



Jon Boden at Theatre Severn,
Shrewsbury

Sun 6 May

Mon 7 to Sun 13 May



Black Honey at The Sugarmill,
Stoke-on-Trent

Thurs 10 May

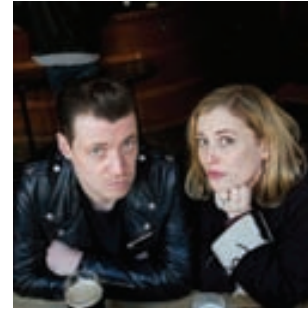
Mon 14 to Sun 20 May



Pasha Kovalev at
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Sun 20 May

Mon 21 to Thurs 31 May



The Rails at Henry Tudor
House, Shrewsbury

Thurs 31 May

THROUGHOUT MAY

Visual Arts

New Art Gallery - Walsall

NEW ANDREW TIFT: IMMORTALISE Andrew presents a range of paintings, drawings, photographs and sketch-books which combine his love of portraiture with experimental works, Fri 25 May - Sun 2 Sept

NEW MAHTAB HUSSAIN - GOING BACK HOME TO WHERE I CAME FROM Exhibition that presents a powerful and poetic reflection on ideas of home, Fri 25 May - Sun 2 Sept

Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

NSAAA EXHIBITION Display of artwork by members of the North Staffs Asperger/Autism Association, until Mon 7 May

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

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 OW BIST Part of a two-year project taking quality art experiences out into rural communities. The groups have tried their hand at textiles, mark making, printing, clay, drumming, Tai Chi, environmental art and creative writing. This exhibition features some of their creations, Thurs 17 May - Fri 15 June

Weston Park, Shifnal

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

SPRING OPEN EXHIBITION 2018 Exhibition of print, mixed-media and metal-work, until Sat 26 May

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

NEW VIKING HEROES Genuine Viking relics, replica objects and projections provide an insight into the Viking world, Sat 12 May - Sun 8 July

NEW QUEEN STREET A look at the history of several properties along Queen Street, Sat 26 May - Sun 22 July

NEW THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY Exhibition which explores the struggles local women faced to gain their

rights and recognition, from Sat 26 May

Other VISUAL ARTS

SARAH ROSS-THOMPSON Sarah specialises in Collagraphy, a printmaking technique which requires a collage block rather than the more traditional use of wood, metal or lino, until Sat 5 May, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Much Wenlock

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, until Sat 19 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

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

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, until Sun 24 June, Lichfield Cathedral

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

NEW INTERNATIONAL GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHER Featuring the winners of Competition 11, which attracted some 19,000 individual entries from over 50 countries, Thurs 3 May - Mon 17 Sept, Jackfield Tile Museum, Telford

NEW RECLAIMING OUR FUTURE Exhibition showcasing a selection of prints from regional, UK and internationally exhibiting photographers, Fri 4 - Wed 30 May, Light House Media Centre, Fryer St, Wolverhampton

NEW MATERIAL STORIES Four women explore evolving narratives, weaving together themes of memory, materials and the passing of time, Sat 5 May - Sat 2 June, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE FINAL YEAR SHOW Joint final-year multimedia exhibition featuring work by students from both the MA Global Media & Cultural Studies programme and the BA Honours Media Communications & Culture programme, Fri 11 - Fri 18 May, Keele University, Staffordshire

NEW SEVERN ARTISTS Exhibition of works by local art group Severn Artists, Thurs 31 May - Thurs 28 June, Wem Town Hall

Gigs

CHRIS HOLMES (W.A.S.P) MEAN MAN Tues 1 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SPICE OF LIFE Tues 1 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

DALEY & ETTA BOND Tues 1 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DON BROCO + THE LA-FONTAINES + YUNGBLUD Tues 1 May, Keele University, Staffordshire

YO LA TENGO Tues 1 May, Birmingham Town Hall

NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS Tues 1 May, Arena B'ham

PLANET OF ZEUS AND LIONIZE Wed 2 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

AN EVENING WITH PUD- DLES PITY PARTY Wed 2 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HER'S, PIZZAGIRL & CHARTREUSE Wed 2 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BABAJACK Wed 2 May, The Robin, Bilston

TEEDRA MOSES Thurs 3 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LE CLUB FONDUE Thurs 3 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE KEEP IT COUNTRY SHOW Thurs 3 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

JOE MCELDERRY Thurs 3 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

FISCHER-Z Thurs 3 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

UK SUBS Thurs 3 May, The Robin, Bilston

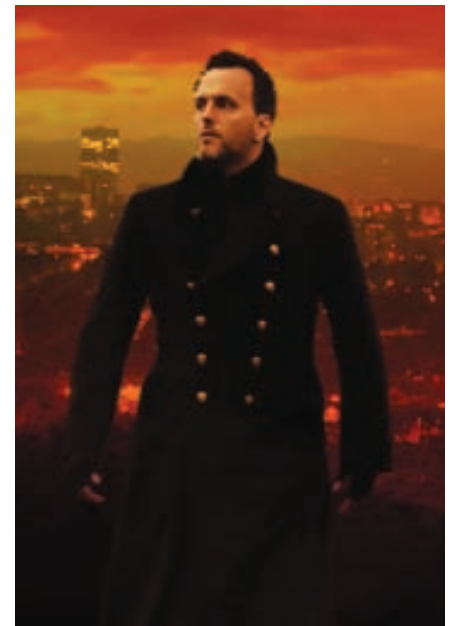
BRAINSTORM Thurs 3 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ERIC BIBB Thurs 3 May, Birmingham Town Hall

CRAZY FOR GERSHWIN Fri 4 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BALAAM & THE ANGEL Fri 4 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

LEGEND - LEGENDS OF ROCK Fri 4 May, The



Jon Boden - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

River Rooms, Stourbridge

DJ RUSSKE LIVE Fri 4 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BRUNO MAJOR Fri 4 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NICKELBACK'D Fri 4 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

BON GIOVI Fri 4 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE VAMPS Fri 4 May, Genting Arena, B'ham

KLASSIDE Fri 4 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GREG RUSSELL Fri 4 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

I Q Sat 5 May, The Robin, Bilston

SURREAL PANTHER Sat 5 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SHANE FILAN Sat 5 May, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

SHREYA GHOSHAL Sat 5 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE ROLLING STONES STORY Sat 5 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

MOMENTUM NIGHT FUNDRAISER FOR FUSE 2018 Sat 5 May, Lichfield Guildhall

TRADAAR Sat 5 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

HOTTER THAN HELL - TRIBUTE TO KISS Sat 5 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SHOWADDYWADDY Sat 5 May, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

LOVE/HATE Sat 5 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

KATE RUSBY Sat 5 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JAZZIE B Sat 5 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE MICHAEL JACKSON HISTORY SHOW Sun 6 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE REMEDY CLUB Sun 6 May, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury

JON BODEN & THE REMNANT KINGS Sun 6 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AMANDA PALMER Sun 6 May, Birmingham Town Hall

APPARITION Sun 6 May, The Robin, Bilston

MAETLOAF & THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS Sun 6 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

WE ARE SCIENTISTS Sun 6 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FULL 100 2018! WITH TARRUS RILEY Sun 6 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

Classical Music

SIR SIMON RATTLE & THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: MAHLER'S NINTH Tues 1 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

SIBELIUS' SECOND Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Edward Gardner (conductor) & Baiba Skride (violin). Programme includes works by Strauss, Prokofiev & Sibelius, Wed 2 - Thurs 3 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SIR LENNY HENRY: PETER AND THE WOLF Sir Lenny Henry narrates the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire opening concert. Christopher Houlding conducts. Programme includes works by Bernstein, Copland, Prokofiev, Elfmán & Williams, Fri 4 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

COALVILLE MALE VOICE CHOIR Programme includes Benedictus, (Carl Jenkins), Morte Christie, Lascia Ch'io Pianga, Gwhodidad, You Raise me Up, Rhythm of Life, The Rose, Let it be Me, Sat 5 May, Birmingham Cathedral

BRUCKNER ORCHESTRA LINZ Featuring Markus Poschner (conductor). Programme includes works by Bruckner & Mozart, Sun 6 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

ROB ROUSE, STEVE GRIBBIN & COMIC TBC Thurs 3 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

WES ZAHARUK, TOM HOUGHTON, RADU ISAC, JACK TOPHER & BARRY DODDS Thurs 3 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

ALISTAIR BARRIE, GEOFF NORCOTT, BEN BRIGGS & DAVE WILLIAMS Thurs 3 May, The George Hotel, Lichfield

TOM STADE Thurs 3 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DALISO CHAPONDA Fri 4 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

IVO GRAHAM Fri 4 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JACK BARRY, SIMON LOMAS & HARVEY HAWKINS Fri 4 May, Cherry Reds Cafe-Bar, Birmingham

ROB ROUSE, STEVE GRIBBIN, MICKEY SHARMA & RADU ISAC Fri 4 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RICK KIESEWETTER, BETHANY BLACK & CHRIS PURCHASE Fri 4 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TOM STADE Fri 4 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

SHAPPI KHORSANDI Sat 5 May, Dudley Town Hall

ROB ROUSE, STEVE GRIBBIN, MICKEY

SHARMA & COMIC TBC Sat 5 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SOL BERNSTEIN, DARREN WALSH, GORDON SOUTHERN & JAMES ALDERSON Sat 5 May, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

CURTIS WALKER, BABATUNDE & NADZ Sat 5 May, MAC, Birmingham

Theatre

EDUCATING RITA Andrew Pollard and Lauryn Redding star in a new staging of Willy Russell's classic comedy, until Sat 5 May, 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 June, 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

ROMEO AND JULIET Shakespeare's most famous story of love at first sight explodes with intense passion in a contemporary production with heart-breaking consequences. Erica Whyman directs, until Fri 21 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE THRILL OF LOVE The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Amanda Whittington's heart-wrenching play, which looks at the life and times of Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, Sat 28 April - Sat 5 May, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

TOM & BUNNY SAVE THE WORLD: THE MUSICAL Fat Rascal Theatre presents an award-winning, gender stereotype-destroying comedy which explores what it's like to be British in a crisis, Tues 1 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Shrek The Musical - Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

YVETTE China Plate present a one-woman show based on a true story about a stolen childhood and growing up with a secret, Tues 1 May, MAC, Birmingham

GALLOWGLASS Classy thriller from the pen of Ruth Rendell, Tues 1 - Sat 5 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BLOOD MONEY Thriller where nothing is as it seems, Thurs 1 - Sat 5 May, Lichfield Garrick

DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE Phil Daniels takes the lead in this staging of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic gothic thriller, Tues 1 - Sat 5 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE BAND Tim Firth's new musical, featuring the music of Take That, Tues 1 - Sat 12 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE TIN SOLDIER Performed by Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre Group, Wed 2 - Fri 4 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE DRILL Award-winning multimedia theatre-makers Breach consider anxieties around security and terrorism, Wed 2 - Sat 5 May, The REP, B'ham

ANTIGONE The Young Rep presents its version of Sophocles' tragedy, which centres on fractured relationships and a city in turmoil, Wed 2 - Sat 5 May, The REP, Birmingham

SHREK THE MUSICAL All-singing, all-dancing musical, where fairytales are turned upside down, Wed 2 - Sun 13 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

AN EVENING OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE Presented by University of Wolverhampton Musical Theatre, Fri 4 - Sat 5 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

QUENTIN CRISP: NAKED HOPE One-man show which charts Crisp's life from the 1970s to his final years, Sat 5 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PLAYHOUSE CREATURES Amateur staging of April De Angelis' moving restoration comedy, Sat 5 - Sat 12

May, Oldbury Rep

Dance

ENCORE: A 3RD YEAR PERFORMING ARTS SHOWCASE The 17 strong cast perform a range of diverse dance works, including Elite Syncopations, choreographed by Sir Kenneth MacMillan with the music of Scott Joplin, Tues 1 May, MAC, Birmingham

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Midlands Theatre Ballet present a choreographed version of the much-loved fairy story, Tues 1 - Sat 5 May, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

JV2 Jasmin Vardimon Company present a triple bill showcasing works by Vardimon and two emerging choreographers - Yunkyung Song and André Rebelo, Wed 2 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

WINDRUSH: MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE Phoenix Dance present a new contemporary dance piece which focuses on the story of some of the first Jamaican people who came to Britain, Fri 4 - Sat 5 May, MAC, Birmingham

ASIAN SPRING DANCE EXTRAVAGANZA Sampad's popular showcase, Sun 6 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Talks

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE REV RICHARD COLES Join the Strictly star as he recounts his experiences both on the dancefloor and backstage, Wed 2 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford

ONCE UPON A WEDNESDAY: JAN BLAKE, OLD WOMEN Jan Blake contemplates what happens when we misjudge our elders, Wed 2 May, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE SQUARE (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Claes Bang, Elisabeth Moss. Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, until Wed 2 May; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 2 May

WONDERSTRUCK (PG) Family/Mystery. Starring Julianne Moore, Michelle Williams. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 3 May

THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL PIE SOCIETY (12a) Drama/History. Starring Lily James, Matthew Goode. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 3 May

THE AFRICAN QUEEN (PG) Drama/Adventure. Starring Humphrey Bogart, Katharine Hepburn. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke, Tues 1 May

THE ICE KING (12A) Documentary. Starring John Curry. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 1 May

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME (15) Drama/Romance. Starring Armie Hammer, Timothée Chalamet.

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 1 May

DARKEST HOUR (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Gary Oldman, Lily James. MAC, Birmingham, Fri 4 May; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 4 & Tues 8 May

PETER RABBIT (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of James Corden, Fayssal Bazzi. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 4 May

A MAN CALLED OVE (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Rolf Lassgård, Bahar Pars. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 4 May

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR (tbc) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Robert Downey Jr, Karen Gillan. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 4 - Thurs 10 May



Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 4 May, showing at selected cinemas

ANON (tbc)

I FEEL PRETTY (12a)

LEAN ON PETE (15)

MARY AND THE WITCH'S FLOWER (U)

TULLY (15)

Events

STEALTH - FINDERS KEEPERS! Put your criminal minds together to pull off Birmingham's biggest heist, Wed 2 - Thurs 3 May, Centrala, Birmingham

SUPERNATURAL OFFICIAL CONVENTION Meet the stars from the show, including Jensen Ackles and Jared Padalecki, Fri 4 - Sun 6 May, NEC, Birmingham

JEWELLERY QUARTER HERITAGE WALK Sat 5 May, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE! Dudley Zoo's annual sponsored charity walk - a 5km stroll around the 40-acre woodland hillside, Sat 5 May, Dudley Zoological Gardens

'FEAST' STREET FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL Sat 5 May, Ingenuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

MAKERS CENTRAL A brand new event bringing together thousands of makers, Sat 5 - Sun 6 May, NEC, B'ham

SANDON SPRING FAIR A celebration of food, craft & family fun, Sat 5 - Sun 6 May, Sandon Hall, Stafford

ARCHERY AT TRENTHAM GARDENS Sat 5

- Mon 7 May, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

SHREWSBURY BOOKFEST Complete with new activities and masterclasses, Sat 5 - Mon 7 May, Shrewsbury Town Centre

STORYTELLING AT TAMWORTH CASTLE Tales of knights, dragons and princesses, Sat 5 - Mon 7 May, Tamworth Castle

SWASHBUCKLING PIRATES A weekend of pirate activities, Sat 5 - Mon 7 May, Cadbury World, Birmingham

GREAT WESTERN TAKEOVER King Edward II makes its last appearance on the railway during the May Bank Holiday, Sat 5 - Mon 7 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Worcestershire

TUG BOATS GATHERING See the canal come alive with traditional tug boats, Sat 5 - Mon 7 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

IRONBRIDGE GORGE WALKING FESTIVAL A programme of 53 free walks in and around the World Heritage Site, Sat 5 - Sun 13 May, Ironbridge Gorge, Telford, Shropshire

GIN AND RUM FESTIVAL Sun 6 May, Burton Market Hall, Burton-upon-Trent

BEAUTIFUL BLUEBELL WALK Join TV's Keith Pybus for the popular Bluebell Walk, Sun 6 May, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

DUDLEY TRAIL Now in its 38th year, Sun 6 May, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

SPRING PLANT FAIR A must-attend event for both plantaholics and novices alike, Sat 6 - Mon 7 May, Weston Park, Staffs

Gigs

JOHN WHEELER Mon 7 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANNY BRYANT Mon 7 May, The Robin, Bilston

JASON DONOVAN Tues 8 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

DAN WALSH TRIO & KYSHONA Tues 8 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

KERRY ELLIS Tues 8 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MARTIN HAYES & DENNIS CAHILL Tues 8 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

CHRISTY MOORE Tues 8 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JASON DONOVAN Wed 9 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CALAN Wed 9 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BROTHERS OSBORNE Wed 9 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TRAGEDY: A METAL TRIBUTE TO THE BEE GEES & BEYOND Wed 9 May, The Robin, Bilston

MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER Wed 9 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ROB HERON & THE TEAPAD ORCHESTRA Thurs 10 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

DAVE DAY Thurs 10 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DON MCLEAN Thurs 10 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BARBARA DICKSON Thurs 10 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

ROXY MAGIC Thurs 10 May, The Robin, Bilston

LAURENCE JONES Thurs 10 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BLACK HONEY Thurs 10 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

NICKELBACK Thurs 10 May, Genting Arena, Birmingham

STRICTLY ABBA Fri 11 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

LIZA SINGS STREISAND Fri 11 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DIIO - A TRIBUTE TO RONNIE JAMES DIO, SAXONISED Fri 11 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

NADINE COYLE Fri 11 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FRUIT & RASCALTON Fri 11 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

WILL POUND'S "THROUGH THE SEASONS" Fri 11 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LET'S HANG ON Fri 11 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KING OF POP - THE LEGEND CONTINUES Fri 11 May, The Robin, Bilston

KATE RUSBY Fri 11 May, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

KING PLEASURE AND THE BISCUIT BOYS Sat 12 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

Sat 12 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RAINBOW RISING Sat 12 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

HEATWAVE & ODYSSEY Sat 12 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LITTLE MIX EXPERIENCE Sat 12 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALEX HITCHCOCK QUIN-TET Sat 12 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

ROCK FOR SPON 7 Sat 12 May, The Robin, Bilston

SHAKATAK Sat 12 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

JUNGLE Sat 12 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

MERCURY - THE ULTIMATE QUEEN TRIBUTE Sat 12 May, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Sat 12 May, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

GAZ COOMBES Sat 12 May, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

ETERNAL FEAR Sat 12 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

SHOW OF HANDS Sun 13 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CATRIN FINCH & SEKKOU KEITA Sun 13 May, Birmingham Town Hall

BLACK COFFEE Sun 13 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BREAST CANCER NOW: PETE BODDIS BAND + FREEWHEELIN' BAND Sun 13 May, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

MIDDAY MUSIC; EMILY SUN (VIOLIN)

Also featuring Jennifer Hughes (piano). Programme includes works by Mozart, Fauré & Igor Frolov, Tues 8 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: BARTÓK'S PIANO CONCERTO

Featuring Kazushi Ono (conductor) & Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano), Wed 9 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BBC PHILHARMONIC; BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH GALA FINALE

Programme includes works by Wagner, Mozart, Weber & Beethoven, Fri 11 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET: FROM BU-DAPEST TO NEW YORK

Programme includes works by Haydn, Bartok & Dvorak's, Sun 13 May, The Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury

Comedy

THE COMEDY HUT Tues 8 May, The Civic, Stourport

JOHN FOTHERGILL, HENRY PARKER, CAREY MARX & STEVE SHANYASKI Wed 9 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

IAN MOORE, SCOTT BENNETT & DAN NIGHTINGALE Wed 9 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

KEITH FARNAN, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 10 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

SIMON EVANS Thurs 10 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

MICHAEL MCINTYRE Thurs 10 - Sun 13 May, Arena Birmingham, Birmingham

SUZI RUFFELL, ANGELA BARNES Fri 11 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KEITH FARNAN, BEC HILL, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN & MARKUS BIRDMAN Fri 11 - Sat 12 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PHILL JUPITUS Sat 12 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROGER MONKHOUSE, BOBBY MAIR, BARRY CASTAGNOLA & LAURA LEXX Sat 12 May, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

PHILL JUPITUS Sun 13 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CRAZY FOR YOU Tom Chambers, Claire Sweeney and Charlotte Wakefield star in a new touring production of the hit musical, Tues 8 - Sat 12 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

AVENUE Q Amateur staging presented by Lichfield Operatic Society, Tues 8 - Sat 12 May, Lichfield Garrick

PYAR ACTUALLY A sparkling new comedy by Sukh Ojla, Tues 8 - Sat 12 May, The REP, Birmingham

THE WIZARD OF OZ Amateur staging presented by Five Towns Theatre, Tues 8 - Sat 12 May, Stoke Rep Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

CALAMITY JANE Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Music Society present an amateur staging of the 'barn-storming' musical, Wed 9 - Sat 12 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

HELLO LA VOIX An evening with the larger-than-life star from Absolutely Fabulous The Movie, Thurs 10 May, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

GODSPELL Presented by Momentum Performing Arts Production in association with South Staffordshire College, Thurs 10 - Fri 11 May, Lichfield Garrick

THE WEDDING RECEPTION Immersive experience from the team behind Fawly Towers The Dining Experience, Thurs 10 - Fri 11 May, The REP, Birmingham

OUR HOUSE Youth Onstage present an amateur staging of the Tim Firth musical set to the songs of Madness, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 May, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

ACÉLÉRÉ Circolombia sing, rock and rap their way through an evening of circus stunts, acrobatics, crazy tricks, flips and aerial work, Sat 10 Mar - Sun 13 May, Clough Hall Park, Stoke-on-Trent



EVENING OF MEDIUMSHIP WITH NIKKI KITT Fri 11 May, MAC, Birmingham

JONNY FLUFFYPUNK: HOW I CAME TO BE WHERE I NEVER WAS A story about finding yourself, unrequited love and the importance of a good record shop, Fri 11 May, Bitterley Village Hall, Nr Ludlow, South Shropshire



Black Honey - The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

Theatre

BETTY BLUE EYES The University of Wolverhampton present a musical comedy based on Alan Bennett's award-winning film, A Private Function, Tues 8 - Wed 9 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ONE WOMAN SEX AND THE CITY A parody on love, friendship and shoes, Fri 11 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SISTER ACT Final-year University of Wolverhampton Musical Theatre students present their version of the feel-good musical comedy, based on the film of the same name, Fri 11 - Sat 12 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

HEROES The Crescent Theatre Company present Tom Stoppard's translation of Gerald Sibley's play, Sat 12 - Sat 19 May, Crescent Theatre, B'ham

THE STRING QUARTET'S GUIDE TO SEX AND ANXIETY New production from one of Europe's most exciting theatre directors, Calixto Bieito, Sat 12 - Sat 19 May, The REP, Birmingham



Kids Show

HOOT OWL Inventive show for children featuring original songs, colourful puppets, animation and rapid costume change, Sat 12 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

Dance

BALLETBOYZ - FOURTEEN DAYS Ballet-Boyz are back with four brand new works and the return of an audience favourite, Wed 9 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BREAK THE LIMITS Students from Steelworks Dance Academy present a groundbreaking show, Wed 9 - Sat 12 May, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

B-SIDE HIP-HOP FESTIVAL 2018 Weekend takeover of dance and rap battles, live music, workshops & graffiti in the streets around the Hippodrome. Lots will be free, with some ticketed and some paid-for events too, Wed 9 - Sun 13 May, B'ham Hippodrome

Talks

MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEGENDS LIVE! Five Midlands football legends talk about their careers - including Ron Atkinson, Paul Merson and Peter Withe. Mon 7 May, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

AN AUDIENCE WITH SIMON KING The star of Springwatch and Big Cat Diary talks about his adventures as a wildlife filmmaker, Wed 9 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

EDDIE HALL - THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN Spend an evening with World's Strongest Man Eddie Hall, as he talks through his journey from being a young rebellious child to becoming The Beast, Thurs 10 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

MONOLOGUESLAM MASTERCLASS 2018 Workshop analysing how to perform a monologue, Sat 12 May, The REP, Birmingham

NARCOS - CAPTURING PABLO AND THE CALI CARTEL Meet the men who were the inspiration behind hit Netflix TV series NARCOS, Sat 12 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN (PG) Musical. Starring Hugh Jackman, Zac Efron. This showing is a sing-a-long. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Mon 7 May

LADY BIRD (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Laurie Metcalf. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 8 May



Sat 5 May
10.30am - 4pm
Severn Street, Low Town,
Bridgnorth, Shropshire
WV14 6BB

Sat 23 June
10.30am - 4pm
Whitchurch Civic Centre
High Street, Whitchurch
SY13 1AX

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OKLAHOMA! (U) Drama/Musical. Starring Gordon MacRae, Gloria Grames. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Tues 8 May

MY GENERATION (12A) Documentary. Starring Michael Caine, David Bailey. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 8 - Wed 9 May

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (15) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Tues 8 & Fri 11 May

70 YEARS FROM NAKBA: A PROGRAMME OF PALSTINIAN SHORTS This programme of nine shorts includes the work of young and established Palestinian filmmakers. Foreign language, subtitled. MAC, Birmingham, Wed 9 May

YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE (15) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Dante Pereira-Olson. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 11 - Thurs 17 May

THE ITALIAN JOB (PG) Action/Comedy. Starring Michael Caine, Noël Coward. Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sat 12 May



NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 11 May, showing at selected cinemas

BREAKING IN (15)

ENTEBBE (12a)

HOW TO TALK TO GIRLS AT PARTIES (15)

LIFE OF THE PARTY (12a)

REDOUBTABLE (15)

LIFE OF THE PARTY (12a)

REDOUBTABLE (15)

SHERLOCK GNOMES (U)

THE CURED (15)

Events

MARVELLOUS MAY DAY A day of family fun, Mon 7 May, Worcestershire County Museum, Kidderminster

MAY DAY! Morris dancing, maypole dancing, games and more, Mon 7 May, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS Grab a maypole ribbon and join the traditional

dancers, Mon 7 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

BODYPOWER EXPO 2018 Fitness event, inspiring and motivating 90,000-plus health & fitness enthusiasts, Fri 11 - Sun 13 May, NEC, Birmingham

HANDICRAFT WEEKEND Craft makers are offered the chance to focus on the handmade parts of the collection; from lace to embroidery, Fri 11 - Mon 14 May, Sunnycroft, Wellington, Shropshire

INFLATABLE 5K OBSTACLE RUN Pit your wits against 10 giant inflatable obstacles on a fun 5k course, Sat 12 May, Wolverhampton Racecourse

BEHIND THE SCENES TOURS Sat 12 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS - A DRAMATIC, COSTUMED EVENING TOUR OF ATTINGHAM Sat 12 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

400 YEARS OF ASTON HALL: GEORGIAN HOUSE PARTY Witness sword fight duels, learn the art of fan flirting, experience what went on in coffee houses, and find out what secret messages a beauty patch can tell you, Sat 12 May, Aston Hall, B'ham

MONOLOGUESLAM MASTERCLASS 2018 Workshop led by Darren RL Gordon, Sat 12 May, The REP, Birmingham

ZOMBIE ESCAPE RACE Zombies have taken over Hawkstone Park follies and the safe zone is on the other side. Do you have what it takes to make it through the 5k route of caves, obstacles and mud with your three lives still intact? Sat 12 May, Hawkstone Park & Follies, Shrewsbury

TELFORD BALLOON AND KITE FIESTA Acrobatic aerial displays with stunt kites and large-scale kites, Sat 12 - Sun 13 May, Telford Town Park, Shropshire



WOOL @ J13 A wool festival for knitters, crochet fans, felters, spinners and yarn specialists alike, Sat 12 - Sun 13 May, Lower Drayton Farm, Nr Penkridge

LUDLOW SPRING FESTIVAL Beer, bangers, bread and classic cars, Sat 12 - Sun 13 May, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

STOURPORT STEAMPUNK & VINTAGE SPECTACULAR Costume and gadget displays, tea duelling and a vintage fashion show, Sun 13 May, The Civic, Stourport

BRITISH MINI DAY Featuring Minis from 1959 to the present, Sun 13 May, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley



B-Side Hip-Hop Festival 2018

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 9 - Sun 13 May

Birmingham Hippodrome's free annual festival celebrating all things hip-hop makes a welcome return.

Now in its third year, B-SIDE Hip-Hop Festival features outdoor performances, pop-up dance events, interactive talks, live graffiti art and a programme of high-energy workshops. For more information, visit birminghamhippodrome.com/bside and facebook.com/bside2018



British Mini Day - Himley Park, Dudley

Lichfield Arts
Blues & Jazz
Festival 2018

Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd June
 Lichfield Guildhall
 Cathedral Hotel
 Lichfield Sports Club
 Wade Street Church

King Pleasure & the Biscuit Boys
 Stan Webb's Chicken Shack
 Robert Jackson
 Emma Jonson
 Boogie-Woogie Quartet
 Zoe Green Band
 Steve Ajao's Blues Giants
 The Shooters
 Theo Travis Double Talk
 Sara Gillespie Quartet
 Walsall Jazz Orchestra
 Imperial Strut
 Tom Lindsay Trio
 Three Step Manoeuvre
 Tom Morgan Trio
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Exhibition | Andrew Jackson: From a Small Island

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Gigs

NORA FISCHER Mon 14 May, Birmingham Town Hall

THE BLUETONES Mon 14 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FOREIGNER Tues 15 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

IAN MOSS Tues 15 May, The Robin, Bilston

JON ALLEN Tues 15 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

REMI HARRIS TRIO Wed 16 May, Lichfield Guildhall

RITA ORA Wed 16 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

TAKING PART - ESCAPE Wed 16 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WALK RIGHT BACK - THE STORY OF THE EVERLY BROTHERS Wed 16 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

STEPHEN DALE PETIT Wed 16 May, Albert's Shed Bar, Shrewsbury

JOSH T. PEARSON Wed 16 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARA COLMAN Wed 16 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NILS LOFGREN Wed 16 May, Birmingham Town Hall

NINA NESBITT Wed 16 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK - THE ROD STEWART STORY Thurs 17 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SLOW READERS CLUB Thurs 17 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

PLANET DURAN Thurs 17 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE MEAT LOAF STORY Thurs 17 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shrops

MACHINE HEAD Thurs 17 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Thurs 17 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffs

CONAN AND MONOLORD

Thurs 17 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WEST COAST EAGLES Thurs 17 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BLACKWATERS Thurs 17 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

CATAPULT CLUB FEAT. ROOKIE Fri 18 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE CHRISTIANS & HUE AND CRY Fri 18 May, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

RAYMOND FROGGATT Fri 18 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

A SYMPHONY OF HORROR Fri 18 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE Fri 18 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shrops

GALLUS COOPER AND MAIDEN SCOTLAND Fri 18 May, The Robin, Bilston

A PARAMORE PARTY Fri 18 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ICONIC EYE Fri 18 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

AERYNN Fri 18 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

BLACKWATERS + FEED-BACC + SPECIAL GUESTS Fri 18 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE BORN AGAIN BEATLES Fri 18 May, Lichfield Guildhall

REBECCA DOWNES Fri 18 May, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton



A COUNTRY NIGHT IN NASHVILLE Fri 18 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

NORTHERN SOUL NIGHT Sat 19 May, Birch-

meadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

DILJIT DOSANJH Sat 19 May, Arena B'ham

BOOT LED ZEPPELIN Sat 19 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

HANNAH SANDERS & BEN SAVAGE Sat 19 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

THE CUTKELVINS Sat 19 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SARA COX PRESENTS JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH 80S Sat 19 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GROOVE CITY Sat 19 May, Albert's Shed Bar, Shrewsbury

FOO FIGHTERS GB Sat 19 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ULTRA 90S Sat 19 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

EXPLOSIVE LIGHT ORCHESTRA Sat 19 May, The Robin, Bilston

OUT OF TIME MOD NIGHT 4TH ANNIVERSARY Sat 19 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

STONE BROKEN Sat 19 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HEAVEN 17 AND THE LIGHTNING SEEDS Sat 19 May, Uttoxeter Racecourse

MOTHERSHIP - LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE Sun 20 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

REAL TO REEL Sun 20 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE CHRISTIANS & HUE AND CRY Sun 20 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

MURDER BALLAD Sun 20 - Mon 21 May, Albert's Shed Bar, Shrewsbury

TY Sun 20 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SPACE ELEVATOR Sun 20 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SCOTT MATTHEWS Sun 20 May, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

JUST FLOYD Sun 20 May, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Handel, J.C Pepsusch, W. Russell, A. Hollins & H. Mulet, Mon 14 May, Birmingham Town Hall

MIDDAY MUSIC: BRAHMS, FAURÉ & TOMASI Featuring Doris Kuo (violin) & Ella Lee (piano), Mon 14 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: MARVELLOUS MOZART Featuring Reinhard Goebel (conductor) & Mirijam Contzen (violin). Programme comprises J.C.Bach's Amadis de Gaule: Suite, 20'; Mozart's Violin Concerto in D major, K.271a, 29' & Symphony No. 36 in C Major (Linz), 28'; Mozart Idomeneo: ballet music, 10', Wed 16 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: MOZART'S HORN QUINTET Featuring Michael Kidd (horn), Charlotte Skinner (violin), Catherine Bower & Amy Thomas (violins) & Catherine Ardagh-Walter (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven & Mozart, Fri 18 May, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: FAMILY FILM FAVOURITES Featuring Holly Mathieson (conductor) & Catherine Arlidge (presenter). Programme includes music from The Incredibles, Harry Potter, Frozen, Pirates of the Caribbean, Star Wars, The Lion King, Wallace and Gromit, Mary Poppins & The Hobbit, Sun 20 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

LEE NELSON Wed 16 May, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST Wed 16 May, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

ROGER MONKHOUSE, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 17 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DALISO CHAPONDA Fri 18 May, Birmingham Town Hall

CHRIS RAMSEY Fri 18 May, Dudley Town Hall

GLENN WOOL Fri 18 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JASON BYRNE, PETE FIRMAN & BRENDON BURNS Fri 18 May, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

ROGER MONKHOUSE, RUDI LICKWOOD, PAUL MYREHAUG & MARK SIMMONS Fri 18 - Sat 19 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVID BADDIEL Sat 19 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LUCY PORTER Sat 19 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROB ROUSE, TOM TOAL, TUDUR OWEN & CAIMH MCDONNELL Sat 19 May, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ADAM VINCENT, DANNY DEEGAN & KEITH CARTER AS NIGE Sat 19 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

STUART GOLDSMITH Sun 20 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

MARK STEEL Sun 20 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH The Nonentities present an amateur staging of Alan Ayckbourn's character comedy, Mon 14 - Sat 19 May, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

HITZ FROM THE BLITZ 1940'S MATINEE SHOW A nostalgic afternoon featuring wartime hits from Glenn Miller, Anne Shelton, Vera Lynn and more, courtesy of Five Star Swing, Tues 15 May, Dudley Town Hall

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL Musical parody starring Cheryl Fergison (EastEnders), Maureen Nolan (The Nolans), Rebecca Wheatley (Casualty) and Hilary O'Neil (ITV's Copy Cats) star, Tues 15 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MADE IN DAGENHAM Curtain Call Theatre Company present an amateur staging of the hit musical comedy, Tues 15 - Thurs 17 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS Amateur staging presented by The Mellow Dramatics, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

DON'T PANIC! Porthill Players present an amateur production based on the hit BBC sitcom, Dad's Army, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, Stoke Rep Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT 'Riotous' comedy featuring misfit knights, killer rabbits, dancing nuns and ferocious Frenchmen, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN Nikolai Foster's musical staging of the Oscar-winning film starring Richard Gere. Soundtrack includes Up Where We Belong, Girls Just Want To Have Fun & Material Girl, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

LOVE FROM A STRANGER Brand new production of Agatha Christie's rarely seen thriller, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

SOME MOTHERS DO 'AVE 'EM Joe Pasquale stars as the hapless Frank Spencer and Sarah Earnshaw as his long-suffering wife, Betty, in the stage

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25 MAY



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26 MAY



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27 MAY



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DANNY BRYANT
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THE YOUNG MAN WRESTLING CREW

WED 9 MAY + WHITE TIGER + DEAD HAPPY
TRAGEDY: ALL METAL BEE GEES & BEYOND
DISCO DEMOLITION NIGHT

THU 10 MAY
ROXY MAGIC

FRI 11 MAY ON STAGE 8.30pm
NAVI AS MICHAEL JACKSON

SAT 12 MAY
ROCK FOR SPON 7
THE NEW SAINTS - PISTON
40 - WAYNE BOON JONES

SUN 13 MAY 11.00am - 3.00pm
RECORD & CD FAIR

SUN 13 MAY CHARITY SHOW
BREAST CANCER NOW
PETE BODDIS BAND +
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TUE 16 MAY FROM COLD CHISEL
IAN MOSS

THU 17 MAY + PLATINUM BLONDIE
PLANET DURAN - TRIP TO
DURAN DURAN

FRI 18 MAY
GALLUS COOPER + MAIDEN SCOTLAND

SAT 19 MAY TRIP TO JEFF LYNNE & ELO
EXPLOSIVE LIGHT ORCHESTRA

SUN 20 MAY (AFT) DOORS 12noon
JUST FLOYD

SUN 20 MAY (EVE) REAL TO REEL
MARILLION
TRIBUTE - THE EARLY YEARS

MON 21 MAY ALL SEATED SHOW
THE RUTLES

WED 23 MAY PLANO MAN
THE MUSIC OF
BILLY JOEL

THU 24 MAY BLUES DOUBLE
CHRIS BEVINGTON ORG
+ BIG WOLF BAND
ALL SEATED LAUNCH

FRI 25 MAY + HONORABLE + SKASTUGA
SEX PISSED DOLLS

SAT 26 MAY SOUL & MOTOWN PARTY
SOUL'D OUT

SUN 27 MAY CLASSIC ROCK DOUBLE
DEF LEPPARD (HYSTERIA)
+ OZZY/RANDY RHOADS
TALK OF THE DEVIL

TUE 29 MAY
EMMA STEVENS
+ MATT BRADFORD
+ SAM DRAISEY

WED 30 MAY + JACK CATTILL
IAN PARKER
WITH HIS BAND

THU 31 MAY + STEVE HILL
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What's on...



Tuesday 8 May, 7.30pm
JASON DONOVAN...AND HIS AMAZING MIDLIFE CRISIS



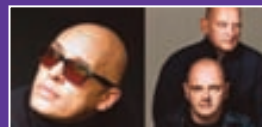
Wednesday 9 May, 7.30pm
AN AUDIENCE WITH SIMON KING



Friday 18 May, 5.00pm & 8.00pm
MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL



Saturday 19 May, 7.30pm
RADIO ACTIVE



Sunday 20 May, 7.30pm
THE CHRISTIANS & HUE AND CRY



Wednesday 23 May, 7.30pm
AN AUDIENCE WITH KATE HUMBLE



Sunday 27 May, 2.00pm
BIG FISH LITTLE FISH



Monday 4 June, 2.00pm
LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY



Thursday 7 June, 7.30pm
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version of the hit 1970s sitcom, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HALF A SIXPENCE Amateur staging of the classic family show, presented by Brownhills Musical Theatre Company, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, Lichfield Garrick

HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Arthur Conan Doyle's spinechilling mystery, Tues 15 - Sat 19 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ME AND MY GIRL Amateur staging of the famous Broadway musical, Wed 16 - Sat 19 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

WEST SIDE STORY Amateur staging presented by Aldridge Musical Comedy Society, Wed 16 - Sat 19 May, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

WHISKY GALORE New adaptation of Compton Mackenzie's novel, paying tribute to the feisty all-female touring companies of the post-war years, Wed 16 May - Sat 2 June, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

FORBIDDEN NIGHTS Featuring acrobats, fire acts, aerial artists and circus performers, Thurs 17 May, The Civic, Stourport-on-Severn

TRUTH New show which looks at the once-simple notion of truth in the messy modern age of fake news, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 May, The REP, Birmingham

SHEN YUN Featuring one of the world's oldest art forms - classical Chinese dance, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 May, International Convention Centre (ICC), Birmingham

RICH STOKES: I'M NOT FINE One-man musical tackling the subjects of anxiety, masculinity, parenthood and sewage through the medium of comedy, songs and storytelling, Fri 18 May, MAC, Birmingham

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL Musical parody starring Cheryl Ferguson (EastEnders), Maureen Nolan (The Nolans) and Rebecca Wheatley (Casualty) and Hilary O'Neil (ITV's Copy Cats) star, Fri 18 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

JAMES PHELAN: TRICKSTER Nephew of the late Paul Daniels, James presents a unique magical prank show, Sat 19 May, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

RADIO ACTIVE Classic scripts from the award-winning BBC Radio Four show, presented live on stage, Sat 19 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford

NUKETOWN Combined storytelling and protest art project about cities, public money and the possible end of life as we know it, Sat 19 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

VERTIGO Birmingham Institute of Theatre Arts present a showcase of musical theatre, Sat 19 - Sun 20 May, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

Kids Shows

SARAH AND DUCK'S BIG TOP BIRTHDAY Brand new stage show featuring characters from the BAFTA Award-winning CBeebies show, Mon 14 - Tues 15 May, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE MAGIC HAT SHOP Children's musical show featuring original songs, interactive adventures and larger-than-life historical characters, Sat 19 May, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE Interactive new show for all the family, Sat 19 - Sun 20 May, Birmingham Town Hall

Dance

BALLETBOYZ - FOURTEEN DAYS Ballet-Boyz are back with four brand new works and the return of an audience favourite, Mon 14 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

RHYTHM OF THE NIGHT - WITH IAN WAITE & OTI MABUSE A night of Latin & ballroom numbers, delivered with Ian & Oti's trademark high intensity, Sat 19 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

PASHA KOVALEV'S THE MAGIC OF HOLLYWOOD Lights, Camera... Ballroom. Pasha Kovalev (from BBC TV's Strictly Come Dancing) returns with a brand new show packed with sequins, glitz and glamour, Sat 19 May, Dudley Town Hall

PASHA KOVALEV'S THE MAGIC OF HOLLYWOOD Lights, Camera... Ballroom. Pasha Kovalev (from BBC TV's Strictly Come Dancing) returns with a brand new show packed with sequins, glitz and glamour, Sun 20 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

GOODBYE CHRISTOPHER ROBIN (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Domhnall Gleeson, Margot Robbie. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 14 May

LAND OF MINE (15) History/War. Starring Roland Møller, Louis Hofmann. Foreign language, subtitled. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 15 May

GONE WITH THE WIND (PG) Drama/History. Starring Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke, Tues 15 May

THE WHITE KNIGHTS (12) Drama. Starring Vincent Lindon, Louise Bourgoïn. Foreign language, subtitled. The



Pasha Kovalev's *The Magic Of Hollywood* - Dudley Town Hall & Wolves Grand Theatre

Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 18 May

GHOST STORIES (15) Drama/Horror. Starring Alex Lawther, Martin Freeman. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 18 - Tues 22 May

FUNNY COW (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Maxine Peake, Paddy Considine. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 18 - Sat 24 May

THE LEISURE SEEKER (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Helen Mirren, Donald Sutherland. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 18 - Sat 24 May

DIRTY DANCING (15) Drama/Music. Starring Patrick Swayze, Jennifer Grey. Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sat 19 May

THE DAM BUSTERS (U) Drama/History. Starring Richard Todd, Michael Redgrave. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sun 20 May

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Tues 15 May, showing at selected cinemas

DEADPOOL 2 (tbc)

Released from Fri 18 May, showing at selected cinemas

ON CHESIL BEACH (15)

SUBMERGENCE (15)

Events

SPRING DIESEL FESTIVAL Featuring heritage and mainline diesels, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THIS MORNING LIVE Live version of the This Morning TV show, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 May, NEC, Birmingham

THE HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS Fri 18 May, Genting Arena, Birmingham

BIG BANG VW festival featuring drag

racing with monster trucks and much more, Fri 18 - Sun 20 May, Santa Pod Raceway, Northants

100 COCKPITS AND CABS Get a closer look inside 100 cockpits and vehicles, Sat 19 May, RAF Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire

RED BY NIGHT Skilled craftsmen and live demonstrations bring the reality of 'black by day, red by night' to life, Sat 19 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SCI-FI WEEKEND Travel by Earth Train to the planet Consall, or beam in dressed as your favourite superhero, to join forces with Dr Who as he tries to thwart the deadly Daleks, Sat 19 - Sun 20 May, Churnet Valley Railway, Froghall, Staffs

INDUSTRIAL MIGHT Discover the awe-inspiring industrial might of the Black Country, Sat 19 - Sun 20 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

MIDLANDS AIR FESTIVAL Air display, with classic WWI & II fighters, high-energy aerobatics, classic jets, flying circus, parachutes, helicopters and gyrocopter. There will also be a full hot-air balloon festival, with up to 50 balloons, Fri 18 - Sun 20 May, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

WAKE UP THE ZOO Follow the keepers as they go about their daily duties, Sun 20 May, Dudley Zoological Gardens

WOOL-VES YARNIVAL Demonstrations of traditional crafts, Sun 20 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

DRAGON BOAT RACING All-action event with teams battling it out in Chinese Dragon Boats, Sun 20 May, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

MIXED TRACTION DAY Enjoy a ride on a number of steam and diesel trains operating along the line, Sun 20 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

The Loft

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2nd May, 7.30pm
Once upon a Wednesday
Jan Blake - Old Women
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10th May, 8pm
Simon Evans: Genius
Tickets: £14

15th - 19th May, 7.30pm
2.30pm Sat mat
The Mellow Dramatics present
Dirty Rotten Scoundrels The Musical
Tickets: £10 - £12

25th May, 7pm
Beer Town Film Festival
Tickets: £5, £10 Sat Mt

26th May, 7.30pm
Now That's What I Call... Three's Company
Tickets: £12

2nd June, 11am & 2.30pm
Tom Adams: My Dad, The Magician
Tickets: £7, Family of 4 for £25

6th June, 7.30pm
Once upon a Wednesday
Shonaleigh, The Emerald Sea
Tickets: £6, £8 otd

7th June, 7.30pm
Red Ladder Theatre
Damned United
Tickets: £12, £10 conc.

9th June, 7.30pm
Patsy Cline & Friends
Tickets: £17.50

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Gigs

TOMMY EMMANUEL
Mon 21 May, Birmingham Town Hall

THE RUTLES MAJOR HAPPY TOUR 2018 Mon 21 May, The Robin, Bilston

COURTNEY PINE Mon 21 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

GAZ COOMBES Mon 21 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

STACEY KENT Tues 22 May, Lichfield Garrick

INK. Tues 22 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

CHRIS KING Tues 22 May, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

BRYDE Wed 23 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

DIRE STRAITS UK Wed 23 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NO AMPS, NO CHAT, NO CHARGE Wed 23 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

PIANO MAN - THE MUSIC OF BILLY JOEL Wed 23 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE CHRIS BEVINGTON ORGANISATION Thurs 24 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE UP-BEAT BEATLES Thurs 24 May, Lichfield Garrick

BREBACH Thurs 24 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PEACE Thurs 24 May, O2 Academy, B'ham



COCO AND THE BUTTERFIELDS Thurs 24 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

ANDY RICHARDS Thurs 24 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

MILES KANE Thurs 24 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BIRMINGHAM CONSER-

VATOIRE FOLK ENSEMBLE Thurs 24 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

JAPANESE BREAKFAST Thurs 24 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HATS OFF TO LED ZEPPELIN Fri 25 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

BRYAN ADAMS Fri 25 May, Genting Arena, Birmingham

BOWIE EXPERIENCE Fri 25 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE COURTBETWEENERS Fri 25 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CATAPULT CLUB FEAT. LONDON BLACK Fri 25 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE WEDDING PRESENT - "TOMMY" 30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Fri 25 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

BON GIOVI Fri 25 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

80'S NIGHT: THE BREAKFAST CLUB, Fri 25 May, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

THE SEX PISSED DOLLS Fri 25 May, The Robin, Bilston

GRETCHEN PETERS Fri 25 May, Birmingham Town Hall

LIVE AND PICKING Fri 25 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE DMA'S Fri 25 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE HUNNA Fri 25 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

HATS OFF TO LED ZEPPELIN Sat 26 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

THE SLOW READERS CLUB Sat 26 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN Sat 26 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE UPTOWN MONOTONES Sat 26 May, Albert's Shed Bar, Shrewsbury

FATMAN ALLEY Sat 26 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ENEMO J Sat 26 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

VOICE OF THE HEART - KAREN CARPENTER Sat 26 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SOFT MACHINE Sat 26 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Sat 26 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KIRVANA (NIRVANA TRIBUTE BAND) Sat 26 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

THE BEAT, BUZZCOCKS, THE SELECTER & STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Sun 27 May, Genting Arena, Birmingham

THE MIGHTY VIPERS Sun 27 May, Albert's Shed Bar, Shrewsbury

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN - CARPENTERS Sun 27 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HYSTERIA AND TALK OF THE DEVIL Sun 27 May, The Robin, Bilston

SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL Mon 28 May, NEC, Birmingham

A CHANGE IS GONNA COME Tues 29 May, Birmingham Town Hall

BROOKE CANDY Tues 29 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

EMMA STEVENS Tues 29 May, The Robin, Bilston

IAN PARKER & HIS BAND Wed 30 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE SHADES Thurs 31 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KING KING Thurs 31 May, The Robin, Bilston

KENT DUCHAINE Thurs 31 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE RAILS Thurs 31 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



Classical Music

BEETHOVEN'S TRIPLE CONCERTO Featuring Hagai Shaham (violin), Arnon Erez (piano), Raphael Wallfisch (cello) & David Curtis (conductor). Programme comprises Beethoven's Coriolan Overture, Op.62 & Triple Concerto in C major, Op.56 plus Mendelssohn's Symphony No4 in A major, Op.90 'Italian', Wed 23 May, Birmingham Town Hall

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: PROKOFIEV AND BERNSTEIN Featuring Ludovic Morlot (conductor) & Tasmin Little (violin). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Bernstein & Prokofiev, Thurs 24 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOSEPH CALLEJA AND THE CBSO Also featuring Andrew Greenwood (conductor). Programme includes works by Verdi, Massenet, Bizet, Cilea, Puccini & Offenbach d'Hoffmann, Fri 25 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE OPERA BOYS Sat 26 May, Lichfield Garrick

BENJAMIN GROSVENOR & FRIENDS: BRAHMS AND SCHUBERT. Featuring Hyeyoon Park (violin), Brett Dean (viola), Kian Soltani (cello) & Leon Bosch (double bass), Sat 26 May, Birmingham Town Hall

A SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE Featuring Llyr Williams on piano. Programme includes works by Schubert, Sun 27 May, Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN Featuring Julian Lloyd Webber (conductor) & Jian Wang & Jiaxin Lloyd Webber (cellos). Programme includes works by Elgar, Haydn & Vivaldi, Mon 28 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: FAURÉ'S REQUIEM Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), CBSO Chorus & CBSO Children's Chorus. Programme includes works by Boulanger & Fauré, Thurs 31 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

TOADALLY FREE COMEDY! Mon 21 May, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

SIMON EVANS Tues 22 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CHRIS RAMSEY Wed 23 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BILAL ZAFAR Thurs 24 May, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

ALLYSON SMITH, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 24 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

JASON MANFORD Fri 25 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ANDREW BIRD, WILL DUGGAN & CHRIS PURCHASE Fri 25 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CHRIS RAMSEY Fri 25 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LARRY DEAN Fri 25 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ALLYSON SMITH, ELLIOT STEEL, TANYALEE DAVIS & COMIC TBC Fri 25 - Sat 26 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

JEREMY HARDY Fri 25 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

TOM STADE Fri 25 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NICK DOODY, DAVE LONGLEY, FUNMBI OMOTAYO & ANDREW ROBINSON Sat 26 May, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 26 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

IMPROV COMEDY WITH BOX OF FROGS Sun 27 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

TIM VINE Wed 30 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

NICK DOODY, JIMMY MCGHIE & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 31 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HAL CRUTTENDEN Thurs 31 May, Lichfield Garrick

Theatre

THE DAMNED UNITED Adaptation of David Peace's ingenious novel about legendary football manager Brian Clough, Mon 21 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL Smash-hit musical starring Lucie Jones, Rita Simons and Bill Ward, Mon 21 - Sat 26 May, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ART Nigel Havers, Denis Lawson and Stephen Tompkinson star in the award-winning comedy, Mon 21 - Sat 26 May, Birmingham Hippodrome



DELIVERED DOZEN - A MINERS' TALE The true story of the Nine Locks Ordeal - a mining disaster in the Black Country in 1869, Tues 22 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PSYCHIC SALLY An evening with the award-winning medium, Tues 22 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE Hayley Tamaddon takes the lead in the Tony



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Award-winning musical based on the 1967 film of the same name, Tues 22 - Sat 26 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

GOLDILOCK, STOCK & THREE SMOKING BEARS Original alternative comedy, Wed 23 - Fri 25 May, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

DARK CORNERS New storytelling performance from Polarbear (aka spoken word artist Steven Camden) about how the decisions we're scared to make can come back to haunt us, Wed 23 - Sat 26 May, The REP, Birmingham

OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD True story of a group of convicts and a young officer who rehearse and perform Australia's first theatrical production, Wed 23 May - Sat 2 June, The REP, B'ham

KING LEAR Return of Gregory Doran's acclaimed production, starring Antony Sher, Wed 23 May - Sat 9 June, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL Musical parody starring Cheryl Fergison (EastEnders), Maureen Nolan (The Nolans), Rebecca Wheatley (Casualty) and Hilary O'Neil (ITV's Copy Cats) star, Thurs 24 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE Tower Players presents its version of one of Agatha Christie's darkest tales, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 May, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE JEFF ASTLE STORY Celebration of the life of the West Brom footballing hero. All proceeds go to the Jeff Astle Foundation, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 May, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CATALOGUE D'EMOJIS Interdisciplinary music theatre event fusing traditional piano playing with text, movement, games and virtuosity, Sat 26 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

MORGAN & WEST: TRAVELLING MAGICIANS Featuring 'baffling magic, unparalleled precognitive powers and a genuine ability to travel through time', Sat 26 May (8pm), Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

URINETOWN THE MUSICAL Presented by the Crescent Theatre Company, Sat 26 May - Sat 2 June, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

GINGER JOHNSON: GLAMOROUS GRAN AND OTHER TALL STORIES A lively collection of original children's stories inspired by the lives of LGBTQIA+ people, Sun 27 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOHN HEGLEY: ALL HAIL THE SNAIL Poet John Hegley takes his audience on a humorous journey through his living library of poems, songs, stories and animal drawings, Tues 29 May, MAC, Birmingham

84 CHARING CROSS ROAD Stefanie Powers stars in the stage version of

Helene Hanff's bestselling book, Tues 29 May - Sat 2 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

STOMP Smash-hit production, combining dance, comedy and music, in which familiar objects - dustbin lids, plastic bags and newspapers - are used to create a universal language, Tues 29 May - Sat 2 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

FRANKENSTEIN 1899 Don't Go Into The Cellar present a reimagining of Mary Shelley's Gothic horror story, Wed 30 May, The Civic, Stourport-on-Severn

JOHN FILLMORE FLYING VISIT The writer and star of the award-winning BBC radio programme brings his brand new live show to the stage, Wed 30 May, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

GREASE Get Your Wiglet On present an amateur staging of the original high school musical, Wed 30 May - Sat 2 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DEAR CHOCOLATE SOLDIER Historical Theatre Company present a docudrama based on the First World War letters of Bombadier Edwin Hadsall, Thurs 31 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

CONCUBINE Amhara Spence's one-woman show exploring womanhood, sexuality and faith, Thurs 31 May - Sat 2 June, The REP, Birmingham

NEVILLE'S ISLAND The Albrighton Players present an amateur staging of Tim Firth's comedy, Thurs 31 May - Sat 2 June, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

Kids Shows

WHAT THE LADYBIRD HEARD Join the woolly sheep, the hairy hog, the fat red hen and the dainty dog in this musical adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Lydia Monks' colourful farmyard adventure, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MORGAN & WEST: MORE MAGIC FOR KIDS Crazy capers for people of all ages, Sat 26 May (3pm), Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FIRST STAGES - TOM THUMB Lyngo Theatre presents an innovative piece of theatre for younger audiences - performed entirely on and under a kitchen table, Sat 26 May, The REP, Birmingham

MR SILLY PANCAKE AND THE LAND OF CAKE AND BISCUITS Knees & Toes Theatre fuse original music & puppetry to transport young audiences to the land of Cake and Biscuits, Sat 26 - Sun 27 May, MAC, Birmingham

PINOCCHIO Blue Orange Arts presents its version of Carlo Collodi's much-loved children's tale, Sat 26 May - Sat



Delivered Dozen - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

2 June, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY One of the world's best-loved nursery rhymes, brought to life with singalong songs and colourful characters, Sun 27 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MY DAD THE MAGICIAN Inventive show for children featuring handmade magic tricks, live music, cassette players, DJ skills, audience interaction and a rabbit called Horace, Thurs 31 May, MAC, Birmingham

Dance

PASHA KOVALEV'S THE MAGIC OF HOLLYWOOD Lights, Camera... Ballroom. Pasha Kovalev (from BBC TV's Strictly Come Dancing) returns with a brand new show packed with sequins, glitz and glamour, Thurs 24 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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THE LITTLE MERMAID Ballet Theatre UK revive their critically acclaimed retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's famous tale, Tues 29 May, The Roses, Kidderminster

Talks

DAN AND PHIL: INTERACTIVE INTROVERTS Join the internet-dwelling nerds for an interactive experience of rants,

roasts, battles, stories and surprises, Tues 22 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN AUDIENCE WITH KATE HUMBLE Wed 23 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

AN AUDIENCE WITH HENRY BLOFIELD Spend an evening with the voice of Test Match Special, Fri 25 May, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

MCKELLEN: PLAYING THE PART LIVE Celebrate one of Britain's true icons during his birthday weekend. Hosted by Graham Norton and broadcast to cinemas nationwide from London's BFI Southbank, Sun 27 May, MAC, Birmingham

PATRICIA ROUTLEDGE: FACING THE MUSIC Patricia Routledge in conversation with writer and broadcaster Edward Seckerson, Sun 27 May, Lichfield Garrick

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE LIMEHOUSE GOLEM (15) Horror/Mystery. Starring Douglas Booth, Olivia Cooke. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 21 May

BEER TOWN FILM FESTIVAL Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Fri 25 May

I GOT LIFE (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Agnès Jaoui, Thibault de Montalembert. Foreign language, subtitled. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 25 - Thurs 31 May

EDIE (tbc) Drama. Starring Sheila Hancock, Kevin Guthrie. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 25 - Thurs 31 May

THAT GOOD NIGHT (12a) Drama. Starring John Hurt, Sofia Helin. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 25 - Thurs 31 May

I KILL GIANTS (12a) Drama/Thriller. Starring Madison Wolfe, Zoe Saldana. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 25 - Thurs 31 May

PETER RABBIT (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of James Corden, Fayssal Bazzi. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 29 - Wed 30 May

DUNKIRK (15) Drama/History. Starring Fionn Whitehead, Barry Keoghan. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 29 May

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Thurs 24 May, showing at selected cinemas

SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY (tbc)

Released from Fri 25 May, showing at selected cinemas

SHOW DOGS (PG)

THE BREADWINNER (12a)

THE LITTLE VAMPIRE (U)

Events

BEER TOWN FILM FESTIVAL A showcase of emerging film talent, Fri 25 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

STOURPORT GIN JAMBOREE An opportunity to sample more than 100 gins, Fri 25 May, Civic Hall, Stourport-upon-Severn

SHROPSHIRE COUNTY SHOW Celebration of the rural community, highlighting the role it plays in our daily lives, Sat 26 May, West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

IAN BURRELL: THE GLOBAL AMBASSADOR FOR RUM Learn all you need to know about the tropical tippie, while sampling a selection of world-class varieties, Sat 26 May, MAC, B'ham

DISCOVERY CLUB - BUG CITY Event encouraging children to get back to nature, enjoy the outdoors and get creative, Sat 26 May, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

IRONBRIDGE GORGE WWII WEEKEND Community charity fundraising event in the historic Ironbridge Gorge, Sat 26 - Sun 27 May, Ironbridge, Telford

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE OF BBQ Sat 26 - Sun 27 May, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

QUEEN VICTORIA'S BIRTHDAY Sat 26 - Sun 27 May, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL Sat

26 - Mon 28 May, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal, Shropshire

CREATE COLOUR Creative workshop, Sat 26 May - Sun 3 June, Ironbridge Gorge Museums, Shropshire

MADE IN THE BLACK COUNTRY From door knockers to record-breaking cars, celebrate the Black Country's manufacturing prowess, Sat 26 May - Sun 3 June, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

FIRST WORLD WAR ACTIVITIES Insight into life as a pilot during the First World War, Sat 26 May - Sun 3 June, RAF Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire

WITSUN WEEK HALF TERM Craft activities and trails around the grounds, Sat 26 May - Sun 3 June, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

HENRY BLOFELD - 78 RETIRED The golden voice of cricket shares unheard anecdotes from on and off the pitch, Sun 27 May, MAC, Birmingham

BIG FISH LITTLE FISH Critically acclaimed family rave, Sun 27 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

MEDIEVAL COURTLY COMBAT Experience the lives of Stokesay's medieval residents, Sun 27 - Mon 28 May, Stokesay Castle, Nr Craven Arms, South Shropshire

ELIZABETHAN LIVING HISTORY EVENT Reenactors and historians transport visitors back in time to the Tudor Age, Sun 27 - Mon 28 May, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

WORLD OF WEDGWOOD FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL Sun 27 - Mon 28 May, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

ROLLESTON TRANSPORT FESTIVAL Vintage vehicles, bicycles, motorbikes, stalls and fairground rides, Mon 28 May, Rolleston on Dove, nr Burton-upon-Trent

OPERATION EARTH SHOW New family show exploring 'the amazing stories and science of the environment', Mon 28 May - Fri 1 June, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

MAY HALF TERM - VIKINGS Mon 28 May - Fri 1 June, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

CASTLE QUEST Mon 28 May - Fri 1 June, Tamworth Castle

PIRATE WEEK Mon 28 May - Sun 3 June, Selly Manor, Bournville, B'ham

MAY HALF TERM CRAFTS Animal-themed craft activities, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 May, Blakesley Hall, B'ham

ANIMAL MANIA Mobile zoo including lizards, snakes, chinchillas, hedgehogs, giant bunnies, tortoises, creepy crawlies and much more, Wed 30 May, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

GET GEOCACHING Explore Attingham as you hunt for hidden geocaches around the grounds, Wed 30 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury



Operation Earth

Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Mon 28 May - Fri 1 June

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.

PICTURE THIS! FAMILY DRAWING TOUR

Have a go at drawing challenges, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 May, Aston Hall, Birmingham

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY SHOW Featuring JCB Dancing Diggers, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 May, Staffordshire County Showground

LITTLE SKIPPERS - BOSTIN BLACK COUNTRY Featuring activities and a boat trip, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 May, Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust

MAY HALF-TERM FAMILY CRAFTS Have a go at bee-themed crafts, make a pot

and sow a seed to take home, Wed 30 May - Fri 1 June, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

LITTLE TREKKERS Spring walk for all the family, led by the expert ranger guides, Thurs 31 May, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills, Church Stretton, South Shropshire

WILD TIMES: BACK TO NATURE Join Wildlife Survival School for an hour of fun around the campfire. Hand-craft something to take home, Thurs 31 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury



Medieval Courty Combat - Stokesay Castle, South Shropshire

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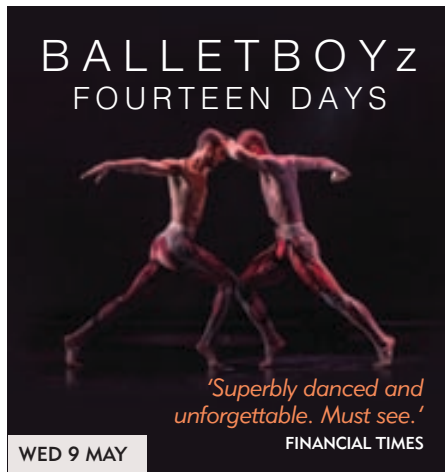
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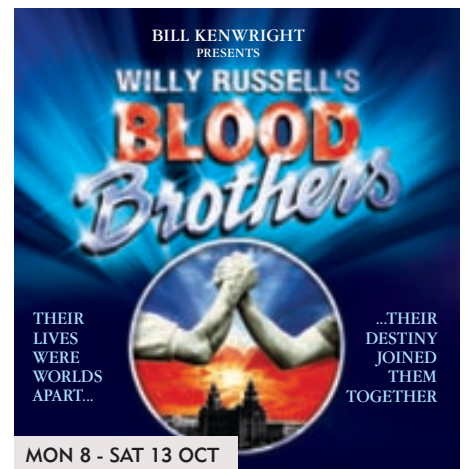


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