Your FREE essential entertainment guide for the Midlands


GARY DELANEY AT STAFFORD GATEHOUSE

Staffordshire

ISSUE 393 SEPTEMBER 2018

What's On

FILM I COMEDY I THEATRE I GIGS I VISUAL ARTS I EVENTS I FOOD

staffordshirewhatson.co.uk



inside:

thelist
Your 16-page week by week listings guide

TAJ EXPRESS
Bollywood in the Potteries **feature inside...**



MOLOTOV JUKEBOX
bring their bilingual fiesta of floor-fillers to Stoke-on-Trent



MORE SUN PLEASE
popular Channel Four show returns to the Midlands



ENTERTAINMENT
CANNOCK CHASE
at the PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE

SEPTEMBER

ANN BREEN
Tuesday 11 September
7.30pm • £15



AMERICAN JUKEBOX
Sunday 16 September
8.00pm • £27.50



OCTOBER

RAYMOND FROGGATT
Thursday 4 October
7.30pm • £18.50



BREAKING THE CODE
Wednesday 10 &
Thursday 11 October
7.30pm • £12



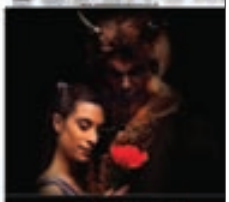
HALFWAY TO PARADISE
Friday 12 October
7.30pm • £21.50



BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT
Wednesday 17 October
7.30pm • £20



BEAUTY & THE BEAST
Thursday 18 October
7.30pm • £17.50
Conc. £15.50 U16 £10



FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS
Friday 19 October
7.30pm • £20



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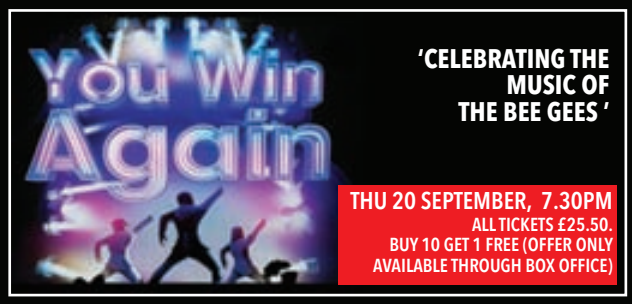
Cannock Chase Council

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tickets.princeofwales.live

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Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
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ST16 2LT











for more information visit:
www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

Contents



Bollywood in the Potteries - Taj Express comes to the Regent Theatre... feature on page 8

Craig Charles



brings his popular Funk & Soul Club to The Buttermarket

page 15

Awful Auntie



David Walliams' much-loked tale, on stage at the Grand...

page 29

Coracle Champions



major event makes a welcome return on the River Severn

page 49

the list



Your 16-page week-by-week listings guide

page 51

inside:

4. First Word | 11. Food | 15. Music | 20. Comedy | 24. Theatre | 39. Film | 42. Visual Arts | 45. Events

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There ain't nothing like A Black Country Night Out!

This year's A Black Country Night Out touring show will feature a new cast member - comedian Wayne Beese.

Wayne joins the ensemble as a replacement for longtime contributor Ian 'Sludge' Lees, who recently passed away following a short illness.

Wayne (pictured below) is joined in the line-up by husband-and-wife comedy duo Dandy, comedian Ollie Spencer, resident band The Empty Can (pictured left) and the ukele-playing Joe Thomas. The show is touring to venues across the Midlands. See page 56 for Midlands dates...



Gorge on comedy at Ironbridge's Enginuity

Ironbridge Gorge Museum is this month hosting its first ever comedy night, with former Time Out Comedian of the Year Paul Tonkinson headlining the event (Enginuity, Friday 7 September).

Paul will be joined by compere Tony Meresse and Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist Jonny Awsum (pictured). For further details, call 01952 433 424 or visit ironbridge.org.uk



Seventy years and still galloping along...

The Horse Of The Year Show will next month be celebrating its 70th anniversary at Birmingham's NEC (Wednesday 3 to Sunday 7 October).

A firm favourite on the showjumping calendar, the five-day event hosts a range of national and international showjumping classes, and will this year also be presenting four entertainment displays for visitors to enjoy. For more information, visit hoys.co.uk

National Theatre show set to visit Wolverhampton



The National Theatre's (NT) Macbeth will tour to the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next spring.

Helmed by NT Artistic Director Rufus Norris and designed by War Horse's Rae Smith, the production propels Shakespeare's classic tragedy into a post-apocalyptic world of anarchy and uncertainty. Michael Nardon and Kirsty Besterman (both pictured, above) star. Macbeth runs at the Grand from 12 to 16 March. To book tickets, ring 01902 42 92 12 or visit grandtheatre.co.uk.

Open Mic auditions

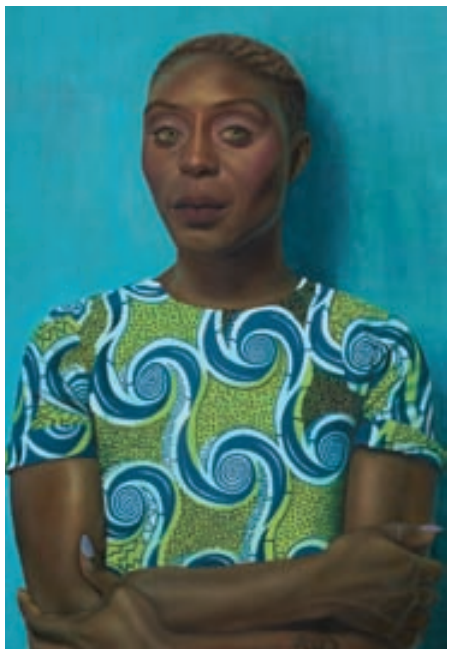
Open Mic UK, the country's premier music competition for unsigned acts, is this month holding auditions at Birmingham's NEC (Saturday 22 September). Singers, songwriters, rappers and vocal groups of all ages are encouraged to enter, and can do so by registering at Open Mic UK for £5. The competition winner will get the chance to record a debut album and music video, as well as benefitting from extensive media promotion.

For more information, visit openmicuk.co.uk

BP Portrait Award returns to Wolverhampton gallery

The prestigious BP Portrait Award is returning to Wolverhampton Art Gallery next month (Saturday 13 October).

Now in its 39th year, the free-to-view exhibition showcases outstanding and innovative new portraits from around the world. Visit wolverhampton.gov.uk for more information.



John Partridge to star in Edgar Wallace thriller

One-time EastEnders favourite John Partridge is next month starring in a spine-chilling murder-mystery at the Lichfield Garrick Theatre.
Partridge, who played the character of Christian Clarke in the long-running BBC TV series, will take the role of Inspector Tanner in the Classic Thriller Company's production of Edgar Wallace's The Case Of The Frightened Lady.
The show runs at the Garrick from Monday 15 to Saturday 20 October. To book tickets, call 01543 412121 or visit lichfieldgarrick.com



Staffs venue full of enchantment

Weston Park is this Christmas inviting visitors to enter 'a magical winter wonderland of illumination' (Friday 14 - Saturday 22 December).
Set within the grounds of the celebrated estate, located on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border, Enchanted Weston will transform the Capability Brown pleasure ground of Temple Wood into a magical after-dark illuminated trail.
For further information, visit weston-park.com.





Day Of The Dead returns to Shrewsbury's Buttermarket

Mexico's legendary Day Of The Dead event is coming to Shrewsbury's Buttermarket venue.
The famous festival, which sees the deceased being prayed for by their family and friends, is well known for its colourful, celebratory tone - and Shrewsbury's version certainly intends to follow suit.
Contributors to the event include live percussionists and a host of international DJs, with huge confetti blasts, candy skull face-painting, stage flames and fire breathing shows also featuring.
Day Of The Dead takes place at The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury, on Friday 2 November.
For more information, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk

Tyler Moon to charm Telford



Former EastEnders actor Tony Discipline will star as Prince Charming in Oakengates Theatre@The Place's pantomime production of Cinderella this Christmas.
Tony, who played the character of Tyler Moon in the long-running BBC TV series, will be joined in pantoland by pop singer Lolly and Joe Chambers, best known from popular Cbeebies show The Rhyme Rocket.
For further information, visit theplacetelford.com

Atlantic Ladies sail into Shrewsbury

A play telling the 'oar-some' story of three Shropshire women who made a record-breaking row across the Atlantic ocean is showing in Shrewsbury late this month. Local playwright Chris Eldon Lee's Atlantic Ladies follows the extraordinary voyage of daredevil threesome Sharon, Di and Elaine, whose 60-day adventure on the high seas finally came to an end when they made landfall in the Caribbean. The production shows at the town's Wightman Theatre from 26 to 29 September; Market Drayton Festival Centre, 4 October and Sir John Bayley Club, Wellington, Fri 5 October.

Ironbridge venue to host silent disco

Popular Ironbridge Gorge visitor attraction Enginuity is set to host its first ever silent disco next month.
Featuring in a series of nighttime events called Ironbridge Lates, the disco takes place on 5 October and is suitable for people aged 18 and older. For more information, visit ironbridge.org.uk

Two long-lost Hancocks in Stourbridge

Two long-lost 1950s radio scripts written for Midlands-born comedy legend Tony Hancock are set to be performed this month.
The scripts from the series Vacant Lot focus on life in the fictional seaside town of Churdley Bay, where the blundering and pompous Hancock is hoping to better his situation.
The scripts will be performed at Stourbridge Town Hall on Wednesday 19 September.



New campaign aims to promote the lives and contributions of older members of the LGBT community

A Midlands charity for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) has launched a campaign aimed at promoting the lives and lived experiences of older LGBTs.
Birmingham LGBT's Ageing With Pride initiative will highlight the positive contributions made by gay and trans people over the age of 50 who are living or have lived in the city.
Commenting on the importance of the campaign, the charity's Director, Steph Keeble, said: "I'm really excited that we're able to deliver Ageing With Pride. The aim is for it to be highly visible, addressing the issues that older LGBT people face but also celebrating the lives and achievements of our LGBT elders, many of whom fought discrimination and campaigned for the achievements in human rights we all now share." For further information, visit blgbt.org

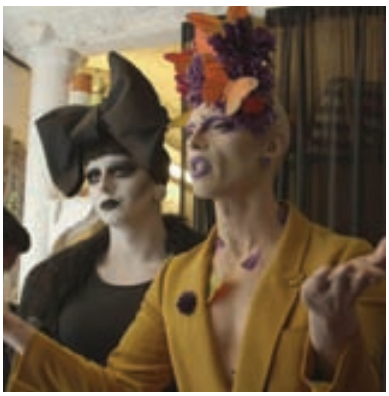
Martin spins the hits in Shropshire



Spandau Ballet and former EastEnders star Martin Kemp turns DJ later this year when he visits Shrewsbury's Buttermarket venue.
The 56-year-old heartthrob will be heading behind the decks to spin all his favourite hits from the 1980s on Friday 7 December.
Commenting on the event, The Buttermarket's Grant Lees said: "Obviously Martin is a huge name from the '80s as part of Spandau Ballet, a group that had so many well-known hits, so we're delighted that he'll be visiting Shrewsbury for one big '80s party for the town."
Tickets are now on sale for the event and are available from seetickets.com or thebuttermarket.co.uk

Channel Four on the lookout for people interested in 'embracing drag'

Channel Four is currently on the lookout for three people from the Dudley area of the Black Country to take part in a new show celebrating the art of drag.
The series will focus on individuals who're interested in embracing the artform, whether that be in order to explore their sexuality or maybe as a way of boosting their confidence. For further information, visit summerfilms.co.uk



Cosford museum shares inspirational RAF stories in a new series of talks

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford this month launches a series of talks about inspirational members of the RAF personnel who've played an important role in shaping the service during its first 100 years. The first talk (6 September) focuses on Michelle Partington, who was operationally deployed as the first female paramedic with the RAF Regiment. Michelle also went on various tours as part of the Medical Emergency Response Team, providing lifesaving care to those injured on the front line in Afghanistan. The second talk in the series takes place on 4 October.
For more information, visit rafmuseumorg/cosford



A celebration of later-life creativity in Staffordshire



Staffordshire's fifth Live Age Festival takes place in the Potteries this month.
Celebrating continued creativity in later life, the event showcases the work and talents of older people, arts organisations and practitioners from across North Staffordshire.
This year's highlights include a fine art workshop and a poetry reading by Simon Armitage (pictured).
The festival takes place at the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, on Friday 28 September and then continues at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery on Saturday the 29th and Sunday the 30th.

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TOWN HALL



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TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2018, 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



INDIANA JONES
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK IN CONCERT!
FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2018, 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



ÓLAFUR ARNALDS
FRIDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2018, 8PM
TOWN HALL



JOANNA LUMLEY IT'S ALL ABOUT ME!
BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL
TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2018 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



AT LAST: THE ETTA JAMES STORY
THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2018, 8PM
TOWN HALL



MISS MONEYPENNY'S HALLOWEEN PROMS
SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER 2018, 8PM
SYMPHONY HALL



ONE MAN STRANGER THINGS - A PARODY
SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER 2018, 8:30PM
TOWN HALL



GRAYSON PERRY
SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER 2018, 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



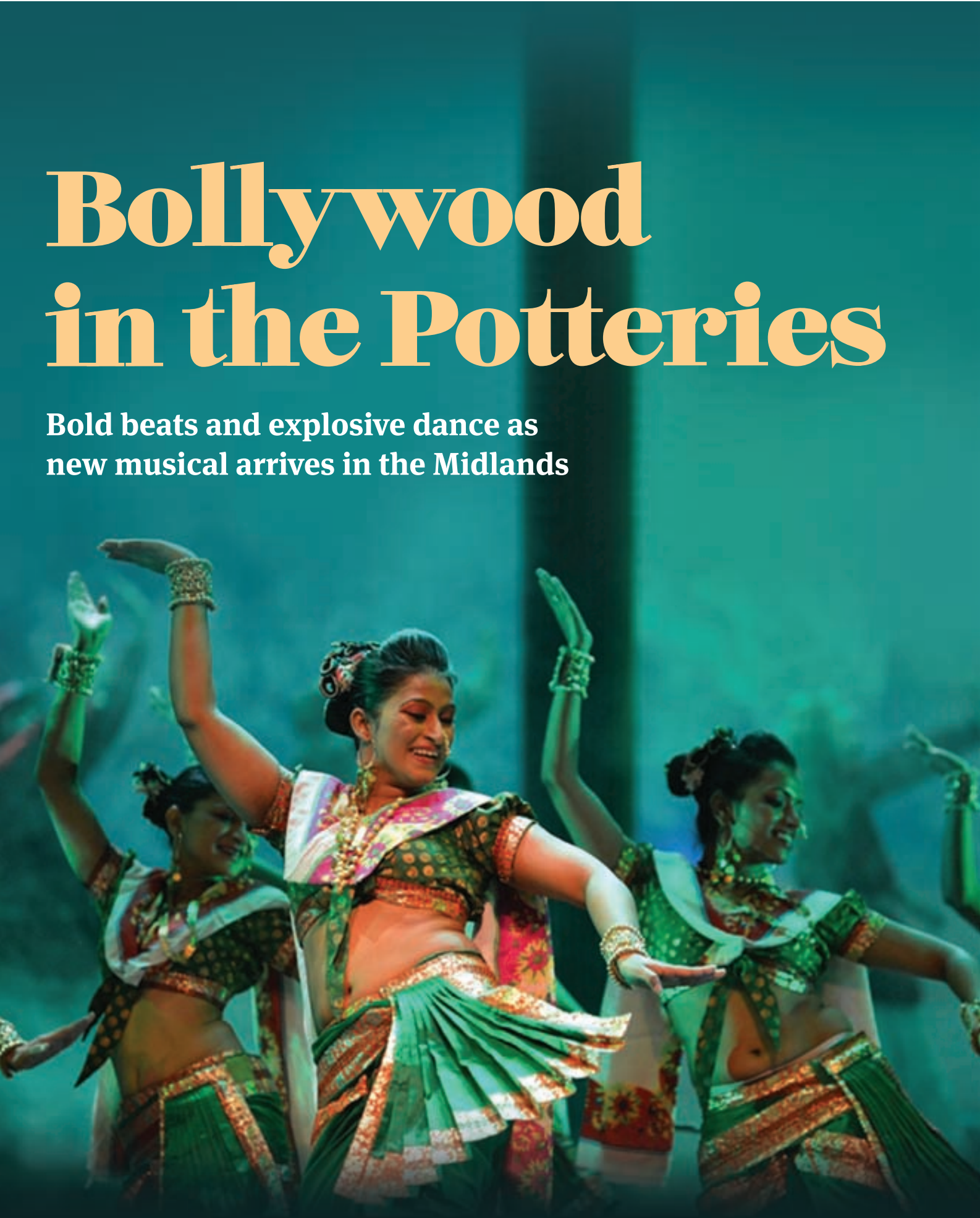
NEIL OLIVER
THE STORY OF THE BRITISH ISLES IN 100 PLACES
MONDAY 29 OCTOBER 2018, 7:30PM
TOWN HALL

Town Hall Symphony Hall @THSHBirmingham townhallsymphonyhall thsh_birmingham

Funded by Birmingham City Council, Arts Council England
Town Hall renovation also funded by Heritage Lottery Fund
PROJECT PART-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Bollywood in the Potteries

Bold beats and explosive dance as new musical arrives in the Midlands



by Lauren Cole

Taj Express, which visits the Midlands this month, is a one-way ticket to experiencing the flavour of Bollywood. Expect a musical bursting with bold colours, fabulous dancing and a soundtrack by famous composer AR Rahman. What's On spoke to producer and director Shruti Merchant about the show...

This month, the Midlands will be hit by a wave of Indian culture when Taj Express comes to both the Birmingham Hippodrome and the Regent Theatre in Stoke.

The feelgood musical has been a success across the globe, including during its stint in London last year. Audiences will get the opportunity to explore the glamorous world of Bollywood through a young man's desire to follow in the footsteps of composer AR Rahman - the man behind the music from hit movie Slumdog Millionaire.

Director and producer of Taj Express, Shruti Merchant, comes from a family who's heritage is deeply rooted in dance and choreography.

"I'm born into a family of choreographers," she says. "Not just in Bollywood, but also from a background of Indian classical dancing - predominantly Kathak, like all my ancestors from Rajasthan.
I started off my career assisting my sister, Vaibhavi Merchant, in films, and that's when we got an offer to do a musical about her life. I quickly preferred sitting in a theatre to being on a set because the experience was exhilarating - the audience reaction to your work was so instant. The kind of love and adulation we received when taking our culture and dance choreography on stage is something that made me never want to go back on a film set. So I started my company, Quintessence, to produce not only Taj Express but a lot more content from India."

Shruti believes that Bollywood is the perfect platform upon which to base the most vibrant of musicals.

"I guess in India we still believe in dreams and fairytales. We believe very heavily in romance, and the drama surrounding romance, and we show this in our films. However, we wanted to do something different with Taj Express. We came up with the idea of telling the story of a young boy who tries to follow in the footsteps of AR Rahman. He wants to be the next big composer in Bollywood because the whole world knows who Mr Rahman is. This story contemplates who carries on his legacy, and it acts as a catalyst to explore all the different music and dance of India through different choreography.

"I always like to think that the audience enjoys being transported into a new world where they feel happy, relaxed and, most importantly, are completely entertained. I'm not here to put across any content that depresses anybody, or that makes them want to check their phones. The fact that everyone wants to dance at the end of the show is great; there's some kind of release the audience feel when they come out of a Bollywood musical. I'm not here to show the technique of Bollywood dancing or to brag about the kinds of fabulous extensions we do in our dancing. I just want my audience to be entertained!"

Shruti believes Taj Express is bringing a true and diverse flavour of India to theatres across the world.

"I think Taj Express is a perfectly curated show of the best parts of India. Everything - from the team we have to the songs we sing, the script by Toby Gough and the dance in the show - makes this happen. We didn't want to bore people with Indian history, so the script is very easy to follow. Even the fabrics and colours of the costumes have brought in a pallete that is pan-India.

"Audiences find our dance styles so intriguing and wonder how we Indians move our necks in that certain way, so these are the kinds of moments we've incorporated into the musical. It doesn't only feature traditional dance performed in the temples in India, it also speaks to current India, which is in tune with hip-hop and other modern forms of dance and music. The way our show has been styled is in tune with popular world standards, but also brings true India through. It's such a unique, diverse production for audiences all over the world to enjoy."

Shruti is particularly excited about bringing Taj Express to the UK.

"This is my favourite country. I desperately want to move to the UK because I feel very connected to the world of musical theatre here. In Mumbai, where I'm currently living, I feel all alone. When I walk around the streets of London, I see so many musicals playing and so many people lining up to watch theatre. That's something that doesn't exist in my country - films and Bollywood are the predominant entertainment. So yes, the UK is special to me."

Directing musical theatre and leading her company is incredibly hard work, but the rewards more than make up for it.

"Theatre is the life I've chosen, but I've had to sacrifice my personal life because the only thing I'm doing is focusing on the productions. It's an endless job. There are times when I say, "I'm never going to do this again". Then, after finishing the production and sleeping for two or three days straight, I'm trying to get back on it. Yes, there are a lot of sacrifices, but I think at the same time the madness is what I enjoy the most. The reward is when the audience stands up at the end to give us a round of applause, and then leaves the theatre laughing, smiling and dancing.

"I have another production that I'll start working on when Taj Express has finished. It will probably be presented next year at the Edinburgh Fringe because we've got a keen interest from there. I've been touring Taj Express for five years now, so it's high time I did something new because there's such a demand. I'll be presenting a lot more stuff from India out there on the world stage."

Taj Express runs at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 September and is at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent on Tuesday 18 September

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SPECTACULAR NEW BOLLYWOOD MUSICAL
TAJ EXPRESS
TUE 18 SEP
REGENT THEATRE



REWIND THE YEARS WITH
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THU 11 OCT
REGENT THEATRE



EXPLOSIVE AND POWERFUL SHOW
SPIRIT OF THE DANCE
WED 19 SEP
REGENT THEATRE



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PRIVATE PEACEFUL
FRI 12 – SAT 13 OCT
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ABBA MANIA FRI 14 SEP VH

THE DRIFTERS WED 26 SEP VH

DANIEL O'DONNELL WED 3 OCT VH

HALFWAY TO PARADISE: THE BILLY FURY STORY THU 4 OCT VH

JAMES MARTIN: ON THE ROAD... AGAIN FRI 5 OCT VH

SHOWADDYWADDY SAT 6 OCT VH

JACKSON – LIVE IN CONCERT THU 11 OCT VH

DRACULA – THE BLOODY TRUTH FRI 19 OCT VH

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REVIEW: Fiume
Talking Italian at popular family-run Wolverhampton eatery

Offering tasty cuisine 'with southern Italian influence and a fresh twist', Wolverhampton-based Fiume is an independent family-run Italian bar, restaurant & café, established in 2013 by Famiglia Scaringi.

The stunning two-storey restaurant boasts white walls and thick wooden beams, as well as a canalside outdoor seating area where customers can enjoy a spot of alfresco dining.

The venue's mouthwatering à la carte menu uses fresh ingredients and offers modern and classic Italian dishes, including pastas, pizzas, fresh fish and meats.

Every Monday and Saturday lunchtime, diners can also enjoy bottomless prosecco and endless pizza for £26.95 per person.

Despite the restaurant being suitably busy, it boasted a relaxed, chilled-out atmosphere on the evening that we visited. The staff were friendly and welcoming, and we were seated in the bright upstairs area next to a window.

We perused the menu over a cold Peroni - Italy's favourite premium lager. Choosing from a selection of starters including Carpaccio di Manzo al Pepe Nero (thinly sliced raw beef served with rocket, parmesan shavings, horseradish mayonnaise and carasau), Polpette della Nonna (pork and beef meatballs in a rich tomato sauce) and Calamari Fritti (deep-fried squid in flour and seasoning served with a spicy tomato salsa), my partner and I opted for the Crespella ai Funghi e Salsiccia and Tagliere di Prosciutto.

The latter, comprising sliced parma ham served with deep-fried gnocco fritto, was a traditional and simple starter. The salty ham, the gnocco fritto - small balls of Italian bread - and the basil leaves made for an enjoyable flavour combination.

The Crespella ai Funghi e Salsiccia came in the form of a crepe filled with mushrooms, Italian sausage and mozzarella, topped with cheese sauce and a breadcrumb gratin. Another simple starter but enjoyable nonetheless.

Fiume's menu features three whole pages of main-course options, including an entire page of spaghetti, linguine, penne, gnocchi, lasagne and risotto dishes, fresh fish - including swordfish, salmon and sea bass - a range of pizzas and a selection of meat dishes, including chicken, calf's liver and beef.

After quite the deliberation, we opted for a small Biancaneve pizza - I'd heard the pizzas were pretty tasty so thought it was only right we tried one - and a 35oz T-bone steak to share. The steak came with fries and a small portion of carbonara - carb heaven!

The pizza featured a garlic butter base with mozzarella, ham, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes. Essentially a cheesy garlic bread with some basic topping, it was nice but nothing spectacular. We've been quite spoilt with pizza options this year, from eating numerous outstanding pizzas in Rome to trying the winner of the 'best traditional pizza in the world' award at the Las Vegas Pizza Expo, at the city's Pizza Rock restaurant. It's hard not to make comparisons.

The monstrous steak was cooked medium rare, much to our delight. It certainly wasn't as flavoursome as other T-bones that we've enjoyed recently, but it was nonetheless cooked perfectly and (almost fully) devoured. The creamy carbonara was also eaten, and we had a good go at the fries too.

Our clothes were bursting at the seams - we'd stuffed ourselves to the point of being uncomfortable - but the tiramisu sounded too good to walk away from. And I'm glad that we didn't. An Italian classic featuring mascarpone and eggs, cream and coffee and Tia Maria-soaked savoiardi biscuits topped with cocoa and crushed coffee, it was the highlight of the evening by far. It was just perfect, and definitely up there with the nicest I've ever enjoyed.

From its canalside location to its exceptional staff, its tasty tiramisu to its comfortable atmosphere, Fiume is well worth a visit the next time you're out and about in Wolverhampton.
Lauren Foster

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

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Cannock Beer Festival back for a fifth year

The fifth Cannock Chase CAMRA Beer Festival takes place from Thursday 20 to Saturday 22 September at The Prince of Wales Theatre.

The event features 63 ales, 20 ciders, bottled beers from around the world and, new for 2018, The Gin Bar, boasting 25 different gins.

Admission is £3 for the general public, £2 for senior citizens and £1 for CAMRA members. The event takes place from 5pm to 11pm on the Thursday and from midday to 11pm on the Friday and Saturday.

Popular beer festival returns to Lichfield

The Lichfield Autumn Beer Festival takes place at the city's Guildhall on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 September.

The popular event features a choice of more than 30 real ales and ciders from local and regional breweries and a wide range of food.

Live entertainment is provided by Grateful Dads on the Friday and local favourites Three's Company on the Saturday.

Deliveroo rides into Wolverhampton

Takeaway service Deliveroo is now available in Wolverhampton and the Black Country.

Known for its bright blue riders zipping across many of the UK's major towns and cities, the company delivers food from local takeaways, popular chain restaurants and independent eateries to its customers' doors within a set-mile radius.





Ludlow's food festival offers a taste of the Marches

Returning to the stunning grounds of the town's castle, Ludlow Food Festival is this year taking place from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 September.

The much-loved annual event boasts three main stages hosting more than 40 hours of chef demonstrations. It also features in excess of 180 local food & drink producers and suppliers, selling real food, ale, cider, perry, wine and plenty more from the Marches area.

This year's line-up of experts includes Wahaca founder Thomasina Miers, gardener Alys Fowler, London Honey Company's Steve Benbow and Romy's Kitchen's Romy Gill MBE.

Tamworth hosts its fourth family-friendly food festival

The fourth Tamworth Food Gusto Festival is taking place at Castle Pleasure Grounds on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September.

Boasting a wide range of food & drink stalls and live entertainment, the event features local producers selling hams, sausages, organic meat, handmade cheese, ice cream, fudge, vegetables, jams and pickles.

Face painting, a bouncy castle and numerous rides ensure there's plenty to keep younger visitors entertained.





by Lauren Cole

Fun in the sun!

Although it's the end of the road for long-running television series Benidorm, the show's Midlands fans can still catch up with all their favourite characters, thanks to a new touring stage version of the hit ITV comedy. What's On recently chatted to Adam Gillen - who plays the unusual but loveable Liam Conroy - to find out more about Benidorm Live...

Complete with swingers, cross-dressing and more, would you say Benidorm really embraces the beauty of diversity, Adam?
I reckon so. I think the character of Les/Lesley is a wonderful one. It also shows how someone can be if they're surrounded by an accepting community that allows him to be himself and express himself both as a man and as his alter-ego. I think it portrays an environment of freedom and freedom of expression, and I think that's a really positive thing. I imagine Benidorm's portrayal of all lifestyles with a certain amount of levity, joy and fun can only be a good thing. I think the overall reason for Benidorm's success, though, is that there's a certain amount of irreverence, real warmth and heart in its story. Derren Litten genuinely loves his characters.

Your character, Liam, and Kenneth - played by Tony Maudsley - have a close friendship. What can we expect in the stage version?
Liam and Kenneth are who they are. They care for each other very dearly. I think they're beautiful, well-formed characters who aren't shallow and have layers. They're very wholesome and just fun to watch. I'm not sure if there'll be duets in the Neptune, but certainly there'll be a continuation of the combative, fun, warring siblings relationship they seem to have - just more nonsense. That's the thing with all your best friends; you can have the most horrendous rows and fall out terribly, but you know they're not going to go very far and you're always going to be there for each other. I think that's what happens with us.

Liam is pretty ill-fated and unlucky in love. What dating advice would you give him?
I think I'd say that he shouldn't be afraid to be himself. That's the beautiful thing about Liam, actually - he doesn't try to be anyone else but who he is. He's sometimes unusual and sometimes quite strange, but nobody should apologise for who they are. So if he keeps on that road, he'll find somebody - eventually.

Some of Liam's fashion choices in the TV series have been questionable. Has he grown up a bit for the stage version?
I'm not sure yet, as we haven't had that costume chat, but I hope so. When I first started playing him, I got the impression he was dressed by his mother and also borrowed a few things from her wardrobe, which is quite a fun angle. Then, as he's grown up, he's been influenced by Kenneth, and I think Kenneth has picked him out a couple of shirts. I think now he's older there may be a change, but we'll see what the costume chat has in store.

What made you want to come back to the character of Liam for a full-on stage show?
The series has come to an end, and I can't think of a better way to pay tribute to that than by doing a sort-of Benidorm roadshow - an extended, bumper episode. To see the freedom that those characters can explore on the stage as well is great. For example, Tony and I, we like the physical, brotherly side of our characters' relationship, and you can't always get all of that on camera effectively. So to be on stage and to have a bit more space that allows you to really have a proper jostle is ideal.

How does preparation for comedy on-stage and comedy for screen differ?
The timings and the rhythm of the comedy is the same, but you're not restricted so much by the technical side of things on stage. On stage, we're able to have a proper barny, where we can cross over speech when shouting at each other without that being an issue. But I think the core elements are the same.

What's the most outrageous thing you've seen off-set during all your time filming abroad?
God, I've seen quite a few things in Benidorm. People really let loose. People just have the best time of their lives. Even though people are insanely happy, it does sometimes look like you imagine Sodom and Gomorrah would! It's just absolute chaos and pure carnage, but in the most beautifully fun sense. I couldn't even pick out a specific event because there have been too may.

Not planning a holiday trip to Benidorm anytime soon, then?
Well, I've been to Benidorm for four months every year for eight years, but I wouldn't say no to dipping my toe in again - once I've had a little break - because its enormous fun. You don't have to be going for it party-wise to enjoy the area because there are actually some really lovely things to do there; it's a really beautiful part of Spain. The neon whites always draw you back for a bit of nonsense in the end, though.

What are your plans for the future?
I'm not sure. We've got this until April and then, after that, who knows? There's hopefully more fun, interesting projects to come.

Benidorm Live visits the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 24 to Saturday 29 September, and then runs at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham from Monday 3 to Saturday 29 December.

COMING SOON TO THE NEW ALEXANDRA THEATRE



TUE 25 – SAT 29 SEP



THU 11 OCT – SAT 3 NOV

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AD Wed 31 Oct 2.30pm



MON 5 – SAT 10 NOV

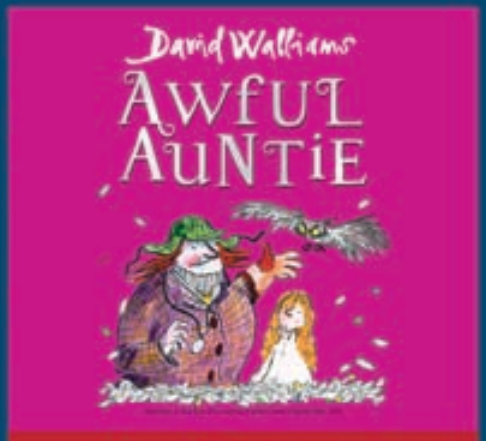


TUE 13 – SAT 17 NOV

AD Thu 15 Nov 7.30pm

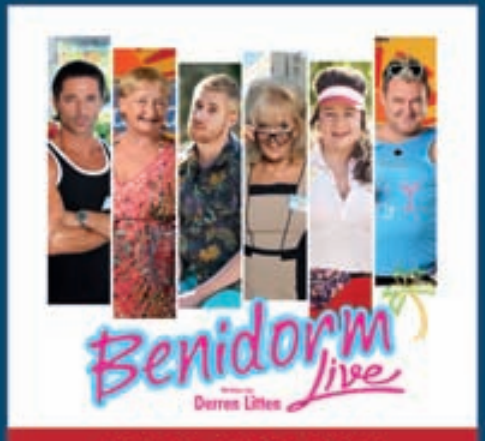


MON 19 – SAT 24 NOV



TUE 27 NOV – SAT 1 DEC

R Tue 27 Nov 7pm



MON 3 – SAT 29 DEC

AD Sat 8 Dec 2.30pm | BSL Wed 12 Dec 7.30pm
CAP Wed 19 Dec 7.30pm



TUE 12 - SAT 16 FEB

BSL Thu 14 Feb 7.30pm



MON 18 - SAT 23 FEB

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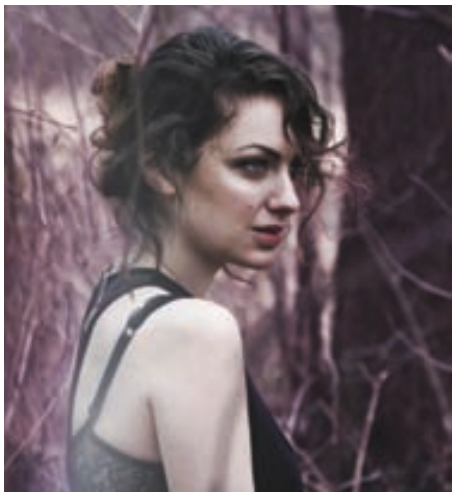
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Fridolijn

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Sun 16 September

Fridolijn's (pronounced 'Free-doe-Line') music blends haunting self-penned songs with covers played in her own unique style, cinematic folk, jazz, electronica and broken beats.
The Amsterdam-born singer previously enjoyed chart-topping success in both Holland and Japan with her band, Finn Silver.



Molotov Jukebox

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 19 September

Boasting a unique sound, Molotov Jukebox are a six-piece like no other.
Fronted by lead singer Natalia Tena (who played Nymphadora Tonks in the Harry Potter film series and the wildling Osha in Game Of Thrones), they bring their bilingual fiesta floor-fillers to Stoke-on-Trent this month as part of a 10th anniversary tour.





Craig Charles

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury, Fri 28 September

Telly series Coronation Street, Robot Wars and Red Dwarf (not to mention successful DJing and writing careers) have ensured Craig Charles is pretty well known to the great British public.
This month sees him bringing his hugely popular Funk & Soul Club to the Midlands. Gig-goers can expect a collection of tracks which have been covered and remixed by current leading bands and DJs.

Lisbee Stainton

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 7 September

Touring with the likes of Seth Lakeman, Paul Carrack and Joan Armatrading, Lisbee Stainton has been writing music for 22 years, releasing five albums during that time. Her latest offering, Lisbee LIVE, was released in March and features nine versions of previously released songs and two brand new numbers. "Every song on the album was recorded in one take," explains Lisbee "so what you're hearing is, quite simply, just me and my guitar."

Big Country

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury, Thurs 13 September; The Robin, Bilston, Fri 21 September

Big Country were formed in 1981 by guitar-playing Bruce Watson and the late Stuart Adamson... Expect to hear classic hits and live favourites from the ever-popular Dunfermline band, including Harvest Home, Fields Of Fire and In A Big Country.

Scott Matthews

Newhampton Arts Centre, Fri 28 September

Scott Matthews' new record, The Great Untold, has been described as 'a masterclass in honesty, instinct and reflection', and is the sixth studio album by the Ivor Novello Award-winning singer-songwriter.
"It's a collection of songs that lots of people will relate to," says Scott. "It's a real mood-shift of a record. The songs always start from a personal angle, but listeners will hear them in different ways."



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Comedy

Comedy Night

Featuring Robert White, Tom Houghton and Rahul Kohli

Thursday 11 October, 7.30pm

Hot on the heels of his appearance on Britain's Got Talent - and prior to his UK Tour, Robert White will headline the first comedy night of the autumn season.

Joining Robert will be Tom Houghton and compere Rahul Kohli.



Rock and Pop Music

80s Night

featuring Kick up the 80s - the ultimate party band

Thursday 15 November, 7.30pm

Take a step back in time to the decade of leg warmers, fingerless gloves, Walkmans and the Rubik cube.

The ultimate 80s party band - 'Kick Up the 80s' - will be performing all of the biggest 80s hits.



Classical

Magic of the Musicals

Thursday 6 December, 7.30pm

Experience the glitz and glamour of the musicals, performed by the Guild Musical Theatre Group at the University of Birmingham.

The evening will feature numbers from the Broadway and West End song book, including hits from Les Miserables, Hairspray, Legally Blonde and Chicago.

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G4 Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 7 September

After scoring a hit in the first ever series of X Factor, G4 became one of the country's biggest crossover classical groups. Their debut album went straight to number one and sold more than 245,000 copies, making it the fastest-selling record of 2005.
Although they disbanded two years and three albums later - citing as the reason their need to pursue individual interests - they reunited in 2014 for their 10th anniversary.
Their visit to Shrewsbury will see them performing a song set that includes Bohemian Rhapsody, My Way, Nessun Dorma and Creep.

CBSO: Italian Moments

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 27 September



Midlands conductor Alpesh Chauhan (pictured) picks up the baton to oversee a CBSO homage to all things Italian - from Tchaikovsky's Romeo & Juliet to Respighi's depiction of Roman excess in his symphonic poem, Feste Romane.
Russian pianist Pavel Kolesnikov also contributes to the evening's programme when he performs Rachmaninov's Rhapsody On A Theme Of Paganini.

CBSO: Dvorak's New World

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 12 & Thurs 13 September

Omer Meir Wellber makes a welcome return to the region to conduct the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The programme for the evening brings together concertos by Rachmaninov and Bartok with Dvorak's Othello and From The New World.
The latter piece was first performed 125 years ago, since which time it has established itself as one of the most popular symphonies ever written.
Two of classical music's most revered artists - violinist Gidon Kremer and pianist Jan Lisiecki (pictured) - contribute to the programme on separate nights.



CBSO: Star Wars

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 8 September

The Force Awakens in the Potteries this month when the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra get to grips with composer and conductor John Williams' memorable music from all eight Star Wars movies. Light sabers at the ready... Michael Seal (pictured) conducts.



Proms And Prosecco In The Park

Chetwynd Deer Park, Newport, Shropshire, Sat 8 September



Proms, prosecco and picnics - what's not to love about this relaxed get-together? Timed to coincide with the Last Night of the Proms, the event features performances by tenor Jack Foley, the highly rated String Infusion and the British winner of the Chinese X Factor, Mary-Jess. Mary (pictured) will round off her performance by leading the crowd in a host of Last Night of the Proms favourites.

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Shiiine On Birmingham

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Sat 8 September



Festival brand Shiiine On is launching a new one-day event at Birmingham's O2 Academy this month.
Shiiine On Birmingham's impressive line-up includes more than 20 iconic bands.
The Hacienda will descend on the city, with Todd Terry headlining a superb line-up alongside Marshall Jefferson and Jon Dasilva. Ticket prices include free entry to two special afterparties.

Line-up includes: Orbital, Shed Seven (pictured), Happy Mondays, Embrace, Glasvegas, Julian Cope, Reverend & The Makers, Black Grape, Cast, The Wedding Present, Dreadzone, A Certain Ratio, Jim Bob (Carter USM), Bentley Rhythm Ace, Thousand Yard Stare, The Stairs, Psyence, Steve Cradock, Clint Boon (Inspiral Carpets) and Ned's Acoustic Dustbin.

Moseley Folk

Moseley Park, Birmingham,
Fri 31 August - Sun 2 September

Tucked away behind Birmingham's busy streets, the beautiful Moseley Park is one of the city's hidden gems, transformed each year into an enchanting escape by one of the Midlands' best-loved music festivals. Traditional folk & low-fi acoustic sets blend seamlessly with dreamy electropop, psychedelia and indie favourites against a magical backdrop of bright hippie colours, lush foliage and a beautiful lake. The perfect way to see out the summer.

Music line-up includes: Levellers, Teenage Fanclub (pictured), Nick Mulvey, Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel, Show Of Hands, Bridget St John, King Creosote, This Is The Kit, Willy Mason, Imarhan, Skinny Lister, Jools Holland and Samantha Parton, Richard Dawson, Martin Carthy, Chris Wood and Siobhan Miller.



Godiva

War Memorial Park, Coventry,
Fri 31 August - Sun 2 September



Proudly reaffirming its status as the UK's biggest and best free music festival, Godiva presents another bumper crop of top-notch talent as it returns for 2018. Veteran performers join emerging artists working across a dazzling array of genres. While the traditional Godiva procession continues to this day, the weekend has certainly come a long way since its 17th century origins as a celebration of the medieval Countess of Mercia.

Music line-up includes: Editors, Ronan Keating, Jake Bugg, Gaz Coombes (pictured), Cradle Of Filth, Asian Dub Foundation, Jonas Blue, Peace, The Neville Staple Band, Gabrielle, Professor Green, Little Comets, Hazel O'Connor and Blood Red Shoes.

Bromyard Folk Festival

Bromyard, Worcestershire,
Thurs 6 - Sunday 9 September

Taking place for the 51st time, Bromyard's much-loved celebration of traditional music is now a well-established tradition in and of itself. This year's event promises more than 170 hours of entertainment, with some of the finest national and international folk musicians headlining a programme that also includes workshops, sing-arounds, ceilidhs, dance displays, children's entertainment and a traditional craft market.

Line-up includes: Oysterband, The Young'uns (pictured), Rura, Cosmotheka, Chris Wood, Fara, Moore Moss and Rutter, The Rheingans Sisters, Granny's Attic, Crows, The Hut People, Cardboard Fox, Jack Rutter, Cohen Braithwaite-Kilcoyne, Steamchicken, Rosie Hood, Ben Robertson and Keith Donnelly.





Marcus Brigstocke

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 23 September; Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 30 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 24 November; Evesham Arts Centre, Sat 1 December

Peddling a line in dark, intelligent humour, the award-winning Marcus Brigstocke is one of the most inventive talents on the comedy circuit. Jokes include: "I realised I was dyslexic when I went to a toga party dressed as a goat," and "If Pac-Man had affected us as kids, we'd all be running around in dark rooms, munching pills and listening to repetitive electronic music."

Marcus's latest touring show, Devil May Care, finds Lucifer himself arbitrating on the increasingly tricky issue of what's good and what's bad 'in these challenging divisive times'.



Gary Delaney

Stafford Gatehouse, Fri 7 September; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 20 September; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 11 October; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 4 November

"The hardest part of running competitively in Wales must be keeping up with the Joneses," quips the ever-popular Gary Delaney.

And Gary's certainly no one-gag pony: "My girlfriend's dog died, so to cheer her up I went out and got her an identical one. She was livid and yelled, 'What am I going to do with two dead dogs?' Or how about: "The president of France said that the English are arrogant with their refusal to learn foreign languages. At least I think that's what he said. It all just sounded like haw-he-haw-he-haw-he-haw."

Suffice to say there'll be plenty more where those came from when Sarah Millican's Solihull-born husband returns to his Midlands roots this month.

Scummy Mummies

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 14 September; Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Wed 10 October

"Our speciality is comedy for less-than-perfect parents, so that means *all* parents!" says Ellie Gibson about Scummy Mummies, her popular double act with Helen Thorn. "Our live comedy shows cover a wide range of parenting topics - from pelvic floors and play-dates to farting and fish fingers. Expect songs, sketches, stand-up and very scummy stories!"



Rich Hall

Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Tues 25 September; Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 11 October; Evesham Arts Centre, Sat 20 October; Stourport Civic Centre, Wed 21 November

His official biography somewhat less than modestly describes American funnyman Rich Hall as 'a comic genius' - albeit a 'grouchy, deadpan' one.

With much of his comedy focusing on making fun of life across the pond in his homeland, Rich is best known for his creation of Otis Lee Crenshaw, a bourbon-swilling redneck jailbird from Tennessee whose many wives have all been named Brenda.

Rich returns to the Midlands with a show that he describes as a hoedown: "There's stand-up comedy, improvised ballads, cracking good musicianship, and ultimately a hilarious, foot-stomping, s**t-kicking good time to be had by all. Even if you don't own a hoe."



Stephen Lynch

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 16 September

American funnyman and theatrical star Stephen makes a welcome return to the UK for the first time in five years this month. A Broadway award winner for his performance in hit musical The Wedding Singer, Stephen describes himself as a musician trapped in a comedian's body - so it's little wonder that he's made the singing of witty ditties a real front-and-centre element of his stand-up set.



Jason Byrne

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 29 September

Watching Jason Byrne on stage has been likened by one reviewer to watching footballer Lionel Messi play for Barcelona: it's not a matter of 'if' the magic will come, but 'when' and 'how often'. Byrne comes to the Midlands with brand new offering You Can Come In, But Don't Start Anything, a show which he promises will hotwire his audience's funnybones big time!
"Everyone's welcome," says Jason, "unless you're under 14, in which case come back when you're older."





Dylan Moran

New Alexandra Theatre, Sat 22 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 6 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 30 October

Once labelled 'the Oscar Wilde of comedy', it's fair to say that Dylan Moran is a fella with a style of humour all his own. A star of hit films Shaun Of The Dead and Run Fat Boy Run, the hugely entertaining Irishman specialises in stand-up rants that are often bizarre and always unpredictable.
Jokes include: "I don't do drugs. If I want a rush, I just stand up when I'm not expecting it," and "I can't swim. I can't drive either. I was going to learn to drive but then I thought, well, what if I crash into a lake?"

Geoff Norcott

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 12 September; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Fri 16 November

High-energy Geoff is one of the sharpest tools in the comedy shed, presenting shows which blend observational humour with satire - and even the odd impression or several! A former teacher, plenty of Geoff's gags relate to school experiences and the education system. He's also made something of a name for himself in the field of sports-related humour, a niche that's yielded him plenty of work both on television and radio.

Chris Tucker

Arena Birmingham, Thurs 27 September



Probably best known for playing Detective James Carter in the Rush Hour movies, American stand-up comedian Chris Tucker has been a big hit at the cinema, starring in films which have collectively grossed more than one billion dollars at the box office. He's been plying his trade as a comedian for a couple of decades now, and released his first stand-up movie, Chris Tucker Live, on Netflix back in 2015.
Jokes include: "Have you ever had a neighbour that borrows your shit for so long, you have to borrow it back?" and "You loan your friend money. You see them again, they don't say nothin' 'bout the money. 'Hi, how ya doin'? How's ya mama doing?' Man, how's my money doin'?'"



by Dave Freak

JOSH PUGH

KEEPS IT PERSONAL WITH THE CHANGING MAN

A harrowing tale of confinement rests at the heart of Josh Pugh's latest show. What's On finds out more from the award-winning Warwickshire comedian...

Josh Pugh was just 10 years old when he experienced the traumatic incident that lies at the heart of his latest stand-up show, The Changing Man.

"I got stuck in a puffer jacket," he confesses, "for 48 hours!"

Hailing from Atherstone, Warwickshire, Josh made his stand-up debut in the spring of 2014. Within 18 months, he'd won the Birmingham Comedy Festival Breaking Talent Award, and in 2016 he picked up the English Comedian of the Year title - the prize for which included a string of Australian gigs.

"The weirdest thing was the ex-pats who came to the show because I was billed as English Comedian of the Year. I'd have people coming up to me saying, 'I used to live in Coventry', or 'I've been to The Roadhouse' (a now-closed venue in Birmingham). I found that dead odd - being so far away, on the other side of the world, and having people coming up to me who knew where I lived!"

It seems that bumping into local folk in far-flung places is more common than you might think.

"I did a gig in Switzerland, which is this real melting pot of a place, and there was one guy there from Worcester!"

The Changing Man is Josh's second one-hour Edinburgh Fringe show.

"The Changing Man was my nickname. That's what my dad used to call me because I was always into different fads and different stuff every time I went round to see him. So it's a bit more personal this year. Last year's show, A Boy Named Pugh, was just jokes and me being daft - which this is as well - but there's also a story this time. I've enjoyed doing a story, actually; when people are quiet, they're listening, but if you're doing jokes and they're quiet, they're not enjoying themselves."

At the centre of the story is that agonising puffer jacket incident.

"I went to my dad's one weekend and he was just angry all the time. The next weekend he bought me this puffer jacket I wanted, as a present, and I zipped it up and realised the zip was stuck, and I was too scared to tell him. I was worried that he'd shout at me, so I kept it on for the whole weekend."

As those two horrendous days progressed, the young Josh's stress levels sky-rocketed. Would his father be furious that he'd just ruined his expensive new present? Would someone have to tear him out of the snug jacket? Or would he be forced to live in it for the rest of his life?

"Then something happens where I realise I don't have to be scared of my dad, so the show is about how you think people are one way, but they can be another way."

The show is one of two he'll be bringing to the Birmingham Comedy Festival next month. The second is the live premiere of his podcast, Josh And Phil's Knowledge Club, with fellow West Midlands comedian Phil Pagett.

"The premise of Knowledge Club is that we're working for a fictional university and we're pitching the university to potential students. I'm a freelance lecturer who hasn't really got a clue and Phil's the straight man. We're still working it out, but it'll be good live. Phil's got a good ear and eye for stuff like that."

The first series of podcasts saw the duo explore subjects including money, crime, dating and technology.

"Doing different subjects is a good way to generate stuff; it's a good exercise. I've enjoyed doing it."

Although the podcast's University of East Coventry setting is entirely fictional, it's certainly plausible.

"You can see these universities online, and they're so embarrassing. You see these students wandering around campus saying, 'Wow! There are so many shops and facilities here! I can really see myself getting a great education here!' So it started off as a parody of that."

With the first six episodes available online for free, listeners will be pleased to know that there are more shows on the way.

"We've started working on another series now. People who've listened to it have enjoyed it, and we've enjoyed doing it - it's nice to do something other than stand-up. You have all these ideas sometimes that don't work as stand-up, so it's nice to have a different vehicle for it. If you listen to a lot of podcasts, they're often just two people chatting, but we wanted to produce it more like a radio show. It's scripted a bit more and edited a bit more - there aren't that many podcasts like it. I don't think anyone else is doing anything like it. We might do it at the Fringe next year if it goes down well in Birmingham."

Josh Pugh performs The Changing Man at 1000 Trades in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter on Saturday 13 October.
John And Phil's Knowledge Club is at The Victoria, Birmingham, on Sunday 14 October, as part of the second Free Half-Dayer.
For more information about Birmingham Comedy Festival (5 - 14 October), visit bhamcomfest.co.uk



Benidorm Live

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 24 - Sat 29 September;
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 3 - Sat 29 December

Sangria in Stoke is the name of the game this month when Benidorm Live jets into the Potteries. Darren Litten's brand new stage show is of course based on the hit ITV1 comedy series that's been delighting viewers for more than a decade now.

Benidorm regulars Jake Canuso (Mateo), Janine Duvitski (Jacqueline), Adam Gillen (Liam) and Sherrie Hewson (Joyce Temple-Savage) are all present and correct in a production that promises to bring plenty of sunshine to six early-autumn evenings at the Regent.
The production is then back in the Midlands in a couple of months' time, for a Christmas run at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre.
Check out our online interview with Adam Gillen who plays Liam at whatsonlive.co.uk

The Goon Show

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,
Tues 18 September

Comedy enthusiasts of a certain vintage will well recall The Goon Show. Presenting a highly original and utterly zany style of humour, the 1950s radio programme made stars of its three main contributors, Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and Harry Secombe.
This brand new homage to the show is presented by the same team who recently adapted another classic radio comedy for the stage - Round The Horne.



Pop Music

The REP, Birmingham,
Wed 12 - Sat 22 September



Described in its publicity as an emotionally contagious rollercoaster for anyone who's ever been a dick on the dancefloor, Pop Music finds G and Kayla taking advantage of the free bar at a wedding they're attending. With lashings of cheap prosecco offering them the chance to forget their troubles, the pair embark on an epic journey through 30 years of pop - in the process discovering that they have far more in common with one another than their taste in tunes...

Nazanin's Story

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Wed 19 & Thurs 20 September

Nazanin's Story focuses on the real-life experience of Iranian British charity worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe. In 2016 she was convicted of plotting to overthrow Iran's clerical establishment and sentenced to five years in the country's prison system.
A judge in Tehran recently admitted that Nazanin will not be released from prison until Iran receives payment for a 1970s debt owed by Britain...
Long-listed for the Amnesty Freedom of Expression award, the play is constantly being updated to take into account new developments in the ongoing saga.



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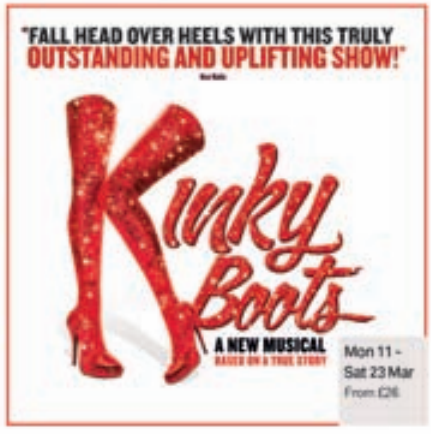






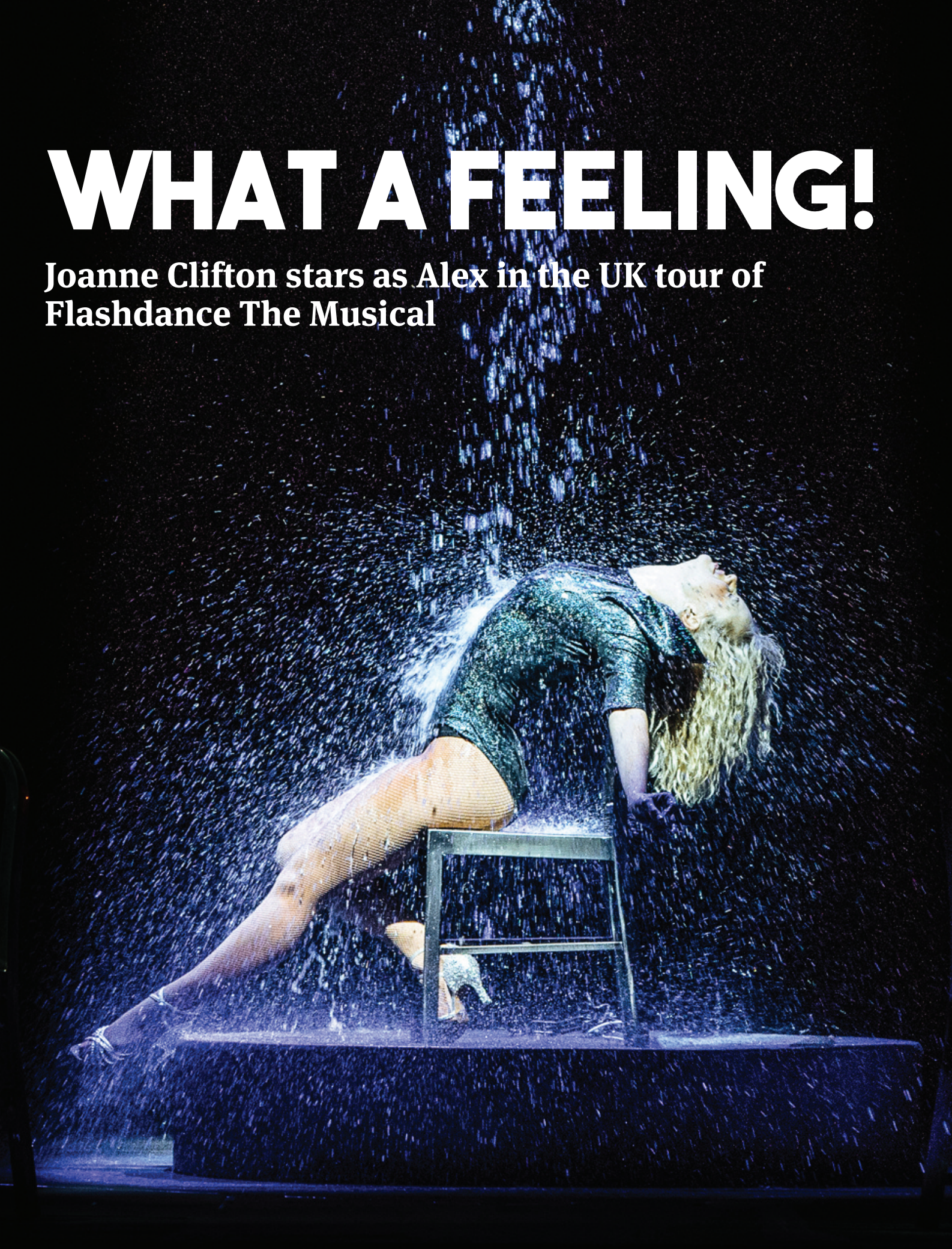






WHAT A FEELING!

Joanne Clifton stars as Alex in the UK tour of Flashdance The Musical



More than 13 million people tuned in to BBC One to see Joanne Clifton and her partner, Ore Oduba, lift the glitterball trophy in the final of the 2016 series of Strictly Come Dancing. For the girl from Grimsby, it was not only a moment of triumph but also a stepping stone to a new career as a star of musical theatre. Now Joanne is taking her dancing to the next level in the new UK tour of Flashdance The Musical...

What's your earliest dance memory, Joanne, and did you want to put on the ballet shoes and tutu or throw yourself into body popping?

My earliest memory is being at my mum and dad's dance school. When they couldn't find anyone to babysit us, they used to take me and my brother Kevin along. We were just toddlers, but Kevin would join in, and as soon as he did, I would copy him. Then mum put me into ballet, but I was just awful at it; they used to call me the 'pregnant plug' because I wore the little black leotard with the pink tights and was one of those kids whose belly really stuck out! I was absolutely rubbish at it and hated it. So I stopped the ballet but did ballroom, Latin, disco and little group dances. Then we started entering competitions when Kevin was five and I was four. Quite a lot of people think we're twins, but there's a whole year and 11 days between us!

You spent a long time in Italy. Do you speak Italian?

Yes, I went over to a dance school at 16 and nobody spoke English there, so I had to learn very quickly. I stayed there for 14 years. When I came back, I'd spent half my life there. It was my first language for quite a long time, and when I came back to England in 2014, I used to think in Italian and had to translate in my head back into English. I dreamed in Italian for about a year after I left. It still comes out in natural reactions - like if I bang my elbow or my knee, I'll swear in Italian rather than English, which can be a good thing if I'm in public!

Do you like Italian food?

I absolutely love it, although I wasn't allowed to eat much of it while I was over there. My male coach was Italian and my female coach was Russian, so we were trained like the Russian ballet dancers and, of course, we needed to be slim. But that's why I'm eating lots of it now!

And do you cook it?

No. I can cook two things. I can do poached eggs and pop tarts - but that's a meal in itself, isn't it? You can have the poached eggs for mains and then the pop tarts for pudding!

2013 was an amazing year for you. You won the World Pro Ballroom Show Dance Championships, the World Dance Sport Games and you performed at the Kremlin.

How was that? And what are Dance Sport Games?

It was an amazing experience. They weren't, like, the loudest audience in Russia, but it was great to be able to say, 'I've done that'. The World Sport Games are basically all the sports that aren't in the Olympics but are on the waiting list to be included. It's always difficult with something that's based on opinion rather than who crosses the line first or who jumped the highest - although ice dancing is in the Olympics, so dance could maybe make it one day, too.

You joined Strictly Come Dancing in 2014 and won two years later with Ore Oduba. What was your favourite dance routine during your winning series?

Singing In The Rain, because I thought that was a turning point for me and that style is just my thing. The audience seemed to love the jive. I'm not keen on Latin, but I'm glad they enjoyed it. But probably equal with Singing In The Rain was the ballroom show dance we did at the end. They've both got all that Hollywood glamour, which I love.

Your brother, Kevin, also a Strictly dancer, was the first to congratulate you, even though you'd beaten him. Was there a little bit of sibling rivalry in evidence during the course of the show?

More on my part. I'm more competitive than Kevin. But he's my big brother and I wanna pay him back for all the wrestling moves he used to practise on me when we were kids. But if he had a good week, I was really happy for him, and he was for me. And as soon as the cameras went off, I went and said sorry because he'd been in the finals four times and not won, and then I just came out of nowhere and took the title!

Having left Strictly, you went into the tour of Thoroughly Modern Millie. Was musical theatre a new direction for you or a return to an earlier love?

I'd never really trained in musical theatre, but I had private lessons in singing and acting when I was a kid growing up in Grimsby. I didn't do anything for 14 years while I was in Italy, but since I came back to do Strictly, I've been taking lessons again. Before Millie, I did two other musicals on the fringe, but Millie was my first big stage show. I've wanted to do musicals since I was a kid. I absolutely love singing and acting, and I like the excitement of the audience coming in, knowing me only as a dancer, sitting there and thinking, 'Let's see if she can actually act'!

The character you play in Flashdance, Alex Owens, is based on a real-life woman who really did work as a welder by day and danced at night. Are you any good at DIY?

I actually built myself a desk and a shoe-rack! The shoe rack was basically little pipes that you fit together at corners, but the desk was wood and you had to use a screwdriver. It's a bit wobbly, and I got one bit the wrong way round, but apart from that I thought I did quite well.

Could you describe Alex in three words?

Passionate, focused and determined.

In Flashdance, you have to perform several dance routines that are so well known they've become iconic movie moments. How are you feeling about that?

I can't wait! I think the audience will get the same feeling as me. When the music starts, particularly Maniac and What A Feeling, even if I'm tired after a day of rehearsals and the director says, 'Okay, let's do it from the top', as soon as that music comes on, I get an absolute buzz and can't wait to do it.

You're appearing in the show up until December. Are you feeling fit and ready to take that on?

I think so. I've danced since I was four and been trained the hard, sports way in Italy. Obviously I'm older now - I'm 33 and I'm playing a 19-year-old, but I know how to train for it and I know how to eat so that I've got enough energy but can look good in a leotard. Touch wood, my dancing experience will help me through it.

What is it about Flashdance that really appeals to audiences?

It's such an iconic movie with such iconic songs and scenes. Everybody knows Flashdance, everybody knows What A Feeling and everybody knows the Maniac water scene. It's going to be great for those moments, and I just say to people, come and see it! I'm so grateful that I've got the role.

Flashdance The Musical runs at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 September.

War Horse



Stage phenomenon War Horse is set to return to the Midlands... What's On spoke to puppeteers Tom Quinn and Lewis Howard about their crucial role in this spectacular, emotive production...

Michael Morpurgo's popular children's book is now a hit National Theatre stage show, which has wowed audiences and moved people to tears all across the world.

The second UK tour of War Horse is underway. Local lads Tom Quinn - from Redditch - and Lewis Howard - who grew up and attended drama school in Birmingham - are puppeteers in the show. What's On spoke to them about the task of bringing huge on-stage horse puppets to life in front of thousands of people...

It takes three puppeteers to work the entirety of the Joey and Topthorn puppets, so what's each puppeteer's specific role?

Tom: My role as the puppeteer of the head of both Joey and Topthorn is to control what the horse is looking at, what it's thinking and what it's feeling; to bring the horse to life.

Lewis: As Joey's heart, I instigate the breathing so the horse looks alive. Being between the head and the hind means I can see what both are doing, so I can silently translate between the two. If I see the hind wanting to make a certain move, but the head isn't in the right position just yet to do so, I can hold off the hind form pushing the puppet forwards until the head is in a good position. Then I control the front legs using triggers at the curve of the knee.

How much time have you both spent studying horse behaviour?

Tom: When we first started, we had a fortnight of just 'horse academy', if you like. It was a little puppetry school where all the puppeteers gathered two weeks before the rest of the cast to learn basic movements like walking, trotting and galloping. Then we went to the Kings Troop, the Royal Horse Artillery with all the ceremonial guns and carriages, to watch the real-life Topthorns.

by Lauren Cole

Then, that afternoon, we went to a riding stable to look at more chilled-out riding horses. So we watched a bunch of Joeys as well. We were there watching a lot of little behaviours to refine our skills.

Lewis: One of the most important things is making the horse look as heavy as it should be. The weight of the puppet is on our backs and we're standing on our own feet, so it takes a lot of practice to sell the idea that it's a real horse. But there are things that the puppet can't do, and if you tried to do those things it would make it look less real, so once we got comfortable with the basics, we moved away from horse behaviour and focused on how the puppet can move, and how best to work with what we've got.

Does each team of puppeteers create a slightly different Joey or Topthorn - or even, does each individual puppeteer bring a different personality to the role?

Tom: Yes, it's the same as any other role. So each team that does Joey and Topthorn brings a slightly different characterisation to life on stage, just like an actor would do when interpreting the lines from Hamlet. We still go through the same acting choices as the speaking parts go through, except we don't act through our own bodies. We also change a lot of things from each show. For example, one of the nights, one of the actors may choose to shout one of their lines, or walk towards Joey particularly aggressively, which obviously Joey will need to be startled by. We spend a lot of it improvising how we think a horse would react in the situation that's playing out on stage, and each time something slightly different is created.

Lewis: I know with my team one of us brings more of a focused intensity to it and one of us is a little more cheeky, but I think both are very funny. But, of course, there are certain personalities it's hard to bring to different parts of the horse. It's much easier to bring a sense of cheekiness to the head than to the hind, for example. It's harder to be more aggressive in certain roles. So yes, certain qualities do manifest themselves in each role in the team, while each team also brings something slightly different to the stage.

Tom, how do Topthorn and Joey's personalities differ, and how do you as a puppeteer bring those different characters out on stage?

Tom: Joey is a hunter, so he's half thoroughbred and half draught horse. He's built for riding, not for a lot of the things he's made to do in the show. He's quite chilled-out and earthy, whereas Topthorn is just pure thoroughbred, so he's like a proper feisty officer's horse. The puppets themselves do a lot of that for us, so Joey in comparison to Topthorn is slightly smaller, and as a head puppeteer, I can extend Topthorn's neck up really tall. He's an enormous horse, and we need to convey that proud, feisty side of him."

It's easy for people who haven't seen the show to be dubious about how a puppet can be made realistic on stage. Do either of you have anything to say to people who aren't yet convinced that they should go and see the show?

Lewis: I first saw it 10 years ago. When my mum told me we were going to see the stage version of War Horse, a book I'd read in school, I didn't imagine it would be puppets. I assumed there would be projections or something, and there would be a way of getting round it that would give the show a slightly more surreal feel.

But when baby Joey appears on the stage, as an audience member you don't want to watch the puppeteers, you want to watch Joey because that's what's amazing. Then, when the big horses come out, from afar you can't see a lot of the mechanisms - the puppets just look so fluid. Anyone who comes to see the show will be surprised by how quickly they forget it's a puppet horse. I mean, we suspend disbelief all the time in theatre, and this is no exception.

Lewis, you trained at the Birminghan School of Acting. Are you proud to be returning to the city in such an important role?

Lewis: Yes, I'm incredibly happy because originally, when we got the contracts, Birmingham hadn't been announced and was still a venue to be confirmed. So when I got that news, it was fantastic. To go back there for four weeks as well is even better. I actually haven't been back to Birmingham since I graduated, so I can't wait to go back and show everyone around because I've been telling the cast all about my favourite places. Going back as Joey is really an honour.

Can you tell us a little bit about the puppets themselves and what they're made of?

Tom: The puppets are made by a South African company called the Handspring Puppet Company. There are 23 puppets in the whole show, and Handspring make most of them. They're made from an aluminium frame that sits on top of the hind and heart puppeteers, and there's a cane cage that sort of sits around them. Then the mane and tail are made using a material called tyvec and bits of leather. So, yeah, those bits rustle and flow but it still has some weight, and between all of the canes there's a thin mesh gauze so the audience can see out mostly, but in the right light the audience's view into the cage is obscured.

Is the puppet as heavy to work with as it sounds?

Lewis: Yes, the cage that we're under is 10 stone, and that's split between the hind and the heart puppeteers' backs. Then, the legs are probably a couple of kg each, and then the head has its own weight that the head puppeteer holds up. We wear it as a backpack and it's something you get used to. It's like wearing one of those big backpacks for hiking - now only once you take it off do you realise how heavy it's been. Early in rehearsals it was quite brutal though. Trying to do stuff, be nimble and make a huge horse puppet look realistic while having this huge weight on your back is quite a challenge.

What are your plans for the future?

Tom: I think this role has given me a bit of a bug for puppetry, but obviously I trained as an actor, so I'm sure I can use all the skills I've gained from this role in a whole range of work.

Lewis: As with most actors, I somehow can't think beyond the current job. I'm sure I've opened other doors by doing this role, and it's taught me new things I wasn't sure I'd enjoy. It's like learning a new language or something - a new realm of opportunities have been opened up for me, so I'll just wait and see what happens next.

War Horse is at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 10 Oct - Saturday 3 November, and Regent Theatre, Stoke-On-Trent from Wednesday 27 March - Saturday 6 April 2019.



Salad Days

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 19 - Sat 22 September; Malvern Theatres, Tues 2 - Sat 6 October

When newly-weds Jane and Timothy Dawes agree to take care of a tramp's mobile piano for a month, they find themselves embroiled in an adventure that involves disruptive music, flying saucers and an irresistible desire to dance...
Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds' hit show debuted in the mid-1950s, having been written by the pair as a summer musical for the Bristol Old Vic's resident company.
Featuring numbers including We Said We Wouldn't Look Back, Look At Me, I'm Dancin' and We're Looking For A Piano, Salad Days is the show that famously made a young Cameron Mackintosh fall in love with all things theatrical.
Casting includes Wendi Peters (pictured centre).

Jekyll & Hyde

The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 18 - Sat 22 September

Doctor Jekyll is not himself! Robert Louis Stevenson's 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 is presented by the National Production Company.

The Silence Of Snow: The Life Of Patrick Hamilton

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 21 September

The burning question being asked in this new work by Mark Farrelly is: why do so many people get through life without feeling they ever truly know another person?
Writer and performer Farrelly, who scored a recent hit in the Midlands with previous show Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope, seeks answers to his question via a contemplation of Patrick Hamilton, best known for his plays Rope and Gaslight. But behind Hamilton's raw, unbridled talent there lurked a troubled alcoholic teetering on the brink of self-destruction...

The League Of Gentlemen

Genting Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 13 & Fri 14 September



The Bafta Award-winning magic of Reece Shearsmith, Steve Pemberton, Mark Gatiss and Jeremy Dyson makes a welcome return to the stage after an absence of 12 years.
Spawned on radio then television in the dying days of the 20th century, The League Of Gentlemen featured a mind-boggling array of grotesque, bizarre and downright unhinged comedy characters, all of whom were going about their decidedly abnormal business in the fictional northern town of Royston Vasey.
Favourite creations include Tubbs and Edward Tattsyrup - who run the 'local shop for local people' - 'dole scum'-hating Restart officer Pauline Campbell-Jones, and gruff-spoken transsexual taxi driver Barbara Dixon.
Expect all four and plenty more to be present and correct when the boys take to the stage in Birmingham this month.

Rebus: Long Shadows

The REP, Birmingham, Thurs 20 September - Sat 6 October

Crime novelist Ian Rankin's celebrated detective, John Rebus, takes to the stage for the very first time in a brand new show helmed by the Birmingham Rep's Artistic Director, Roxana Silbert.
Rankin's most famous creation first hit the bookshelves back in 1987, with this year seeing the publication of the 22nd Rebus novel.
The character has also been brought to life on television, first by Four Weddings And A Funeral actor John Hannah and then by Ken Stott.
The new stage play sees a retired Rebus back on the case when the daughter of a murder victim appears outside his flat...



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SALAD DAYS!



A loved-up young couple, plenty of laughs and a magical piano that makes people dance - award-winning musical Salad Days is coming to the Midlands...
What's On caught up with star of the show Wendi Peters to talk about the hit production and her extensive stage and screen career...

What's Salad Days about, Wendi?

Salad Days holds lots of great memories for me, and I was thrilled when this opportunity came along to do it. I first saw a production of it when I was about 10. It was an amateur production in Accrington in Lancashire and my godmother, Lorna, was in it. I became obsessed with the music and, soon after, there was a TV version of the show. My sister and I videoed it and watched it over and over again. It's really become a family joke/ memory, and it's still quoted today! Of course, I'm now feeling very old, as I'm playing one of the parents in the show. The show revolves around Jane and Timothy, who've just graduated from university. Not knowing what to do next, they decide to get married and get a job looking after a piano, which happens to be magic and makes people dance! Tim's parents are desperate for him to get a good job and send him out to visit all his uncles for career advice. Jane's mother wants to find her a wonderfully rich and influential husband - not knowing that she's already married. It's a wonderfully upbeat, fun show with great numbers that a lot of people will know and can tap and hum along to. It's a great 'leave your troubles outside the theatre' show, and I guarantee you'll leave with a big smile on your face.

Lots of audience members will know you from Coronation Street. How does this character differ from Cilla?

They differ inasmuch as Lady Raeburn in Salad Days is the quintessential aristocrat who's very relaxed and laid back until it comes to her daughter and finding the right husband for her. I suppose she really just has Jane's best interests at heart. Cilla in Corrie couldn't give two hoots for her children, Fiz and Chesney, and comes from a very northern working-class background, so has had to fight for all she has. The only similarity is the fact that both have a roving eye for the opposite sex...

What else can you tell us about your character?

Lady Raeburn likes to look after herself and spends plenty of time in the beauty salon. There's a wonderful scene in Salad Days where she's having her hair and nails done... it's going to be fun!

How do you feel about embarking on this tour?

Most of my career has been on stage, and if someone asked me to pick between TV and theatre, the stage would always win. It's where I first fell in love with acting and singing. My mum would take us to see all the musicals that came to Manchester, and I adored going to the theatre. A lot of my theatre work has been on tour and I love it. It's very exciting to be back on the road again, bringing such a fun show to some wonderful places. I've played all of the theatres on this tour apart from two, so I'm looking forward to new towns and stages. We're mostly doing a week in places, which is the perfect length. By the time you've settled the show in, you have a couple of days to explore and then you move on. It's also great being on tour and catching up with friends and family in various towns.

What would you say to encourage people to come and watch Salad Days?

Salad Days is a fun, feelgood show that will have you humming and tapping all the way out of theatre. It's complete escapism for two-and-a-half hours - and in today's world, that's sometimes needed.

What do you hope the audience will take away from the show?

I'm hoping they'll leave with big smiles on their faces after a glorious evening of uplifting singing and dancing. They may be a little confused as to why everyone's looking for a piano, and why one of Tim's uncles appears from a space ship shaped like a saucer. It's such wonderful, crazy nonsense but very funny!

What's coming up for you once the tour finishes?

I have a week off and then it's straight into panto season. I'm back at the Lyceum Theatre in Sheffield, playing Mrs Darling, Myrtle the Mermaid and Big Chief Squatting Cow. I love Sheffield. I did my very first panto there in 1987 at the Crucible Theatre and have been back a few times since. There are great audiences and it's a lovely city.

Any advice for budding actors?

My advice would be that you really must have the drive and determination to want to succeed. Not in terms of being famous and a 'star', but in having a long and varied career and a love for your art. Take the time to train properly, be it privately or at a drama school. Watch and learn from other actors around you. You never stop learning. If you're still at school, get involved in as many school or local amateur productions as you can and enjoy it! That's really important.

Salad Days The Musical runs at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Wednesday 19 to Saturday 22 September, and then at Malvern Theatre, Worcestershire, from Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 October.



Tartuffe

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 7 September - Sat 23 February

Described as a wicked comedy about faith, family and #fakingit, this brand new version of a 17th century masterpiece brings events bang up to date.

The story centres around the wealthy Pervaiz family. Living in modern-day Birmingham, they have in their midst the charismatic and devout Tahir Taufiq Arsuf - or Tartuffe to the sceptical. But is Tartuffe all that he seems - and will family life ever be the same again?...

First performed in 1664, Moliere's famous comedy saw its reputation wildly enhanced when the Archbishop of Paris issued an edict threatening excommunication for anyone who even so much as read the play, so offensive to the church did he consider the work to be.

As You Like It

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 27 - Sat 29 September

A pacy tale of cross-dressing and mistaken identity, As You Like It is one of Shakespeare's most accessible and appealing comedies. And this particular version of the much-loved yarn should be even more accessible and appealing than most, given that it's being presented by the critically acclaimed Pantaloons.

Laughing gear at the ready, then, for an evening of bombastic buffoonery and foot-stomping live music!

Queens Of The Coal Age

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Fri 7 - Sat 29 September

This powerful play by critically acclaimed actor Maxine Peake sees four women taking a stand in the face of a changing world.

It's 1993, and although the Parkside Colliery pit is winding down, Anne, Elaine, Dot and Lesley are not giving up. Instead they go below ground and dig in, determined to do what they can to save their community...

Peake's previous written work, Beryl - a warm and witty celebration of British cyclist Beryl Burton - was also performed at the New Vic Theatre.

Super Hamlet 64

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 21 September

Are you tired of all those common-or-unweeded-garden Hamlets in which the prince's father gets bumped off by his uncle who then marries his mother? If so, you may well enjoy the refreshing wind of change that Super Hamlet 64 is blasting across the ramparts of Elsinore Castle.

Sure, all that dad/uncle/mum gubbins is present and correct, but on this occasion the young Prince Hamlet awakens to discover that his life is actually a computer game. What's more, the person he has a crush on is a samurai-sword-wielding superhero.

Such imaginative stuff-and-nonsense is very much all in a day's work for one-man entertainment machine Edward Day, whose production also features retro animation, live music and comedy songs.

Evita

Malvern Theatres, Tues 4 - Sat 8 September; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 25 - Sat 29 September

Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice's third major collaboration opened to rave reviews way back in the late 1970s, since which time it's garnered a reputation as one of the greatest musicals ever to grace West End and Broadway stages.

Telling the real-life story of Eva, the wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Peron, the show is packed to the rafters with memorable numbers, including On This Night Of A Thousand Stars, Buenos Aires and, of course, the classic Don't Cry For Me Argentina.

Voice UK 2015 finalist Lucy O'Byrne takes the title role.

Awful Auntie

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 26 - Sun 30 September; New Alexandra Theatre, Tues 27 November - Sat 1 December

Frights, fights and friendships are the order of the day in David Walliams' much-loved story. At the centre of the tale is a young girl named Stella. The sole heir to Saxby Hall, she finds herself in danger of losing both her inheritance and her life when she comes up against her thoroughly unpleasant Aunt Alberta...

Produced by the team behind the hugely successful stage adaptation of Walliams' Gangsta Granny, the show comes complete with a very old car, a very large owl, a very small ghost and plenty of opportunity to enjoy a jolly good chuckle.



Teletubbies Live

Oakengates Theatre, at The Place, Telford, Sat 1 - Sun 2 September; Malvern Theatres, Wed 19 - Thurs 20 September

Despite having been around for many a year, the world famous Teletubbies are here appearing in their first ever theatre show, created especially for little ones. Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa and Po continue to enchant and delight pre-school youngsters a full 21 years after making their television debut on BBC Two.

Brand new songs and the popular supporting characters of Tubby Phone, Noo-noo and Sun Baby also feature.

Ensonglopedia Of Animals

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 16 September

After scoring a huge success with musical comedies about Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein and Marie Curie, the award-winning John Hinton returns to the stage with a show that features 26 animal songs - one for every letter of the alphabet. So if, as John puts it, you want to 'get to grips with fascinating facts about extraordinary echinoderms, distressed damselflies, crazy corals, batty birds and amazing arachnids', then this is most definitely the show for you.

The Snail And The Whale

MAC, Birmingham, Sat 1 & Sun 2 September

Following on from versions of The Gruffalo and Room On The Broom, highly rated ensemble Tall Stories here present a show that blends imaginative storytelling, live music and plenty of humour... When a tiny snail, who longs to see the world, hitches a lift on a humpback whale, she finds herself embroiled in an exciting adventure - particularly when the whale unexpectedly gets beached...



Milkshake! Live

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sat 22 September; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 27 October

Here taking youngsters on a journey through the world's favourite fairytales are, among others, Bob the Builder, Little Princess, Noddy, Fireman Sam and Shimmer & Shine. If you've watched the TV series and/or been to a previous live production, you'll already know what to expect. If not, get ready for an event that promises lots of laughter, bucketloads of family fun, bags of audience participation and plenty of singing and dancing.





Matilda The Musical

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sat 8 September

Adapted from one of Roald Dahl's best-loved books, the Royal Shakespeare Company's stage-musical version of Matilda - complete with music and lyrics by comedian Tim Minchin - has been delighting West End audiences for six years.

A staggering eight million people worldwide have so far seen productions of the critically acclaimed show, which has visited more than 50 cities and bagged an impressive 80-plus international awards. Impressive statistics indeed. If you haven't already done so, bag yourself a ticket and find out what all the fuss is about!

Last chance to see!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY


The Gruffalo


The Canterville Ghost


The Snail And The Whale

This month marks the 21st anniversary of highly acclaimed theatre company Tall Stories, created following a chance meeting between its co-founders and artistic directors, Toby Mitchell and Olivia Jacobs.

"Tall Stories came to be when I was producing a show on my own," explains Toby. "I went to deliver some flyers to Soho Theatre. I bumped into Olivia there, we got talking and stayed in touch. We decided to set up a company, which wasn't called Tall Stories at the time, and went to the Fringe. We got reviewed and were regarded as a company to watch.

"When we returned to the Fringe the following year, we came up with the name Tall Stories, as we thought it summed up what we aimed to do. I directed one show and Olivia the other. Olivia did a show based on Oscar Wilde's The Happy Prince And Other Stories, and I did Alice In Wonderland.

"We didn't really know what we were doing, and neither of those shows were particularly aimed at children. They were just ones that we wanted to do, but because they were based around childhood favourites, families were our main audience. They told us how lovely it was to find work that didn't talk down to their kids. We wouldn't even have considered talking down to our audience - we were just telling good stories - but that's been our touchstone ever since."

Toby firmly believes this approach has been a major factor in Tall Stories' success: "We don't patronise the younger people in the audience, and we don't make it too silly for the older people. We pride ourselves on making the kind of theatre that we ourselves would like to watch. There are those big and silly shows that parents enjoy on a certain level but not entirely. That's not what we do. We try to create something where everyone has a wonderful experience, and I think that's why audiences keep coming back to our shows again and again.

"High points are when audiences really get the show, or when a parent comes up to you and says their child won't sit still for longer than 10 minutes in front of the television, but that they've been absolutely motionless for an hour watching us. Moments like that make me very proud, but are also understandable because we're talking directly to the audience and taking them seriously, which a lot of children's television doesn't do."

A pinch of good luck, or maybe just sound intuition, also helped Tall Stories become established: "I had a day job in the early years of Tall Stories. I was working for Macmillan Children's Books, and I read The Gruffalo just before it was published. We were looking for a show for a younger age group. We thought the Gruffalo was just a lovely story, so we decided to put that on stage.

"Of course, at the time it was an unknown book. Julia Donaldson was also unknown, so it was fairly easy to negotiate the rights. Then, while we had it in rehearsals, it won a major book prize - which was handy, to say the least! We were wowed by the response to The Gruffalo, and from there it snowballed."

The reaction to the show at the Edinburgh Fringe was one of many highlights for Toby during Tall Stories' 21 years.

"I picked up a copy of The Scotsman's Fringe pull-out to find the review, and there was a full-page photograph of our Gruffalo on the front cover with a five-star review inside. So, it's moments like that, when we realised we were doing things that people were actually enjoying, that really stand out in our journey."

Seventeen years on, Tall Stories are still reimagining The Gruffalo every time they bring it back to the stage.

"Now a lot of the audiences are coming because they know the animation rather than the book. We used to have two narrators and a female actor playing mouse. That worked when people only knew the book. Since the animation, we got the occasional complaint saying that the animals didn't look convincing because our costumes were a little more suggestive of animals than full costumes. So, we went back to the structure of the show, made it have three narrators at the start and then turned one of them into mouse on-stage in front of the audience.

"This was just gently saying to the audience that they needed to use their imaginations for the show; part of the fun of a storytelling show is that we don't give it all to them on a plate. They have to get involved for it to be

by Lauren Cole

TO TALL STORIES!


Wilde Creatures


The Snow Dragon


Room on the Broom

believable. It's so rare to get a complaint about our shows now, which is wonderful. It's great that the show is still 80% the same as it was 17 years ago, when it first went on stage. It's just a case of making sure we reinvent enough of it to keep it relevant and modern, so that people keep on coming."

Tall Stories are often approached to adapt children's picture books into theatre productions.

"Whatever themes can be plucked out of a story always create resonances if it's a strong story. We're quite well known as book adapters, and that's despite the fact that only a third of our shows are based on picture books. The other two-thirds are popular fairytales or things we've made up ourselves. We do turn down people if their book hasn't got a strong enough plot."

Sometimes, however, extra layers can be added to the story to make it suitable for the stage.

"The way we made it work with The Snail And The Whale was to tell the story through the eyes of a young girl and her father, who's in the navy. So in the story, the snail wants to go on a trip around the world, so hitches a ride on the tail of a whale. This reflects how the girl would rather be with her dad than stuck in her bedroom, so there's a process where we added emotional resonance to that story. In that case, there was a way for us to make it work on stage, but the power of the story always has to come first when we make our shows.

"The Snail And The Whale is another Julia Donaldson title, but audiences get something else from Tall Stories that they also enjoy. We make it clear on all our publicity material that there is this extra story added on top of the Julia Donaldson one, and that we've obviously consulted Julia about it and that she's happy with it. That's a definite favourite - a well-loved story in a fresh way."

Luckily for Midlanders, two more of Toby's all-time favourite Tall Stories productions are coming to the region very soon...

"Wilde Creatures has four acting-musicians who're extremely talented and manage to, with our help, bring Oscar Wilde's stories to life in a very imaginative and modern way. There's also Emily Brown And The Thing (see pages 32/33), a really lovely story about a child who's scared of the dark at bedtime and the way she overcomes it.

"With all my favourites, there's a seamlessness to them; although the stories are complex and there are lots of scene changes and props, we make it flow over that hour so that it doesn't seem clunky. But that doesn't mean it's simple! We look like swans from the front, but you don't realise how much furious paddling is going on behind the scenes!

"For our 21st birthday, we took Wilde Creatures and the premier of The Canterville Ghost to the Fringe. Wilde Creatures had a run in London last Christmas because there was a big Oscar Wilde season. The Canterville Ghost uses the same cast as Wilde Creatures. We've set it as a grown-ups' show, but we've set the minimum age guide at 12-plus, so it's still something that caters for lots of people.

"We did a preview in London a few weeks before the Fringe, to what we thought was going to be a very tough crowd of South London school kids. Again, I think because we took them seriously, they were completely on board. It was joyous to watch because we thought they were going to be quite a demanding audience - and actually they *were* a demanding audience, but what they were demanding was a good story. So that's the aim for our 21st birthday - to do a more grown-up show, seeing as we're hitting 'proper' adulthood. Then we're hoping that the two shows will tour together."

Toby is optimistic about the future of Tall Stories.

"The aim is to continue to give audiences shows that they're enjoying. The challenge for the future is to get more shows in, to keep on creating by seeing if there are any other great picture books out there, or any other stories we want to make up ourselves, and to always be reinventing. Here's to the next 21 years!"

For more information and to find out when the next Tall Stories production is coming to a theatre near you, visit tallstories.org.uk



by Lauren Cole

Emily Brown And The Thing!

It's time for another adventure with award-winning theatre company Tall Stories. Join Emily Brown and her rabbit, Stanley, on their quest to find the key ingredients to a good night's sleep... What's On spoke to Sophie Alice, who plays Emily, about hit production Emily Brown And The Thing, which is coming to the Midlands over Christmas...

Young Emily Brown and her best pal, toy rabbit Stanley, discover a Thing crying outside their bedroom window because he can't get to sleep. Of course, they can't help but go on an adventure to try and assist him...

Tall Stories' version of the book, Emily Brown And The Thing, is a witty and heartwarming children's show that sees Sophie Alice taking the lead role of Emily. "I'd worked with Tall Stories before," says Sophie, "so when they asked me to do this show, I jumped at the chance. It's a truly wonderful book. Emily Brown is a fantastic young female protagonist. She's adventurous, she's strong, she's courageous. I thought it would be brilliant to be involved in a family show that has such a good female role at the heart of it. I just figured it would be such a rewarding role to play."

The production is adapted from the book by Cressida Cowell, the author behind the famous How To Train Your Dragon series.

"The original cast worked with Cressida and the book's illustrator, Neal Layton, to make sure the production was respectful and in keeping with the world of Emily Brown as seen in the original book. If you look at the pictures in the book and then come to see the show, there's a striking resemblance between the characters, and we've tried to do that with the actual content also. Almost all the words from the book are in the stage version. Obviously, some of the characters have been extended, and we've got some original songs and music in there, just to add to the production element as a whole, but it's been kept as authentic as possible."

Emily Brown And The Thing features physical storytelling that uses not only actors but also puppets. "What puppets allow you to do is include adventure elements on stage that actors just couldn't perform in a realistic way - for example, climbing trees and skiing down slopes. It brings a really exciting dimension to the play for both the audience and us as performers. I think it's very amusing to watch, too - particularly with Stanley, who, for a lot of the play, has been upscaled from cuddly toy to full-grown adult man in a rabbit costume, only to be shrunk back down to tiny puppet size."

Sophie is thoroughly enjoying her time in the production: "I get to go on three different adventures, so what's not to like? Really immersing myself in those worlds is just so exciting. We have so much fun playing our characters. It's not put on at all; a lot of the emotion you see on stage isn't even acting. We're just having the best time, and it means a lot to us if the audience has as much fun watching the show as we do performing it."

Tall Stories' version of Emily Brown And The Thing has been met with widespread critical acclaim wherever it's been presented.

"I wasn't in the original cast, but I was in the second cast, which did a UK tour followed by the Sydney Opera House and Wisconsin. So there are a few nerves now I'm returning, but mainly the feeling is one of excitement. Yes, there's always the pressure of reviewing well because Tall Stories are so well known, but as they're so supportive, I tend not to notice that pressure too much. We really like to create great shows as a team, so overall I'd say it's definitely more enjoyable than nerve-wracking."

Sophie has some theories as to why, over their 21 years of performing, Tall Stories have been so successful.

"The company are very passionate about telling good stories to anyone and everyone - I think that's the most important thing. They have an incredible team of creatives, directors and visual thinkers. They have such a passion for delivering beautiful messages on stage, and I think that's at the core of what's allowed Tall Stories to flourish."

Currently, Sophie's plans don't extend beyond a future spent with Emily Brown and her friends.

"We're taking the show to America and Canada after Christmas. That's a five-month tour, so that takes me up to May next year. After that, who knows? All I know is that Emily Brown and myself have an amazing adventure ahead of us!"

Emily Brown And The Thing shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 17 December to Sunday 6 January.

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Rosie Kay: MK Ultra

The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 20 & Fri 21 September; Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 25 September

This critically acclaimed offering from Rosie Kay's highly regarded local ensemble has been inspired by 'the bizarre realm of pop culture, mind-control conspiracies and Illuminati imagery'.

Commenting on the show, Artistic Director Rosie said: "MK Ultra is the result of three years of intense research which has taken me through the world of surveillance, state police, torture and brainwashing, to pop culture, mainstream media and celebrity breakdowns, then all the way back to politics and a comment on the post-culturism state we are now in.

"At a time when everything is fake, or at least we don't trust what's real anymore, MK Ultra looks at what this world really feels like - and what effect it is having on us, whether we know it or not."



Fagin's Twist

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 28 & Sat 29 September

"I've always been excited by the idea of retelling a popular tale," says Tony Adigun, the artistic director of innovative hip-hop and contemporary dance company Avant Garde. "I wanted to add a mischievous twist that would play with and challenge the audience's perspectives on a much-loved classic."

The classic to which he refers is Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist, which Adigun and his company are here reimagining. The piece delves deep into the backstories of the novel's most prominent characters: Oliver, Fagin, Bill, Nancy and the Artful Dodger. "We've examined the relationships between the five of them," explains Adigun. "The backstories will allow the dancers who're playing these dynamic people to be engrossed by the characters and to really embody the roles."



New English Ballet

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 18 September

New English Ballet here performs two works that should perfectly showcase the company's impressive talent and versatility.

The Four Seasons features recomposed music by Max Richter and bold choreography from Jenna Lee...

Performed alongside it is Remembrance, a new ballet created by choreographer Wayne Eagling to commemorate the armistice. Inspired by the story of Dame Marie Rambert's life during the Great War, the piece is set to Handel's Ode for St Cecilia's Day.

Sampad: Double Bill

MAC, Birmingham, Mon 24 September

Sampad's latest production, bringing together the classical and contemporary, showcases the ability of 'the most exciting young talent in South Asian dance'.

A story of love and devotion is explored in TRI, via a series of solos and emotive duets. EKA, meanwhile, presents a show of female unity and strength 'through mesmerising movement'.

The piece imagines the Hindu goddesses of learning, wealth and power as they impact upon a modern world.



BALLET IN BRUM



Tzu-Chao Chou, photo: Fabio Filippi

The much-acclaimed Birmingham Royal Ballet this month launches its new Hippodrome season with two exciting presentations - one of which includes a world premiere. The beautiful balletic shots on this page and opposite showcase the prowess of the company's dancers. We suggest you grab yourself a ticket or two and check out La Fille mal gardée and Fire And Fury in person. We promise you won't be disappointed...



La Fille mal gardée

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Wed 26 - Sat 29 September

Frederick Ashton's ever-popular La Fille mal gardée (translated as The Wayward Daughter) is a choreographed exploration of rural life. A firm family favourite, the simple and engaging story tells the tale of Lise, whose mother is desperately attempting to find her a wealthy suitor. But who will win Lise's hand - the loaded country bumpkin or the penniless but hunky farmhand?...

Ashton's 1960s creation was described by the Daily Telegraph as being 'as finely wrought an English comedy as My Fair Lady or The Importance Of Being Earnest'.

Justified praise indeed for a slick comedy that features a clog-dancing dame, a super-cute pony and no shortage of spectacular classical ballet.





Fire And Fury

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Wed 3 - Sat 6 October

The old and the new here combine for what promises to be an evening of truly memorable dance.

David Bintley's The King Dances focuses on the young King Louis XIV of France as he dances the role of the Sun God in a spectacular court entertainment...

The second production is Ignite, by up-and-coming choreographer Juanjo Arqués. Presented as part of Birmingham Royal Ballet's innovative Ballet Now programme - and inspired by Turner's painting, The Burning Of The House Of Lords And Commons - the piece is here receiving its world premiere.



Photo credits (top to bottom) 1. Brandon Lawrence and Céline Gittens, 2. Tyrone Singleton and Delia Mathews, 3. Delia Mathews, 4. Brandon Lawrence and Céline Gittens. All photos: Fabio Filippi



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The King Of Thieves CERT tbc

Starring **Michael Caine, Jim Broadbent, Tom Courtenay, Charlie Cox, Michael Gambon, Ray Winstone, Francesca Annis, Paul Whitehouse** Directed by **James Marsh (UK)**

The thieves in question are a gaggle of ageing crooks who have the temerity to break into a vault in Hatton Garden, London's jewellery district. It was the biggest robbery in British criminal history and no sooner had the raid broken across the headlines, than a film version of the events seemed almost inevitable. But nobody could have envisaged such a mouth-watering cast of England's knighted and fêted. The director James Marsh made his mark in the field of documentaries, winning innumerable plaudits for Man On Wire and Project Nim, before directing the Oscar-winning The Theory Of Everything.

Released Fri 14 Sept

Film highlights released in September...

The Nun CERT 15 (96 mins)

Starring **Demián Bichir, Taissa Farmiga, Jonas Bloquet, Charlotte Hope** Directed by **Corin Hardy (USA)**

The fifth instalment in The Conjuring franchise, this supernatural shocker is set in 1952 and features a creepy Romanian monastery. And there's already talk of The Nun 2.

Released Thurs 6 Sept





American Animals

CERT **15 (117 mins)**

Starring **Evan Peters, Barry Keoghan, Blake Jenner, Jared Abrahamson, Udo Kier, Ann Dowd** Directed by **Bart Layton (USA)**

Heists are suddenly all the rage again (think Ocean's Eight, Logan Lucky), but this one's based on a true story. Four young fantasists decide to rob a Kentucky university library, as much for the excitement of the crime as for the value of the rare books. The real crooks talk to camera as their escapades are re-enacted on screen.

Released Fri 7 Sept

The Miseducation Of Cameron Post CERT 15 (91 mins)

Starring **Chloë Grace Moretz, John Gallagher Jr, Sasha Lane, Forrest Goodluck, Jennifer Ehle** Directed by **Desiree Akhavan (USA/UK)**

Having been caught making out with the prom queen, Cameron Post (Moretz) is sent to God's Promise, an out-of-the-way treatment centre dedicated to curing the gay. Based on the 2012 novel by Emily M Danforth.

Released Fri 7 Sept



Film highlights released in September...



The Seagull CERT 12a (99 mins)

Starring **Annette Bening, Saoirse Ronan, Corey Stoll, Elisabeth Moss, Mare Winningham, Jon Tenney, Brian Dennehy** Directed by **Jennifer Yuh Nelson (USA)**

Yep, this is an American version of Chekhov's 1895 social satire, with Ms Bening as the ageing actress Irina Nikolayevna Arkadina. The film was shot in New York.

Released Fri 7 Sept

The Predator CERT tbc

Starring **Boyd Holbrook, Trevante Rhodes, Jacob Tremblay, Keegan-Michael Key, Olivia Munn, Sterling K Brown, Thomas Jane, Alfie Allen** Directed by **Shane Black (USA)**

The human race is in trouble again. The predators - first seen in the 1987 thriller starring Arnold Schwarzenegger - have upgraded themselves by introducing DNA from other species. And now they are intent on wiping out humankind.

Released Thurs 13 Sept





Lucky CERT 15 (88 mins)

Starring **Harry Dean Stanton, David Lynch, Ron Livingston, Ed Begley Jr, Tom Skerritts, Melissa Leo, Bill Pullman, Sakina Jaffrey** Directed by **John Carroll Lynch (USA)**

Having reached the grand old age of 90, Lucky, a US Navy veteran, realises that it is time to come to terms with his mortality... Not long after completing this, his first leading role in some time, the veteran character actor Harry Dean Stanton passed on, aged 91, adding an enormous frisson to this noble character study. It marks the directorial debut of the actor John Carroll Lynch.

Released Fri 14 Sept

Reinventing Marvin CERT tbc

Starring **Finnegan Oldfield, Grégory Gadebois, Vincent Macaigne, Charles Berling, Isabelle Huppert** Directed by **Anne Fontaine (France)**

At the age of 59, Anne Fontaine can consider herself one of the grande dames of French cinema, with a portfolio that includes Coco Before Chanel (2009), Gemma Bovery (2014) and The Innocents (2016). Here, Marvin Bijoux (Oldfield) is not like other boys in his small village and only after a chance encounter with a drama teacher does he realise that there is another world that can accommodate those who are different... Mlle Huppert plays herself.

Released Fri 14 Sept



Superfly CERT 15 (116 mins)

Starring **Trevor Jackson, Jason Mitchell, Michael K. Williams, Lex Scott Davis, Jennifer Morrison** Directed by **Director X (USA)**

Following the remake of the blaxploitation thriller Shaft in 2000, there are now a slew of new reboots in the works, with this being the first out of the starting gate. Trevor Jackson takes on the role of Youngblood Priest (made famous by Ron O'Neal in 1972), an Atlanta drug dealer who attempts to quit the business after 'one last job.' For the record, Director X was born Julien Lutz in Toronto.

Released Fri 14 Sept

Mile 22 CERT tbc

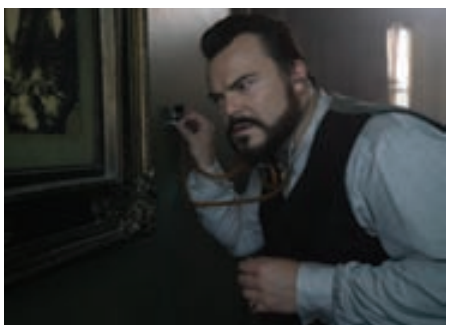
Starring **Mark Wahlberg, John Malkovich, Lauren Cohan, Iko Uwais** Directed by **Peter Berg (USA)**

A CIA agent (Wahlberg) is tasked with smuggling a police officer with sensitive information out of Southeast Asia. Peter Berg previously directed Marky Mark in the enormously efficient Lone Survivor, Deepwater Horizon and Patriots Day.

Released Wed 19 Sept

The House With A Clock In Its Walls CERT PG

Starring **Jack Black, Cate Blanchett, Owen Vaccaro, Renée Elise Goldsberry, Sunny Suljic, Kyle MacLachlan** Directed by **Eli Roth (USA)**



Eli Roth is responsible for such films as Cabin Fever, Hostel and Death Wish, so it makes sense that his first children's film should be based on the Gothic horror novel by John Bellairs. The recently orphaned Lewis (Owen Vaccaro) goes to stay with his uncle (Jack Black), who turns out to be a mediocre warlock living in a house containing the secret to the end of the world. Should be fun.

Released Fri 21 Sept

Faces Places CERT PG (94 mins)

Directed by **Agnès Varda and JR (France)**

Agnès Varda is the grande dame of the French New Wave, JR an anonymous artist and photographer who specialises in colossal pictures displayed in public places. Together, the unlikely duo travel round France to capture the lives of the locals and in the process bond on camera. The result went on to be nominated for an Oscar for best documentary of 2017.

Released Fri 21 Sept



The Little Stranger

CERT **12a (111 mins)**

Starring **Domhnall Gleeson, Ruth Wilson, Will Poulter, Charlotte Rampling, Josh Dylan** Directed by **Lenny Abrahamson (Ireland/UK/France)**

The name to note here is Lenny Abrahamson, the talented director who brought us the gripping, moving and original (and Oscar-winning) Room of 2015. His new film is a Gothic drama set in 1947 based on the novel by Sarah Waters. It stars Domhnall Gleeson as a country doctor whose life unravels when he attends a patient at a crumbling manor house.

Released Fri 21 Sept

A Simple Favour

CERT **15 (117 mins)**

Starring **Anna Kendrick, Blake Lively, Henry Golding, Andrew Rannells, Linda Cardellini, Rupert Friend** Directed by **Paul Feig (USA)**



It's a case of mistaken intentions when a small-town 'mommy blogger' (Anna Kendrick) attempts to solve the disappearance of her high society friend (Blake Lively). The mystery drama is based on the novel by Darcey Bell, described as 'Gone Girl on steroids, amphetamines and cocaine.' From the director of Bridesmaids, The Heat and Spy.

Released Fri 21 Sept



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Puzzle CERT 15 (103 mins)

Starring **Kelly Macdonald, Irrfan Khan, David Denman, Bubba Weiler, Austin Abrams** Directed by **Marc Turtletaub (USA)**

The puzzle in question is of the jigsaw variety. It is one of the few pleasures that Agnes (Kelly Macdonald) allows herself, in between caring for her husband and her two sons, all the cooking, the housework and her commitments to the church. Somehow, arranging all these myriad cardboard shapes into their correct order gives Agnes a sense of control, of finding a way to complete the puzzle of her life. And her new obsession is about to transform her world in a way that neither she nor her blob of a husband could have foreseen. Puzzle, the film, is not unlike its protagonist. Its wider ambitions materialise slowly and while it seems to occupy a modest, even safe mind-set, it has the intelligence to feed out its story in its own time, without pandering to the impatient. The result, then, is a splatter of surprises, as our heroine gathers courage to pursue her own dreams and to find her own voice. In short, Marc Turtletaub's subtle, resonant film is a timeless character study of a woman sidelined by life. In a good way.

Released Fri 7 Sept



Night School CERT 12a (111 mins)

Starring **Kevin Hart, Tiffany Haddish, Rob Riggle, Taran Killam, Romany Malco, Keith David** Directed by **Malcolm D. Lee (USA)**

It seems like only yesterday that Melissa McCarthy went back to school in Life Of The Party (2018). Now it's the turn of Kevin Hart and other troublemakers who are forced to attend night school in order to complete their high school exams. From the director of The Best Man, Soul Men and Girls Trip. Just saying.

Released Fri 28 Sept

The Wife CERT 15 (100 mins)

Starring **Glenn Close, Jonathan Pryce, Christian Slater, Max Irons, Annie Starke, Harry Lloyd** Directed by **Björn Runge (UK/Sweden/USA)**

It's early days, but there's already some buzz surrounding Glenn Close's Oscar chances for this drama. She plays Joan Castleman, the wife of a writer (Jonathan Pryce) who is honoured with the Nobel Prize in Literature, an event that prompts her to examine her own life. Based on the 2003 novel by Meg Wolitzer.

Released Fri 28 Sept





Out Of The Shadows

MAC, Birmingham,
8 September - 11 November

The human cost of locking up people with learning disabilities and/or autism is the subject of Polly Braden & Sally Williams' Out Of The Shadows.

"Sally and I spent 2017 driving between Bristol, London and West Bromwich to visit the 10 people that share their stories with us," explains Polly. "Sometimes we would arrive to find Rodney didn't feel like seeing us, or Harry had got into trouble and was back in prison. On other occasions we would be happy to see Lindsey preparing for her first day of volunteer work after a life spent in and out of prison. This journey, at times sad and frustrating, could also be inspiring and uplifting."







experienceCOLOUR

Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge, until Sun 14 October

Standing inside a rainbow, playing with the shadows of an eclipse, exploring reflection and investigating the mystery of coloured shadows are among the activities and experiences which visitors to this 'remarkably beautiful' exhibition can enjoy.
Exploring the science and art of colour through a selection of large-scale installations, displays and experiments, the presentation aims to explain the ways in which different colours can influence people, and also to pose new questions about 'the meanings of colour in the world around us'.



Journeys With 'The Waste Land'

The Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 15 September - Sun 18 November

Taking as its starting point TS Eliot's famous poem, The Waste Land - written in 1922, in the aftermath of the Great War - Journeys aims to explore the meanings of the poem and its relationship to Coventry.
The Waste Land's imagery of journeys and fragmentation, redemption through fire and rebirth, connects with the histories and myths of the city.
The exhibition shows at the Mead Gallery until one week after the 100th anniversary of the World War One armistice.

Within And Without: Body Image And The Self

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Fri 1 February



This is the second exhibition to take place in the museum's Story Lab gallery, a space that invites visitors to help shape the future of the venue.
Exploring the ways in which body image impacts on issues such as social status, gender, stage of life, health, aesthetics, religion, politics and sexuality, the exhibition's theme has been shaped into a single narrative by volunteers working with staff on the show's development.

Grace A Williams: Intermission

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 11 November



Grace A Williams' two-screen projection focuses on the gaze of two unknown black men whose portraits appear on 19th century photographic slides found by the artist.
"Despite being historic images," explains Grace, "their representation in a contemporary context enacts a reading of race and identity that completely undermines their original purpose of defining colonial 'othering'. This feels particularly pertinent in a moment where voices eradicated by white eurocentrism - including women and ethnic minorities, regularly lumped together as 'other' - are being reinstated."

FESTIVAL OF IMAGINEERS

presenting a unique mix of arts and engineering on the streets of Coventry...



Festival of Imagineers brings a plethora of outdoor art and performance to Coventry this month. All pieces are based around the merging of the arts with engineering.
The festival is now in its fifth year and is a recurring part of Imagineer's calendar of projects.

"Our aims as a company really are to create extraordinary, new and exciting outdoor work in creative spaces, with the hope of engaging as broad a range of audience as possible," says Claire Maddocks, Creative Producer at Imagineer, and the festival's director. "We want to support the development of new artists and young people through our work, but mainly we want to create work that's really memorable."

The eyes of the nation were drawn to Imagineer when they unveiled their project for the London 2012 Olympics.

"The thing that everyone would know us for is our Godiva Awakes project for the Olympics," says Claire. "We made a massive Lady Godiva puppet and cycled it down to London. I think since then it's been a slightly challenging journey because there was a period after 2012 where a lot of funding dried up - this happened nationally."

Despite those funding difficulties, the company managed to create a very unusual and distinct identity for Festival of Imagineers.

"The concept came out of quite a long journey," Claire continues. "We ran a small-scale festival of invention at that time, which was to do with the fact that Coventry has historically been a very inventive city. We left that behind when we did our major Olympic project in 2012, where we'd mixed with a whole series of engineering companies across the region. So it seemed like a natural progression to link all our future work to those engineers, and to explore further the synergy between creative engineers and creative artists.

"For the festival, quite a lot of the performances will use structures or machines or other things that have been engineered to create a framework for facilitating performance or art of some description.

By Lauren Cole

We've managed to really fuse those elements together over the years, and I think that's very much what Imagineer is about. I feel it really makes sense to our audience now, and they really appreciate the festival as something a little bit different, quirky and unexpected."

Each year sees the festival programme take on different themes: "We're doing two themes this year - connectivity and play. The connectivity part is all about exploring what connects people, communities, places and more. Our theme of play partly links to some work the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum are doing exploring the subject. It also links to our major new commission, Bridge, where one of the main things we're exploring is creating an environment in which members of the public are invited to play in the public space, or behave differently from usual in relation to a public space."

Claire is immensely proud that Festival of Imagineers presents a balance of local, national and international work.

"I do feel like you need to do stuff that's locally rooted, but is interesting nationally and internationally. I think the important thing is creating a platform upon which there can be a cross-fertilisation between local, national and international artists. So I think it's about striking a balance between nurturing, supporting and showcasing local artists, and bringing in work from outside that can influence the local art scene, or be influenced by it."

Claire is also optimistic about the festival's future.

"We're exploring a slightly different model and different partnerships, so it may become a festival where you might visit Coventry and stay for the duration. I can't reveal much else about what we're actually trying to do, but the plan is to grow and explode the festival over the next five years."

Claire hopes Coventry becoming City of Culture 2021 will help propel Imagineer, the festival and Coventry itself towards new heights: "I'm really excited because I've spent almost my whole career in Coventry, insisting the city isn't the cultural desert many presume it to be! This is Coventry's opportunity to really change people's perceptions of it. In terms of what it means for the festival, we really don't know, but we're hopeful. I think it's just a case of waiting to see what happens."

Festival of Imagineers takes place in various locations around Coventry city centre from Monday 17 - Saturday 22 September
For more information, visit festivalofimagineers.co.uk

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS...



CARMEN FUNEBRE
Sat 22 Sept

As Imagineer celebrates 20 years of working with inspirational outdoor arts company Teatr Biuro Podrozy, and the UK marks the centenary of World War One, Festival of Imagineers presents Teatr Biuro Podrozy's most iconic performance. Carmen Funebre is a visceral and brutal exposé of the horrors of war, based on the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s.



REAR VIEW
Thurs 20 - Sat 22 Sept

Rear View is a unique, interactive experience where the streets of Coventry become part of the performance. Presented by IOU, the action happens on a custom-made conversion of a double decker bus, a mobile auditorium that turns the city into a stage, as participants are taken on a journey during which familiar and not so familiar places are brought to life.



CHILD HOOD
Thurs 20 - Sat 22 Sept

Originally commissioned by Artichoke for Lumiere London in Trafalgar Square, an installation of illuminated balloons fills Broadgate. French company Collectif Coin are experts in site-specific art, exploring a dreamy and somewhat naïve vision of the digital technologies that surround us in everyday life through ideas about body, sound and light.


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*Calls cost 13ppm plus standard network charges. Ticket prices include a free show guide. Advance tickets are available until midnight Thursday 8 November 2018. After that date, tickets will only be available at the show. All bookings are subject to a single transaction fee of £1.95. Please be aware the above code does not equate to a discounted rate and is solely for marketing purposes. All information correct at time of publishing. **Book your ticket(s) before Friday 26 October 2018 at midnight and you will be automatically entered in to our free prize draw to win a Jaguar E-type model worth £8,735. Full T&Cs online: www.neoclassicmotorshow.com/tickets



A Place In The Sun Live

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 21 - Sun 23 September

The official exhibition of Channel Four's popular series returns to the Midlands - and it's the perfect place to negotiate the process of finding an ideal property abroad.

More than 150 exhibitors will be flying in from locations including Spain, France, Portugal, Italy and Florida, showcasing a wide range of properties and answering potential punters' purchasing questions.

Television-show presenters Amanda Lamb, Jasmine Harman, Jonnie Irwin and Laura Hamilton will be on hand to share their experience and offer advice, while a panel of experts will take visitors through the ins and outs of buying a property abroad.

Autumn Steam Gala

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Thurs 20 - Sun 23 September

Check out an array of steam locomotives at Severn Valley Railway's Autumn Steam Gala this month.

Attractions include overnight running on the Friday and Saturday, an early-morning breakfast train from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster, an open-to-visitors Eardington Halt station, and Paddock Railway and Coalyard Miniature Railway in steam.



Midland Game Fair

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sat 15 & Sun 16 September

As the premier event of its kind in the country, the well-established Midland Game Fair offers a rewarding weekend for those with a passion for traditional country pursuits.

The event showcases a wide range of rural attractions, including clay shooting, gundog competitions, falconry displays and ferret racing.

There's plenty of musical entertainment to enjoy as well, with folk, jazz & blues and Celtic & country stages all featuring.

Younger visitors can get up-close-and-personal to some beautiful birds in the falconry classroom, with other kids' entertainments including donkey rides, a bouncy castle and bungee trampolines.



Classic & Retro Show

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley, Sun 2 September

This popular show presents a selection of 800-plus vehicles and static displays featuring saloons, sports cars, commercial & military vehicles and classic motorcycles. There are trade & autojumble stands too, as well as a contribution from Warwickshire singer Melissa Hollick, who's promising to get the crowds dancing with a variety of vintage music.



The Cycle Show

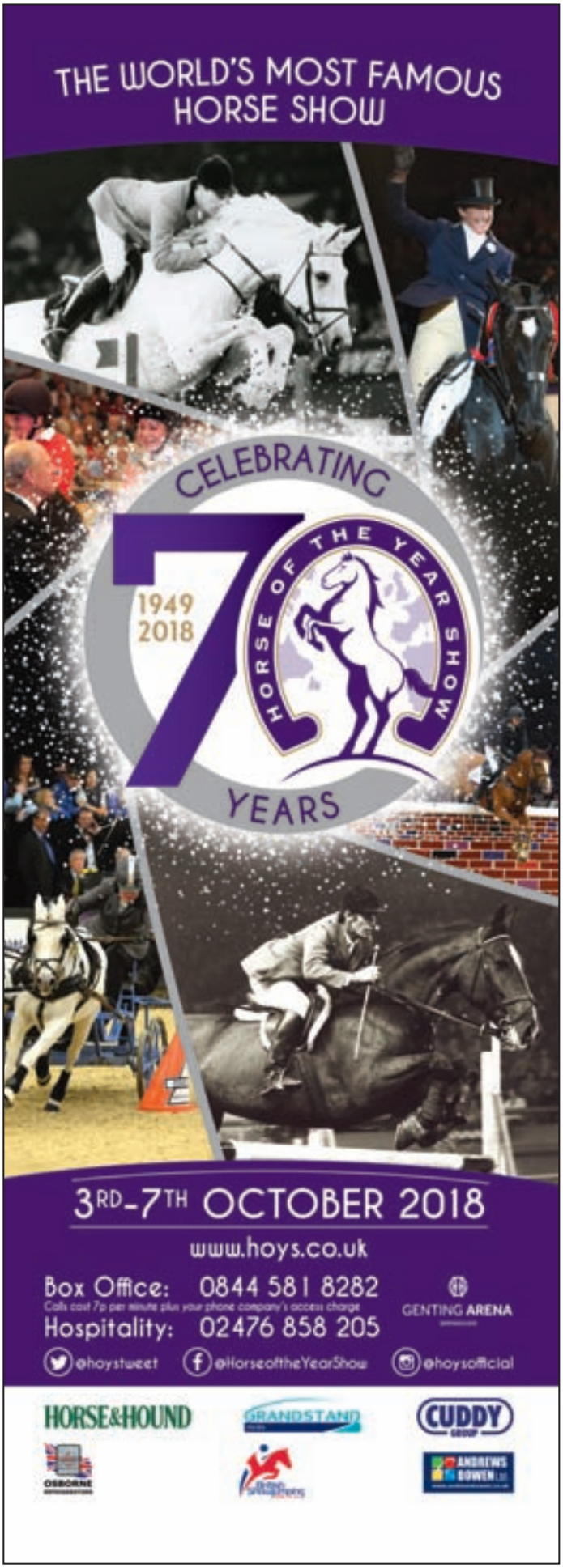
NEC, Birmingham, Fri 28 - Sun 30 September



Showcasing more than 300 exhibitors, 500 brands and the very latest bikes and accessories, it's no surprise that the Cycle Show is the UK's biggest cycling event.

The 2018 line-up of brands features Canyon, Orange Mountain Bikes, Oakley, Primal Europe and Dolan, to name but a few.

Main-stage attractions include industry talks, celebrity interviews and the chance to pick up plenty of hints and tips about cycling - from how to get started to safety for families.


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400 Years of Aston Hall

Aston Hall, Birmingham, Sat 8 September

Aston Hall brings to a close its 400th anniversary celebrations with The Palace of Curiosities, a Victorian sideshow full of 'spectacular and astonishing displays'.

There's also the chance to meet Queen Victoria and learn about her two visits to the venue - first as a princess and then, in 1858, as Queen.

Trampoline, Tumbling & DMT British Championships

Arena Birmingham, Sat 22 & Sun 23 September

With 13 major medals won at the European Championships, British gymnastics is enjoying a brilliant year.

Olympic medal-winning trampolinist Bryony Page (pictured) is here back on home soil, taking on stiff competition from world team bronze medallists Laura Gallagher and Kat Driscoll.

Nathan Bailey and Luke Strong go head-to-head for the men's trampoline crown.

Other attractions include performances by the senior tumbling teams, led by 2018 European champion Lucie Colebeck, and the very best of Britain's DMT gymnasts, who'll be executing high-flying stunts in a bid for the British titles.





Malvern Autumn Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Sat 29 & Sun 30 September

A weekend of home-grown family fun is in store at the Malvern Autumn Show.

For green-fingered visitors, there's the chance to glean some useful know-how from the gardening and floral experts in attendance, as well as to stock up on plants and bulbs for winter.

Other show highlights include the Giant Vegetables Championship, an 'old tyme' fairground, free dance lessons and a local arts, crafts & food market.

heritage open days

Every September, thousands of volunteers across England organise events to celebrate the country's fantastic history, architecture and culture. These Heritage Open Days offer you a chance to discover hidden places, try out new experiences and learn fascinating facts about some of England's most interesting visitor destinations - all free of charge. Below, we've selected a few Midlands highlights from the 2018 edition of the festival.

POP-UP EXHIBITION This year's exhibition explores the stories of women in Stratford-upon-Avon across six centuries - from Shakespeare's plays to Stratford's suffragettes and beyond - through the Shakespeare Centre's library, archive and museum collection. Craft activities and a Tudor 'dress-up corner' are also available.

SAT 8 & SUN 9 SEPTEMBER, THE SHAKESPEARE CENTRE, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

****

OPEN WEEKEND A weekend for steam, engine, canal boat and industrial archaeology enthusiasts. The event features engine rallies and displays of classic cars and commercial vehicles. Crafting activities take place in the Canal Warehouse.

SAT 15 & SUN 16 SEPTEMBER, ETRURIA INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM, STOKE ON TRENT

****

OPEN DAY TOURS Free-entry event featuring tours of both the museum and the nearby ruins of Bordesley Abbey. Other highlights include children's craft activities, various exhibitions, a family heritage trail and music by local charity Indigo Arts.

SUN 9 SEPTEMBER, FORGE MILL NEEDLE MUSEUM, REDDITCH

****

MEET 17TH CENTURY COSTUMED CHARACTERS Meet the musketeer and his wife alongside replica arms and armour from the siege of Oswestry in 1644. On the Saturday and Sunday, visitors can also enjoy a guided walk from outside St Oswald's Parish.

FRI 14 - SUN 16 SEPTEMBER, OSWESTRY VISITOR CENTRE, SHROPSHIRE


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The Monster

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 21 - Sun 23 September

Release your inner child in a nostalgic bouncy castle experience for adults.
At nearly 300 metres long, The Monster is one of the world's largest inflatable obstacle courses.

There are 42 obstacles in total, including an 18-metre mega-slide, a 'tunnel of love' and 'The Bouncy Cage of Doom'.
The event also features a selection of street food, numerous cocktails and craft beers, a host of pop-up stalls, giant adult ball pits and live DJs.

Coracle World Championships 2018

Pengwern Boat Club, Shrewsbury, Fri 14 September

This major charity event makes a welcome return to Shrewsbury's River Severn for the 11th time. Organised in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, the championship sees teams of four paddle a traditional coracle boat in a relay race across the river.
Also up for grabs is the Richard Bayliss Trophy, for the team that raises the most money prior to the event, and a prize for the best fancy dress. Racing starts at 3pm, with teams aiming to improve on the current world record of five minutes and 20 seconds. Event organisers are hoping to raise funds in excess of last year's £33,700.



The Glamping Show

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 September



Glamping - a more luxurious form of camping - has become increasingly popular during the last few years and is now a prominent part of the leisure industry.
This annual show presents a wide selection of pop-up, temporary and pre-pitched accommodation solutions, including yurts, tipi and safari tents.
This year's seminar programme takes a look at innovation within the industry, how to develop a glamping business and ways to create sustainable profit.

heritage open days

STORE TOURS Behind-the-scenes tour during which visitors can meet the BCLM Curators, see some of the museum's hidden treasures and curiosities, and handle objects in the workshop.

SAT 15 SEPTEMBER, BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM, DUDLEY

****

WOMEN OF WELLESBOURNE New exhibition bringing to life the stories of local women through voice recordings and displays. From the everyday to the extraordinary, the event celebrates the rural Warwickshire community.

SAT 15 SEPTEMBER, CHEDHAM'S YARD, WELLESBOURNE

****

MEDIEVAL WALK & COSTUME GUIDED TOURS Discover hidden history in the village of Yardley on a 2.5-mile stroll led by experts from the Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society. The walk begins at Blakesley Hall, where costumed guided tours will also be taking place.

SAT 15 & SUN 16 SEPTEMBER, BLAKESLEY HALL, BIRMINGHAM

****

TOLKIEN & SAREHOLE Visitors to the 18th century mill can learn about how it inspired Lord Of The Rings author JRR Tolkien's fictional land of The Shire.

SAT 15 & SUN 16 SEPTEMBER, SAREHOLE MILL, BIRMINGHAM

****

EXTRAORDINARY COMMANDERY WOMEN Explore Worcester's Civil War Story, an interactive experience with costumed tours in a Grade I listed building. Visitors can join one of the Their Stories tours and learn about extraordinary Commandery women.

SUN 16 SEPTEMBER, THE COMMANDERY, WORCESTER

****

HIGHBURY DURING THE GREAT WAR The Moseley Society History Group commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One with interactive displays, living history, and the chance to research family members.

SUN 16 SEPTEMBER, HIGHBURY HALL, MOSELEY

An extensive list of Heritage Open Days events can be found at heritageopendays.org.uk



Tom Silverton photo credit: Clive Padden Photography / paddenphotography.co.uk

A PLAY FOR OUR TIMES

Midlands-born actor Tom Silverton this month makes his Old Joint Stock Theatre debut, playing Michael in a new comic four-hander about sex and commitment in the 21st century. Tom recently chatted to What's On about this much-anticipated play, and about what audiences can expect...

Why is Four Play a relevant drama for our times, Tom?

It explores what relationships have become in the time of Grindr, Tinder, Hornet etc. They can be a lot more open and fluid, and I think that people who were in a relationship before this phenomenon kicked off may feel a little bit left behind, as though they've missed out on all this opportunity to be so easily promiscuous and easy-going. There are plenty of contemporary cultural references in the play, and the dialogue is very conversational, which adds to the intimacy.
Four Play exposes the frustrations that can arise for couples in long-term relationships. Are they involving another member to simply spice up their sex life, or are they doing it to save an already-crumbling relationship?
With relationships being a lot more open these days, the definition of monogamous can be slightly looser.

Does the play centre on a throuple or a threesome? What's the difference?

Without giving too much away, one couple propositions half of another couple with an idea which means there's a certain amount of risk involved for them all. There's definitely a great deal of intimacy for the three characters. I would say a throuple is a three-way relationship in every aspect, but a threesome is purely a physical, sexual experience.

Do the characters in the play distinguish between sex and a loving relationship?

Definitely. One of the characters gets about quite a bit, but he still saves 'something' intimate for his partner. He believes what he's doing is purely physical, whereas what he has with his partner is truly loving and special.

Can you give us some background to the four characters?

We have two couples: Rafe & Pete and Andrew & Michael. Michael's my character. Rafe and Pete are in a seven-and-a-half-year relationship, and one of them instigates the idea to involve one of the other couple. Pete is quite adventurous and likes to pass off the power to Rafe, but he can be a little uptight and is very sensitive. Andrew and Michael have been together a couple of years. Andrew is easy-going and loving, which Michael can take advantage of. He's often out at all hours at the gym.

Where does the comedy angle come from?

Relationships aren't usually one long battle, so there's plenty of playfulness between the couples. I think comedy comes from tension too, so even if the characters aren't being directly funny, their sly comments, slip-ups and mistakes provide plenty of laughs, along with a few tongue-in-cheek moments.

How much sexual content is there, and is there an audience age limit?

Sex is one of the biggest topics of the play, so there's plenty of it explored by the characters - from kinky things to sensual candles, it covers a lot! As for an age limit, it's at your own discretion, but I wouldn't bring your kids - it'd make for a bit of a full-on sex-ed.

What research have you undertaken for the role?

Well, I haven't signed up to Grindr, but I've spoken to a few friends about their experiences. For my own character of Michael, who's obsessed with fitness, I've been hitting the gym as much as possible. As for the cast as a whole, people have really been delving into the details of the script and then going away to create these rich backgrounds for the characters; where they work, their families, their favourite bars - anything that'll bring them to life.

Is Four Play best suited to an intimate performance area like The Old Joint Stock, or would it work equally well on a larger scale?

The OJS is the perfect venue for it; the characters are revealing all the intimate details right in front of you. It feels like you're right there with them throughout the whole play.

There's been a big furore over Jack Whitehall - a straight man - playing a gay character in Disney's Jungle Cruise. What's your opinion on straight men playing gay characters?

I can understand the frustration from the LGBT community, as it's important to improve representation in Hollywood, giving everyone an equal opportunity. On the other hand, if they felt he was the very best person to fulfil that role because of his acting ability, then that's fair enough. However, Disney may well have played on the controversy a little to generate publicity, which could be considered a little exploitative.

Four Play shows at Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre from Wednesday 5 to Saturday 8 September.

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thelist

Your week-by-week listings guide

September 2018



Joe Lycett plays Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent - Thursday 6 September & Dudley Town Hall - Friday 7 September

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

What's On

Sat 1 to Sun 9 September



Peaky Blinders Night at Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

Fri 7 - Sat 8 September

Mon 10 to Sun 16 September



An Evening with Ant Middleton at Regent Theatre, Stoke

Fri 14 September

Mon 17 to Sun 23 September



Ross Noble at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Thurs 20 - Fri 21 September

Mon 24 to Sun 30 September



Russell Watson at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Mon 24 September

THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER

Visual Arts

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

THE DUDLEY SOCIETY OF ARTISTS Exhibition of work by society members, until Sat 22 Sept

New Art Gallery - Walsall

ANDREW TIFT: IMMORTALISE Andrew presents a range of paintings, drawings, photographs and sketchbooks which combine his love of portraiture with experimental works, until Sun 2 Sept

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

MAHTAB HUSSAIN - MITTI KA GHAR Exhibition extending from Mahtab Hussain's Floor Three exhibition, Going Back Home To Where I Came From, until Sun 24 Feb

Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

NEW BACK IN TIME WITH TEXTILES Fashion and textiles collection from the early 1800s to the 1980s, Sat 15 Sept - Tues 13 Nov

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

NEW COMMEMORATING CONFLICT: THE POTTERIES AND WAR Exhibition exploring how the Staffordshire potters chose to commemorate the wars of the 18th and 19th centuries, Sat 22 Sept - Sun 18 Nov

NEW FOR THE FALLEN A 22-metre-long painted wall hanging, depicting a panorama of the battlefields fought over by the 5th Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment during the First World War. Plus archives and objects relating to the end of the war, Sat 22 Sept - Sun 18 Nov

Qube Gallery, Oswestry

NEW QUBE OPEN 2018 Annual competition inviting artists from all over the country to submit work on a particular theme. This exhibition features the shortlisted entries, Thurs 6 Sept - Mon 15 Oct

Weston Park, Shifnal

NEW 100 HEARTS WAR STORIES A thoughtful exhibition to commemorate all those who took part in World War One. Textile artists interpret the stories using cloth and thread as both a medium and metaphor, Sat 29 Sept - Tues 30 Oct

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

NEW AUTUMN OPEN EXHIBITION 2018 Showcasing work by OutlineArt, a group of professional artists who live on the borders of Cheshire East and Staffordshire, Sat 15 Sept - Sat 27 Oct

NEW WAR & CONFLICT, POETRY & PEACE AS PART OF WILFRED OWEN FESTIVAL Exhibition of remembrance and commemoration to mark the centenary of Wilfred Owen's death and armistice day, Sat 15 Sept - Sun 11 Nov

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

SLAVES OF FASHION: NEW WORKS BY THE SINGH TWINS Exhibition exploring the history of Indian textiles, Empire, enslavement, luxury consumerism, and the contemporary relevance of these issues in the modern world, until Sun 16 Sept

CONTEMPORARY COLLECTIONS Display highlighting paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures in the gallery's contemporary collections, until Tues 2 Oct

MELANIE TOMLINSON: GHOST HORSES AND GUNS Exhibition of work by Melanie Tomlinson, who creates intricate three-dimensional sculptures as an archive of urban folk tales, until Sun 14 Oct

WOLVES CELEBRATORY EXHIBITION Celebration of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club's EFL Championship triumph, showcasing a selection of photographs from the club's end-of-season open-top bus parade, until Sun 28 Oct

QUEEN STREET A look at the history of several properties along Queen Street, until Sun 4 Nov

Other VISUAL ARTS

NEW H-ART Exhibition by artist Maggie Davis, Sat 8 - Sun 16 Sept, Lingen Nursery and Garden Centre, Nr Bucknell

NEW ROOM CURATED BY PETER SALTER Exhibition of works by architects and photographers in conjunction with artists, ceramicists and textile makers, Sat 8 Sept - Sat 6 Oct, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Ludlow

NEW SECRET SEVERN ART TRAIL Twice-yearly showcase for both new and established artists in and around the Ironbridge Gorge, Fri 28 Sept - Sun 7 Oct, Ironbridge, Telford



Lisbee Stainton - Lichfield Guildhall

Gigs

THE KAISER CHIEFS Sat 1 Sept, Wolverhampton Racecourse

BLAKE - THE ANNIVERSARY TOUR Sat 1 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

SAVING ABEL Sat 1 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

THE ZEPPELIN EXPERIENCE Sat 1 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

FRANCIS & THE FIEND Sat 1 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE SOUND AKA + BRITANNIA BEAT Sat 1 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

TEXAS + IMELDA MAY (SKYLINE SERIES) Sat 1 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MARSHALL JEFFERSON Sat 1 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SERPENTYNE Sun 2 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

OFF THE WALL- PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE Sun 2 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

MARTIN STEPHENSON Sun 2 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

CLARE BOWEN PLUS SUPPORT Sun 2 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN - IN CONCERT Mon 3 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GREG RUSSELL & CIARAN ALGAR Mon 3 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

WET WET WET'S GRAEME CLARK Mon 3 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE DEVON ALLMAN PROJECT, Mon 3 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

INCUBUS Tues 4 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

SANDY ALEX G Tues 4 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SOCCER MOMMY Tues 4 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SERENITY + TEMPERANCE + ALIGHT Tues 4 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

LA GUNS Tues 4 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BARRY MANILOW Tues 4 Sept, Arena B'ham

JASON DONOVAN Wed 5 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Wed 5 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SAM DRAISEY AND THE REVOLT Wed 5 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

PASSENGER Wed 5 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SABBRA CADABRA Thurs 6 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

T.REXTASY Fri 7 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE SMALL FAKERS Fri 7 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

THE THE Fri 7 Sept, Digbeth Arena, B'ham

SYKED FEAT EX LIMEHOUSE LIZZY TIM READ Fri 7 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

LISBEE STAINTON Fri 7 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

WHITESNAKE UK Fri 7 Sept, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

U2-2 Fri 7 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE RHYTHM KINGS + SPECIAL GUEST OTIS REDDING III Sat 8 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GARBAGE Sat 8 Sept, Digbeth Arena, B'ham

THE DARLING BUDS + THE PROCTORS Sat 8 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Sat 8 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SWEDE DREAMZ Sat 8 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BROTHERS BEYOND Sun 9 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

NIGHTWISHED Sun 9 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

LICHFIELD PROMS Free annual outdoor concert that takes place in the beautiful surroundings of Beacon Park, Sat 1 Sept, Beacon Park, Lichfield

A FRENCH ACCENT ON THE CLASSICS Featuring Birmingham Conservatoire pianists Domonkos Csabay & Connor Wilcox. Programme includes works by Handel, Chopin & Debussy, Thurs 6 Sept, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

G4 Fri 7 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

STAR WARS Michael Seal and the CBSO perform John Williams' music from all eight films, Sat 8 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

PROMS & PROSECCO IN THE PARK Featuring Newport Male Voice Choir, Mary-Jess Leaverland (soprano), Jack Foley (tenor), local community choir A Choired Taste & electric-acoustic string quartet String Infusion, Sat 8 Sept, Chetwynd Deer Park, Newport, Shropshire

Comedy

ANDY ASKINS, KEVIN MCCARTHY, STUART MITCHELL, JOHNNY COCHRANE & COMIC TCB Sat 1 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LIVE AT HOT WATER SPECIAL Sat 1 Sept, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

ADAM ROWE, STEVE HALL, MANDY KNIGHT & COMIC TBC Sat 1 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 1 Sept, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs

JOE LYCETT Thurs 6 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ROSS NOBLE Thurs 6 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

JARLATH REGAN, ANDREW O'NEILL & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 6 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

KUM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY NIGHT Thurs 6 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

JONNY AWSUM, ANDREW BIRD, LUKAS KIRKBY & SEAN MORAN Thurs 6 Sept, The George Hotel, Lichfield

IAIN STIRLING Fri 7 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT Fri 7 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

PAUL TONKINSON & JONNY AWSUM Fri 7 Sept, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

JARLATH REGAN, ANDREW O'NEILL, OLA & GEORGE ZACH Fri 7 - Sat 8 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEORGE EGG Sat 8 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

MO GILLIGAN Sat 8 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ADAM BLOOM, SARAH KEYWORTH, MIKE NEWALL & FREDDY QUINNE Sat 8 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ALFIE MOORE Sat 8 Sept, MAC Birmingham

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 8 Sept, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs

JEREMY HARDY Sun 9 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Theatre

DIAMONDS ARE FOR ERIC Eric is taking his new lady on holiday, so finds the cheapest deal..., until Sat 1 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE FULL MONTY Musical adaptation of the hit film of the same name, until Sat 1 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

JERSEY BOYS Internationally acclaimed musical telling the real-life story of Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons, until Sat 8 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE COMEDY ABOUT A BANK ROBBERY Smash-and-grab comedy promising swagloads of laughter, until Sat 8 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

MACBETH Starring Christopher Eccleston and Niamh Cusack, until Tues 18 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

ROMEO AND JULIET Contemporary production of Shakespeare's story of love at first sight, until Fri 21 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR David Troughton stars as Falstaff, until Sat 22 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

TAMBURLAINE Michael Boyd returns to the RSC to direct a new staging of Christopher Marlowe's famous play, until Sat 1 Dec, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

UNCLE BEN'S FAMILY FEUD Comedy following the ups and downs of family life, Thurs 30 Aug - Sun 2 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

JOHN EDWARD - PSYCHIC MEDIUM Sun 2 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

MRS BEETON, MY SISTER The story of Isabella Beeton's surprising life, Sun 2 Sept, Chelmarsh Parish Hall, Nr Bridgnorth, Shropshire

MEEK A haunting story of ruthless state control, tense friendships and one woman's determination not to be broken, Tues 4 - Sat 8 Sept, The REP, Birmingham



Joe Lycett - Dudley Town Hall

THE RESISTABLE RISE OF ARTURO UI Bertolt Brecht's satire about the rise of Hitler, Tues 4 - Sat 15 Sept, The Wightman, Shrewsbury

LADY MACBETH AND HER SERVANTS Jars Of Clay Theatre Company presents its version of Shakespeare's blood-splashed tale, Wed 5 - Sat 8 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

FORBIDDEN NIGHTS Two hours of 'thrilling action and provocative choreography', Thurs 6 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GOODNIGHT MISTER TOM Amateur staging of Michelle Magorian's wartime tale, Thurs 6 - Sat 8 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN UGLY B***DS!** Join Cattle Productions for some rude'n'crude fun & frolics... Fri 7 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

TARTUFFE Brand new version of Moliere's provocative French classic, relocated to Birmingham's modern-day Pakistani Muslim community, Fri 7 Sept - Sat 23 Feb, The Swan Theatre Stratford, Stratford-upon-Avon

QUEENS OF THE COAL AGE Maxine Peake's powerful play about four women taking a stand in the face of a changing world, Fri 7 - Sat 29 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE 39 STEPS The Crescent Theatre Company present John Buchanan's tale of treachery, spies and dastardly deeds, Sat 8 - Sat 15 Sept, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CONJUGAL RIGHTS Amateur staging of Roger Hall's single-set farce concerning a couple about to celebrate their 21st wedding anniversary, Sat 8 - Sat 15 Sept, Oldbury Rep

BROTHERS BEYOND Celebrating 50 years of Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Sun 9 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

Kids Show

MATILDA THE MUSICAL The Royal Shakespeare Company's award-winning musical, until Sat 8 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

TIDDLER AND OTHER TERRIFIC TALES Featuring live music, puppetry and a host of colourful characters from Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's best-loved titles, Thurs 30 Aug - Sat 1 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

TELETUBBIES LIVE Join Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa and Po as they explore their magical world, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

THE SNAIL & THE WHALE A Tall Stories musical production inspired by the bestselling picture book by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Sept, MAC, Birmingham

THE ENORMOUS TURNIP Stuff And Nonsense Theatre Company return with unswerving energy, live music and eccentric puppetry, Sun 9 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

Dance

QUEST Unique family show fusing morris, clog and sword dancing with popping, locking, breaking and martial arts, to the beat of new songs and traditional melodies, Sat 1 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

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Theatre

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Photos by Keith Pattison

Talks

AN EVENING WITH ADAM HENSON Join Adam as he shares stories about his farming life, his TV career and the running of the Cotswold Farm Park, Thurs 6 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON In conversation with his son, Mike, and showing highlights from the Parkinson archive, Sun 9 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN (12a) Comedy/Musical. Starring Meryl Streep, Lily James. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Sat 8 Sept

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN (PG) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Hayley Atwell, Ewan McGregor. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 24 Aug - Thurs 6 Sept; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 24 - Thurs 6 Sept

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3: SUMMER VACATION (PG) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Adam Sandler, Andy Samberg. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 31 Aug - Sat 1 Sept & Mon 3 Sept

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: FALLOUT (12A) Action/Adventure. Starring Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 31 Aug & Tues 4 Sept; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Fri 7 Sept

MADAME (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Toni Collette, Harvey Keitel. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 31 Aug - Thurs 6 Sept

THE CHILDREN ACT (12a) Drama. Starring Emma Thompson, Stanley Tucci. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 31 Aug - Thurs 6 Sept

HEART BEATS LOUD (PG) Drama/Music. Starring Nick Offerman, Kiersey Clemons. MAC, Birmingham, Fri 31 Aug - Thurs 6 Sept



THE POST (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks. The Clifton, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 1 Sept

THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL PIE SOCIETY (12a) Drama/History. Starring Lily James, Jessica Brown Findlay. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 3 Sept

DARKEST HOUR (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Gary Oldman, Lily James.The Clifton, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 8 Sept

Events

BACKSTAGE TOUR Journey behind the scenes at one of Britain's premier producing theatres, Sat 1 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

CARIBBEAN NIGHT Grass skirts and loud shirts at the ready! Sat 1 Sept, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BAT WALK See the park at nightfall and discover the creatures who come out to play in the darkness, Sat 1 Sept, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

SUMMER NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL - DUNKIRK Enjoy a picnic and movie on a late-summer evening, Sat 1 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

MIDDLE EARTH FESTIVAL Two-day event celebrating the life and works of JRR Tolkien and his connections to the city of Birmingham, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham

WORLD WAR DAY Featuring music, trade stalls and activities, with highlights including displays and re-enactments as well as a selection of civilian and military vehicles, Sun 2 Sept, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

FESTIVAL OF 1000 CLASSIC CARS & NORTH WEST CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE SHOW Unparalleled selection of classic cars and bikes, Sun 2 Sept, Cholmondeley Castle

CLASSIC VEHICLE SHOW Classic & retro show presenting a fine selection of over 800 vehicles as well as trade and autojumble stands, Sun 2 Sept, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

ON THE BUSES All aboard for vintage buses at Bewdley! Sun 2 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

SPITFIRE FAMILY RUN Gentle 1K run, Sun 2 Sept, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

AUTUMN FAIR Featuring brands, new products, retail insight and 'endless inspiration', Sun 2 - Wed 5 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

BACKSTAGE TOUR Journey behind the scenes at one of Britain's premier producing theatres, Thurs 6 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Celebration of 'Extraordinary Women', Thurs 6 - Fri 7 Sept, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE OPEN DAYS AT SAREHOLE MILL Thurs 6 - Sat 15 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, B'ham

CASTLE TOURS 2018 Fri 7 Sept, Dudley Castle

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Walk around the Peaky Blinders film set and enjoy an evening of music and entertainment from the Roaring 20s, Fri 7 - Sat 8 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



JEWELLERY QUARTER HERITAGE WALK Sat 8 Sept, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

BACKSTAGE TOUR Journey behind the scenes at one of Britain's premier producing theatres, Sat 8 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

KIDSOUT COLOUR DASH Sat 8 Sept, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth, Staffs

PRISON BREAK Escape from a real, fully working, operational jail, Sat 8 Sept, The Dana Prison, Shrewsbury



GLASS ENGRAVING Ideal for beginners Sat 8 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

FUN DOG SHOW & FETE Sat 8 Sept, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

ALE, CIDER & GIN FESTIVAL Sat 8 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

SHUGBOROUGH ESTATE HERITAGE OPEN DAY Sat 8 Sept, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Stafford

AMIR KHAN VS SAMMY VARGAS Sat 8 Sept, Arena Birmingham

400 YEARS OF ASTON HALL: ROLL UP! ROLL UP! Featuring a Victorian sideshow, Sat 8 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

BAT WALK Discover the creatures who come out to play in the darkness, Sat 8 Sept, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

RETRO TRUCK SHOW Featuring modern classic trucks produced between 1970 and 2000, Sat 8 - Sun 9 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

CAMBRIAN HERITAGE RAILWAYS - OSWESTRY SOUTH SIGNAL BOX The Signal box is open for viewing, Sat 8 - Sun 9 Sept, Cambrian Heritage Railways , Oswestry, North Shropshire

FAMILY MAGIC WEEKENDS Live shows from resident magicians and ventriloquists, Sat 8 - Sun 9 Sept, Cadbury World, Birmingham

DIGITAL ACTIVITIES FOR SCOUTS Bring your scout pack to Enginuity for a hands-on workshop session every Saturday, Sat 8 Sept - Sat 20 Oct, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

WAKE UP THE ZOO Go behind the scenes courtesy of an early-morning guided tour, Sun 9 Sept, Dudley Zoological Gardens

OPEN DOORS Part of the Heritage Open Days initiative, Sun 9 Sept, Gregynog Hall, Nr Newtown, Powys

Food Festivals

GIN AND RUM FESTIVAL Fri 7 - Sat 8 Sept, Edgbaston Stadium, B'ham

LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL Fri 7 - Sun 9 Sept, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

ALE, CIDER & GIN FESTIVAL Sat 8 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

TAMWORTH FOOD GUSTO FESTIVAL Sat 8 - Sun 9 Sept, Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

Music Festivals

COVENTRY GODIVA FESTIVAL Line-up includes Editors, Jake Bugg, Ronan Keating, Jonas Blue, Gabrielle, Professor Green & Blood Red Shoes, Fri 31 Aug - Sun 2 Sept, War Memorial Park, Coventry

MOSELEY FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Levellers, Nick Mulvey, Teenage Fanclub, Show Of Hands, Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel, Skinny Lister, Willy Mason & more... Fri 31 Aug - Sun 2 Sept, Moseley Park, Birmingham

OFF THE TRACKS SUMMER FESTIVAL Line-up includes Transglobal Underground, Jon Otway & His Little Big Band, Dreadzone, Mad Dog Mcrea & more... Fri 31 Aug - Sun 2 Sept, Donington Park Farmhouse, Castle Donington, Derbyshire

ONBOARD THE CRAFT FESTIVAL Line-up includes Vince Ripper & The Rodent Show, Mr Strange, Syteria, Poisond Electrick Head, Underground Zero & BB Blackdog, Thurs 6 - Sat 8 Sept, Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove

BROMYARD FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Oysterband, The Young'Uns, RURA, Chris Wood, Granny's Attic & more... Thurs 6 - Sun 9 Sept, various locations, Bromyard, Herefordshire

SHIIINE ON BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL Line-up includes Orbital, Shed Seven, Happy Mondays, Julian Cope, Embrace, Reverend & The Makers, Black Grape & more... Sat 8 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

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17TH	CANNOCK PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE	01543 578762
18TH	SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN HALL	0121 296 9543
19TH	STOURPORT THE CIVIC	01299 823339
25TH	SOLIHULL CORE THEATRE	0121 704 6962
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24TH	WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND	01902 429212
25TH	CANNOCK PRINCE OF WALES	01543 578762
26TH	BROMSGROVE ARTRIX	01527 577330



Big Country play The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury & The Robin, Bilston

Gigs

FAITH - THE GEORGE MICHAEL LEGACY Mon 10 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE LOW ANTHEM Mon 10 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

ROSE TATTOO Tues 11 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

YOUNGBLOOD BRASS BAND Tues 11 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

YUNGBLUD Wed 12 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MILDLIFE Wed 12 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

RICHARD DIGANCE - THE NOT BAD FOR HIS AGE TOUR Wed 12 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Wed 12 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW AND THE LOW RIDERS Wed 12 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

INK. Thurs 13 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CILLA & THE SHADES OF THE 60S Thurs 13 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

CAM Thurs 13 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BIG COUNTRY Thurs 13 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WHITESNAKES JOURNEY Fri 14 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

DJ ANDY SMITH (EX PORTISHEAD DJ) Fri 14 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

ABBA MANIA Fri 14 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SOUL'D OUT Fri 14 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

DREAMS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Fri 14 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

MONEY FOR NOTHING Sat 15 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

ARRIVAL - THE HITS OF ABBA Sat 15 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

AC/DC EXPERIENCE Sat 15 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAN WITHOUT COUNTRY + MACIOUS + LOST RUSSLE Sat 15 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

MOLOTOV JUKEBOX Sat 15 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JARET REDDICK Sat 15 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HANDS OFF GRETAL + HIGHTOWN PARADE + THE HOWLING TIDES Sat 15 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

KICK UP THE 80S Sat 15 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

YOU WIN AGAIN – CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF THE BEE GEES Sat 15 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

KUPID THE KING Sat 15 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ARCTIC MONKEYS Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Arena Birmingham

MARLEY REPRISED Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

FRIDOLIJN Sun 16 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

JAYCE LEWIS Sun 16 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NINES Sun 16 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SINGLE BY SUNDAY Sun 16 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

SKATING POLLY - BABE PUNCH - DESENSITISED Sun 16 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CEILDH WITH THE REEL HOT CEILIDH PEPPERS Sun 16 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

JIMMY OSMONDS 70S JUKEBOX Sun 16 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

WOODEN SHJIPS Sun 16 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE SHOW Sun 16 Sept, The Robin, Bilston



Arctic Monkeys - Arena Birmingham

Classical Music

CBSO: DVORÁK'S NEW WORLD SYMPHONY Featuring Omer Meir Wellber (conductor), Gidon Kremer (violin) & Jan Lisiecki (piano). Programme includes works by Dvorák, Bartók & Rachmaninov, Wed 12 - Thurs 13 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

CHRIS RAMSEY Mon 10 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

RACHEL PARRIS Wed 12 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CRAIG MURRAY, GEOFF NORCOTT & DAN NIGHTINGALE Wed 12 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

DARREN HARRIOTT, MARTIN MOR & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 13 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE NOISE NEXT DOOR Fri 14 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SCOTT BENNETT (PICTURED BELOW), JAVIER JARQUIN & DAVE WARD Fri 14 Sept, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

DARREN HARRIOTT, MARTIN MOR & ADAM HESS & JANEY GODLEY Fri 14 - Sat 15 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

SCOTT BENNETT, JENNY COLLIER, JUNIOR SIMPSON & KANE BROWN Sat 15 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

JULIETTE BURTON Sat 15 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

TOM STADE, ALUN COCHRANE, JO ENRIGHT & WAYNE BEESE Sat 15 Sept, Cornbow Hall, Halesowen

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 15 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FREDDY QUINNE, GAVIN WEBSTER, ALLYSON JUNE SMITH & DAMION LARKIN Sat 15 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 15 Sept, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs



BRENDON BURNS, MERYL O'ROURKE, PAUL PIRIE & DAN NIGHTINGALE Sun 16 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES The Nonentities present an amateur staging of Arthur Conan Doyle's classic Sherlock Holmes story, Mon 10 - Sat 15 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

A LOCK-IN WITH TUFFERS AND DAWSON Cricketer Phil Tufnell and rugby star Matt Dawson lift the lid on their hugely successful sporting careers, Tues 11 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

TAJ EXPRESS Brand new musical featuring Bollywood's greatest dancers and the songs of AR Rahman, Tues 11 - Sat 15 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

9 TO 5 The Mellow Dramatics present an amateur staging of the musical comedy based on the film of the same name, Tues 11 - Sat 15 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

POP MUSIC A night at the theatre 'for anyone who's ever been a dick on the dancefloor', Wed 12 - Sat 22 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

SHEILA'S MHS MENTAL HEALTH SHOW 3 'THE ANGER CUSHION' A show combining humour and mental health, explaining why life is too serious to be taken seriously, Thurs 13 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

POPPYFIELDS Amateur staging of John Howard's poignant and respectful story about the young people who gave their lives for their country a century ago, Thurs 13 - Sat 15 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE WIZ Thurs 13 - Sat 15 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FAULTY TOWERS: THE DINING EXPERIENCE A fully immersive, highly improvised and site-specific comedy -theatre production, Thurs 13 - Sat 15 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

MARLENE MCKENZIE: LITE Marlene fuses drama and humour to explore the issue of skin lightening, Fri 14 Sept, MAC, Birmingham

A VICAR OF DIBLEY CHRISTMAS - THE SECOND COMING Stage version of the original TV series, Fri 14 - Sat 22 Sept, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

THE PURPLE LIST One-man play for health & social care providers, LGBT communities and carers of people with dementia, Sat 15 Sept, The Hive, Shrewsbury

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Bill Woodrow, Crow and Carrion, 1981, Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London © The artist.
Image courtesy Bill Woodrow.

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Talks

AN EVENING WITH BRIAN BLESSED Join the larger-than-life actor as he talks about his career on stage and screen, Thurs 13 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

LUCY WORSLEY - QUEEN VICTORIA - DAUGHTER, WIFE, MOTHER & WIDOW The life, the palaces and the rich colourful age of a woman who ruled a quarter of the globe, Thurs 13 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

AN EVENING WITH ANT MIDDLETON (PICTURED) Join Ant as he shares his experiences as a modern-day explorer and expedition leader, Fri 14 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE POST (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 10 Sept

THE BAND WAGON (U) Comedy/Musical. Starring Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Mon 10 Sept

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (15) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 11 Sept

NOTHING LIKE A DAME (12a) Documentary. Starring Eileen Atkins, Judi Dench. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 11 - Wed 12 Sept

LEAN ON PETE (15) Adventure/Drama. Starring Charlie Plummer, Amy Seimetz. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 14 Sept

MANDELA (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Idris Elba, Naomie Harris.The Clifton, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 15 Sept

ATONEMENT (15) Drama/Mystery. Starring Keira Knightley, James McAvoy. Stokesay Court, Craven Arms, South Shropshire, Sat 15 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Wed 12 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

THE PREDATOR (tbc)

THE KING OF THIEVES (tbc)

THE MISEDUCATION OF CAMERON POST (15)

LUCKY (15)

OPERATION FINALE (tbc)

SUPERFLY (15)

Events

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK AT ASTON HALL Wed 12 - Fri 14 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

HOME ON THE RANGE Discover the challenges of feeding a family in the Victorian period, Thurs 13 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Celebrating 'Extraordinary Women', Thurs 13 - Fri 14 Sept, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

OUTDOOR CINEMA AT BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS 'The UK's most luxurious outdoor cinema experience', Thurs 13 - Sat 15 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

CORACLE RACE Charity fundraiser on the River Severn, Fri 14 Sept, Pengwern Boat Club, Shrewsbury

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Free family event exploring over 1.000 years of history, Fri 14 - Sun 16 Sept, Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster

PROMS IN THE PARK Prosecco, strawberries and the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra, Sat 15 Sept, The British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

100 COCKPITS AND CABS A rare chance to get a closer look inside 100 cockpits and vehicles from the collection, Sat 15 Sept, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

YARDLEY MEDIEVAL WALK Join experts from the Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society in a leisurely 2.5-mile stroll around the village of Yardley, Sat 15 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAY STORE TOUR Behind-the-scenes tour featuring some of the museum's hidden treasures and curiosities, Sat 15 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

BOURNVILLE HERITAGE OPEN DAY Featuring living-history experts Gloriana, Sat 15 Sept, Selly Manor, Bournville, Birmingham

FREE TOUR OF WEOLEY CASTLE Sat 15 Sept, Weoley Castle Ruins, B'ham

ARCHITECTURE TOUR OF BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL Sat 15 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral



100 Cockpits & Cabs - RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

HERITAGE OPEN DAY A free, costumed, guided tours of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory, Sat 15 Sept, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, B'ham

MIDLAND GAME FAIR Premier event of its kind in the country, for anyone interested in traditional country pursuits, Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal, Shropshire

HERITAGE OPEN WEEKEND Free entry all weekend, Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

FAMILY MAGIC WEEKENDS Enjoy live shows from the resident magicians and ventriloquists, Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Cadbury World, Birmingham

HIDDEN AREAS WEEKEND - ATTIC TOURS Discover the rarely revealed attics of Harvington Hall, including the second-largest priest hide ever found, Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

CAMBRIAN HERITAGE RAILWAYS - OSWESTRY SOUTH SIGNAL BOX The signal box is open for viewing, Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Cambrian Heritage Railways, Oswestry, North Shropshire

OPEN WEEKEND A weekend for steam, engine, canal boat and industrial archaeology enthusiasts, Sat 15 - Sun 16 Sept, Etruria Industrial Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL Have a go at archery or get involved with medieval dancing, Sun 16 Sept, Bewdley Museum, Nr Kidderminster

HERITAGE OPEN DAY Bring a picnic and enjoy the beautiful scenery, Sun 16 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

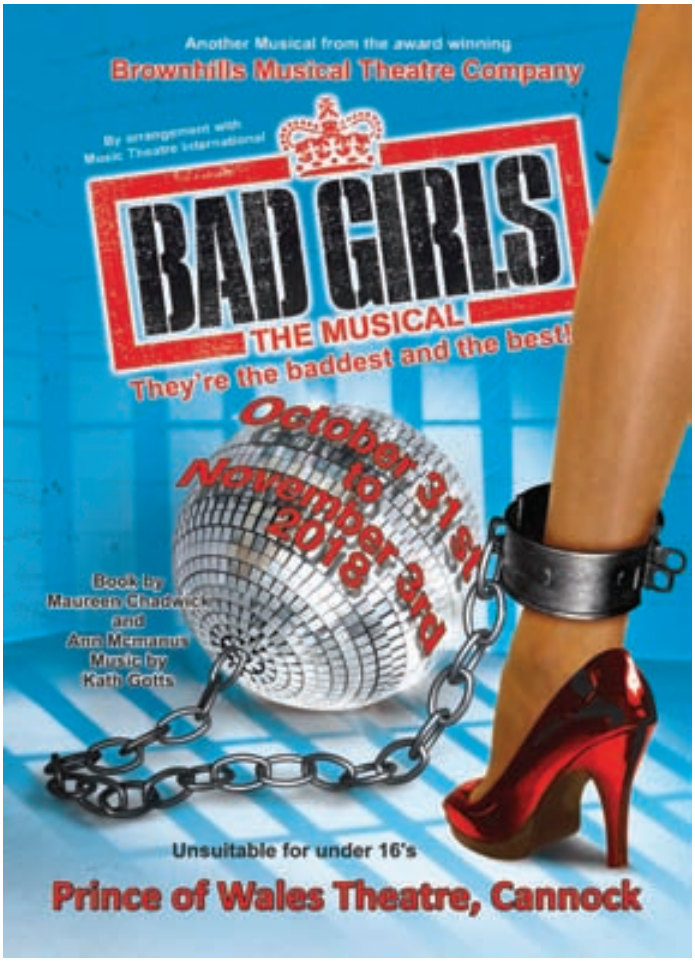
HIGHBURY DURING THE GREAT WAR Featuring interactive displays, living history and opportunities to research family members, Sun 16 Sept, Highbury Hall, Moseley, Birmingham

Food Festivals

CHILLI FESTIVAL A day of live music, street performances and plenty of chilli-inspired food & drink, Fri 14 - Sat 15 Sept, Brindleyplace, B'ham



Home On The Range - Black Country Living Museum, Dudley


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Saturday 22 Sept, 8.00pm
Tickets £15.00
BOBBY "KP" WOODS
SINGS RAY CHARLES
Friday 28 Sept, 7.00pm
Tickets £17.50, £24.50
WANNABE: THE SPICE GIRLS SHOW
Sunday 7 Oct, 8.00pm
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BLACK MAGIC: THE LITTLE MIX SHOW
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Graham Coxon - New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Gigs

GRAHAM COXON Mon 17 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SLUG Mon 17 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS Mon 17 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

TOM CLARKE Tues 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LOST HORIZONS Tues 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

50 CENT Tues 18 Sept, Arena Birmingham,

DIVAS OF JAZZ Tues 18 Sept, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

SARI SCHORR & THE ENGINE ROOM Tues 18 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BROOKE CANDY Wed 19 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MOLOTOV JUKEBOX Wed 19 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

CATHERINE MCGRATH Wed 19 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JOYNER LUCAS Wed 19 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PUNKS ALIVE PRESENTS THE WILD STRAYS Wed 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW Wed 19 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BIFFY CLYRO MTV UNPLUGGED PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS Wed 19 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

A CELEBRATION OF JOHN DENVER Wed 19 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE GOON SAX Thurs 20 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DIONNE WARWICK Thurs 20 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN Thurs 20 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

VINCENT FLATTS LAWLESS Thurs 20 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

HOME FREE Thurs 20 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

YOU WIN AGAIN - THE STORY OF THE BEE GEES Thurs 20 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DESPERADO: FROM CALIFORNIA TO EDEN Fri 21 - Sat 22 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

DEMON Fri 21 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

BOTH SIDES NOW PRESENTS THE JONI MITCHELL SONGBOOK Fri 21 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BIG COUNTRY Fri 21 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE MIDNIGHT BEAST Fri 21 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KYLIE MINOGUE Fri 21 Sept, Genting Arena, Birmingham

JANE MCDONALD Fri 21 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

LUTHER - THE SHOW Sat 22 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

ROCK FOR HEROES Sat 22 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

FRANK SINATRA- HIS WAY! Sat 22 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

KILLERSTREAM Sat 22 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

KICK UP THE 80S Sat 22 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SACK SABBATH Sat 22 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

THE MAGIC GANG Sat 22 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TORY LANEZ Sat 22 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DIVAS : THE LEGENDS Sat 22 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

LEPROUS | AGENT FRESCO Sun 23 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

MERRY HELL AND FOLKLAW Sun 23 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

CLASSIC ROCK SHOWCASE Sun 23 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE BIG WOLF BAND Sun 23 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

JANE MCDONALD Sun 23 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Classical Music

AUTUMN CLASSICS: CBSO BENEVOLENT FUND CONCERT Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor), Jennifer Pike (violin) and the City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Shostakovich, Saint-Saëns, Wieniawski, Glazunov, Kreisler & Tchaikovsky, Sat 22 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

DANNY BAKER Mon 17 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

KEVIN BRIDGES Wed 19 - Sat 22 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

LLOYD LANGFORD, GARY LITTLE, RYAN DALTON & ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 20 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROSS NOBLE Thurs 20 - Fri 21 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



SUKH OJLA, RAHUL KOHLI, ESHAAN AKBAR & NABIL ABDUL RASHID Fri 21 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

LLOYD LANGFORD, GARY LITTLE, RICH WILSON & GEOFF NORCOTT Fri 21 - Sat 22 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOSH HOWIE, NICK DIXON, RORY O'HANLON & PETE OTWAY Sat 22 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ALFIE MOORE Sat 22 Sept, Lichfield Garrick



ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 22 Sept, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs

MARCUS BRIGSTOCKE Sun 23 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TEZ ILYAS, TOMMY SANDHU, SLIM, & SUKH KAUR OJLA Sun 23 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROUGH WORKS: NEW MATERIAL NIGHT Sun 23 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

Theatre

TAJ EXPRESS Brand new musical featuring Bollywood's greatest dancers and the songs of AR Rahman, Tues 18 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

BURNING BOOKS Powerful and humorous look at an education system buckling under government cuts and targets, Tues 18 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE GOON SHOW From the producers of the 50th anniversary tour of Round The Horne comes another radio comedy classic live on stage, Tues 18 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

ALL SHOOK UP A Sutton Coldfield Musical Theatre Company Production, Tues 18 - Sat 22 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

JEKYLL & HYDE The National Production Company put a fast-paced spin on a classic story, Tues 18 - Sat 22 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

BRASSED OFF Amateur staging presented by Kidderminster Operatic & Dramatic Society (KODS), Tues 18 - Sat 22 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

BEYOND THE BARRICADE 2018 The UK's longest-running musical theatre concert tour, Wed 19 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE LOST HANCOCKS: VACANT LOT Featuring impressionist James Hurn as Tony Hancock, Wed 19 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

NAZANINS STORY The true and ongoing story of Nazanin Ratcliffe, currently imprisoned in Iran, Wed 19 - Thurs 20 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

TRANZ TALKZ Join prominent queer artist Travis Alabanza for an intimate dinner of burgers, chips and drinks, while discussing, reflecting and documenting experiences of queer and transphobic public harassment, Thurs 20 Sept, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

RENT Amateur staging presented by Get Your Wigle On, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FAULTY TOWERS: THE DINING EXPERIENCE Fully immersive, highly improvised and site-specific comedy-theatre production, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

REBUS: LONG SHADOWS Brand new play based on Ian Rankin's fictional detective, John Rebus, Thurs 20 Sept - Sat 6 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE DREAMBOYS Fri 21 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE SILENCE OF SNOW - THE LIFE OF PATRICK HAMILTON Production telling the story of alcoholic playwright Patrick Hamilton, Fri 21 Sept, Lich-


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STONES AND BONES Squashbox Theatre fuse puppetry, song and slapstick in a show about archaeology and fossils, Fri 21 Sept, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

BEYOND THE BARRICADE The UK's longest-running musical theatre concert tour, Fri 21 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

FUNNY FACES A double bill of plays based on the lives and loves of two British comedy legends, Sid James and Joan Sims, Fri 21 - Sat 22 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

YOUNG HERBERT'S HORRORS A pirate adventure with a twist, Sat 22 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Russian State Opera presents its version of Puccini's tale of sorrow and heartbreak, Sat 22 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

STONES AND BONES Squashbox Theatre fuse puppetry, song and slapstick in a show about archaeology and fossils, Sat 22 Sept, St John's Church, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

ONE MAN TWO GUVNORS The Crescent Theatre present Richard Bean's adaptation of Carlo Goldini's play, Sat 22 - Sat 29 Sept, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Dance

THE FOUR SEASONS & REMEMBRANCE - A BALLET DOUBLE BILL 'A visual and musical feast of passion, hope and remembrance' in a brand new ballet double bill, Tues 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SPIRIT OF THE DANCE Award-winning dance spectacular combining Irish dance with Latino rhythms, Wed 19 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ROSIE KAY - MK ULTRA 'A visually arresting production' featuring costumes from Lady Gaga's designer, Gary Card, Thurs 20 - Fri 21 Sept, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome



Talks

THE STORY OF LIDICE Dr Kate Vigurs, a Second World War historian who specialises in Resistance and the Holocaust, traces the story of Lidice from the beginnings of Operation Anthropoid to today, Sun 16 Sept, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH SATHNAM SANGHERA Boy With The Topknot author Sathnam talks about the role of the creative industries in urban place-making, regeneration, education and employment, Mon 17 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

AN EVENING WITH SIR CHRIS HOY One of the most successful Olympic athletes of all time talks about his new book and incredible career in cycling, Tues 18 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

AN AUDIENCE WITH SIMON REEVE Journalist Simon recounts tales from more than 15 years of travelling to the most remote and extreme corners of the planet, Sun 23 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH PETE WATERMAN The music mogul reveals the never-before-heard stories behind some of the greatest songs and artists of the 1980s and '90s, Sun 23 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE MERCY (12a) Adventure/Biography. Starring Colin Firth, Rachel Weisz. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 17 Sept

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN (PG) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Hayley Atwell, Ewan McGregor. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 17, Fri 21 & Sat 22 Sept

GREASE (PG) Musical. Starring Olivia Newton-John, John Travolta. This is a sing-a-long screening. Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton, Tues 18 Sept

A FANTASTIC WOMAN (15) Drama. Starring Daniela Vega, Francisco Reyes. Foreign language, subtitled. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 18 Sept

THE EYES OF ORSON WELLS (12A) Documentary. Starring Mark Cousins, Beatrice Welles. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Wed 19 - Thurs 20 Sept

ZAMA (15) Drama. Starring Daniel Giménez Cacho, Lola Dueñas. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 21 Sept

THE PARTY (15) Drama/Comedy. Starring Timothy Spall, Kristin Scott Thomas. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 21 Sept



Spirit Of The Dance - Regent Theatre, Stoke-on- Trent

JOURNEY'S END (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Tom Jones, Sam Caflin.The Clifton, Telford, Sat 22 Sept

TESTAMENT OF YOUTH (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Alicia Vikander, Kit Harington. Highbury Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 23 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Wed 19 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

MILE 22 (tbc)

FACES PLACES (12a)

THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN ITS WALLS (tbc)

THE LITTLE STRANGER (12a)

A SIMPLE FAVOUR (15)

Events

SONGS FROM THE MOVIES: INTERACTIVE SINGING SESSIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA Join local musician Adrian Plant for interactive singing sessions, Mon 17 Sept, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

AUTUMN STEAM GALA Thurs 20 - Sun 23 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

OUTDOOR CINEMA SCREENINGS Fri 21 - Sat 22 Sept, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhamtpon

THE MONSTER The ultimate bouncy-castle experience, Fri 21 - Sun 23 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

A PLACE IN THE SUN LIVE Find your ideal property abroad, Fri 21 - Sun 23 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

CREATE YOUR OWN RAG RUG Join craft experts and discover the traditional craft of rag rugging, Sat 22 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

DUDLEY CASTLE & THE STATION HOTEL PARANORMAL NIGHT Evening of paranormal investigating, Sat 22 Sept, Dudley Castle, Dudley

WHISKEY, MALTS & BLENDS Evening with local whiskey merchants Nickolls & Perks Est 1797, Sat 22 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

FORGE EXPERIENCE DAY Hands-on experience of blacksmithing, Sat 22 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

CBEEBIES' RASTAMOUSE LIVE! Plenty of 'singin', dancin' and jammin'' as Da Easy Crew look for a new band member. Could it be you? Sat 22 - Sun 23 Sept, Cadbury World, Birmingham

THE 2018 TRAMPOLINE, TUMBLING & DMT BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS First-class performances from both the senior squad and up-and-coming stars, Sat 22 - Sun 23 Sept, Arena Birmingham

AUTUMN GIFT AND CRAFT MARKET Sat 22 - Sun 23 Sept, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

For Foodies

AUTUMN FOOD FAIR Sun 23 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, B'ham

CHILLI, CHEESE & CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL Featuring artisan market stalls, live music, a chilli trail around the garden, cooking demos, a chilli-eating contest, a fire eater, a bouncy castle and more, Sun 23 Sept, The Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

What's on...



Tuesday 2 October, 7.00pm
VIENNA FESTIVAL BALLET : THE NUTCRACKER



Wednesday 3 October, 7.30pm
DANNY BAKER : GOOD TIME CHARLIE'S BACK!!



Thursday 4 October, 7.30pm
LET'S HANG ON : THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS



Friday 5 October, 7.30pm
THE SIMON AND GARFUNKEL STORY



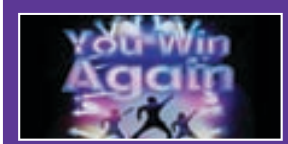
Saturday 6 October, 7.30pm
ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN : PERFORMED BY GARY MULLEN AND THE WORKS



Sunday 7 October, 2.30pm
Monday 8 October, 11.30am
THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY



Thursday 11 October, 7.30pm
THE ALTER EAGLES



Friday 12 October, 7.30pm
YOU WIN AGAIN : CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF THE BEE GEES



Saturday 13 October, 7.30pm
QUADROPHENIA NIGHT : FEATURING THE ATLANTICS

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MON 3 SEP
THE DEVON ALLMAN PROJECT
WITH SPECIAL GUEST DUANE BETTS

TUE 4 SEP
LA GUNS + SPECIAL GUESTS JARED JAMES NICHOLS + STONE TROPICAL

WED 5 SEP AND THE REVOLT
SAM DRAISEY + THE ARRANGEMENTS + DAVID YOUNG AND THE ... + BRAINS FOR BREAKFAST

THU 6 SEP + TRICKY BUSINESS
SABBRA CADABRA TRIBUTE TO BLACK SABBATH

FRI 7 SEP + BLACK BEAR KISS
ACHTUNG BABY ALBUM SPECIAL U2-2

SAT 8 SEP
COUNTERFEIT STONES

SUN 9 SEP
NIGHTWISHED + SPECIAL GUESTS WINTER STORM + CENFORA

WED 12 SEP ALL SEATED SHOW
RICHARD DIGANCE NOT BAD FOR HIS AGE TOUR

THU 13 SEP + THE TREAT ACOUSTIC
LEGENDARY WELSH ROCKERS RETURN MAN

FRI 14 SEP
SOUL'D OUT

SAT 15 SEP LOST BOY LIVE:
KUPID THE KING WITH MUSIC 'TIL MIDNIGHT HIP-HOP-SOUL BACKLINE BAND!

SUN 16 SEP
THE TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE

TUE 18 SEP US BLUES SENSATION
SARI SCHORR + PAUL BRIDGWATER & THE ELECTRIC BLUES REBELLION

WED 19 SEP ON STAGE 8.30pm
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW

THU 20 SEP + THE MAZ MUTRENKO BAND
VINCENT FLATTS LAWLESS

FRI 21 SEP + WOUNDED SPIRIT
BIG COUNTRY BRUCE WATSON + MARK BRZEZICKI JAMIE WATSON...

SAT 22 SEP
KICK UP THE 80'S

SUN 23 SEP + RITCHIE DAVE PORTER
BIG WOLF BAND

WED 26 SEP + JUMP ACOUSTIC
LIFESIGNS

THU 27 SEP + DENDERA + CHIMKILL
NWOBHM LEGENDS DEMON
THE UNEXPECTED GUEST TOUR

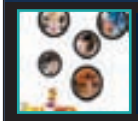
FRI 28 SEP TRIPLE TRIBUTE
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NEW ORDER TRUE ORDER

SAT 29 SEP ORIGINAL LIZZY DRUMMER
BRIAN DOWNEY ALIVE & DANGEROUS + BLUE NATION + THUNDERCHUNKY

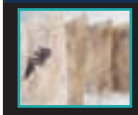
SUN 30 SEP ON STAGE 8.30pm
A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY

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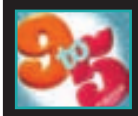
the brewhouse
arts centre & café bar



1st Sept - 1pm - 3pm
Brewhouse Open Day
3pm Film Screening
Tickets: FREE event



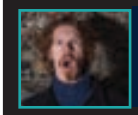
8th Sept - 27 Oct
Ruth Singer: Criminal Quills
Tickets: See website for details



11th - 15th Sept, 7.30pm
2pm Sat mat
The Mellow Dramatics:
9 to 5 The Musical
Tickets: £12 (5-for-4 offer Tues, Wed, Thurs & Sat Matinee)



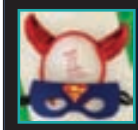
21st & 22nd Sept, 7.30pm
LTC Youth in Concert:
"A Million Dreams"
Tickets: £10



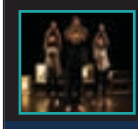
26th Sept, 7.30pm
Once Upon A Wednesday:
Giles Abbott - Caught On The Horns
Tickets: £7adv, £8.50 otd



28th Sept, 8pm
A Hijinx Production in association with Spymonkey
The Flop
Tickets: £10, £8 conc, £5 student



29th Sept, 6pm
Spotlight Academy:
Heroes and Villains
Tickets: £10



12th Oct, 8pm
Standby Theatre:
The Room at the Top of the House
Tickets: £10, £8 conc, £5 student



18th Oct, 7pm
Maison Foo: A Thing Mislaid
Tickets: £10, £8 conc, £5 student

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Gigs

CHASTITY BROWN Mon 24 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

SHANIA TWAIN Mon 24 Sept, Arena Birmingham

HORSE FEATHERS Mon 24 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PALE WAVES Tues 25 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JIMOTHY LACOSTE Tues 25 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WARWICK JOHNSON SONIC ACOUSTIC ATTACK Tues 25 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

THE DRIFTERS Wed 26 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FORTUNES Wed 26 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

STARS OF IRISH COUNTRY Wed 26 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

MAJOR PARKINSON Wed 26 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHRIS CLEVERLEY TRIO Wed 26 Sept, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

JASON DERULO Wed 26 Sept, Arena Birmingham

LIFESIGNS Wed 26 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ASWAD Wed 26 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE BLUETONES Wed 26 Sept, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

BIG BOY BLOATER AND THE LIMITS Wed 26 Sept, Albert's Shed Bar, Shrewsbury

THE LAFONTAINES: THE UP TOUR Wed 26 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

DEMON Thurs 27 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

RE-TAKE THAT Thurs 27 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

REX ORANGE COUNTY Thurs 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BRIAN DOWNEYS ALIVE AND DANGEROUS Thurs 27 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

THE TREATMENT Thurs 27 Sept, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

SPRING KING Thurs 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ELVANA: ELVIS FRONTED NIRVANA Thurs 27 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BIGFOOT Fri 28 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

SCARLXRD Fri 28 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE SMITHS TRIBUTE Fri 28 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SCOTT MATTHEWS Fri 28 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

CHELSEA GRIN Fri 28 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

THE SUPERSKAS Fri 28 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

UB40 - LABOUR OF LOVE Fri 28 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS Fri 28 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

VICIOUS NATURE Fri 28 Sept, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

AIRWAYS Fri 28 Sept, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

TRIVAX, BLASFEME & OPUS MORTIS Fri 28 Sept, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

BOBBY "KP" WOODS SINGS RAY CHARLES Fri 28 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

BRIGHT LIGHT BRIGHT LIGHT + MONDO ROYALE Fri 28 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, B'ham

BABBU MAAN Sat 29 Sept, Arena Birmingham

TALON Sat 29 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SOUL & MOTOWN PARTY NIGHT WITH THE KRYSTALETTES Sat 29 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

PLANET ROCK PRESENTS: THE BAD FLOWERS + FEDERAL CHARM Sat 29 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SONGSTERS ON BROADWAY WITH RUTHIE HENSHALL Sat 29 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

RED LEMON ELECTRIC BLUES BAND - LEGACY CONCERT Sat 29 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

BRIAN DOWNEYS ALIVE AND DANGEROUS Sat 29 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

GIANTS OF ROCK U.S.A 2018 TOUR Sat 29 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

ERADIKATOR Sat 29 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WEST COAST EAGLES Sat 29 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

YOLANDA BROWN Sat 29 Sept, Mac, B'ham

WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' - TRIBUTE TO SHAKIN' STEVENS Sat 29 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

THE PAUL GARNER BAND Sat 29 Sept, Ludlow Brewery, Ludlow, South Shropshire

A FOREIGNER'S JOURNEY: THE MUSIC OF FOREIGNER AND JOURNEY Sun 30 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN Sun 30 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MARTIN SIMPSON Sun 30 Sept, The Hive Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury



KEITH JAMES THE SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN Sun 30 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE NIGHT CAFE Sun 30 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

RUSSELL WATSON An intimate evening with one of the world's most prominent tenors, Mon 24 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



CHARLES OWEN Programme includes works by Bach, Ravel & Schubert, Wed 26 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

RAF IN CONCERT CENTENARY TOUR An evening that charts the development of the Royal Air Force from its formation in 1918 through to the present day and beyond, Wed 26 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MENDELSSOHN'S STRING OCTET Featuring Jonathan Martindale, Philip Brett, Kirsty Lovie & Colette Overdijk (violins); Angela Swanson & Amy Thomas (violas) & Miguel Fernandes & Lorenzo Meseguer Luján (cellos), Thurs 27 Sept, CBSO Centre, B'ham

CBSO: ITALIAN MOMENTS Featuring Alpesh Chauhan (conductor), Pavel Kolesnikov (piano) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Puccini & Respighi, Thurs 27 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

RICH HALL Mon 24 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

RICH HALL Tues 25 Sept, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Shropshire

CHRIS RAMSEY Wed 26 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JAMALI MADDIX Wed 26 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

STEPHEN LYNCH Wed 26 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT Thurs 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BEN NORRIS, DAVID TRENT & COMIC TBC Thurs 27 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

KANE BROWN, ED PATRICK, STEVE HALL & TOM HOUGHTON Fri 28 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ROY CHUBBY BROWN Fri 28 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

BEN NORRIS, DAVID TRENT, HOWARD READ & LAURA LEXX Fri 28 - Sat 29 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JASON BYRNE Sat 29 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

KUMARSUTRA Sat 29 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

ROY CHUBBY BROWN Sat 29 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

TROY HAWKE, ROB THOMAS, ROBIN MORGAN & ANDRE VINCENT Sat 29 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ROFL! COMEDY CLUB Sat 29 Sept, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs

MARCUS BRIGSTOCKE Sun 30 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Theatre

BENIDORM Brand new stage show based on the smash-hit ITV comedy, Mon 24 - Sat 29 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

NEW NIGERIANS Oladipo Agboluaje's satire about the state of populism in politics, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER Brand new stage version of the hit musical, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

NIGHTMARE A Lichfield Players Production, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

MY FAIR LADY A Lichfield Operatic Society production, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE FLOP Hijinx Theatre team up with clown supremos Spymonkey to present 'an anarchic slice of stupidity', with live music and 'unfeasibly large wigs', Wed 26 Sept, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ATLANTIC LADIES A musical play about the true adventures of Shropshire's 'Atlantic ladies' as they attempt to become the oldest female team to row right across the Atlantic Ocean, Wed 26 - Sat 29 Sept, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury

AS YOU LIKE IT The Pantaloons present an innovative version of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, Thurs 27 - Sat 29 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALL SHOOK UP Cannock Chase Drama Society present an amateur staging of the musical fantasy inspired by and featuring the songs of Elvis Presley, Thurs 27 - Sat 29 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

EARLY DOORS LIVE The hit sitcom, live on stage with a brand new story, Fri 28 Sept, Arena Birmingham

A HUNDRED DIFFERENT WORDS FOR LOVE Theatre, comedy and live music combine in a heartlifting story of romance, despair and friendship, Fri 28 Sept, Quatt Village Hall, Bridgnorth,



Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri - The Clifton, Telford, Shropshire

Shropshire

SAID AND DONE Sugarscratch Theatre's two-hander explores friendship, family relations, maternal ties, sibling rivalries and ex boyfriends, Fri 28 - Sat 29 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

KUKUNOR/KALAHARI Sign+Sound Theatre present a tale of two guards, who, despite their lingual and cultural differences, learn the means to communicate with one another, Fri 28 - Sat 29 Sept, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

BEST OF BROADWAY: THROUGH THE YEARS Celebration of musical theatre through the decades, Sat 29 Sept, MAC, Birmingham

SONGSTERS ON BROADWAY Featuring West End and Broadway star Ruthie Henshall, Sat 29 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

MINI MUSIC HALL SHOW The Nonentities present an evening of old songs and comedy sketches, Sun 30 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

Dance

TRI & EKA: DOUBLE BILL Classical and contemporary Indian dance intertwine in a dynamic double bill, Mon 24 Sept, MAC, Birmingham

RIP IT UP THE 60S Strictly Come Dancing champions Harry Judd and Louis Smith MBE, and people's champion Aston Merrygold, join forces to become 'the ultimate boy band of dance', Mon 24 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



ROSIE KAY - MK ULTRA 'A visually arresting production' featuring costumes from Lady Gaga's designer, Gary Card, Tues 25 Sept, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

LA FILLE MAL GARDEE Birmingham Royal Ballet present Frederick Ashton's final full-length ballet, an engaging story which remains a firm favourite for all the family, Wed 26 - Sat 29 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

BRB FIRST STEPS: A CHILD'S LA FILLE MAL GARDÉE An introduction to the world of ballet for children aged three-plus, Fri 28 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

Talks

GILES ABBOTT: CAUGHT ON THE HORNS Storytelling night for grown-ups, Wed 26 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

LIVE AGE AFTERNOON WITH SIMON ARMITAGE Afternoon of performance, discussion & poetry as part of the Live Age Festival, Fri 28 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

LIVING A WILD LIFE WITH COLIN STAFFORD-JOHNSON The acclaimed Irish wildlife cameraman and presenter shares unique natural history stories, Illustrated with his own stunning film footage and photography, Sun 30 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD (15) Biography/Crime. Starring Michelle Williams, Christopher Plummer. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 24 Sept

PHANTOM THREAD (15) Drama. Starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Vicky Krieps. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 25 Sept

IF... (15) Drama. Starring Malcolm McDowell, David Wood. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 26 Sept

ALPHA (12A) Adventure, Drama. Starring Kodi Smit-McPhee, Natassia Malthe. Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Wed 26 - Thurs 27 Sept

THE PIANO (15) Drama. Starring Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 28 Sept

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (15) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson. The Clifton, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 29 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 28 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

NIGHT SCHOOL (tbc)

THE WIFE (15)

Events

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR Guided walk from Stokesay Castle through the beautiful Shropshire countryside to Stokesay Court, Wed 26 Sept, Stokesay Castle, Nr Craven Arms, South Shropshire

CERAMIC ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS Wed 26 Sept, Coalport China Museum, Telford, Shropshire

THE CYCLE SHOW Showcasing the very latest bikes and accessories, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

BACKSTAGE TOUR: GENERAL Journey behind the scenes at one of Britain's premier producing theatres, Sat 29 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

THE GREAT BRITISH GIN FESTIVAL Sat 29 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WAR IN THE VALLEY Annual wartime weekend, Sat 29 - Sun 30 Sept, Churnet Valley Railway, Froghall, Stoke-on-Trent

CBEEBIES' RASTAMOUSE LIVE! Plenty of 'singin', dancin' and jammin'' as Da Easy Crew look for a new band member. Could it be you? Sat 29 - Sun 30 Sept, Cadbury World, Birmingham

SPOOKY SPECTACULAR Featuring witches, wizards and werewolves, Sat 29 Sept - Sun 4 Nov, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Sun 30 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

TUG OF WAR The return of the iconic Clash of the Titans tug-of-war event, Sun 30 Sept, The British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

AUTUMNAL ASTON: RUFUS AND THE GOLDEN ACORNS Half a day of activities celebrating 'autumnal Aston', Sun 30 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

For Foodies

DIRTY VEGAN Loads of delicious vegan drinks, desserts and freak shakes, Fri 28 Sept, MAC, Birmingham



Phantom Thread - Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

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