

Birmingham

ISSUE 398 FEBRUARY 2019

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thelist

Your 16-page week
by week listings guide

NO MORE TOURS 2

The Prince of Darkness plays
Resorts World Arena



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

BRB ballet at the Hippodrome



BRITISH ATHLETICS

Indoor Championships at
Arena Birmingham





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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

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CHOREOGRAPHY DAVID BINTLEY
MUSIC GLENN BUHR
DESIGNS PHILIP PROWSE
LIGHTING MARK JONATHAN
LIVE MUSIC ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA

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brb.org.uk/beast

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

BIRMINGHAM
ROYAL BALLET

Set Design: Philip Prowse and Brandon Lissner. Photo: © Sally Kell



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Birmingham theatre co-produces city's Chinese New Year event

Birmingham Hippodrome is once again co-producing the city's official Chinese New Year celebrations.

Collaborating with Birmingham Chinese Festival Committee and the event's headline sponsor, Birmingham Airport, the Hurst Street theatre is presenting 'an array of traditional performances, tantalising food and creative craft workshops' to celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Pig.

Event highlights include a parade of lion and dragon dancers, performances of acrobatics and martial arts from Shaolin Warriors, hip-hop danceworks by Hong Kong-born choreographer Si Rawlinson, and traditional fan and face-changing dancing from Dans Dance Company.

Circus performances, karaoke, market stalls and funfair rides feature too, as do free performances in the Hippodrome's Patrick Studio and family craft workshops in the theatre's foyers.

The Chinese New Year celebrations are being held at locations across the city from Friday 8 to Sunday 10 February.

For more detailed information about what's taking place, where and when, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

New development for city's £1.5billion project



Birmingham City Council has announced Lendlease as its development partner to deliver the transformation of the Birmingham Smithfield site.

Located in the heart of the city centre, Birmingham Smithfield is a £1.5billion initiative that will 'reposition the city on an international stage'. The project will provide a new home for the historic Bull Ring retail markets, a new public square, integrated public transport and more than 2,000 homes with a public park and community facilities.

The development is part of Birmingham's Big City Plan, launched in 2010, which sets out a 25-year vision to grow the city centre by more than 25%.

Having the Craic in Brum

Birmingham comedy fans should get along to the city's Symphony Hall this month to check out a show that's dedicated to promoting the very best in up-and-coming local talent.

Brum Craic takes place at the venue on Thursday 28 February and features headliner Andy White.

Held once a month, the show's March edition will celebrate International Women's Day, with Daisy Earl headlining. Visit thsh.co.uk for more information.

BCMG to host Chinese mouth-organ performer

Performances by Chinese sheng mouth organ expert Wu Wei and a concert inspired by composers who have crossed the English Channel are among the highlights of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's spring 2019 programme.

The season's line-up also features a family concert during which visitors can spend an hour with Wu Wei and explore music from across the centuries.

For more information, visit bcmg.org.uk



Forward - group exhibition celebrates Brum artists

A group exhibition celebrating artists living and working in Birmingham is currently available to view at the city's Medicine Bakery & Gallery venue.

Forward: New Art From Birmingham highlights the depth and vitality of a wide range of practices currently being employed by some of the Midlands' most creative talents. The exhibition shows until Sunday 24 March.

Dining out on love at Birmingham museum



Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is hosting a Valentine dinner in its Edwardian Tearoom on Thursday 14 February.

The special event will see the museum's team of talented chefs treat diners to a romantic five-course meal. Local guitarist and singer-songwriter Robert Lane will serenade the dining couples with live music throughout the evening. For more information, visit birminghammuseums.org.uk

50 years of Black Sabbath on show in Birmingham

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG) will this summer host a major exhibition exploring the legacy of local heavy metal superstars Black Sabbath. Showing at the venue from 22 June to 29 September, Black Sabbath: 50 Years will explain how the music of four working-class lads captured the hearts and minds of a global fanbase. Commenting on the exhibition, a spokesperson at Birmingham Museums Trust said: "Black Sabbath are Birmingham legends and we're thrilled to be hosting this exhibition. We will keep fans updated when tickets go on sale and look forward to welcoming them to BMAG this summer to trace Black Sabbath's journey from their beginnings in Aston to global success."

Anniversary gig for popular pair

Guitarist & vocalist Kevin Dempsey and fiddle & mandolin player Joe Broughton are celebrating 20 years of making music together by performing a series of gigs over the next few weeks, including two shows in the Midlands. The fellas appear at Birmingham's Kitchen Garden Cafe on Thursday 28 February and Coventry's Albany Theatre on Sunday 10 March. For more information, visit dempseybroughton.co.uk



BRB appoints Carlos Acosta as its new Director

Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) has appointed the internationally renowned Carlos Acosta as its new Director. Carlos will take up the post in January 2020, replacing David Bintley, who is standing down from the role in the summer. Commenting on his appointment, Carlos said: "My ambition is to build on BRB's classical traditions, to expand its repertoire and to reach out to new and more diverse audiences. I want to define what it is to be a world-leading classical ballet company in the 21st century."



Star performers to visit Birmingham's popular arts centre

Visits by Jasmin Vardimon's dance company, folk luminaries Eliza & Martin Carthy and topical comedians Rob Newman and Mark Thomas will no doubt see the sold-out signs going up at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre this season. To check out the venue's full line-up of events, visit macbirmingham.co.uk

Insomnia at Easter?

The UK's biggest gaming festival will return to Birmingham's NEC across the Easter weekend. From old-school arcade games to cutting-edge VR technology, Insomnia 2019 takes place at the venue from 19 to 22 April. For more information, visit insomniagamingfestival.com





Dance Hub Birmingham to promote South Asian dance genre artists

Dance Hub Birmingham has announced a commissioning round for West Midlands-based South Asian dance genre artists who will be developing and presenting work in the region.

The organisation, which will award four commissions of up to £7.5k, is keen to support classically trained dancers in South Asian dance styles as they explore choreographic practice and develop new commissioned work.

The deadline for applications is 11 February.

Commenting on the announcement, Monique Deletant, Director of Dance Hub Birmingham, said: "I'm really excited about the work that comes from the artistic commissions and the opportunity to see new performances. These commissions build on the fantastic work happening in the West Midlands, and this next round gives us a chance to grow dance work in areas that historically have been underfunded."

For more information, visit culturecentral.co.uk/dance-hub

Northern Ballet pirouette onto the big screen

Northern Ballet's short dance version of *Elves And The Shoemaker* will make its cinema debut this month. The show is one of six dance works created specifically for children by the award-winning company. It will be screened in collaboration with CinEvents at cinemas across the Midlands on Saturday 23 February. To search for your closest participating cinema and to book tickets, visit bitesizedballets.com



Spread the word! Verve Poetry Festival returns to the heart of Birmingham

A four-day festival of 'world class' poetry and spoken word is being held in the heart of Birmingham this month. Featuring special collaborations, cross-genre performances and 'inspiring' workshops, Verve takes place at the Old Rep Theatre from Thursday 14 to Sunday 17 February. For more information, visit vervepoetryfestival.com



Fed up of the loved-up? Anti-Valentine shindig offers a fun alternative...

If the thought of Valentine's Day makes you come out in a cold sweat, you should head for Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) on the 14th of this month, where an Anti-Valentine's shindig includes a complimentary cocktail or mocktail, unlimited party food, Anti-Valentine's games with prizes, live music and a screening of the movie *Fatal Attraction*.

And as well as the Anti-Valentine's Party, Midlands Arts Centre is also screening, earlier the same evening, a Galentine's movie - that's a 'gal pals' film for gals to watch with their gal pals (we hope we've explained that concept clearly for you!). *Romy And Michele's High School Reunion* stars Lisa Kudrow and Mira Sorvino as best friends who, when attending their high-school reunion, determine to prove just how successful they are - in the process making full use of fabulous outfits and fabricated life stories...

Visit macbirmingham.co.uk for more information.

Strum away at the Conservatoire

A live interview with and recital by Milos Karadaglić is among the highlights of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's guitar festival, taking place at the venue on Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 February. The event also features a workshop run by flamenco star Daniel Martinez for the novice flamenco guitarist, and a masterclass and recital by David Russell. To check out the full programme of events, visit bcu.ac.uk

All You Need Is Love as Beatles festival returns

A day-long festival celebrating The Beatles makes a welcome return to Birmingham this month.

Taking place on Sunday 10 February at venues in the Kings Heath area of the city, the All You Need Is Love event features Beatles homages by a selection of local musicians and a performance from top tribute band Made In Liverpool.



**MELISSA
ETHERIDGE**
**YES I AM - 25TH
ANNIVERSARY TOUR**
 THU 21 FEBRUARY 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



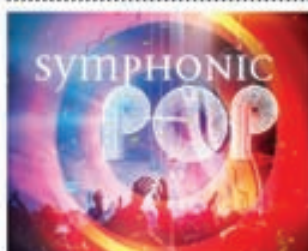
**ASIAN
SPRING**
 SUN 3 MARCH 6PM
TOWN HALL



**TWIRLYWOOS
LIVE!**
 FRI 22 - SUN 24 FEBRUARY
TOWN HALL



**MIKE AND THE
MECHANICS**
 FRI 15 MARCH 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**SYMPHONIC
POP**
 SAT 23 FEBRUARY 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**REMEMBERING
THE MOVIES**
 SAT 23 MARCH 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**TRUST FAST
HEALTH WITH
MICHAEL
MOSLEY**
 MON 25 FEBRUARY 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



**I TALK TOO
MUCH**
 AN EVENING OF CHAT
 AND MUSIC WITH
FRANCIS ROSSI
 SAT 30 MARCH 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



DAN SNOW
 AN EVENING WITH
 THE 'HISTORY GUY'
 TUE 26 FEBRUARY 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



**AN EVENING
WITH THE
HAIRY
BIKERS**
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SYMPHONY HALL

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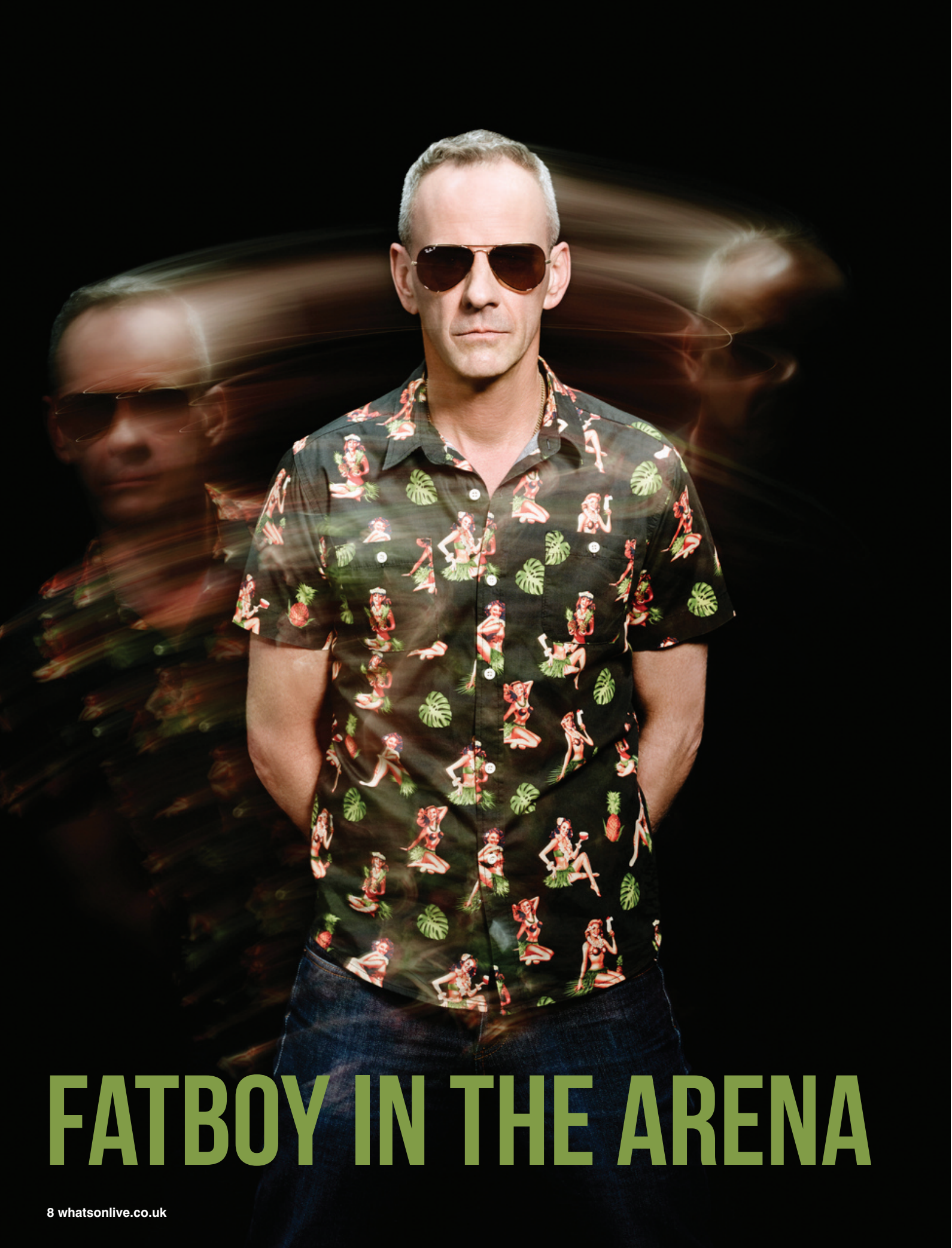


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FATBOY IN THE ARENA

What's On catches up with DJ superstar Norman Cook - better known as the legendary Fatboy Slim - as he prepares to visit Arena Birmingham...

It's been more than 20 years since the release of Norman Cook's global breakthrough album - *You've Come A Long Way, Baby* - yet the 55-year-old remains very much a current and prominent member of the world music scene.

Praised by critics for its sound and style, the album - which features two of the most popular Fatboy Slim songs, *Praise You* and *Right Here, Right Now* - brought international attention to Norman, earning him a Brit Award in 1999, and was later certified four times platinum.

This year sees the global superstar heading out on tour for the umpteenth time - but on this occasion he'll be creating something 'unusual and completely different'. Expect a big production, a revolving stage, rave ushers and a live smiley face experience. No seat in the house will be far away from the stage.

"I've played different shows at festivals, on beaches and in big venues," says Norman, "but I've always shied away from arenas, even though I've always thought it's something you should do in your lifetime. Arenas can be quite impersonal places; it's quite hard to get atmosphere going, and they can be quite cavernous and daunting for DJs. I had a one-off show last year at O2 in London, and we worked out that if we did it in the round, all of a sudden, rather than feeling like an arena, it felt like a big nightclub. For some reason, it worked. It takes away all the impersonality and you forget you're in an arena; it's just me in the middle of people having a load of rave-up nonsense which totally works. So we thought we'd roll it out around the country. It's a chance to do the show I've always wanted to do in terms of size and production."

Norman first came to musical prominence in the mid-1980s during his time with indie rock band The Housemartins. After three top-10 albums and six top-20 singles, the band decided to go their separate ways.

"I might consider playing in a band again, but probably not The Housemartins. I'm still mates with them, but we did vow never to reform. We still get together every now and again to confirm our vows. To be honest, I'm more likely to be playing in a band at a

mate's wedding than I am to be inflicting it on the rest of you. Over the years I've realised that I'm a much better DJ than I am a bass player."

After The Housemartins split, Cook formed the electronic band Beats International in his home town of Brighton, producing number-one single *Dub Be Good To Me*. Fatboy Slim followed shortly afterwards, in 1996.

Since then, Norman has become one of the global DJ scene's most treasured and important figures. His infamous Big Beach Boutique gig in 2002 saw a staggering 250,000 fans flock to Brighton beach and he's worked with musical greats aplenty, including David Byrne and Iggy Pop.

Norman recently became the first DJ to perform at the top of Brighton's i360 tower. So how was that experience, and are there any other particular locations in which he'd like to perform?

"Well, that was definitely top of my bucket list. It's just up the road from me. I'm very Brighton-centric, and there was nobody else who was going to do that. We've been trying for three years to make that happen, so to finally do it was quite emotional. It was such a beautiful sunset, almost like the gods were approving of what we were doing. It was nice because it put Brighton on the map too. Still on my bucket list? Obviously outer space would be good. I thought I'd got a gig there actually. Richard Branson phoned me up and offered me the job of being the first DJ to play in space, but it turned out it was Beardyman doing an impersonation."

As well as his upcoming tour, Norman reveals that he's currently working on the music for a film that Julien Temple is making about Ibiza.

"It's called *Ibiza: The Silent Movie*, but rather than getting Paul Oakenfold, Pete Tong and me to bang on about Ibiza, it's about the history of the island before we invaded it. It starts with the Venetians and the Romans, the Nazis and all the different people who've visited it over the years. It's a lighthearted documentary, but it's silent, there's no vox pops and there's no commentary. The music and the visuals tell the story. Julien has got

quite an individual style, the way he makes documentaries; they're not traditional. It's been a pleasure to work with him - he's been one of my favourites for many years. It's really nice to flex different muscles but still be working within the parameters of the Ibiza soundtrack, which has been the soundtrack of my life for the last 25 years.

"The intention is to premiere it at Glastonbury this year, but if I'm not there presenting the film, I'll be there anyway - you know me. Isn't it amazing how we all miss Glastonbury during the fallow year? I was thinking it may be nice to have a year off, but I've really missed it. It seems like it's been three years! It's good, though, because we're all really chomping at the bit to get back there now. You'll be seeing me in all the familiar places over the summer - lots of Ibiza action and lots of festival action. I'm really, really enjoying DJing - it's a wonderful job!"

If you've ever been to a Fatboy Slim gig or watched one on YouTube, you'll absolutely know that he 100 percent means what he says about loving his trade - his enthusiasm for DJing couldn't be more apparent than during his gigs.

"Is it weird to say that I actually enjoy it more now? Obviously, as I get older, there's some kind of clock running that says some day I'll have to stop doing it, so I'm savouring it more. Now I'm DJing sober, I'm remembering more. It might've been better back then, but as far as I remember, it's better now. It's the most wonderful job in the world, and it ticks all the boxes for me. I love music, I love performing and I love just travelling around the world, making friends, telling stories and sharing music."

Having achieved so much in his life, what are Norman's highlights?

"The gig on Brighton beach, definitely! Having number ones - that feels like the pinnacle because you know you're doing it right. I'm very proud of my children, of course. I look back on those things and think, 'Yeah, that was a good idea; that was worth doing.'"

.....
Fatboy Slim plays Arena Birmingham on Friday 22 February.



REVIEW: Aluna Mailbox cocktail favourite ticks food boxes with pan-Asian-inspired menu

Known predominantly for their expansive and inventive cocktail menu, popular bar & eatery Aluna have recently launched a new menu with the help of London consultancy Kinkou.

Kinkou have a reputation for creating dishes that are light yet luxurious, and Aluna's new pan-Asian-inspired menu is said to be a culmination of the chef's experience and dedication to food.

Located at The Mailbox, one of Birmingham's best-known dining-out destinations, the restaurant boasts a range of signature dishes: seared beef sashimi with apple, pickled cucumber, enoki mushroom, lemongrass and ginger dressing; chilli soft shell crab tempura with lemon soy and green chilli aioli; red scallop curry.

Many of the dishes are suitable for those on gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan diets.

My partner and I chose to visit the canalside venue on a Friday evening. The bar was packed out with groups of friends and couples, and the restaurant area was suitably busy too. I was im-

pressed from the off - the venue boasted a fantastic, lively atmosphere and was the perfect setting in which to get the weekend under way.

We kickstarted proceedings with an extremely tasty Aluna Secret cocktail - a vodka-based concoction which had the taste and consistency of a strawberry milkshake. Served in a martini glass, the 'secret sugar' that topped the drink was set alight at the table, providing a crème brûlée-style coating that tasted of marshmallow. It was tremendous!

The food menu featured six sections - while you wait, small dishes, plates to share, salads, sides and desserts.

We ordered from the small-dishes section: chilli salt squid with spring onion, shichimi pepper and yuzu & mirin sauce; and pan-roasted scallops with wasabi aioli, crushed pea and purple shisho.

The scallops were delicious, of a good size and cooked perfectly. Served in the shell, they were nicely seared on both sides yet soft in the middle. I could have eaten the dish three times over.

The chilli salt squid, however, was underwhelming. Even with the sauce poured on top, there was little to no flavour. The squid pieces were cold and in no way salty, which was a shame as it's usually one of our favourite dishes.

From the 'plates to share' section, we ordered: the red aromatic crispy duck curry with tamarind, baby aubergine, baby corn, crispy sweet basil and wild ginger; the beef bulgogi sirloin with grilled asparagus and green peppercorn yoghurt; and the wasabi lamb chops with parsley, coconut, red chilli and pickled cucumber.

We started with the ever-so-tasty lamb chops. The meat was cooked to perfection and boasted a melt-in-the-mouth texture. I didn't get much coconut, but the beautifully cooked lamb, subtle wasabi flavouring and the pickled garnish made for a very enjoyable plate of food.

Next up was the beef. As with the lamb, the meat was cooked perfectly. Served medium rare, it was nicely seasoned and of a high quality. I annoyingly poured the entire pot of green peppercorn yoghurt over the meat before I'd tried it. It was a bit too sour for my liking and ended up masking the taste of the beef - a mistake on my part.

Everything we ordered was served at once, tapas style, with which we had no issue whatsoever. However, because the plates to share were much larger than your average tapas dish, they took longer to eat, which resulted in some of the dishes dropping in temperature by the time we got round to them.

We moved on to our last savoury dish of the evening, the duck curry. Although slightly cold in temperature, due to being left until last, it boasted an enjoyable sweet-and-strong tamarind flavour. There wasn't as much duck as I'd have liked for the £11.95 price tag, but it was a tasty dish nonetheless.

Although we encountered a couple of hiccups flavour-wise during the course of our meal, the presentation was aesthetically pleasing and of an impressive standard.

Service at both the bar and in the restaurant area was exemplary - hats off to the staff for making our debut visit an enjoyable one.

On another positive note, Aluna have certainly perfected all things beverage. Their cocktails are absolutely delicious and the lagers are crisp and fresh - there's nothing worse than a flat pint!

The canalside location is certainly a draw too, and I can easily imagine myself making use of the outside seating in the summer whilst enjoying another melon colada or several.

Lauren Foster

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

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128-130
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Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RQ
Tel: 0121 633 9987

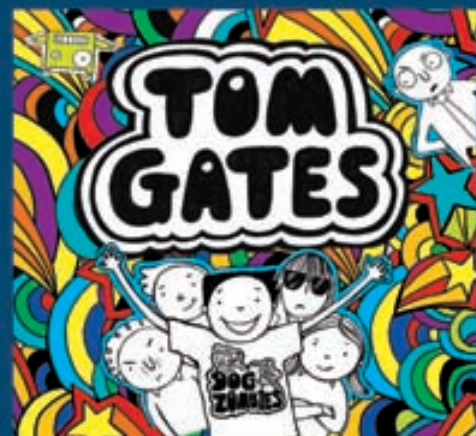
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 £7 THU 14 FEB 7.30PM



MON 18 – SAT 23 FEB



WED 13 – SAT 16 MAR



TUE 9 – SAT 13 APR



MON 29 APR – SAT 4 MAY
 £7 WED 1 MAY 7.30PM



MON 6 – SAT 11 MAY
 £7 WED 8 MAY 2.30PM



MON 13 – SAT 25 MAY



MON 3 – SAT 8 JUN



TUE 11 – SAT 15 JUN

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Rocking it!

Kevin Clifton
unleashes his
inner rock star...



Kevin Clifton is temporarily hanging up his dance shoes to play rock legend Stacey Jaxx in hit jukebox musical *Rock Of Ages*. What's On recently caught up with the *Strictly Come Dancing* 2018 *Glitterball* winner to find out more...

Last year ended on an enormous high for Kevin Clifton. As *Strictly Come Dancing* fans will know, Kevin and his dance partner, Stacey Dooley, won the TV show's public vote, meaning that he finally got to lift the coveted *Glitterball* trophy after coming so close on a couple of previous occasions.

Unassuming and ever so modest, Kevin was genuinely surprised by the result: "I didn't think for one second that we were going to win. I thought it was going to be another runners-up spot, so when Tess called out our names, it was just total shock. My legs kind of gave way and I screamed. I'd always thought that if it did ever happen, I'd be cool, calm and collected. Instead, I just lost control and started crying!"

What makes the win even sweeter for Kevin is that he nearly didn't make it to the *Strictly* dancefloor. Having been rejected twice, his opportunity only came when the producers upped the ante and decided to make the show bigger - increasing the number of dancers from 14 to 15 and finally giving Kevin the break he needed to showcase his dancing prowess. "I feel like I snuck in through the back door a little bit to get into the show. This five-year journey has been one of trying and trying and just never giving up."

As many of the show's dancers and celebrities hit the road with the *Strictly Live Tour*, Kevin is living another dream - playing Stacey Jaxx in the UK tour of acclaimed jukebox musical *Rock Of Ages*. So just how rock'n'roll is he?

"The truth is I'm not really rock'n'roll at all, but I've always fancied myself as a wannabe rock star. I always felt before *Strictly* that I dressed the part all of the time. I would wear leather trousers, big boots and a long leather coat. I had this long black hair and wore eyeliner and makeup all of the time. I love rock'n'roll music, but when it actually comes to acting up like a rock star, then not anymore. Even at the *Strictly* wrap party, I left early because I wanted to get home and have a cup of tea."

So how does Kevin plan to tackle a role made famous by Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise?

"I'd actually seen the musical quite a few times before the film came out, so Tom Cruise was one of the last people I saw as Stacey. I've seen the show both on Broadway and in the West End, and in all honesty it's my favourite show. Stacey is quite over the top and flamboyant. He's really self-obsessed, so I need to tap into all of that a little bit and be as pretentious as I can about it all. As far as rock icons are concerned, I went over to Paris to visit Jim Morrison's grave because I thought that would be a really cool rock'n'roll thing to do, and I want to tap into a bit of him. As for over-the-top flamboyancy, I'll probably look to the band The Darkness. Between them, they play into the *Rock Of Ages* ethos quite nicely."

Kevin is no stranger to musical theatre, having made his debut in *Dirty Dancing* in the West End - but how will his vocals stand up to belting out the show's repertoire of rock'n'roll classics, including Bon Jovi's *Wanted Dead Or Alive* and Foreigner's *I Want To Know What Love Is*?

"I've always loved singing, and I used to have a lot of singing lessons when I was doing *Dirty Dancing*, even though I only had to do backing vocals in that particular show. As for my vocal range, I can get up quite high, which was one of the reasons I was interested in doing this. The thing I need to focus on is the maintenance of the voice, and that's something I'm continuing to work on so that I can sustain doing seven or eight shows a week."

It would be fair to assume that Grimsby-born Kevin was always destined for a career in dance - both his parents were dance teachers, while his sister, Joanne Clifton, won *Strictly* in 2015. She's since carved out an impressive career in musical theatre.

"My first dance class, so I've been told, was when I was about four years old. I just started joining in as I was watching what was going

on in our parents' dance classes. I was just stood at the back trying to copy them. And then at some point I started to go to one of the classes. I guess I've never really known any different, but there was never any pressure. It was just a normal part of life - wake up, eat breakfast, go to school (or work, as I got older) and then go dancing. It's always been a normal part of my day. I just loved to dance, but I'd always wondered about musical theatre, especially as I got older. Dance is something I've always done, but with musical theatre it was more of a conscious decision, something that I was leaning towards; well, either that or becoming a rock star, so this has all worked out nicely."

Although obsessed with dancing and intrigued by musical theatre, Kevin did have his eye on one other career for a period of time: "I wanted to be a wrestler - like, a WWE wrestler. That's what I thought I'd be, but I would never have looked the part."

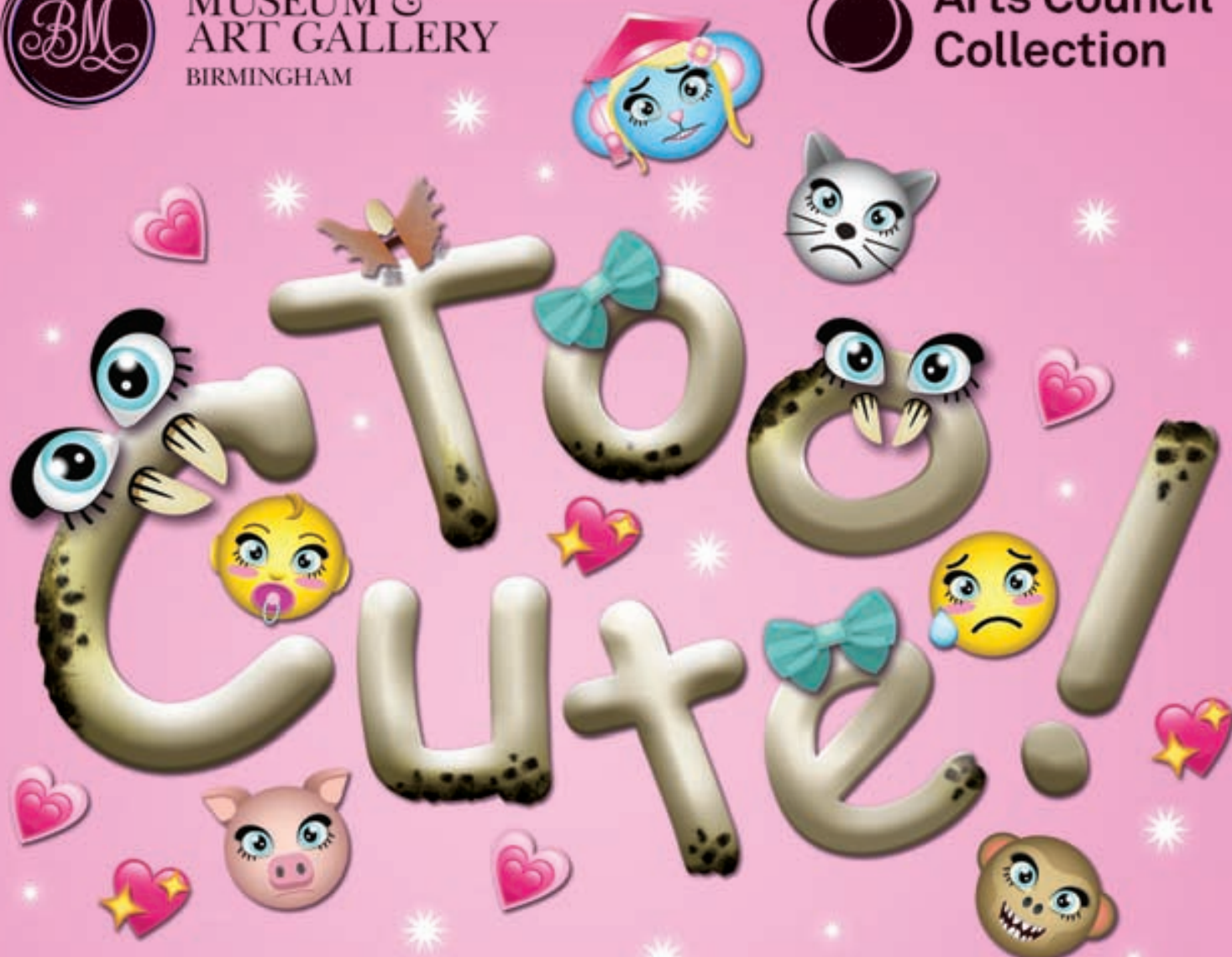
Kevin most certainly *does* look the part as a *Strictly* dancer, though - so will he be returning to the hit BBC One television show in the autumn?

"I hope they'll ask me back, but they don't make any decisions until a couple of months into the new year. They normally have an initial conversation with you around February or March, and then, if they want you, you get offered a contract later in the year. If they still want me on the show, then yes, I'd love to be there."

.....

In the meantime, you can catch Kevin in *Rock Of Ages* at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tues 12 to Sat 16 February.

He will then be bringing his *Burn The Floor* tour to the region in the spring. Visit whatsonlive.co.uk for venues and dates.

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Midlands Arts Centre to host Dirty Vegan pop-up nights

Fancy a cool night out in Birmingham with vegan food and live music? If so, Midlands Arts Centre is the place to head for.

The popular venue is playing host to two ticketed Dirty Vegan nights - a dessert night on 8 February and a curry night on 1 March - with sittings at 7.30pm, 7.45pm and 8pm for both events... For more information, visit macbirmingham.co.uk

Little Dessert Shop to open first restaurant in Brum's city centre

Little Dessert Shop is opening its first restaurant in Birmingham city centre. Sweet treats available from the venue include a range of cookie dough (white choc chip, choc bar and Everything I Want being among the favourites), waffles including I'm Nuts About You, Malteser Teaser, Broken Rainbow and Oreo Explosion, and a selection of crepes, brownies, bakes, milkshakes, gelatos and more...

The shop will open on Link Street, although its launch date is yet to be announced.

Birmingham Beer Week returns for 2019

A week-long festival celebrating Birmingham's flourishing beer scene makes a welcome return to the city from 19 to 28 July. Birmingham Beer Week brings together breweries, pubs, bars, bottle shops and restaurants to create 'exciting events with good music, food and great beer'.



Multi-million pound rooftop bar & restaurant opens at Birmingham's popular Resorts World venue

A new rooftop bar & restaurant has opened its doors at Birmingham's Resorts World.

Described as an exciting new social dining & drinking experience with stunning views, Sky By The Water has a capacity of 260, a private-dining space for groups of 12 to 48, and a Chef's Table option for between two and 10 people.

The menu has been created by Birmingham-born Head Chef Aaron Darnley. Dishes include slow-cooked ox cheek, bamboo steamed medallion of cod with a chorizo & bean cassoulet, lamb hotpot with sticky red cabbage, and lightly spiced curried sweet potato, cauliflower, spinach and peas with puffed black rice.

Chez Mal launches modern-twist vegan menu for winter

Malmaison's Chez Mal Brasserie & Bar in Birmingham has unveiled a brand new vegan menu, providing a modern twist on traditional winter flavours.

The new menu features, among other dishes: tempura of seasonal vegetables with jalapeños and lime & sweet chilli sauce; caramelised red onion hummus, truffled leeks & sesame flatbread; and roast aubergine, winter squash and red pepper bhuna, served alongside fluffy pilaf rice and grilled Indian bread.

There's also a vegan take on Mal's signature Valrhona chocolate fondue dish.

Laying off the booze? The chic hotel brand has got a range of non-alcoholic 'feelgood' cocktails to enjoy, including a dry gin & tonic comprising Seedlip Garden 108 non-alcoholic gin, Fevertree light tonic, cucumber, blueberries and mint.

Chez Mal Brasserie & Bar is situated within Malmaison Hotel at The Mailbox, Birmingham. To check out the venue's complete menu and for more information, visit malmaison.com/locations/birmingham/chez-mal-brasserie





Ray & Liz

Richard Billingham's debut film explores growing up in 70s Midlands

Richard Billingham is a born-and-raised Birmingham photographer, artist, and now director. His debut feature film, *Ray & Liz* explores the memories of his family from his childhood, whilst growing up in 70s Midlands. The film looks at the lives of his alcoholic father Ray; his mother Liz; and his younger brother Jason, who lived on the margins of society and societal taboos.

You wrote the film a long time ago; do you think all your photography has been a storyboard to the test out moments of the film you had in your head?

Well, I made that work in the early 90s. Maybe I'd have used moving images, a video camera. But the thing is, it wasn't affordable back then. I think the first video camera I got was in 1996 and that was £1000. So 96' was when they first became affordable. I probably would've used moving image and moved onto that a lot quicker, if the technology had been there.

In relation to technology, in the film, a tape recorder has a significance to a particular scene – was that just part of the plot, or the factual beginnings of your fascination with capturing real life?

No, I used to have a tape recorder like that, and I used to make audio tapes of friends and family, especially of my Uncle. I'd say 'Can you do this?' or 'Can you take off George Formby?', and he would. And also, I'd tape conversations and things off the radio if I thought they were interesting. In fact, I still have some of those audiotapes, and I used them as research for the film. So yes, it probably was, before the camera. The first time I got a camera I was 19, I'd been recording since I was about 10. I guess it's a way of objectifying the world around you.

Was it a way to process it, listening back to the conversations?

Probably, but I wouldn't have been able to articulate that back then.

You're so meticulous in terms of your direction, was it difficult to find actors that were happy with this process? Did you like to rehearse and shoot on first takes to give it a natural feel?

No, I didn't find it difficult, but it was hard to find actors in the sense that they had to look like family members, and have to be good actors at the same time. Yes, I did do quite a bit of rehearsing. The scene where Ray, Lol and Liz are together, when Lol walks in, I rehearsed that a lot. I told them the spaces of the room to inhabit; I was quite specific, because I'm trying to recreate things I remember.

There's a lot of specific visual elements, such as Ray filling his drinks to the very

brim, and pickled red cabbage. That's such a specific choice to make, is that a very firm memory for you?

Yes! And the pickle going onto white bread and then the fingerprints in the bread. It makes it particular.

Photography is a quite solitary and personal experience; how did you find it letting others become part of that process in terms of lighting and design?

Yes, photography is solitary, or can be, especially landscape photography. It's a different sort of process though; it's documentary. And film, you have to recreate everything before you can film it, it's a very different process. I was trying to recreate memories, so it's just what you have to do. I enjoyed it, working with lots of different people because it was a learning process.

As a photographer, you focus on visual composition, so when it came to sound, you needed something that would complement the visuals. How involved were you with sound designer Joakim Sundstrom?

With the voices, for example, the voices of your family are in your head, that's fine to deal with. Natural sounds were fine, the only problem I maybe had was, I don't have many musical memories. When I was a kid, the TV was on all the time, it was very rare the radio was on and we heard songs. So I had help with the music; Jacqui (Davies), the producer helped choose the music that you hear in the film, so that was tricky for me.

And although the 70s were perhaps a drab era, everything both visually and sound-wise are very busy. Was that something that came from your memories?

Well it was intentional, you have to keep the viewer engaged and the more visually stimulating it is the better. When you remember things, you do remember the more textural, or maybe you feel them more? Looking at other movies, I do remember scenes in that are very textural, like Ivan's Childhood.

Some of the busiest scenes involves animals. Are they somewhat a parallel of Ray's self-imposed captivity, or Jason being left alone in the flat?

Well when I was a kid growing up, and we lived in these four walls, I had a sense that

time stood still. And that out the window, time was moving forwards; time was still for us. There's a symmetry there with animals and cages, time stood still for them in a way.

You've mentioned before a fascination with confinement. You've mentioned before you were planning to make a 20 minute short film set in a prison.

That was an idea I had, yes. There's a short story that I was interested in and I did write a script, but it's one of those projects that never happened. To go back and do that now wouldn't make much sense because I've done something similar in this film. I might be repeating a lot of things if I went back and made that.

When I was a little kid, I do remember watching a film *A Man Escaped*, by Robert Bresson. I remember that film being on the TV and being very intrigued by it. It was very tense, even though it was just this prisoner picking away at the wood of his door.

Throughout the film, there's an element of religious imagery. Some film makers who have come from a Christian/ Catholic background have a tendency to include iconography in their films. Coogan explored this extensively in 'PHILOMENA', and Dennis Kelly says his plays, particularly 'DEBRIS', deals with what he calls 'Catholic guilt'. How was this specific to you?

It was always around on the walls, I think my mum used to put things on the wall like that. My Uncle believed in that – Lol, in the film, he believed in God. My mum didn't believe in God, I think maybe she put it up because she saw it around when she was a kid. It adds texture, and maybe tells you something about the characters.

If you were to make another film, do you feel you've said everything you want to within the world of Ray and Liz? And if you did, would you have had to been the one wrote it to make it a personal enough experience?

I think so, yes; It'd be completely different. I am writing things, but I haven't tried to seek out any scripts.

.....
Ray & Liz will be shown 24th January at Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham at 7pm

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Ozzy Osbourne

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham,
Sat 9 February

The Prince of Darkness is back in his hometown this month to present his final global extravaganza - No More Tours 2. Having amassed sales of more than 100 million records both solo and with Black Sabbath, Ozzy is using the show to celebrate five glorious decades in the music business.



Beans On Toast

The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham,
Fri 15 February

Beans On Toast emerged from the London folk scene over a decade ago, making a splash with songs about sex, drugs and politics. Sticking firmly to his own tradition of releasing a new album on the same date each year, Beans' latest offering, A Bird In The Hand, is a celebration of love, life, family and the world in which we live. This latest Birmingham gig forms part of one of his biggest-ever tours and sees him performing alongside a full live band.



Peach

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham,
Sat 16 February

Bridging the gaps between house, techno and electro, London-based Canadian Peach regularly performs at prestigious institutions including Phonox and Corsica Studios,

and was invited to play for Ben UFO during his XOYO residency last year. The talented producer's debut offering, Silky, was the stand-out track on Intergraded, a new imprint launched by Midland for emerging artists. Her gig at the Hare & Hounds this month is her first ever in Birmingham.

King King

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 1 February

Scottish award winners King King have been described as 'the living, breathing here-and-now of classic rock music'. With a reputation for creating a fantastic chemistry with their audience, the band boast an outstanding back-catalogue, a full-blooded style, technical brilliance and impassioned vocals from lead singer Alan Nimmo. This is a must-see show for rock and blues lovers alike.

Tears For Fears

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham,
Tues 12 February

One of the UK's most influential bands, Tears For Fears - otherwise known as Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith - have sold more than 30 million records worldwide and boast a string of huge hits, including Everybody Wants To Rule The World, Shout, Mad World, Head Over Heels and Woman In Chains.

They're visiting Birmingham this month with their Rule The World tour, rescheduled from last year.

Kaiser Chiefs

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Sat 2 February

Fronted by the charismatic Ricky Wilson, primarily inspired by new wave and punk-rock music of the late 1970s and '80s, and having long ago established themselves as one of the leading bands of their generation, Kaiser Chiefs have released a succession of classic albums since forming in Leeds 19 years ago. Their long list of anthemic singles includes Oh My God, I Predict A Riot, Everyday I Love You Less And Less, Ruby and Never Miss A Beat.

The boys visit Birmingham in support of their latest album, KC7.





Love Is In The Air

Danielle de Niese performs a Valentine's Day concert in Brum

For celebrated soprano Danielle De Niese, the 14th of February will always be an extra-special day. So when she performs in Birmingham this Valentine's Day, she will also be celebrating an important anniversary.

"My husband proposed to me on Valentine's Day, in 2009, so it's an extra-special day because we always remember that. He waited until Valentine's Day, which meant that we were in Bowling Green, Ohio."

De Niese's Valentine's Night Special at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire sees her returning to a venue that holds fond memories for her from a couple of years ago.

"I'd been invited by Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Principal Julian Lloyd Webber to sing at his birthday celebrations, and that's how we connected. As soon as Julian wanted to get me back, I said yes. I'm thrilled to come back. I found the audience so warm, nice, lovely and very engaged.

"The first thing that happened when Julian asked, 'Do you want to perform the recital on Valentine's Day?' was that I rang my husband and said, 'Do you want to come to Birmingham on Valentine's Day?' and he said, 'Sure.'

"I've always been a real girly girl, somebody who's in love with love. I love that about myself, and I love that that hasn't changed as I've grown older, wiser and had more love experiences. I'm still totally enamoured with love, which is why I said yes to doing a recital on Valentine's Day."

While the Australian-born diva is known as an opera singer, her versatility has seen her tackle a wide range of musical genres, a fact

that's likely to be reflected in a performance to suit all tastes.

"I'm going to do some arias in the first half, and in the second it's going to be a lot of musical repertoire, so I'm doing stuff from the golden age of musicals like 'You say to-may-to, I say to-mah-to' and fun things about playful love. I want to do some songs of Bernstein's, which are all about wistful, romantic love, and I want to end on a high, celebrating all the great things about love."

Danielle's rise to stardom began in 1988, at the tender age of nine, when she became the youngest winner of Australian television programme Young Talent Time, in which she performed a medley of Whitney Houston hits. Her prize was \$5,000 and a grand piano that she still owns. Soon after, her family relocated to the States, where her career as a talented young singer and dancer flourished.

When asked about her earliest Valentine's Day memory, Danielle recalls a gift she received from an admirer at junior high school: "My first Valentine's Day memory was when I was in sixth grade. This boy gave me a ring watch - rings that had little watch dials on them - but I remember telling him, 'Gene, I really like you so much, but there's just no spark.'"

Danielle made her debut at the prestigious Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2005, when she stepped in at short notice to play Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. She received enough critical plaudits to earn her a return to the South Downs. Four years later, she went one step further by marrying Glyndebourne Director Gus Christie. It was a match

that echoed the marriage of Christie's grandfather, John Christie, who constructed the original opera house for his wife, Canadian soprano Audrey Mildmay.

Now resident at Glyndebourne, Danielle will play the title role in a new production of Jules Massenet's *Cendrillon* at the festival in June. Before that, she returns to London's West End for a revival of *Man Of La Mancha*, where she will be joined by a familiar face to fans of hit TV comedy shows *Cheers* and *Frasier*: "It's going to be with Kelsey Grammer, and he's incredible. It's an amazing chance for me and a dream come true."

Danielle will notch up a decade as a UK resident later this year - and it would appear that she's settled very well into life in rural England.

"Getting to know England was like returning to a little piece of myself because I grew up in Australia, in the Commonwealth, with the monarchy. All of these things, their roots are in England but they took root in Australia, so there are a lot of things that I relate to in a much more 'feels like home' way.

"I feel fully a part of English life, and I feel like England has really taken me in as one of its own. Rather than feeling out of place everywhere I go, I find commonality everywhere I go, and that really helps me feel at home."

.....

Danielle de Niese performs her Valentine's Night Special at The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, on Thursday 14 February.

Ex Cathedra: Purcell, The Indian Queen

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 17 February

Jeffrey Skidmore (pictured) once again picks up the baton to conduct Birmingham's highly rated early music ensemble. On this occasion, they're performing Purcell's famous tale of tangled loyalties and seemingly hopeless love, as war rages between a Mexican Indian Queen and an Inca king.

The concert closes the newly revived Birmingham Festival of Early Music, more details of which can be found below...



Birmingham Festival of Early Music

The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, Sun 3 - Sun 17 February

Birmingham's own Ex Cathedra (see above), Consortium 5 (pictured below) and the Binchois Consort are among the ensembles featuring in this eagerly anticipated event.

The festival brings together young musicians and leading researchers for a series of concerts, recitals and talks exploring instrumental and vocal music from the medieval period. World premieres designed to be performed alongside earlier repertoire are also included.



CBSO: Mozart & Brahms

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 28 February

It may only be February, but if the programme for this concert is anything to go by, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra already have one eye firmly set on summer.

With Olari Elts taking on conducting duties for this afternoon concert, the CBSO turn their attention to Brahms's First Serenade. A work evocative of warm nights and romantic melodies, the piece is widely considered to be the sunniest symphony the composer ever produced.

Beethoven's stirring Leonore Overture No3 and Mozart's exuberant Double Piano Concerto also feature, as do talented Dutch pianists and siblings Lucas and Arthur Jussen (pictured).

Tasmin Little

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Wed 6 February

One of the UK's favourite classical musicians here joins forces with one of the Midlands' most widely admired orchestras for a concert featuring one of classical music's best-known works.

Or, to be more specific: Tasmin Little takes to the stage with the Stratford-upon-Avon-based Orchestra of the Swan to present Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

The programme of work also features Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso in D minor, Arvo Pärt's Fratres and Bach's Concerto for Two Violins. The orchestra's concert master, David Le Page, shares violin duties with the uber-talented Tasmin.



Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra

The Bramall, University of Birmingham, Sun 10 February



One of the region's best known and most admired non-professional orchestras, the Birmingham Phil was voted 'best orchestra in the Midlands' in the 2018 What's On Readers' Awards.

Their latest concert sees them presenting a programme of well-known movie music, including Star Wars, Back To The Future, Assault On Beautiful Gorky and Rhapsody In Blue. Principal Guest Conductor Richard Laing is the man at the helm.



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Peeling back the layers

Richard Lintern takes on new role at The Rep

For millions of television viewers, actor Richard Lintern is best known as a pathologist – but this month he switches medical professions to become a psychiatrist. Richard, who has played Dr Thomas Chamberlain in six series of the hit BBC drama *Silent Witness*, is taking on a new role in the play *Blue/Orange* at Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Written by Joe Penhall, *Blue/Orange* premiered at the National Theatre in 2000 before transferring to the West End and picking up a raft of awards. It tells the story of Christopher, who is sectioned to a psychiatric unit where professionals wrangle over his diagnosis and treatment.

When Christopher tells the specialists he is the son of the former Ugandan president Idi Amin, he opens a Pandora's box of racism, misunderstanding, prejudice, professional rivalry and bigotry.

Richard plays the senior consultant Robert alongside Thomas Coombes as junior consultant Bruce and Ivan Oyik as Christopher in the new production directed by Birmingham Rep's associate director Daniel Bailey. And Richard says both the play and his role are thought-provoking.

"Whenever I talk to my friends about the play, if you don't present it in the right way, it sounds like the worst play in the history of the world because it's about mental health and race," Richard says.

"But it's actually hysterically funny and it's a play that has issues in it which will touch virtually everyone in the audience. They will ei-

ther have these issues themselves or they will have friends who have issues about confidence, about crises in people's lives or about mental health in one way or another."

And Richard believes audience members will also have strong opinions over the decisions surrounding the future for Christopher.

"The two psychiatrists, a younger one and an older one, have very different views about how the young man should be treated.

"And so it ends up with the audience members becoming almost amateur psychiatrists themselves because they will either agree or disagree with the course of treatment which one or other of the psychiatrists is recommending."

The specialists are not just influenced by their age and experience – their views are also coloured by the fact that Christopher is black.

"Race massively impacts on those decisions – whether there's an unconscious bias or a conscious bias," says Richard. "I'll leave the people who come and see the show to decide whether or not, certainly my character, has a hidden agenda.

"I don't want to pre-judge him. In many ways he says things which are valid and justifiable but at certain points he comes out with stuff which will take the audience's breath away – or I certainly hope it will!"

Blue/Orange was one of Joe Penhall's first successful theatre productions. His other works include The Kinks' musical *Sunny Afternoon*, *Mood Music* which premiered at the

Old Vic last year, the Netflix series *Mindhunter* and he also wrote the screen adaptations of Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*.

Blue/Orange may have been written nearly two decades ago but Richard says it hasn't dated at all – in fact its themes may be even more pertinent in 2019 than they were in 2000.

"The reason I was attracted to do the play is because it's a terrific piece of theatre," Richard says. "It was a massive success in the West End and there's a reason it's being revived. The issues are as contemporary and relevant today, if not more so, than they were when this play was first written 20 years ago. You can't open a paper these days without reading about teenagers struggling with depression or women or men having issues around mental health.

"It's rather a sad thing to say that the themes are still so relevant. If you'd asked the people who did the play originally if they'd thought that 20 years in the future these issues of race and mental health would be as relevant and as full of controversy now as they were then, they would probably have said not. They would have expected us to make progress on them.

"Sadly we haven't and in a multicultural environment like Birmingham the play is a very relevant reminder of that."

.....
Blue Orange shows at The Rep, Birmingham from Fri 1 - Saturday 16 February



Jessie Cave

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 24 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Sat 9 March

"I think that maybe being open about sex and relationships - things like STDs, monogamy, pregnancy, motherhood - allows us all to feel a little less alone sometimes." So says rising star of the comedy circuit Jessie Cave, whose latest show, *Sunrise*, is all about her experiences of dating following a tricky breakup with the father of her children, fellow comedian Alfie Brown.

Tony Law

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 20 February

Zany alternative comedy is the name of Tony Law's game, a fact which means his audience is guaranteed an evening of truly off-the-wall, boundary-defying standup. The popular Canadian funnyman appears on Henry Tudor House's Comedy Club bill this month alongside Danny McLoughlin and the event's resident host, Dan Nightingale.



Dave Spikey

Stafford Gatehouse, Thurs 21 February; Malvern Theatres, Thurs 21 March



Dave Spikey is not only a very funny man, he's also got the silverware to prove it, including a prestigious British Comedy Award and an equally coveted gong from the Royal Television Society. Co-writer of Peter Kay's *Phoenix Nights* (in which he played the role of Jerry), he turns up here with a touring show designed to celebrate the 30th anniversary of his decision to swap a career as a biomedical scientist for a life spent on the UK comedy circuit. Audiences are duly warned to prepare themselves for an evening of great hilarity in the company of a master craftsman.

Robert White

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Fri 22 February; Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock, Thurs 7 March; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Fri 22 March

Clever jokes and pitch-perfect delivery are the stock in trade of gay, Aspergeric and quarter-Welsh musical comedian Robert White. Robert's been playing the Edinburgh Fringe to great effect for the better part of a decade now, but really came to prominence last year when he made the final of Britain's *Got Talent*. He's visiting the Midlands this month with a suitcase full of his trademark vests and a show that's appropriately entitled *The Tank Top Tour*.



Jack Barry

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 22 February

Having previously provided tour support for James Acaster and Joe Lycett, Jack Barry here steps out on his own for a show that sees him explaining the 'thrills, spills and slip-ups' associated with his unofficial appointment as his feuding parents' couples therapist. "It's all good clean fun," says Jack, "just be sure not to bring along your mum and dad!"

Carl Hutchinson

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 15 February; The REP, Birmingham, Sat 9 March

Observational comedian Carl Hutchinson makes a welcome return with a show that covers all manner of common-or-garden topics, from the challenges of buying a house to the experience of having kids. Prior to becoming a full-time standup, Carl spent some time as a maths teacher. "There are certainly comparisons between the two professions," says the popular Geordie comedian, "but the definite advantage with comedy is that if you have a bad gig, you can rest assured that you don't have to see the same audience the next day at 10am!"

Sindhu Vee

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 13 February; Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 22 February

"Kids are to marriage as tsunamis are to beach holidays," explains former banker Sindhu Vee, who's this month touring to the Midlands with first ever solo offering Sandhog, a show that proved an unqualified success at last year's Edinburgh Fringe. Although her previous career in the City no doubt offers plenty of material for a standup show, Sindhu's decided to let the subject of finance gain some extra interest in the comedy bank for the time being. Instead, she's turning the spotlight on the trials and tribulations of marriage and domestic life.



Zakir Khan

Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 17 February

"I've been writing jokes ever since I was a kid," says Indian comedian Zakir Khan. "My early years were spent in a boys' school, a fact that gave me a near-unlimited stock of tales that I could use to make people roll around on the floor. The challenge for me was working out the best way to present

them." The winner of Comedy Central's 'best standup comic of India' award, Zakir has performed more than 1,000 sold-out shows in venues across the world. He's this year bringing his act to the UK for the very first time.

Adam Kay

Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 6 February; New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 24 April

After watching an Adam Kay performance, Stephen Fry declared, "This made me very, very happy." Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is this month visiting the Midlands with his latest tour, This Is Going To Hurt: Secret Diaries Of A Junior Doctor. The show features one hour and one minute's-worth of humorous material based on his bestselling book of the same name. Expect splendidly silly spoof songs and some seriously shocking stories from the NHS frontline...



star man

Professor Brian Cox takes us on adventure in space and time



It isn't easy making complicated ideas accessible to a mass audience, but Professor Brian Cox has spent the last decade doing precisely that to stunning effect. His exploration of particle physics and astronomy on TV shows such as *Stargazing Live*, *Wonders Of The Solar System* and *Forces Of Nature* have entranced millions of viewers. And given the vast numbers who got off their sofas to check out his last touring show, people clearly can't get enough of Brian in person either - so much so, in fact, that he's even earned himself an entry in the Guinness Book of World Records for 'most tickets sold for a science tour'.

While Brian can rightly be proud of such achievements, it merely confirms a long-standing belief of his: "I've always thought that most people are interested in these ideas. If science is available, they'll come and listen and think and enjoy being challenged. Everybody's interested in questions or ideas that are best addressed by astronomy or physics or biology or geology; they're interested in whether aliens are out there, or how the universe began, or how it's going to end.

"Some people get the mistaken impression that they won't be able to understand it; that science is for weird boffin-type people. It's very important to get the message across, especially to children, that scientists have chosen a career in finding out about nature, and that's it. You don't have to be freakishly clever. You don't have to be Mozart to be a professional musician or Einstein to be a scientist, otherwise we wouldn't have many!"

With his forthcoming tour, Brian will once again aim to have audiences walk away with a better understanding about the universe's origins and evolution than they had when they bought their ticket. And this time round, he'll be educating and entertaining considerably bigger audiences: "For the last tour, we had a lot of dates in smaller venues, and they sold out very quickly. So we decided to put more shows in arenas, which I thought I wouldn't enjoy because it wouldn't be the same experience. But what it allowed us to do was to use these enormous hi-res LED screens, and suddenly the images from the Hubble Space Telescope and the Cassini spacecraft around Saturn came to life in a way that I'd never seen before. You usually look at them on a computer monitor. I think the audience really enjoyed the spectacle that astronomy can deliver. The only downsides are that you have to book that kind of tech-

nology a year-and-a-half in advance or you can't get it - lots of massive rock bands like Coldplay and U2 use it - and it's really expensive, so you take a risk. But it's worth it to see these images of the cosmos as you've never seen them before."

Brian's mention of globetrotting rock behemoths provides the perfect opportunity to ask him about his own previous life as a member of '90s bands Dare and D:Ream. The latter had a number-one hit with *Things Can Only Get Better*, the song New Labour adopted as its anthem for the 1997 general election. So is there a little bit of Brian that hankers after those bygone days in the music industry?

"There really isn't. I'd say I'm a competent musician, but not that good! I think if I'd got to my age now in music, I wouldn't have been creating great things; I don't think I have it in me. I couldn't write *Abbey Road*, and that's what I'd have wanted to do, so I think I'm not good enough. I can play and operate in a band, but that's about it. I'm definitely better at science than I am at music."

Joining Brian onstage for the Q&A section of the show will be comedian Robin Ince, the pair having worked together on BBC Radio Four's *The Infinite Monkey Cage* since 2009. So was he a fan of Robin's before they teamed up? "I'd never heard of him until I worked with him! There was this idea of doing a topical science show on Radio Four. I was introduced to him because the producer wanted to see if it would work, having a comedian and a scientist co-presenting. And it did work because, among other things, Robin is one of the most well-read people I know, so he's full of information and he knows something about everything. He's also been trying to teach me how to impersonate John Peel, but I just can't do it."

Talking of impersonations, Brian is one of numerous celebrities to have been immortalised in mimicry by Dead Ringers' Jon Culshaw. Does he take this as a compliment? "I know Jon very well, but he's doing the 40-year-old me and hasn't moved on to the almost-50-year-old me. I've evolved in the way I present television programmes, but the early ones are exactly like Jon Culshaw. But now I speak a bit faster and keep my arms in check a bit more."

As well as putting on entertaining and enlightening live shows, Brian is also keen to dispel some myths about his work. One of them is that scientists spend hour upon hour every day on their own in the lab, shuffling home to write up their research before doing it all again the next day. "One of the key points about modern science - certainly astronomy and particle physics - is that it's extremely collaborative and international. With the science I do, no single country can build those facilities anymore. One of the great attractions of the job, which I emphasise particularly for younger people thinking of a career in science, is that you get to travel and meet different people from different cultures and countries, and this is vitally important. The more perspectives we can get, the more likely we are to understand nature. This collaboration is a blueprint for the way that our civilisation must develop. We all live on the same planet, after all."

.....

Brian Cox Universal: Adventure In Space & Time visits Arena Birmingham on Saturday 23 February, returning to the venue in the autumn, on Saturday 21 September.



Annie

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 19 - Sat 23 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 23 July - Sun 11 August; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 18 - Sat 23 November

Anita Dobson is the latest high-profile performer to take on the coveted role of Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, the oft-touring Broadway musical that's once again hitting the road this month. Anita is playing the

character until the end of April, at which point Craig Revel Horwood will step back into a role that he first performed in 2015.

A heart-warming rags-to-riches story of a little girl who finds herself transported from a New York orphanage to the luxurious world of millionaire Oliver Warbucks, the show features plenty of memorable songs, including *It's A Hard Knock Life*, *I Don't Need Anything But You*, *Easy Street* and, of course, the legendary *Tomorrow*.

Blue Orange

The REP, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Sat 16 February

Racism, ideology, prejudice and egotism lie at the heart of this Olivier Award-winning play by Joe Penhall, best known to Netflix subscribers as the creator of hit serial-killer show *Mindhunter*.

In a London psychiatric hospital, the schizophrenic Christopher states that he's the son of former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin - a claim that leaves his doctor and senior consultant at serious odds with each other...



The Misogyny Trials

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 28 February

The *Misogyny Trials* is the product of a collaboration between seven female writers who are members of Shakti Women, a 12-year-old Midlands organisation dedicated to helping women reach their full potential. Set in 2030, 10 years after the outlawing of misogyny but with the practice still rife, the play takes a look at some of the cases brought before Judge Serendipity Hope, a woman dedicated to stamping out misogyny in all its ugly forms - even as she grapples with some deep, dark secrets of her own...

Octopus Soup!

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 2 - Sat 16 February

"My *Octopus Soup!* character, Seymour, is a slightly down-on-his-luck insurance broker," explains Stoke-born and Shrewsbury-based

Nick Hancock (pictured), who's best remembered as the 1990s host of TV shows *They Think It's All Over* and *Room 101*. "The play's central idea is of being swept up into some sort of white-collar criminal enterprise without really knowing how it happened. *Octopus Soup!* may not be Bertolt Brecht, but I'm hoping that it's going to be a slick, funny farce and an enjoyable evening of nonsense and fun."



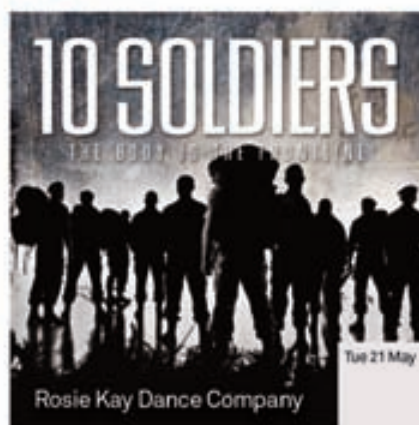
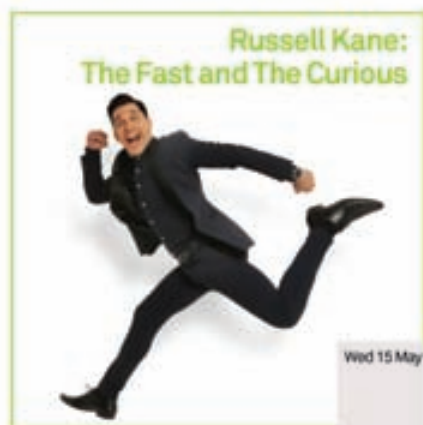
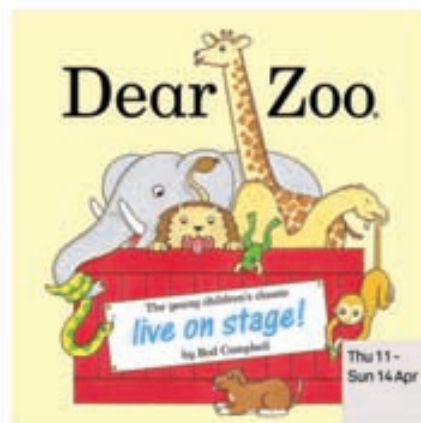
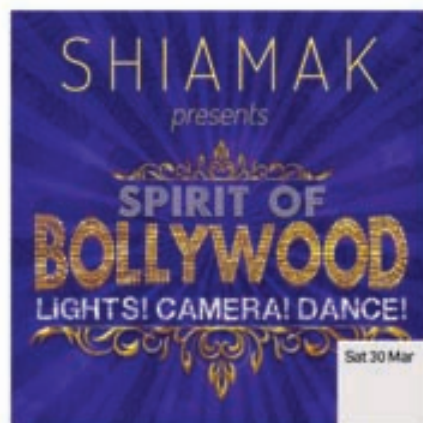
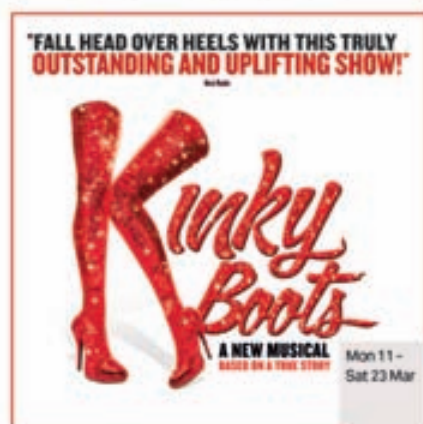


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21st century Shakespeare



**RSC puts inclusivity front and centre in
three new Shakespeare comedies...**

A collaborative cross-cast ensemble - reflecting the nation in terms of gender, ethnicity, regionality and disability - is this year presenting three Shakespeare comedies at the RSC, two of which open in the next few weeks.

What's On chats to the respective directors of *As You Like It* and *The Taming Of The Shrew* to find out more about their brand new shows...

"This season reflects the power of storytelling in its most essential form," says RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran in talking about the company's summer line-up of shows. "With directors Justin Audibert and Kimberley Sykes, I'm creating a company which reflects the nation in terms of gender, ethnicity, regionality and disability - 27 actors who will all appear in two out of three Shakespeare plays."

The plays to which Gregory refers are *As You Like It*, *The Taming Of The Shrew* and, later in the year, *Measure For Measure*. And as you'd expect from a company determined to build on its commitment to inclusivity, the productions are reflective of society's ongoing conversations about a range of issues, including the empowerment of women. This is strongly evidenced in the first of the three plays to open - *As You Like It*, directed by Kimberley Sykes. The play's lead character, Rosalind, is credited with more lines than any other female Shakespearean character.

So was this something that attracted Kimberley to the play?

"Yes absolutely! I was drawn to a woman who's busy working out who she is as the play unfolds. I think sometimes with Shakespeare's women, it feels like they already know who they are. Or that their internal life isn't really the thing that Shakespeare is exploring in the play. With Rosalind, it's completely different. She changes her mind all the time, and she changes her mind with us, with the audience.

"She talks about this magician, this uncle magician, who she's conversed with since the age of three. Lucy Phelps, who's playing Rosalind, and I have talked a lot about who on earth this magician is. We feel that this magician is inside all of us, representing the potential for change and to be different people. The play is really all about Rosalind having a conversation with herself to find a route to contentment, and that's not easy. Sometimes you have to crawl through the dirt to get to the diamond."

Down the years, the character of Rosalind has been played for the RSC by numerous

high-profile artists, including Peggy Ashcroft, Vanessa Redgrave, Eileen Atkins and Juliet Stevenson. Kimberley firmly believes that Lucy Phelps will be a worthy addition to that roll of honour: "Lucy is relentlessly intelligent and rigorous in what she, as an actress and as a woman, wants from the world, and she does all of that with generosity and the most infectious spirit. I think you have to have both of those things to play Rosalind. Lucy's never satisfied as an artist. She's always digging, always chipping away. But if you chip, chip, chip away in rehearsal, and then walk on stage and you've stopped chipping because you've decided what it is, then you've lost Rosalind - whereas Lucy has the bravery to keep discovering, to keep searching."

What does Kimberley hope audiences take away from the production?

"I would like them to take away a new relationship with their own 'magician'. To feel able to explore the possibility of and potential for change, especially right now, with all of the uncertainty in this country and Europe and the rest of the world. To feel that change is possible, and that change can come by working together, learning from each other and from being more honest; being brave enough to jump off the cliff into the unknown."

Jumping off the cliff into the unknown is exactly what Kimberley's fellow RSC director, Justin Audibert, is doing with *The Taming Of The Shrew*, which opens in Stratford next month: "I didn't want to make a *Shrew* in the way it's been done many times before," says Justin. "I'm really interested in seeing what happens when you get female actors to play traditionally powerful male roles, and vice versa.

"So for example, the role of Petruchio, which we've renamed Petruchia, is being played by Claire Price as a woman in a woman's costume, but with the same character motivations and social status as Petruchio in any other production. Likewise Katherine is being played by a male actor, Joseph Arkley, and he's playing it as a man and will be wearing a man's costume, but will have the same social

restrictions that a woman in 1590s England would've had. The actors are playing their own gender, but we've flipped which gender holds power."

So why has Justin decided to take such an interesting route with the play?

"At the moment, there's an important conversation about gender and power and where that lies, and whenever you make any play or work of art of any kind, you're always influenced by what's going on around you. During rehearsals it's been fascinating to see how things feel when, for example, a mother sells off her two sons, as opposed to in the traditional retelling, when a father sells off his two daughters. We're somehow not shocked by the traditional version, but when we see a mother selling off her sons, that feels transgressive."

Justin's version of *Shrew* certainly promises to be thought-provoking, but might it not also face accusations of being gimmicky?

"I can understand why someone might feel that, but I'd like to think that, as a company of 19, we're going about this with a sense of intellectual curiosity and artistic enquiry. I think you have to come and see the show to make up your own mind. The fact that if you come, the vast majority of the lines are going to be spoken by women in those iconic roles means that the play is going to feel different to every other time you may have seen it.

"The late, great and much-missed Cicely Berry from the RSC Voice Department has always been my guiding light. She said you have to make the play talk to *now* - and that's exactly what we're trying to do with this production."

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As You Like It shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST), Stratford-upon-Avon, from 14 February to 31 August.

The Taming Of The Shrew shows at the same venue from 8 March to 31 August.

Measure For Measure, directed by Gregory Doran, shows at the RST from 28 June to 29 August.



Glengarry Glen Ross

The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,
Mon 18 - Sat 23 February

Although David Mamet's Pulitzer Prize-winning classic is probably best known from its 1992 all-star movie adaptation, the Christian Slater/Robert Glenister version of the play that's showing in the London West End until the third of this month has certainly been winning some plaudits of its own.

Visiting Birmingham just two weeks after closing at the Playhouse Theatre, and starring one-time EastEnders heartthrob Nigel Harman (pictured left), the show tells the story of four under-pressure Chicago real-estate salesmen and their desperate attempts to close some deals. If they're successful enough, they can win a Cadillac; if they're not, the scrapheap beckons... Harman is joined in the cast by Mark Benton (pictured right).

The Capital

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 12 February; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Wed 13 February

The ever-clever Stan's Cafe are at their impressively ingenious best with this latest slice of thought-provoking theatre.

Performed without words to a 'stunning' soundtrack, The Capital uses moving-walkways to present a visual story based around themes of financial and social inequality. Stan's Cafe are presenting the show in association with Birmingham Repertory Theatre.



The Toxic Avenger

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 7 - Sat 16 February

There's certainly nothing toxic about this show - a five-star rock musical based on a cult classic and boasting a fantastically original storyline.

When aspiring earth scientist Melvin Ferd the Third attempts to clean up Tromaville's pollution problem, the town's corrupt mayor has him thrown into a vat of toxic waste - from which he emerges as New Jersey's first ever superhero, The Toxic Avenger...

Metamorphosis

The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 26 February - Sat 2 March

A desire for more control over the material he was performing inspired actor Adam Lloyd-James to set up Beyond The Horizon (BTH) four years ago - since which time the theatre company has majored in producing dynamic and immersive touring shows driven by emotive stories and high-quality effects. Latest production Metamorphosis - Franz Kafka's famous story about a man who wakes up one morning to find that he's been transformed into 'a monstrous vermin' - looks set to further enhance BTH's reputation as one of the UK's brightest new theatre companies. Lloyd-James himself takes the lead role of Gregor.

Intronauts

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 20 - Fri 22 February

Green Ginger are frequently praised for their refreshingly anarchic approach to theatre - and this latest production offers them plenty of opportunity to illustrate just why they've become so widely admired. Set in the near future and blending absurd visual comedy, ani-

ated sets and innovative puppetry, the show focuses on the idea of miniaturised human workers - Intronauts - who're injected into the body in order to carry out essential maintenance work. The question is, though... Do people actually want to know about what's going on inside them?...

The House On Cold Hill

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 4 - Sat 9 February; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 11 - Sat 16 February

EastEnders' favourite Rita Simons and Strictly 2017 winner Joe McFadden spearhead this new stage adaptation of Peter James' ingenious novel. With more than 17 million copies of his books sold worldwide, James' reputation as a talented crime-fiction author was further enhanced a couple of years back when he received the coveted Diamond Dagger award, crime-writing's highest honour. This latest stage adaptation of the novelist's work sees the Hargreaves family moving into the house of their dreams - a house, it soon becomes apparent, in which they may not be alone...



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MOTOWN
HOW SWEET IT IS**



Setting the Barr...

A character comedian, musician, Olivier Award-winning experiential theatre-maker and all-round entertainer, Christopher Green this month brings his music hall 'creation', Ida Barr, to Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre. What's On recently caught up with him to find out more...

Ida Barr is an extremely elderly lady with many extraordinary talents. As an old-fashioned music hall singer turned grime & hip-hop rapper, Ida fuses her old and new music genres in revolutionary performances filled with fun and laughter.

'I'm really interested in music hall and other forms of old-school entertainment like variety,' says Christopher Green, the man behind Ida. 'I've spent a lot of time researching in the archives, and a lot of that time at the British Library. I found some mentions of this Royal Music Hall singer called Ida Barr. She died in 1969, and I just really liked the sound of her. Seeing as most people don't remember her, I thought that instead of just inventing something completely new, I'd resurrect her in a certain way. I imagined that she hadn't died in the '60s but had carried on living until she was incredibly old. I thought that she seemed pretty sparky, and that by now she'd have thought of doing something completely new, so my character is combining old and modern songs. It's a very basic comic confit to have an oldie doing contemporary rap.'

Ida calls her genre 'artificial hip-hop' - as Christopher explains: 'The 'artificial hip-hop' refers to the 'pensioner music hall singer meets the streets' idea, so you'll get a really old woman rapping about her prescription meds. I think my favourite Ida song is Get Old Or Die Trying - I think that really

symbolises her and her gangster-grandma attitude.'

So what does Christopher think makes Ida so funny?

'Ida herself steers clear of doing old-fashioned jokes because she's worried about being misinterpreted by the modern generation, but she's really, really funny inadvertently. It's just that clash of old meets young, typically British meets multicultural urban city life. It's just observations on what life is like now if you're impossibly old, have been around to see so much happen, but are now struggling to understand things in the modern world.'

Ida's latest show, Granarchist, explores the dreaded 'p'-word - politics - in a lighthearted but very frank way.

'What I'm exploring with this new show is the idea that ordinary people are voicing their unhappiness and dissatisfaction with their political structures a lot more. I think we could do worse than listening to a really old lady whose learned a few things. I think her sort of attitude, of not caring anymore because she's got nothing to lose so just says everything as it is, is great. I think she's got really great values; they're very open and tolerant. Being overwhelmed by a lack of common sense in our political structures seems to be rife among us all at the moment. She's really no-nonsense, talking as it is and want-

ing to make changes for the good rather than having such hostility.'

Audience participation is frequently a part of Christopher's character comedy shows. But don't be put off by that - it's not as intense as you'd think...

'Audience participation is an awful phrase and I really hate using it, because while it's one that people understand, it makes everybody really worried. But actually, certainly in the context of Ida, the audience involvement is really, really gentle because it's just like having a sing-song. I really do believe in the power of collective. Groups of people are really powerful, and I think the angry mob is very rare - a benign, well-meaning crowd is much more common. I really, really like group behaviour. So it's not like I'm getting one person out of the audience and saying, right, do this, and I'm going to make a fool of you. It's absolutely the whole audience singing along, or making decisions amongst themselves and talking to me as a collective group. I think having a sing-song in shows is something we used to do a lot, and we've kind of lost that.'

Alongside Ida, Christopher's other characters include Tina C, a raunchy satire on country singers: 'I think what you have to contemplate when going into standup is which version of yourself you want to present. All standups are a part of themselves that's magnified for the audience. In terms of that

“

All standups are a part of themselves that's magnified for the audience. In terms of that process, I find it much easier and much more fun for me - and therefore for the audience - to be someone completely different to me.

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process, I find it much easier and much more fun for me - and therefore for the audience - to be someone completely different to me. I think that's why two of my most successful characters have been women: Ida Barr and Tina C. Some performers work really well being completely different from themselves, and some work well being closer to themselves. I definitely prefer to be as far away as possible! It's also a way of being able to sing, as I'm primarily a musician and entertainer. So having a musical character who can sing all kinds of songs, whether good or bad, and make them work just makes sense really.”

Although he's currently touring with Ida, Christopher has other irons in the fire: “I have two big strands to my career. One is the character comedy, the other is experiential theatre. A lot of my creative work is in that theatre field. I'm doing a big show this year for a fake old people's home, where the audience come and live for three days and the elderly people care for them. It's pretty full-on as a piece. I'm hoping lots of people get excited about it, and that it really gets people talking about vulnerability, loneliness and all of that. Obviously, I'm very interested in ageing and why people are scared of it, and I'm exploring that subject both through Ida and through this new piece.”

.....
Ida Barr: Granarchist shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Thursday 21 February.



Sunday 10 March 3.00pm

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The Band

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 26 February - Sat 2 March

Despite being co-produced by Take That and featuring their music, Tim Firth's show isn't about Gary Barlow and co. It's actually a story about the fans, the power music can have over people and, as Firth himself says, how music 'makes time travellers of us all'. For five teenage girls in 1992, 'The Boys' and their music are everything. Twenty-five years later, the quintet attempt to rekindle their friendship with a trip to a concert by the band they loved so dearly as teenagers. But none of the ladies' lives have turned out quite the way they were expecting...

Kinky Boots

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
Mon 28 January - Sat 9 February;
Birmingham Hippodrome,
Mon 11 - Sat 23 March

The newly appointed manager of his late father's shoe factory in Northampton, Charlie Price has got some tough decisions to make as he attempts to save the struggling business. After a chance meeting with drag queen Lola, Charlie identifies a potentially lucrative niche market - creating footwear to cater for men who dress as women...

A topical story about diversity and acceptance, Kinky Boots is based on the 2005 film of the same name and features music & lyrics by '80s pop star Cyndi Lauper. Expect a feel-good evening of catchy tunes, fierce anthems and warm-hearted humour.



Abigail's Party

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
Mon 18 - Sat 23 February

Making its television debut as a BBC Play For

Today on 1 November 1977, Mike Leigh's Abigail's Party became an instant hit and catapulted the brilliant Alison Steadman to stardom. A fascinating study of the pretensions of 1970s suburbia, the play focuses on the interplay between five ill-matched characters during an evening characterised by alcohol, cigarettes, Demis Roussos records and cheesy nibbles.

Steadman's portrayal of the monstrous Beverly was so definitive that it's since been virtually impossible for any actress to play the character in any other way. Jodie Prenger is the latest to embrace the challenge.



A Brave Face

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 26 & Wed 27 February; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Fri 29 Mar; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 30 March; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 10 April

Worcestershire-based full mask theatre company Vamos here tackle the emotional subject of post-traumatic stress.

"I wasn't very aware of PTS before," says Vamos' Artistic Director, Rachel Savage. "To

be honest, it wasn't something that I knew I cared about until I started reading stories about people who'd been affected by it." Focusing on the difficulties experienced by a soldier returning from the war in Afghanistan, the show has been produced in collaboration with British war veterans and their extended support networks.



Back In Our Day: The Life & Times Of The Dancing Grannies

Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire,
Fri 1 & Sat 2 February; Forest Arts Centre,
Walsall, Fri 15 February; Crescent Theatre,
Birmingham, Fri 22 February

Black Country laughter merchants Fizzog make a welcome return with their internet sensations The Dancing Grannies, presenting a show that charts the elderly trio's fabulous friendship, from the 1940s right through to the present day.



21ST CENTURY MACBETH

What's On catches up with National Theatre Artistic Director Rufus Norris to discuss the reimagined production of Macbeth he's touring to Wolverhampton next month...

Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's fiercest tragedies. The familiar story of murder, deceit and suicide undergoes a thrilling remake for National Theatre's (NT) touring production.

"I feel Macbeth speaks very keenly to a lot of aspects of nowadays," explains NT's Artistic Director, Rufus Norris. "It's a story of corrupted leadership, ambition and survival. You don't have to look very far in the world to see how ambition can change leaders, and how taking various courses of action can lead to a corruption of them spiritually and literally. If you look to places like Syria or Libya, it's not hard to see contemporary parallels to my vision of the play."

Rufus believes it's these parallels that allowed him to take Macbeth from the 11th century to a contemporary post-civil war setting: "Eleventh century Scotland was a time where Vikings were rampaging. Trying to keep a kingdom together at that time would've been really difficult. I've seen various productions of Macbeth, where it's set in the 1920s or the 16th century, and I don't think they work because the play rapidly becomes about rich people killing other rich people. The influence of corrupt, ambitious leadership and the relationship between characters comes through, but I feel it misses that true 11th century element of 'survival'. To get by in that tumultuous environment, people would've had to take opportunities when they came, which sometimes may have provoked the kind of radical, murderous action we see in Macbeth.

"Therefore, the contemporary setting was an obvious place to go for me. If all the lights went out, the internet stopped working, the banks stopped giving people their money and the rubbish was no longer collected, in a week, let alone a month, the streets would look very different. In 10 years' time, when we would see those who'd survived and had adapted to living in this new world, the scene would probably play out much more like the 11th century Scotland of Macbeth than any other time since. It made sense to place Macbeth in a contemporary, post-civil war setting, which chimes with what we see on our

news feeds and many of the play's thematic roots."

The metaphysical is also a vital part of the play. In productions of Macbeth, creatives must think carefully about how the witches fit into their vision.

"The witches are a hugely important element of the play. There's something very uneventful about other-worldly goings-on in the 11th century, and still a lot of pagan belief systems giving a context to that metaphysical world. In conflict situations, even nowadays, superstitions rise to the surface. People adopt different belief systems, or begin to put their faith in lucky charms and the like, to help themselves find a way through the horror. That's how our setting honours the metaphysical."

Rufus' Macbeth wasn't received all that well by the critics when it debuted at London's Olivier Theatre: "I think there's generally just a resistance to updating Shakespeare - and also, many people don't really like looking with a depressing or pessimistic eye to the future. Our concept wasn't just plucked from nowhere. I think the brilliance of Shakespeare is that it can easily be adapted. It's a slightly abbreviated text in our case, but I've never seen a Shakespeare play that wasn't in some way. We cut one or two sequences, which the die-hard Shakespeare fans were critical of, but I was genuinely surprised by the reaction from some critics, and obviously very disappointed. However, the auditorium has always been full and the audience's response to it has been very positive. I'm just very relieved that word-of-mouth pushed back against the tide of those initial negative responses."

Despite the lack of correlation between critic and audience reaction, Rufus still believes theatre criticism to be of immense value.

"I think critics are important, particularly for productions with less well-known titles and without any serious stars. Those reviews are essential because fewer people would buy a ticket without having already been told it's

good. I have sympathy for the old-school critics in broadsheet newspapers because they have incredible knowledge of theatre, and it's very difficult for them at the moment because a lot of the arts sections are being cut back. However, I'm also all for the diversification of criticism through the world of blogging and social media, as it's much closer to the informed word-of-mouth you get from audience members."

Moving away from talking about Macbeth, what does Rufus feel is the National Theatre's primary remit?

"We have to live up to our name. Obviously, we have to make theatre that's good, but beyond that, we have to continue to earn that title of 'national'. For me, part of the Brexit vote was a very deep protest against inequality of opportunity and the break-up of communities all over Britain. It's part of our duty and privilege to make sure we prioritise encouraging and supporting arts centres, theatres and all creative infrastructure around the country, because theatre does bring everyone together. It's also important to maintain equality of opportunity across the UK. It's a no-brainer to take this production around the country, and in certain key places, like Wolverhampton, to make our communication and collaboration deeper, to address how important the creative industries are to our nation."

Encouraging engagement with the arts in education is also something about which Rufus is passionate: "The degradation of arts in education is a huge issue. There's a relentless drive by authorities towards maths and the sciences, or to see literature as the only valuable art. I do feel very strongly that drama texts are being studied in schools in a way that focuses solely on them being words on a page, rather than what they're supposed to be - a performance."

.....
Macbeth shows at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 12 to Saturday 16 March

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The Cat In The Hat

The REP, Birmingham,
Tues 26 February - Sun 3 March

The Cat In The Hat is the funniest, most mischievous cat that Sally and her brother

have ever met. And what's more, he's got a fantastic talent for turning the rainiest of afternoons into the most amazing of adventures... This latest theatrical version of Dr Seuss's much-loved book boasts plenty of circus-style action.

that Fireman Sam, Noddy, Shimmer & Shine and all their friends are on hand to help out... If you've watched the TV series and/or been to a previous live production, you'll already know what to expect from this latest Milkshake! show. If not, get ready for an event that promises lots of laughter, bucket-loads of family fun, bags of audience participation and plenty of singing and dancing.

Jack And The Beanstalk

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 22 February

Jack and his mam are hard-up and have no choice but to take their cow to market to raise some cash. However, Jack being Jack, he decides to trade her in (the cow, that is, not his mam) for a handful of magic beans, which then grow into a real ogre of a beanstalk... If you're up for a bit of post-panto-season fe-fi-fo-fumming, the Gatehouse is most definitely the venue to head for, as the hugely popular Lyngo Theatre prove that not every encounter with a grumpy, cash-counting ogre need end in tears.

Elmer The Patchwork Elephant

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 2 February; The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 27 & Thurs 28 February

This lively production tells the story of a patchwork elephant who determines to hide his 'true colours' in an effort to blend in, only to find that he feels happiest when he's simply being himself.

Selladoor Family is the company behind this latest stage presentation of David McKee's much-loved creation, which comes complete with puppetry, plenty of colour and, er, a trunk-load of fun...

Sourpuss

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,
Sun 17 February

Buzzing bees, chirpy robins, vibrant flowers and stinky rubbish are much in evidence when a grumpy ginger cat named Sourpuss finds himself shut out of the house.

Intrigued by the garden, he heads off on an adventure that makes him realise there's maybe more to the great outdoors than he'd previously imagined...

Featuring beautifully handcrafted string and shadow puppets, the show is performed by professional puppeteer Lori Hopkins and is suitable for youngsters aged between three and eight.

Exciting Science Show

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Wed 20 February

If your kids love things that wizz, bang, pop and splurt, then this is most definitely the production for them! Created with children aged four and older in mind, and featuring 'silly, fun and factual' science experiments, the show is being hailed by its producers as 'the perfect way to engage the imagination during a dull and boring half-term holiday'.

The Amazing Adventures Of Pinocchio

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 24 February

The walking, talking puppet with the mischievous nose that grows and grows whenever he tells even the smallest of porky pies makes a welcome return in a brand new, larger-than-life musical. Immersion Theatre are the company behind this latest version of Carlo Collodi's classic tale.

Milkshake! Live 2019

Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Wed 20 February; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 23 February; Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock, Wed 17 April

Milkshake Monkey's desire to put on a new musical has hit the skids due to a nasty bout of rampant stage fright - so thank heaven

Mimi And The Mountain Dragon

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 21 February

This 'magical musical puppetry adventure' is presented by Skewbald Theatre and based on the popular children's book by Michael Morpurgo. The story unfolds in the snowy mountains of Switzerland, where the villagers of Dorta create a cacophony of noise in order to keep away the Mountain Dragon.

But when a young girl named Mimi discovers a baby dragon sleeping in her woodshed, she realises that she must conquer her overwhelming sense of fear in order to return the little creature to its fiercesome mother...

Twirlywoos Live!

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 22 - Sun 24 February; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 26 February

The Twirlywoos' big red boat drops anchor at two major Midlands venues this month. CBeebies stars Great BigHoo, Toodloo, Chickedy and Chick have earned themselves an impressive following of young television viewers since debuting in 2015. They're visiting the region with a live show that features mischief, music, plenty of surprises and some beautifully inventive puppetry.



Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 5 - Sat 16 February

"It's always exciting to bring back Swan Lake," says Matthew Bourne, whose company, New Adventures, bring his classic version of the legendary ballet back to the Hippodrome this month. "So many people love it, and you know they're going to want to come and see it again and bring along friends and family who didn't see it last time." First staged in 1995 and the longest-running ballet in the West End and on Broadway, Bourne's Swan Lake is best known for the fact of having an all-male cast. "It was such an iconic image for people to have a male dancing swan," continues Matthew. "It was very unexpected, and people couldn't imagine what it was going to look like. It got dubbed 'the gay Swan Lake', which wasn't what the aim was, but there was certainly a story within it that was very meaningful for gay audiences, and I celebrate that. It's accepted now by a much wider audience, who, rather than be shocked by any element of it, find it uplifting that this is a story being told about a young man who's confused about his future and his sexuality. I think that's something which is very meaningful for young people in the audience."

Autin Dance Theatre: A Posi+ive Life

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 14 February

Project-based Birmingham company Autin Dance Theatre describes its re-worked version of this 2017 show as 'an interactive sex education and coming-of-age dance-theatre experience for teenagers and young adults'. "The piece is a special invitation to a house party like no other," explains company founder and choreographer Johnny Autin. "A web of

stories around sex, love and relationships unravels, with audience participation and original scenography transporting the guests to the heart of the piece." Now in its sixth year, Autin Dance Theatre has gained an enviable reputation for producing impressively innovative artistic performances based around contemporary social issues and events. The company also runs an extensive community-focused learning and participation programme.

Torus

The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 15 & Sat 16 February

"Torus is a return to the tribal," explain Rudi Cole and Júlia Robert Parés, the co-artistic directors of Humanhood, the contemporary dance ensemble presenting the show. "It's a tribal hurricane of effortless fluidity where rhythm takes over the performers and the viewer."

Commissioned by DanceXchange and Sadler's Wells, the new show explores issues relating to physics and Eastern mysticism, contemplating the ways in which the connections between these two seemingly very different subjects 'shape our human experience of ourselves and reality'.



BalletBoyz: Them/Us

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 28 February

This innovative double bill is a brand new collaboration from Ballet Boyz's critically acclaimed dancers and Olivier Award-winning choreographer Christopher Wheeldon. The first of the two shows, Them - set to a score by emerging composer Charlotte Harding - is the work of the company's own in-house talent. The follow-up presentation, Us, is inspired by the Wheeldon-choreographed duet that featured in the company's previous show, Fourteen Days.



Giovanni Pernice: Dance Is Life

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 21 February;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 24 February;
Lichfield Garrick, Sun 31 March; Oakengates
Theatre at The Place, Telford, Mon 1 April

Giovanni Pernice is a two-time Guinness Book of Records star, thanks to the stunning speed at which he can perform jive kicks & flicks and Charleston swivels.

Here presenting a production that's maybe just a cut or two above similar showcases by other much-loved Strictly stars, the 28-year-old Italian is visiting the Midlands just 11 short days after finishing the Strictly Live! tour, during which he once again teamed up with his 2018 celebrity dance partner, Steps' Faye Tozer. Strictly's newest pro, Luba Mushtuk, joins in the fun.



Birmingham Royal Ballet: Beauty And The Beast

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 19 February - Sat 2 March

Beauty And The Beast is one of Birmingham Royal Ballet's most popular productions, thanks in no small measure to David Bintley's rich choreography and Philip Prowse's stunning sets.

Much loved by generations, the story tells of a cruel prince who, having been cursed

to spend the rest of his life as a grotesque beast, eventually finds salvation in the heart of a beautiful girl.

Featuring a golden ballroom full of wondrous animals and a magical transformation as the beast once again becomes a handsome prince, the production's music is composed by Glenn Buhr and performed by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia.

Jasmin Vardimon: Medusa

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 9 February;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 18 February

Founded in 1998, Jasmin Vardimon's company combines physical theatre and quirky characterisation with innovative technologies, text and dance.

The choreographer's latest work, focusing on the myth surrounding the powerful feminine symbol of Medusa and its various connotations in contemporary life, was created on the coast of Barcelona and inspired by its marine life.

"A lot of the time, people stay behind after our performance for the post-show discussion," explains Jasmin. "You can see that they're emotionally attached or intellectually engaged and want to speak and talk about it more. And that's exactly what I always hope to do with my art. I want to make people think and ask questions; I don't want to give answers. At the end of the day, I see myself as a storyteller and communicator about things that are important to me."





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Image: Angela Kelly, *Untitled (Women's Identity)*, 1975. Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London © Angela Kelly

Green Book CERT 12a (130 mins)

Starring **Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali, Linda Cardellini**
Directed by **Peter Farrelly (USA)**

Voted best film of the year by the National Board of Review, Green Book is shaping up to be a major Oscar contender. Mahershala Ali (Moonlight) has already won a fistful of glittering prizes as the classical jazz pianist 'Doc' Don Shirley, who tours the Deep South in the 1960s. As a flipside to Driving Miss Daisy, Shirley's chauffeur is actually an Italian-American bouncer, played by Mortensen, who was nominated for a Golden Globe for his part (although Ali actually won it). Based on interviews with Shirley, the film marks a seismic artistic switch for its writer-director Peter Farrelly, who is better known for his gross-out comedies Dumb And Dumber, Shallow Hal and There's Something About Mary.

Released Fri 1 Feb



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in February...

Can You Ever Forgive Me?

CERT 15 (106 mins)

Starring **Melissa McCarthy, Richard E Grant, Dolly Wells, Jane Curtin**
Directed by **Marielle Heller (USA)**



Based on the eponymous memoir by Lee Israel, this bittersweet drama tells how the biographer turned to forgery to keep up with her rent. It's a fascinating tale well told with sparkling performances from the three leads.

Released Fri 1 Feb

Escape Room

CERT 15 (99 mins)

Starring **Taylor Russell, Logan Miller, Deborah Ann Woll, Tyler Labine**
Directed by **Adam Robitel (USA)**

Six strangers find themselves trapped in a series of rooms that only offer a meagre possibility of escape... Fans of Saw, The Maze Runner and especially Cube take note. Filmed in South Africa.

Released Fri 1 Feb



How To Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World

CERT PG (104 mins)

With the voices of **Jay Baruchel, America Ferrera, Cate Blanchett, Craig Ferguson, Jonah Hill, Kit Harington, Gerard Butler**
Directed by **Dean DeBlois (USA)**



The first two cartoons were terrific and this one builds on the mythical universe of burly Scotsmen and flying creatures, as Hiccup (Baruchel) discovers 'The Hidden World,' a dragon utopia that may be under threat.

Released Fri 1 Feb

Alita: Battle Angel

CERT 12a (122 mins)

Starring Rosa Salazar, Christoph Waltz, Jennifer Connelly, Mahershala Ali, Ed Skrein, Jackie Earle Haley
Directed by Robert Rodriguez (USA)



Produced and co-scripted by James Cameron, this is a big-budget adaptation of the cyber-punk manga comic. Set in a post-apocalyptic world, it stars Salazar as a disembodied soul who is given a body by a scientist (Waltz), enabling her to try and find out who she really is. Expect lashings of CGI.

Released Wed 6 Feb

All Is True

CERT 12a (101 mins)

Starring Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen Directed by Kenneth Branagh (UK)

In a bizarre about-face of his TV sitcom Upstart Crow, scenarist Ben Elton looks at Shakespeare in his later years as he mourns the death of his son Hamnet and the destruction of The Globe theatre due to fire. Writing, it seems, is the last thing on the Bard's mind.

Released Fri 8 Feb

Boy Erased

CERT 15 (115 mins)

Starring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Joel Edgerton, Joe Alwyn, Xavier Dolan
Directed by Joel Edgerton (USA/Australia)

When the son of a preacher is raped by a fellow student, he is sent away to a gay therapy conversion centre. Amazingly, there are still 36 states that allow conversion therapy to be practised on minors and this sensitive drama is based on the real-life memoirs of Garrard Conley.

Released Fri 8 Feb



If Beale Street Could Talk

CERT 15 (119 mins)

Starring KiKi Layne, Stephan James, Colman Domingo, Dave Franco, Ed Skrein, Regina King Directed by Barry Jenkins (USA)

The first film from Barry Jenkins since his Oscar-winning Moonlight (2016), this drama follows a pregnant woman (Layne) as she tries to clear the name of her wrongly accused lover. Based on the 1974 novel by James Baldwin.

Released Fri 8 Feb



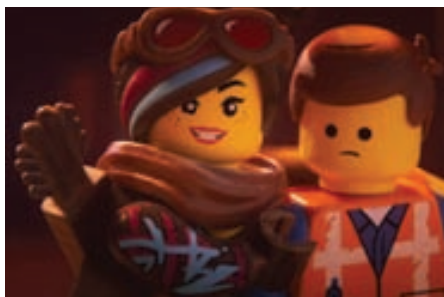
The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part

CERT PG (126 mins)

With the voices of Chris Pratt, Elizabeth Banks, Tiffany Haddish, Will Arnett, Channing Tatum, Margot Robbie Directed by Mike Mitchell (USA/Australia/Denmark/Canada/Norway)

The boxy figurines are back for another adventure set in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. By the sounds of it, the collective tongue remains in its cheek as Batman, Superman, Aquaman and Emmet struggle to preserve the status quo of Apocalypseburg.

Released Fri 8 Feb



Happy Death Day 2U

CERT 15 (120 mins)

Starring Jessica Rothe, Israel Broussard, Phi Vu, Suraj Sharma, Steve Zissis
Directed by Christopher Landon (USA)

Two years ago, Tree Gelbman (Jessica Rothe) had a habit of dying every day. And now her friends are at it. But who's the killer?

Released Thurs 14 Feb

Instant Family

CERT 12a (118 mins)

Starring Mark Wahlberg, Rose Byrne, Isabela Moner, Margo Martindale, Julie Hagerty, Octavia Spencer Directed by Sean Anders (USA))



Mark Wahlberg returns to comedy (after the blistering heroics of Mile 22) and is reunited with Sean Anders, director of Daddy's Home and Daddy's Home 2. He (Marky Mark) and Rose Byrne play eager parents whose cup runneth over when they adopt three children. Idiots.

Released Thurs 14 Feb

Isn't It Romantic

CERT tbc

Starring Rebel Wilson, Liam Hemsworth, Adam DeVine, Priyanka Chopra, Jennifer Saunders
Directed by Todd Strauss-Schulson (USA/Australia)



When Natalie, an Australian architect working in New York (Rebel Wilson), is knocked out, she wakes up to find herself stuck inside a romcom. It's full of clichés and other hackneyed situations, but in order to claw her way back to reality, Natalie must first find true love within her new parameters.

Released Fri 15 Feb

The Kid Who Would Be King

CERT PG

Starring Louis Ashbourne Serkis, Tom Taylor, Rebecca Ferguson, Patrick Stewart, Denise Gough Directed by Joe Cornish (UK/USA)

Alex Elliot is bullied at school but discovers that he is bestowed with a very special, centuries' old power. A modern-day reincarnation of King Arthur, Alex is compelled to

protect his world from the ancient forces of darkness rallied by Morgana le Fay (Ferguson). Alex is played by Louis Ashbourne Serkis, son of the actor and director Andy Serkis.

Released Fri 15 Feb



Capernaum CERT tbc (121 mins)

Starring **Zain Al Rafeea, Yordanos Shiferaw, Boluwatife Treasure Bankole** Directed by **Nadine Labaki (Lebanon)**

Winner of the Jury Prize at last year's Cannes film festival, Capernaum is the extraordinary story of a 12-year-old Syrian refugee boy who takes his parents to court.

Released Fri 22 Feb



Cold Pursuit CERT tbc (118 mins)

Starring **Liam Neeson, Laura Dern, Emmy Rossum, Tom Bateman, William Forsythe** Directed by **Hans Petter Moland (USA)**

Liam Neeson is on the warpath again, this time seeking retribution for the death of his son at the hands of a drug cartel. The difference this time is that Liam plays a snowplough operator. It's a remake of the 2014 Norwegian actioner In Order Of Disappearance, also directed by Hans Petter Moland.

Released Fri 22 Feb



A Private War CERT 15 (110 mins)

Starring **Rosamund Pike, Jamie Dornan, Tom Hollander, Stanley Tucci, Corey Johnson, Faye Marsay** Directed by **Matthew Heineman (UK/USA)**

"Nobody in their right mind would do what you do," Sean Ryan tells Marie Colvin. He is the foreign editor for The Sunday Times, she is his star player, a fearless correspondent who has reported from the hellholes of Chechnya, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the film opens, Marie Colvin's voice ruminates on the nature of her work and of her fear, something, she says, that came after the fact. She is in Homs, Syria, a place where houses, streets and whole districts have been reduced to rubble, decorated by the entrails of its inhabitants. Her job is to share the fear, to give her subjects a voice

that can be heard around the world...

A Private War - based on Marie Brenner's feature, Marie Colvin's Private War, for Vanity Fair - marks the 'fictional' debut of Matthew Heineman, who directed the visceral, harrowing Cartel Land and City Of Ghosts, two of the best documentaries in the last decade. Here, he applies his nose for the frontline drama with an accomplished verve, while permitting his actors the chance to shine.

As Colvin, Rosamund Pike is as selfless in her portrayal of a one-eyed alcoholic woman in her 50s as was Nicole Kidman as the washed-up alcoholic cop in Destroyer, but Pike inhabits her role more fully. She never seems to be acting and is every inch the damaged, searching and highly intelligent reporter that Colvin obviously was.

Released Fri 15 Feb

On The Basis Of Sex

CERT 12a (120 mins)

Starring **Felicity Jones, Armie Hammer, Justin Theroux, Sam Waterston, Kathy Bates, Cailee Spaeny, Jack Reynor** Directed by **Mimi Leder (USA)**

That's sex as in gender. Following the marvellously engaging documentary RBG last month, now comes the dramatisation of the early years of the iconoclastic Ruth Bader Ginsberg, the Supreme Court justice who fought the corner for her sex.

Released Fri 22 Feb

The Rhythm Section CERT tbc

Starring **Blake Lively, Jude Law, Max Casella, Daniel Mays, Richard Brake, Sterling K Brown** Directed by **Reed Morano (UK/USA)**

Stephanie Patrick (Blake Lively) was meant to be on a flight that killed her family. Then she discovers that the crash was not an accident... Based on the novel by Mark Burnell and directed by the former cinematographer Reed Morano, so it should look good.

Released Fri 22 Feb



Wildlife Photographer Of The Year

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry,
Sat 16 February - Sun 2 June

The Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition makes a welcome return to the Herbert this month in the form of 100 stunning images.

The on-show pics were selected by expert judges and drawn from a staggering 45,000-plus entries, the images being rated for their creativity, originality and technical excellence. Open both to professional and amateur snappers, the competition celebrates biodiversity, promotes conservation and champions ethical photography. In the process, it also provides visitors with the opportunity to view dramatic landscapes and endangered habitats, as well as to come face-to-face with some of the world's most bizarre species.

© Marsel van Oosten - Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Herbert

Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

16 February – 2 June 2019

The acclaimed wildlife photography exhibition from the Natural History Museum is back with 100 stunning images.

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Detail: Isak Pretorius



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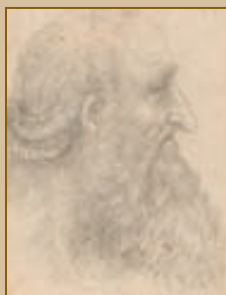
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Leonardo da Vinci: A Life In Drawing

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery,
Fri 1 February - Mon 6 May

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery's (BMAG) display of 12 drawings by Leonardo da Vinci forms part of a nationwide event to mark the 500th anniversary of the artist's death. Featuring a total of 144 of the Renaissance master's greatest artworks, drawn from the Royal Collection and displayed in 12 simultaneous exhibitions across the country, A Life In Drawing provides the widest-ever UK audience with the opportunity to see the work of a truly extraordinary artist. None of the 12 drawings on display at BMAG have ever before been seen in Birmingham. The exhibition is accompanied by a series of talks and tours, as well as a programme of events aimed at 'bringing to life' Leonardo's techniques, to enhance visitors' appreciation of the drawings on show.



Pick Of The Pops

Wolverhampton Art Gallery,
Sat 2 February - Sun 1 September

Wolverhampton Art Gallery boasts the UK's largest collection of Pop Art outside of London - so it's hardly surprising that the venue frequently mounts exhibitions celebrating the hugely influential 20th century art movement. This particular show is a little different from its predecessors, however, with visitors being given the chance to vote for their favourite on-display work of art. The results will then be used to form the gallery's very own 'pick of the Pops'... Featured image is *Colour Her Gone* by Pauline Boty (1962) and copyright is the Artist's Estate.



Drawing Out The Sound

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham,
until Sun 19 May



A bravura display of drawings and prints by artists ranging from Dürer to Renoir, *Drawing Out The Sound* explores the ways in which visual artists have risen to the challenge of depicting music and sound through the silent media of graphic art.

The exhibition coincides with the Barber's loan of the National Portrait Gallery's Johan Zoffany masterpiece, *The Sharp Family*. The sumptuously painted artwork depicts 13 musicmaking relatives who captivated 18th century audiences with al-fresco performances from their barge on the Thames.

The painting, never before seen outside London, is the centrepiece of a Barber programme of events and presentations - including *Drawing Out The Sound* - which has been designed to investigate the subject of music in art.

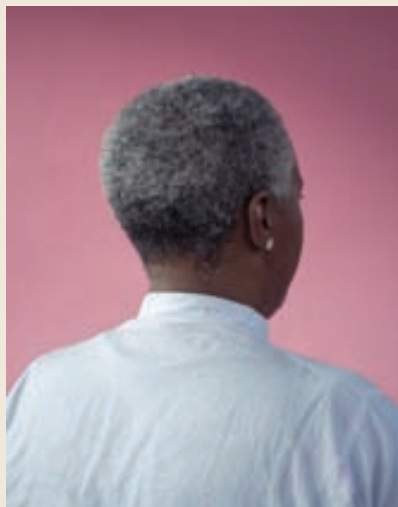
The Range

Eastside Projects, Birmingham,
until Sat 27 April

"The Range is an exhibition approached as an artwork," explains its curator, Rehana Zaman. "It uses instinct and intuition as a guiding principle, bringing together a group of people and sharing resources, both material and emotional, to realise an idea."

"The artists gathered in this show, and for the purposes of this show, speak to a sentiment, an attitude, a conviction; they have the range. All have shown work or created a public discussion that I have found myself drawn to. All the artists have crafted new works for the show - a show initiated by one group gathering in October 2018, a WhatsApp group chat and endless email threads. "We discuss suns and moons, rice

snacks, hysteria, diversity initiatives, grief, sadness, flu, joy, irreverence and pleasure. We hope you enjoy the show."



Award FINALISTS in each category announced! **VOTE for your WINNER!**

What's On

Readers' Awards

Yes, you VOTED in your thousands in the first round of nominations in the **What's On Readers' Awards** - over 15,000 votes across the West Midlands region! Now it's time for you to VOTE once more to choose your ultimate WINNER in each category! Here are the award shortlist finalists:

Midlands Large Theatre

- Birmingham Hippodrome
- Belgrade Theatre - Coventry
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre - Stratford
- The Alexandra Theatre - Birmingham
- The REP - Birmingham
- Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Best Touring Musical

- Dirty Dancing
- Jersey Boys
- Mamma Mia
- Matilda
- Wicked

Best Home-Produced Show

- A Christmas Carol - RSC
- Boogie Nights - The Alexandra Theatre
- Once Upon A Mattress - Lichfield Garrick
- Pinocchio - The Old Rep
- The Wizard Of Oz - The REP

Best Dance Production

- Anton & Erin: From Hollywood To

Broadway

- Birmingham Royal Ballet: Sleeping Beauty
- Birmingham Royal Ballet: The Nutcracker
- Matthew Bourne: Cinderella
- Transitions Dance Company Triple Bill

Best Orchestra/Choir

- Birmingham Cathedral Choir
- Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra
- Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra
- CBSO
- Shrewsbury Symphony Orchestra

Best Classical/Operatic Production

- Birmingham Cathedral Choir: The Divine Beauty - Birmingham Cathedral
- Birmingham Philharmonic: War & Peace - The Bramall
- CBSO: Spectacular Classics - Symphony Hall
- City Of Birmingham Choir: Handel's

Messiah - Symphony Hall

- Welsh National Opera: War & Peace - Birmingham Hippodrome

Best Touring Theatre Play/Show

- Blood Brothers
- Brighton Rock
- Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde
- The Play That Goes Wrong
- War Horse

Best Pantomime in The Midlands 2018/19

- Dick Whittington - Lichfield Garrick
- Mother Goose - Theatre Severn
- Peter Pan - Birmingham Hippodrome
- Sleeping Beauty - Belgrade Theatre
- Sleeping Beauty - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Best Kids Show

- Awful Auntie
- Disney On Ice: Dream Big
- Disney On Ice: Worlds Of Enchantment
- Elf: A Christmas Spectacular

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- The Snowman

Best Arts/Cultural Festival

- Artsfest - Wolverhampton
- Birmingham Comedy Festival
- Birmingham Fest
- Birmingham International Dance Festival
- Lichfield Arts' Fuse Festival

Best Exhibition

- Coming Out: Sexuality, Gender & Identity - Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Dippy The Dinosaur - Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- LEGO: Brick History - Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery
- Real Bodies: The Exhibition - NEC, Birmingham
- Women. Power. Protest - Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Best Amateur

Dramatic/Operatic Group Production

- Birmingham & Midland Operatic Society: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
- Birmingham Ormiston Academy: Lord Of Flies - The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham
- Coventry Musical Theatre Society:

- Annie - Belgrade Theatre
- Get Your Wiggle On: Grease - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
- Lichfield Operatic Society: Avenue Q - Lichfield Garrick

Best Comedy Night

- Comedy Carousel at The Glee Club - Birmingham
- Comedy at Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
- Funhouse Comedy - Birmingham & West Midlands
- Just The Tonic - Birmingham
- Laugh Out Loud Comedy Club

Best Midlands Music Venue

- Arena Birmingham
- O2 Academy - Birmingham
- Resorts World Arena - Birmingham
- Symphony Hall, Birmingham
- The Empire - Coventry

Best Midlands Music Festival

- Birmingham Pride
- Download
- Godiva
- Moseley Folk Festival
- Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul

Best Midlands Chef

- Adam Bennett - The Cross in Kenilworth, Warwickshire
- Adam Stokes - Adams, Birmingham
- Brad Carter - Carters Of Moseley, Birmingham
- Glynn Purnell - Purnell's, Birmingham
- Josh Crouch - CSONS, Shrewsbury

Best Midlands Food Festival

- Colmore Food Festival - Birmingham
- Foodies Festival Birmingham
- Lichfield Food Festival
- Ludlow Food Festival
- Shrewsbury Food Festival

Best Street Food Vendor

- Bournville Waffle Co
- Dick's Smokehouse
- Press De Cuba
- Urban Cheesecake
- Vegan Grindhouse

Best Midlands Market

- Beckett's Farm - Birmingham
- Bullring Indoor Market - Birmingham
- FarGo Village - Birmingham
- Moseley Arts Market - Birmingham
- Shrewsbury Market Hall

What's On

FINALISTS in each REGION

BIRMINGHAM

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Crescent Theatre
- Core Theatre, Solihull
- Midlands Arts Centre
- The Old Joint Stock
- The Old Rep
- The REP

Best Music Venue

- The Asylum
- The Glee Club
- Hare & Hounds
- The Jam House
- The Night Owl

Best Music Festival

- Birmingham Pride
- Birmingham & Solihull Jazz & Blues Festival
- MADE Festival
- Moseley Folk
- Mostly Jazz, Funk & Soul

Best Arts Festival

- Arts & Science Fest (University of B'ham)
- Birmingham Comedy Festival
- Birmingham Int Dance Festival

- Birmingham Lit Fest
- Flatpack

Best Food Festival/Event

- BBC Good Food Show
- Birmingham Cocktail Weekend
- Colmore Food Festival
- Digbeth Dining Club
- Foodies Festival at Cannon Hill Park

Best Visitor Attraction

- Birmingham Back to Backs
- Birmingham Botanical

- Gardens
- Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Cadbury World
- National Sealife Centre
- Thinktank

Best Outdoor Event

- Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market
- Ice Skate Birmingham
- Magical Lantern Festival Birmingham
- Summer in Southside
- We Are Balsall Heath Street Market

Best Indoor Event

- Birmingham International Tattoo
- British Athletics Indoor Championships
- Crufts
- MCM Birmingham Comic Con
- Polar Express B'ham

Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- The Barber Institute
- Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Coffin Works
- IKON Gallery
- Midlands Arts Centre

Best Independent Restaurant

- Carters Of Moseley
- Little Blackwood
- The Meat Shack
- Original Patty Men
- Purnell's

Best Independent Coffee Shop

- Cherry Reds Cafe Bar
- Damascena Coffee House
- Java Lounge
- Wayland's Yard
- Yorks Cafe & Coffee Roasters

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Best Independent Bar/Pub

- 1000 Trades
- The Old Crown, Digbeth
- The Old Joint Stock
- The Plough, Harborne
- The Prince Of Wales, Moseley

BLACK COUNTRY

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Arena Theatre
- Forest Arts Centre, Walsall
- Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
- Light House Media Centre, W'hampton
- Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Best Music Venue

- Brierley Civic Hall
- Dudley Town Hall
- Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton
- The Robin, Bilston
- The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

Best Visitor Attraction

- Black Country Living Museum
- Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust
- Dudley Zoo
- RAF Cosford Museum
- Wightwick Manor

Best Event

- 100 Years Of The RAF Festival, RAF Cosford
- 1940s Evening - Black Country Living Museum
- Cosford Air Show
- Peaky Blinders Nights at BCLM
- Wolverhampton Literature Festival

Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- Bilston Craft Gallery
- Dudley Museum At The Archives
- Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton
- New Art Gallery, Walsall
- Wolverhampton Museum & Art Gallery

Best Independent Restaurant

- Banks Bistro, Wolverhampton
- Bella, Wolverhampton
- Fiume, W'hampton

- Il Michaelango, Brierley Hill
- The Old Glasshouse, Dudley

WARWICKSHIRE

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Albany Theatre, Coventry
- Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford
- Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
- Warwick Arts Centre

Best Music Venue

- The Assembly, Leamington Spa
- The Kasbah, Coventry
- Knights' Wine Bar, Coventry
- The Tin Music & Arts, Coventry
- Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Best Festival

- Godiva Festival
- Leamington Food and Drink Festival
- Stratford River Festival
- Warwick Folk Festival
- Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival

Best Visitor Attraction

- Charlecote Park
- Coventry Music Museum
- Coventry Transport Museum
- Kenilworth Castle
- Warwick Castle

Best Event

- Art In The Park, Leamington Spa
- Coventry Steampunk Carnival
- Dragon Slayer at Warwick Castle
- Festival Of Imagineers, Coventry
- HSBC City Ride, Coventry

Best Food Festival/Event

- Coventry Food And Drink Festival
- Digbeth Dining at Coventry Cathedral
- Fargo's Vegan Festival, Coventry
- Royal Leamington Food & Drink Festival
- Warwick Food Festival

Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- CET Building, Coventry
- Compton Verney
- Coventry Music Museum
- Herbert Art Gallery
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

Best Independent Restaurant

- Shields Of Henley
- The Cross, Kenilworth
- Dough And Brew, Warwick
- My Dhabba, Coventry
- Simmer Down Restaurant, Coventry

WORCESTERSHIRE

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Artrix, Bromsgrove
- Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
- Malvern Theatres
- Palace Theatre, Redditch
- Swan Theatre, Worcester

Best Music Venue

- The Boar's Head, Kidderminster
- Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
- The Marr's Bar, Worcester
- Paradiddles Music Cafe Bar, Worcester
- The Queen's Head, Bromsgrove

Best Music Festival

- Bewdley Festival
- Bromsgrove Folk Festival
- Upton Blues Festival
- Upton Jazz Festival
- Worcester Music Festival

Best Event

- Bromsgrove Light Festival
- Malvern Food Festival
- Worcester Festival
- Worcester Food Festival
- Worcester Oktoberfest

Best Visitor Attraction

- Avoncroft, Bromsgrove
- Hanbury Hall and Gardens
- West Mid Safari Park
- Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley
- Witley Court, Worcester

Best Independent Restaurant

- Bolero Bar & Kitchen, Worcester
- Dine India, Bromsgrove
- The Old Rectifying House, Worcester
- The Olive Branch, Worcester
- The Orangery, Redditch

STAFFORDSHIRE

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Lichfield Garrick
- Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
- New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
- Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Best Music Venue

- Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent
- Lichfield Guildhall
- Victoria Hall, Hanley
- The Sugarmill, Stoke
- The Underground, Stoke

Best Music Festival

- Lichfield Arts' Fuse Festival
- Lichfield Blues & Jazz Festival
- Lichfield Festival
- Lichfield Festival Of Folk
- Staffs Fest

Best Arts Festival

- Big Feast, Stoke-on-Trent
- Lichfield Festival
- Stafford Arts Festival
- Stoke Literary Festival
- Tamworth Arts Festival

Best Food Festival

- Great British Food Festival
- Lichfield Food Festival
- Stafford Cheese & Ale Festival
- Stone Food & Drink Festival
- Tamworth Food Gusto Festival

Best Visitor Attraction

- Alton Towers
- Cannock Chase Visitor Centre
- Drayton Manor Theme Park
- Lichfield Cathedral

- National Memorial Arboretum
- Tamworth Castle

Best Event

- Cathedral Illuminated at Lichfield Cathedral
- Fireworks Spectacular at Drayton Manor
- Lichfield Proms in Beacon Park
- Scarefest at Alton Towers
- Staffordshire County Show

Best Independent Restaurant

- 1709, The Brasserie
- Mackenzies, Lichfield
- The New Olive Tree, Cheadle
- NOM Restaurant, Hanley
- Olive Tree, Lichfield

SHROPSHIRE

Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Theatre On The Steps
- Theatre Severn
- The Hive, Shrewsbury
- The Place, Telford
- Ludlow Assembly Rooms

Best Music Venue

- Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury
- The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury
- Havana Republic, Shrewsbury
- Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
- The Hive, Shrewsbury

Best Music Festival

- Beady Folk Festival
- Farmer Phil's Festival
- Let's Rock Shrewsbury
- Shrewsbury Folk Festival
- Shropfest

Best Food Festival

- Field to Fork
- Great British Food Festival, Weston Park
- Ludlow Food Festival
- Oswestry Food & Drink Festival
- Shrewsbury Food Festival

Best Arts Festival

- Church Stretton Arts Festival
- Ludlow Fringe Festival
- Oswestry Literary Festival

- Shrewsbury Literary Festival
- Wellington Arts Festival

Best Visitor Attraction

- Attingham Park
- British Ironworks Centre, Oswestry
- Hawkstone Park & Follies
- Ironbridge Museums
- Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth

Best Event

- Chocolate Festival, Shrewsbury
- Ludlow Medieval Fayre
- Shrewsbury Flower Show
- Shropshire Oktoberfest
- The Polar Express, Telford Steam Railway

Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- Bear Steps Art Gallery, Shrewsbury
- Coalbrookdale Gallery, Ironbridge
- Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery
- Twenty Twenty Gallery, Much Wenlock
- Willow Gallery, Oswestry

Best Independent Restaurant

- CSONS, Shrewsbury
- Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
- Hundred House, Telford
- The Olive Tree, Shrewsbury
- Umai, Shrewsbury

Best Independent Café

- The Bird's Nest Cafe, Shrewsbury
- The Coffee House, Shrewsbury
- CSONS at The Green Cafe, Ludlow
- Ginger & Co. Shrewsbury
- House Coffee Co.

VOTE NOW!



Race Retro

Stoneleigh Park, Staffordshire
Fri 22 - Sun 24 February

The turbo-charged era of Formula One is celebrated at this year's Race Retro. Zooming into its 17th year, the event showcases motorsport

disciplines including formula and circuit racing, rallying and motorcycling. Visitors also have the chance to purchase parts, spares, helmets and clothing from more than 250 specialist exhibitors - not to mention the opportunity to bag themselves a racing or rally car in a special auction!

Pirate And Princess Takeover

Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire,
Fri 15 - Sun 24 February



Well shiver those timbers and straighten that tiara - Alton Towers Resort is certainly the place to take your little pirates and princesses this half-term holiday!

The popular visitor attraction is hosting a range of family-focused themed activities this month, including a disco, a treasure hunt, meet-and-greets with CBeebies Land characters and the chance to learn some essential pirate skills.

Away from the princess & pirate theme, visitors can check out Sharkbait Reef to see a variety of amazing fish, splash around in the tropical surroundings of the Alton Towers Waterpark, and enjoy a round of what's being termed 'extraordinary' golf.

Open Cockpits: Hunter and Phantom

RAF Museum, Cosford, Sat 16 - Sun 24 February

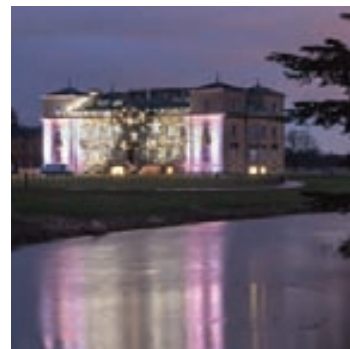
The RAF Museum Cosford is this half term opening up the Hawker Hunter F Mk4 cockpit for closer inspection. It's also allowing visitors to take a seat inside the McDonnell Douglas Phantom FG1, featured as part of the museum's National Cold War Exhibition.

Alongside the cockpits will be a Cold War handling collection, consisting of helmets, life jackets and a collection of photos.



Lantern Walk

Croome Park, Worcester,
Sat 9 February



Visitors participating in this 1.5-mile walk around Croome's picturesque grounds will be given a lantern and LED candle to take with them, so that they can help light up the parkland as they make their way along the route. The event is being held in aid of St Richard's Hospice in Worcester.

Harry Potter Book Night

Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust,
Thurs 7 February



Expelliarmus! Celebrating all things Harry Potter, this 'magical' evening of wizard fun features a spellbinding selection of free activities for visitors to enjoy, including the chance to create their own wand, make magic potions and head out on a quest for some magical creatures.

Participants are encouraged to don their very best Wizarding World fancy dress for the event.

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Pop-up Planetarium

Enginuity, Ironbridge, Shropshire,
Sat 16 - Sun 24 February

Families can check out the night sky and discover more about the solar system, distant stars and outer space in a pop-up planetarium at Ironbridge Gorge Museums' Enginuity this half-term.

Hands-on workshops also feature in the venue's line-up of holiday attractions, with youngsters having the opportunity to use craft materials to design and make (and then take home) their very own space-themed model.... Budding astronomers can enjoy an evening of sky-gazing on Tuesday the 19th, complete with the chance to see some fantastic star constellations.

Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust

Various Shakespeare Birthplace Trust venues,
Sat 16 - Sun 24 February



There's plenty of fun to be had at Shakespeare's family homes this February half term, with a series of special events taking place across five venues. Highlights include a Jacobean sugar work workshop at Hall's Croft, a chance to see the super-moon at a special stargazing event in the gardens of Shakespeare's New Place, and the opportunity for younger audiences to have a go at creating their very own version of a Shakespeare play in the puppet theatre.

Jawsome Sharks

National Sea Life Centre,
Birmingham, Sat 9 February
- Sun 10 March

The National Sea Life Centre is promising that this brand new event will have plenty of 'extra bite', as families come face-to-fin with some of the venue's most 'jawsome' species in the UK's only 360-degree Ocean Tunnel. The fully immersive experience gives visitors the chance to check out a number of sharks, including the Black-tip Reef, Nurse and Zebra varieties.

Younger visitors, meanwhile, can become Jawsome Shark Rangers by helping Professor Finn to find some missing sharks' teeth.



Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show

NEC, Birmingham, Tues 19 - Sun 24 February

The UK's biggest showcase of motorhomes, campervans, caravans, caravan holiday homes and lodges returns to Birmingham this month. Visitors to the show can check out all the new-season models and products, stock up on their holiday accessories, and gather ideas, inspira-

tion and advice about where to head for and what to do when they get there. The six-day event also features plenty of free activities and attractions, including the Holiday Park Experience, bringing a park holiday to life and including a climbing wall, play area, bushcraft classes and more. Other features include a top dog arena, a full programme of speakers, live cookery demonstrations and motorhome manoeuvring tuition.



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SPAR British Athletics Indoor Championships

Arena Birmingham, Sat 9 & Sun 10 February

This is the 63rd edition of the indoor championships, providing Midlands athletics fans with a

not-to-be-missed opportunity to see some of the UK's finest performers coming together for a weekend of high-quality action.

The championships comprise a total of 13 events - including the 60m sprint and 5,000m race walk - and have a grand total of 26 titles up for grabs.

Thomas & Friends

Drayton Manor Theme Park,
Staffordshire,
Sat 9 - Sun 24 February



Thomas the Tank Engine fans are certainly well catered for at Drayton Manor Park this half term. The Staffordshire visitor attraction is home to Europe's only Thomas Land and will be running numerous rides during the holiday period, including Harold Helicopter Tours, Bertie Bus and Cranky Crane.

Among the venue's other half-term highlights are selected family-favourite rides around the park (not including the thrill rides), live shows with the Fat Controller and friends, and the chance to check out the 15-acre zoo, complete with red pandas Tika and Pema.

Tattoo Freeze

Telford International Centre,
Sat 2 & Sun 3 February

Celebrating its 10th year and following on from the success of previous shows, this specialist event offers members of the general public the chance to get themselves tattooed by one (or more!) of the 200-plus talented tattooists who'll be in attendance.

The two-day get-together also features burlesque performances, body painting, circus workshops and numerous trade stands selling everything from clothing to cupcakes.



RSC half-term activities

Royal Shakespeare Company,
Stratford-upon-Avon, Mon 18 - Fri 22 February

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is hosting a range of workshops for young thespians during February half term, providing activities for children aged four to eight, nine to 12 and 13 to 17. Using approaches straight from the RSC rehearsal rooms, kids will have the opportunity to hone their talents in singing, clowning and set design. They also get the chance to reenact Shakespeare's classic comedy, *As You Like It*.

Whodunnit?

Aston Hall, Birmingham,
Sat 23 February

Whodunnit? is described as a drop-dead-fun, time-travelling mystery-trail aimed at families and those young at heart. Participants are invited to travel back to the Victorian era to find out who stole the precious and mystical Star of Al-Ara gem... The wearing of Victorian costume for the event is greatly encouraged but by no means essential.







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Discover Bostin' Black Country Fittle

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley,
Sat 16 - Sun 24 February

Discover the Black Country's "bostin' fittle" ('good food' in Black Country 'spake'!) at this

sure-to-be-lively two-day event. All manner of dishes and delights will be available to sample as Black Country Living Museum characters cook up a storm. Younger visitors, meanwhile, not only get to check out the tasty tucker but can also enjoy street games, competitions, crafts and street theatre.

Dragon Hunt

Tamworth Castle, Sat 16 - Fri 22 February

Tamworth Castle's resident dragon, Ruby, and her brother, Hafgrim, have gone missing while playing a game of hide & seek. And they're probably going to stay horribly lost too, unless some young and enthusiastic half-term-holiday visitors are willing to put in the hard yards to help find them!... The dragon hunt is just one of numerous dragon-based activities taking place at the castle this month; kids can also learn how to decorate the dragon's den, identify dragon eggs and have a go at a dragon-related craft.



Nick Sharratt's Right Royal Drawalong

The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury,
Tues 19 February

Grab your pencils & paper and join acclaimed children's writer and illustrator Nick Sharratt as he hosts a fun-filled family-friendly drawalong.

Nick will show participants how to sketch favourite characters, including Tracy Beaker and Timothy Pope, and share ways of creating fantastic creatures like dragons and unicorns. And to celebrate his latest book, Nice Work For The Cat And The King, everything will have a special 'royal' twist!

The Classic Dirt Bike Show

Telford International Centre,
Sat 16 & Sun 17 February



This annual off-road and road-racing show makes a welcome return. Multiple world, indoor and British Trials champion Dougie Lampkin and 'BSA warrior' John Banks have been confirmed as the star guests for 2019. The off-road legends will be giving fans the low-down on their spectacular careers. The show also features an outdoor autojumble, overflowing with bargains and boasting classic dirt bike machinery galore, from parts and spares to accessories, riding kits and bike projects.

Chinese New Year Of The Pig

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery,
Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 10 February

The Potteries' popular Chinese New Year celebrations are back, this time welcoming in the Year of the Pig.

Highlights of the event include traditional music and dance, with dragon, lion and unicorn dance performances all featuring. Chinese craft workshops, fire-crackers and acrobatics are also included in the day's programme of entertainment.





Feline coffee shop is just purr-fect...

Paws Cafe opens in Shrewsbury

Where did you get the inspiration for Paws Cafe?

James is an engineer and I'm a teacher. About two years ago, we both went through a tough time at work; too many hours, late nights, early mornings, and didn't reap any benefit from it.

We've got a cat at home and for James's birthday, my mum got him tickets to the Manchester cat cafe. We were only supposed to be there for an hour, but we really, really enjoyed it and found it so calming and relaxing. It was lovely spending time with their cats. We went home feeling quite good about ourselves and quite interested in the concept. We looked into it and found out that there were quite a few popping up in the UK, though mainly in big cities. Then we went back to work on the Monday, had another stressful week and just ended up thinking, let's give it a go, as it had got to the point where we didn't want to do what we were doing anymore.

So why Shrewsbury?

I'm originally from Crewe in Cheshire and James is from Ludlow, but we live in Telford. We often come into Shrewsbury and quite like the smaller, one-off, quirky sorts of places, so we actually thought it was an ideal town. But to be honest, we didn't think we could afford it. But we had a look around at different areas within the town centre and came across a few that we really liked and thought might work for us.

Once you'd found your ideal premises, were there any obstacles to moving things forward?

Yes. We looked into it and thought we may have to have a cattery licence. Other cafes offer things like an adoption service or a rehoming service, and because they're doing that, they need a cattery licence. But because these are our pets, we didn't.

Talk us through the visitor experience...

We take walk-ins and bookings - because we're only just opening, we've said to people that they're more than welcome to wait in the reception area, but that it might be a bit of a wait as we're busy with bookings at the moment. When they come to the reception desk, they're given some information about the cats and the rules of the cafe. For example, if a cat is sleeping or walking away from you, don't interrupt what it's doing, don't pursue it or pull its tail. And if it comes and sits on your lap, you can stroke it, but if you don't

want it there then just stand up and it will get off. It's very much the cats' home here, and you're coming into that, so we have a hatch at the top where we keep the food and the litter trays, so if they want time out from the cafe, they can simply go up there.

We have the coffee counter, and some drinks are available in the price that you pay. We have a selection of cakes and tray cakes, cookies and things like that, but it's basically about just spending time with the cats. We do have to explain to people that it's not a zoo or a circus and we can't guarantee that the cats will interact.

What's the minimum time people can stay?

The minimum stay is 30 minutes, and then we charge for every five minutes after that. We do have some vouchers that proved very popular over Christmas; if you have vouchers or you have very young children, then you will need to book. We don't currently have an age-restriction in place like a lot of the other cat cafes do. We've decided that for the first couple of weeks we will run a 'parent policy'. It will be up to the parents to make sure their children abide by the rules. So for example, if some children start playing around and stressing the cats, the mum and dad will be given a warning or alternatively asked to leave because the cats' welfare is the priority for us.

Are there any stand-out personalities among the cats?

I think for us the Bengals are the obvious ones. We nicknamed them 'the raptors' because they're so energetic. Bengals have a bad reputation because they're so mischievous and very active all the time, unlike other cats who tend just to sit and have a cuddle on your knee. But because ours have been hand-reared, they do have that softer side where they do want the cuddles and the fuss.

Cleo is our Canadian Sphynx. We got her thinking that she'd be a bit like Marmite - you'd either love or hate her. I did take some convincing because of the look, so we did have a look at other breeds. She's very affectionate and loving and can get a little possessive with other cats!

How do you look after the cats' welfare?

All of the cats have got a care plan with Vets4Pets, so they all have monthly defleaing and worming. They've all had their vaccinations or are having their boosters, so we do have a vet coming in once a month,

meaning most cats are done at the same time. It's nice for the vet to see them in their natural environment. Whatever the cats need, we will go out and get it. For example, when we got Elsa, she was underweight, so we took her to the vets straight away and they advised us about what food and milk we needed. And Cleo has a very specific breed gastro food. It can all be very expensive, but it's not a question of price but of the cats' well-being.

You're planning film nights...

We're going to do them every Friday evening, starting in February, to ease everyone in. We do have a premises licence, so you can come and have a beer and some popcorn. They will probably be cat-themed and we'll put them on rotation. Because the cinema is quite a small, intimate space, the cats will come and snuggle and watch the film with you.

Is there anything else you're thinking about introducing?

Yes, James came up with a lovely idea that links in with the 'parent policy' because we don't really want to enforce an age limit. So in February, probably over the half-term holiday, we're holding the Cat Academy. If younger children want to come, parents can bring them and do activities or workshops to learn about what to do if you were to have a pet, and that it's not just all cuddles. We'll be having a variety of workshops on subjects like which types of food they'll eat, litter trays, what you need to protect them from and when to take them to the vets. When you complete those workshops, you get a certificate and a badge.

How did you choose which breeds you were going to have?

With a lot of research, really. We've been to see a lot of cats! It's quite easy to go with the 'business head' on and say, this is our budget - but each cat is individual and different. So for example, the Bengals are a lot softer and more affectionate than a traditional Bengal might be, so it was very much a case of wanting the cats to choose us. So we researched the breeds to see if they were suited to an indoor environment and would socialise with other cats.

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Paws Cafe is sited at 53 Mardol Head, Shrewsbury, SY1 1PP. Visit www.pawscave.co.uk for further information

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*Your week-
by-week
listings guide*

February 2019

the list



Chinese New Year Celebrations at The Arcadian, Birmingham - Sun 10 February

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

What's On

Fri 1 to Sun 10 February



Lenny Henry at Royal
Birmingham Conservatoire
Wed 6 February

Mon 11 to Sun 17 February



Wolf at The REP, Birmingham
Mon 11 - Wed 13 February

Mon 18 to Sun 24 February



The Shy Manifesto at
The Old Joint Stock Theatre
Fri 22 - Sat 23 February

Mon 25 to Thurs 28 February



Gary Delaney at
Artrix, Bromsgrove
Thurs 28 February

THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY

Visual Arts

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

WOMEN POWER PROTEST Inspired by the bold work of feminist artists and activists, Women Power Protest aims to raise awareness, provoke debate and assess how much has changed for women, until Sun 31 Mar

WITHIN AND WITHOUT: BODY IMAGE AND THE SELF Exhibition examining how social, historical and cultural factors affect body image, and how this is expressed through objects and artworks, until Sun 5 May

TOO CUTE!: SWEET IS ABOUT TO GET SINISTER A range of artworks that show different takes on cuteness, from contemporary-based issues to 19th century oil paintings, until Sun 12 May

COLLECTING BIRMINGHAM: WHO IS BIRMINGHAM? Discover new collections that reflect the experiences of diverse Birmingham people - from working lives to community activists and protest movements, until Sun 27 Oct

Eastside Projects

MARK ESSEN: BUILD A WALL Mark creates a barrier that talks about lives, invisible walls constructed by governments, maintained by factions of society and the media, prohibiting them from being part of wider society, until Sat 23 Feb

Grand Union

NEW LAUREN GAULT: DRYE EYES A series of sculptural moments, through objects and sound, Fri 1 Feb - Sat 13 Apr

Ikon Gallery

A MURDER OF CROWS Display of painted crows by artist Matthew Krishanu, until Sun 10 Mar

MAC, Birmingham

MATTHEW KRISHANU: THE SUN NEVER SETS London-based painter Matthew Krishanu takes inspiration from a childhood spent in Bangladesh to produce dream-like, reflective paintings, until Sun 10 Mar

WAYS OF BELONGING Exhibition including works by Sabihev Awanza Mah-moud, FreeHandFanatic, Farwa Moledina and Anisa Fazal. The artwork on show represents strong and empowered women, subverting the stereotypes and offering a new way of understanding what it means to belong somewhere, until Sun 17 Mar

RBSA Gallery

NEW CARNIVAL Inspired by the extravagant carnivals of New Orleans and Brazil, this exhibition includes bright jewellery, vivid ceramics and luxurious textiles, Mon 4 Feb - Sat 1 June

NEW BRIAN FLETCHER Membranes and Fascias - A fascination with derelict industrial sites has led Brian to produce paintings based on the textures and palimpsests of old walls and rusting metal surfaces, Mon 11 Feb - Sat 23 Mar

NEW GEORGE JACKSON Exhibition of forms resulting from techniques and processes employed in pursuit of a creative equilibrium, Mon 11 Feb - Sat 6 Apr

NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC PRIZE EXHIBITION The third RBSA Photographic Prize exhibition is in partnership with Argentea Gallery and will be displayed across both venues, Thurs 14 Feb - Sat 9 Mar

The Barber Institute

NEW RECOVERY ART 2019 Recovery Art Group provides an invaluable safe space for people recovering from physical or mental ill health. The exhibition features new paintings and sculptures alongside insights from the group in their own words, Fri 1 - Sun 10 Feb

Other VISUAL ARTS

FORWARD: NEW ART FROM BIRMINGHAM Group exhibition, including work by approximately 25 artists living and working in the city, that highlights the depth and vitality of a wide range of practices, until Sun 24 Mar, Medicine Bakery & Gallery, Birmingham

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION Display of photographs drawn from the University Heritage Archive Collection held in the Cadbury Research Library, until Fri 29 Mar, Birmingham City University

NEW SKY ARTS LANDSCAPE ARTIST OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION The official exhibition in collaboration with Sky Arts TV channel, showcasing three paintings from each of the eight finalists as well as the winning landscape, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Feb, Whitewall Birmingham

NEW A WASTE LAND Joint exhibition created by jewellery artists Dan Russell and Dauvit Alexander which sets out to question and challenge the illegal dumping of consumer waste, Mon 4 Feb - Fri 1 Mar, Vittoria Street Gallery, Birmingham

NEW ART AT THE HEART Exhibition by students of Art At The Heart CIC, Wed 20 Feb - Mon 4 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Gigs

ENTER SHIKARI Fri 1 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE SNAKE DAVIS TRIO Fri 1 Feb, Pizza Express Live, B'ham

KING KING Fri 1 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

HER'S Fri 1 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DAZED PRESENTS PLAYAZ Fri 1 Feb, The Mill, Birmingham

WALK LIKE A MAN - CELEBRATION OF FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS Fri 1 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES Fri 1 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BLACKBALLED Fri 1 Feb, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

COMMON PEOPLE Fri 1 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

HYENA KILL / KILLER BOB: GRUNGE NOISE NIGHT! Fri 1 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

NU GUINEA (DJ SET + LIVE KEYS) Fri 1 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BONES PRESENTS A LITTLE SOMETHING Fri 1 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

MIKE YOUNG Fri 1 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 1 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge



Liela Moss - Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

T.REXTASY Fri 1 - Sat 2 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

HERITAGE: X-PRESS 2, KELVIN ANDREWS AND PHIL GIFFORD Sat 2 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KAISER CHIEFS Sat 2 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BUDDY HOLLY'S WINTER DANCE PARTY Sat 2 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

MACKA B & THE ROOTS RAGGA BAND Sat 2 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

MARTIN YATES + MAYDAY Sat 2 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE BONGOLIAN Sat 2 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

SWEDDREAMZ - ABBA TRIBUTE Sat 2 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD Sat 2 Feb, Castle &

Falcon, Birmingham

VNV NATION Sat 2 Feb, The Assylum, B'ham

HAYLEY KİYOKO Sun 3 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ELVIS LIVES Sun 3 Feb, Symphont Hall, Birmingham

STEVE LAMACQ - GOING DEAF FOR A LIVING Sun 3 Feb, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

DARIA KULESH Sun 3 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

JOE ARMON-JONES Sun 3 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE JONI MITCHELL SONGBOOK Sun 3 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall

LIELA MOSS Sun 3 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

YOUNG DRUMMER OF THE YEAR Sun 3 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

GHEETS Sun 3 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham



King King - Birmingham Town Hall

Classical Music

JONIAN-ILIAS KADESHA (VIOLIN) & JEAN-SÉLIM ABDELMOULA (PIANO) Programme includes works by JS Bach, Beethoven & Ravel, Fri 1 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

COME & SING! WITH THE BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR Programme comprises Elgar's The Music Makers, Sat 2 Feb, Selly Oak Methodist Church, B'ham

DUO TROBAIRITZ: ROMANCE & REVELRY Part of Birmingham's Early Music Festival and featuring Faye Newton (soprano) & Hazel Brooks (vielle), Sun 3 Feb, The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham

Comedy

DARREN HARRIOTT - VISCERAL Fri 1 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDREW DOYLE Fri 1 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ED GAMBLE Fri 1 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

SANDI TOKSVIG Fri 1 - Sat 2 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome



DARREN HARRIOTT Sat 2 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

STEVE BUGEJA Sat 2 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

ANDREW BIRD, RACHEL FAIRBURN, JOSH JONES & STEPHEN GRANT Sat 2 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

IAN COGNITO, DANIEL MUGGLETON, JULIAN DEANE & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 2 Feb, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

HAL CRUTTENDEN - CHUBSTER Sat 2 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham



CURTIS WALKER, AURIE STYLA, JAY DROCH & MISS MO'REAL Sat 2 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

IMPROV COMEDY WITH BOX OF FROGS Sun 3 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

NOREEN KHAN, JUDI LOVE, ESTHER MANITO, MAUREEN YOUNGER & FATIHA EL-GHORRI Sun 3 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

TIMON OF ATHENS Simon Godwin directs Kathryn Hunter in Shakespeare's satire on wealth, greed & betrayal, until Fri 22 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

TARTUFFE New updated version of Moliere's provocative French classic, until Sat 23 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

ONE MAN TWO GUVNORS A Lichfield Players production, Wed 30 Jan - Sat 2 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

DADMAN: THE BATHTIME WARRIOR A show for adults about not baby-sitting your own kids. Warning: This show uses moderately strong language and deals with adult themes, Fri 1 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

MISTRESS TO THE MIDNIGHT Spoof of the classic British horror film, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE ARSONISTS Alistair Beaton's staging of Max Frisch's 1958 parable, Fri 1 - Sat 9 Feb, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

BLUE ORANGE Joe Penhall's darkly funny dissection of institutional racism and mental health in modern Britain, Fri 1 - Sat 16 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

STEVE STEINMAN'S VAMPIRE'S ROCK Featuring special guest star Sam Bailey, Sat 2 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE SEAGULL The Crescent Theatre Company present its version of Anton Chekhov's acclaimed drama, Sat 2 - Sat 9 Feb, Crescent Theatre, B'ham

OCTOPUS SOUP! Nick Hancock stars in a brand new British farce, Sat 2 - Sat 16 Feb, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

SING-A-LONG-A THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Sun 3 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows

GOLDOLOCKS AND THE THREE MARTIANS Space-age pantomime, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Talks

HIT THE ODE Evening of spoken-word, Fri 1 Feb, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome



Timon Of Athens - The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE FAVOURITE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Olivia Colman, Emma Stone. Artrix, Bromsgrove, until Mon 4 Feb

MARY POPPINS RETURNS (U) Adventure/Family. Starring Emily Blunt, Emily Mortimer. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Thurs 21 Feb

9 TO 5 (15) Comedy. Starring Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 1 Feb

COLETTE (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Keira Knightley, Eleanor Tomlinson. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Wed 6 Feb

THE FRONT RUNNER (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Hugh Jackman, Vera Farmiga. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Thurs 7 Feb

BEAUTIFUL BOY (15) Drama. Starring Steve Carell, Timothée Chalamet. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Thurs 7 Feb

DOWN TO EARTH (U) Documentary. Directed by Renata Heinen & Rolf Winters. Midlands Arts Centre,

Birmingham, Sun 3 Feb

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN (U) Musical. Starring Hugh Jackman, Michelle Williams. This is a sing-a-long showing. The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 3 Feb

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 1 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME (15)

ESCAPE ROOM (15)

GREEN BOOK (12a)

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Events

OPEN ASTON Wander around the grand old mansion, Sun 3 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

ARTS MARKETS Featuring a range of stalls with a broad selection of quality handmade products, including ceramics, jewellery, paintings and craft items, Sun 3 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham



Dadman: The Bathtime Warrior - Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS NOW BOOKING

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WALK LIKE A MAN
Friday 1st February
7.30pm
Tickets £24 / £22 conc.

NORTHERN SOUL VS SKA
Sunday 10th February, 5.00pm
Tickets: £10 adv, £15 otd

THE ELVIS YEARS
Saturday 2nd March, 7.30pm
Tickets: £25 / £23 conc.

DEFINITELY MIGHTBE X ADORED
(OASIS/STONE ROSES TRIBUTE)
Saturday 9th March, 8.00pm
Tickets: £14

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT
Tuesday 12th - Saturday 16th March, 7.30pm (Sat Mat 2.30pm)
Tickets: From £15

THE ADDAMS FAMILY
Tuesday 19th - Saturday 23rd March, 7.30pm (Sat Mat 2.30pm)
Tickets: £18 / £17 / £10 conc.

EVITA
Tuesday 26th - Saturday 30th March, 7.30pm (Sat Mat 2.30pm)
Tickets: £19 / £14

SORTED
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Saturday 6th April, 7.30pm
Tickets: £17

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Gigs

PSYCROPTIC & AVERSIONS CROWN Mon 4 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

ODUNSI (THE ENGINE) Mon 4 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DAVID KEENAN Mon 4 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

RIVAL SONS Tues 5 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE JEEPS Tues 5 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE FAIM Wed 6 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

ROSETTA FIRE + CHASING DEER Wed 6 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VERSATILE Wed 6 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

BEN POOLE BAND Wed 6 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

THE BLACK FEATHERS Wed 6 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

KNOXVILLE HIGHWAY Wed 6 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

BETH ROWLEY: GOTA FRIA - TRACING THE LINE Wed 6 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

KOVIC Thurs 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SHOTTY HORROH LIVE Thurs 7 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY Thurs 7 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE CHRISTIANS Thurs 7 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

FOREVER SABBATH

Thurs 7 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

HANNAH BROWN Thurs 7 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BEATLEMANIA Thurs 7 Feb, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

BEHEMOTH Thurs 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FERRIS & SYLVESTER Thurs 7 Feb, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

GANGSTAGRASS Fri 8 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SPINOUT REVUE Fri 8 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

JARROD DICKENSON + JP RUGGIER Fri 8 Feb, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

GIMME! GIMME! GIMME! ABBA AFTER MIDNIGHT Fri 8 Feb, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

GEORGE FITZGERALD (DJ SET) Fri 8 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BOYZONE Fri 8 Feb, Genting Arena, B'ham

THE URBAN VODOO MACHINE Fri 8 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall

TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS Fri 8 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CHVRCHES Fri 8 - Sat 9 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CARNIVAL MAGNIFICO WITH BIG NARSTIE Sat 9 Feb, The Mill, B'ham

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Sat 9 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

OZZY OSBOURNE Sat 9 Feb, Genting Arena,

Birmingham

THIRD EYE COLLECTION - 2019 LAUCH Sat 9 Feb, Mama Roux's, B'ham

SPINNING OFF - UB40 TRIBUTE Sat 9 Feb, The Night Owl, B'ham

HIDDEN AGENDA: BENNY PAGE, BRIAN BRAINSTORM, DJ HYBRID, + MORE! Sat 9 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

LOST SOCIETY: SAM MITCHAM & DYLYEN Sat 9 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE BEST OF WHAM Sat 9 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

GUYANA Sat 9 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

AS YOU WERE - LIAM GALLAGHER TRIBUTE Sat 9 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

BUCKCHERRY / HOOBSTANK Sun 10 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HUE AND CRY Sun 10 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

SEAN MCGOWAN + SPECIAL GUESTS Sun 10 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

OLD FIRM CASUALS + DRONGOS FOR EUROPE + SUCKERPUNCH Sun 10 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

SOCIAL BEINGZ UK TOUR Sun 10 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE LUCID DREAM Sun 10 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KH WALK OF FAME PRESENT MADE IN LIVERPOOL BEATLES TRIBUTE Sun 10 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

Classical Music

HARMONIE BAND Featuring Daniele Rosina (director) plus Sabrina Ko & Olivia Tait (conductors). Programme includes works by Haydn, Beethoven, arr. Friedrich Starke & Beethoven, arr. Wenzel Sedlak, Mon 4 Feb, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

CHINESE NEW YEAR'S SPECIAL Featuring Didi Xiao (piano), Jiaxin Lloyd Webber (cello), Shui Zhao (face changing artist) & Du Dan (Chinese traditional dancer), Tues 5 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



KIAN SOLTANI IN RECITAL Also featuring Mario Häring (piano). Programme includes works by Schumann, Franghiz Ali Zadeh, David Helbock and Prokofiev, Tues 5 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DUNEDIN CONSORT: APOLLO AND DAPHNE Part of Birmingham's Early Music Festival & featuring John Butt (conductor), Rowan Pierce (soprano) & Matthew Brook (Bass). Programme comprises 3 works by Handel, Wed 6 Feb, The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: TASMIN LITTLE PLAYS VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS Also featuring David Le Page (violin). Programme includes works by Vivaldi, Arvo Pärt & Bach, Wed 6 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: A HERO'S LIFE Featuring Nikolaj Znaider (conductor) & Steven Isserlis (cello). Programme includes works by Strauss & Schumann, Wed 6 - Thurs 7 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DANIEL LEBHART PIANO CONCERT Programme includes works by Beethoven & Rachmaninoff, Thurs 7 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: PÄRT & NIELSEN Featuring Veronika Klišova (flute), Emmet Byrne (oboe), Oliver Janes (clarinet) & Nikolaj Henriques (bassoon). Programme includes works by Pärt, Nielsen & Vasks, Fri 8 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

BITE-SIZED BACH Fri 8 Feb, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ANNEKE SCOTT (NATURAL HORN) &

STEVEN DEVINE (PERIOD PIANO) Programme includes works by Schubert (arr. Gallay), Gounod and Gounod (arr. Brémont), Fri 8 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

ENDYMION Programme includes works by Beethoven, Ligeti & Brahms, Fri 8 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE PROJECTS ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor). Programme includes works by Britten, Bartók & Rachmaninoff, Fri 8 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EX CATHEDRA: BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor), Katie Trethewey (soprano), Martha McLorinan (alto), Samuel Boden (tenor) & Greg Skidmore (bass). Programme includes works by Bach & Roth, Sat 9 Feb, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE Also featuring Sir Antonio Pappano (conductor) & Anita Rachvelishvili (soloist). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff & Tchaikovsky, Sun 10 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Richard Laing (conductor) & Samantha Ward (piano). Programme includes iconic scores from the movies, Sun 10 Feb, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

Comedy

TOM STADE Wed 6 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MARK WATSON: THE INFINITE SHOW Wed 6 - Thurs 7 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ED BRIMSON, DOMINIC HOLLAND, DAVID CALLAGHAN & SULLY O'SULLIVAN Thurs 7 Feb, The George Hotel, Lichfield

ROB NEWMAN - TOTAL ECLIPSE OF DESCARTES Thurs 7 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

LAURA LEXX, ANDREW STANLEY PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 7 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LAURA LEXX, MARK NELSON, ADAM BLOOM & ANDREW STANLEY Fri 8 - Sat 9 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SCOTT CAPURRO Fri 8 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEORGE EGG - DIY CHEF Sat 9 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

JARRED CHRISTMAS, ROSCO MCLENAN, CHRIS WASHINGTON & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 9 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

LLOYD GRIFFITH Sun 10 Feb, The



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**MISS KIDDY &
THE CADS**



SAT 16TH FEBRUARY
ADRIAN COX



SAT 23RD FEBRUARY
**SOUNDS OF
KOOL**



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JESSOP JESSOP**



SAT 2ND MARCH
IMAANI



SAT 9TH MARCH
**BELLA & THE
BOURBON BOY**



FRI 15TH MARCH
MARI WILSON



SAT 16TH MARCH
**KIKI DEE &
CARMELO LUGGERI**



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VENUS VS MARS - BATTLE OF THE SEXES Featuring Kat B, Njambi McGrath, Desiree Burch, Ashley Hesson & Axel Blake, Sun 10 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

BLUE ORANGE Joe Penhall's darkly funny dissection of institutional racism and mental health in modern Britain, until Sat 16 Feb, The REP, Birmingham



THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY Musical show chronicling the unique story of Dame Shirley Bassey, Thurs 7 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE TOXIC AVENGER: THE MUSICAL An aspiring earth scientist cleans up a toxic waste problem, in a show that's based on the 1984 cult classic, Thurs 7 - Sat 16 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

'RENE & EDITH' COMEDY DINNER SHOW An eat and drink comedy experience in the company of 'Allo 'Allo's René, Yvette, Edith, Lt Gruber and Herr Flick, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

DI & VIV & ROSE The Crescent Theatre Company presents Amelia Bullmore's exploration of friendship, Sat 9 - Sat 16 Feb, Crescent Theatre, B'ham

Kids Shows

GOLDOLOCKS AND THE THREE MARTIANS Space-age pantomime, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Dance

MATTHEW BOURNE'S SWAN LAKE Bourne's famous reimagining of the classic ballet features male dancers as the swans, Tues 5 - Sat 16 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

JASMIN VARDIMON COMPANY: MEDUSA A reflection on the powerful feminine symbol of Medusa, the myth and its various connotations in contemporary life, Sat 9 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

CINDERELLA Performed by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Sun 10 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Talks

TRACEY THORN: ANOTHER PLANET Join Thorn as she reconsiders the green-belt post-war dream, Mon 4 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LENNY HENRY IN CONVERSATION Wed 6 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

POETRY JAM 6TH BIRTHDAY SPECIAL An open-mic night that promises to be 'unfiltered, unapologetic and united', Thurs 7 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

BERGMAN: A YEAR IN A LIFE (15) Documentary. Directed by Jane Magnusson. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Tues 5 - Thurs 7 Feb

THE WARRIORS (18) Crime/Thriller. Starring Michael Beck, James Remar. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 8 Feb

MONSTERS AND MEN (15) Drama. Starring Anthony Ramos, John David Washington. Midlands Arts Centre,

Birmingham, Fri 8 - Tues 12 Feb

AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE (15) Drama/Romance. Starring Virginie Efira, Niels Schneider. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 8 - Wed 13 Feb

STAN & OLLIE (PG) Biography/Comedy. Starring John C. Reilly, Shirley Henderson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 8 - Thurs 14 Feb

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Margot Robbie. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 8 - Thurs 14 Feb

GLASS (12a) Drama/Mystery. Starring Sarah Paulson, Anya Taylor-Joy. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 8 - Thurs 14 Feb

THE RAFT (12a) Documentary. Directed by Marcus Lindeen. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 9 - Tues 12 Feb

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Wed 6 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (12)

ALL IS TRUE (12a)

BOY ERASED (15)

IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK (15)

Events

CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS Hear the stories of the ordinary people who called Court 15 home for over 160 years as you walk around the houses, Thurs 7 Feb, Birmingham Back to Backs

HARRY POTTER BOOK NIGHT An evening of 'fabulous free fun', Thurs 7

Feb, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

CHINESE NEW YEAR 2019 (DAY 1) Featuring performances from Birmingham Conservatoire & Dans Dance Company, Fri 8 Feb, St Philip's Cathedral & Grounds, Birmingham

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS (DAY 2) Featuring a parade of lion and dragon dancers; acrobats and martial arts from Shaolin Warriors plus Hip-Hop dance from Hong Kong born choreographer Si Rawlinson, Sat 9 Feb, Bullring & Grand Central, Birmingham

CADBURY CHARACTER SHOWS Sat 9 - Sun 10 Feb, Cadbury World, B'ham



JAWSOME SHARKS Help Professor Finn find the missing sharks' teeth to become a Jawsome Shark Ranger, Sat 9 Feb - Sun 10 Mar, Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

THOMAS & FRIENDS FEBRUARY HALF TERM Meet Thomas and his friends at Europe's only Thomas Land, Sat 9 - Sun 24 Feb, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Explore over 500 stalls packed with all kinds of collectable toys, trains and models for sale, Sun 10 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS (DAY 3) Featuring acrobatics, circus, dance performances and karaoke on two stages plus, market stalls & fun fair, Sun 10 Feb, Chinatown, Birmingham Hippodrome & The Arcadian, Southside, Birmingham



Chinese New Year Celebrations - Birmingham Hippodrome

Gigs

THE MURLOCS / NIGHT BEATS Mon 11 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HANSON Mon 11 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WITT LOWRY Tues 12 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KEITH SLATER'S 60S CELEBRATION Tues 12 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

TEARS FOR FEARS Tues 12 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

CHIP Tues 12 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WHENYOUNG Tues 12 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THUNDER - PLEASE REMAIN SEATED Tues 12 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

HOT 8 BRASS BAND Tues 12 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WILD NOTHING/J FERNANDEZ Tues 12 Feb, Mama Roux's, B'ham

POLYPHIA Wed 13 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

PROFESSOR GREEN Wed 13 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ANOTHER SKY Wed 13 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HOLY HOLY Wed 13 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

THE LOST NOTES Wed 13 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

WHITE DENIM Wed 13 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE ELVIS YEARS Wed 13 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

VALERAS + SPECIAL GUESTS Wed 13 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DONELL JONES Thurs 14 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SPIELBERG'S + SPECIAL GUESTS Thurs 14 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

MARC REBILLET Thurs 14 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ELAINE DELMAR Thurs 14 Feb, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

VOICE OF THE HEART - KAREN CARPENTER Thurs 14 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

AYODI Thurs 14 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

SOMEONE LIKE YOU: THE ADELE SONGBOOK Thurs 14 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

VEIN, HIGHER POWER : BIRMINGHAM - LESS THAN HALF LEFT! Thurs 14 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

MALLORY KNOX Thurs 14 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Fri 15 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

CASH Fri 15 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

G2-DEFINITE GENISES Fri 15 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

STONE BROKEN Fri 15 Feb, The Mill, B'ham

THE LEMONHEADS Fri 15 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MISS KIDDY AND THE CADS Fri 15 Feb, Pizza Express Live, B'ham

ART BRUT Fri 15 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SABREPULSE, NEON ASYLUM, FIGURE.09 & CHROMATOUCH Fri 15 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

CREEDANCE CLEARWATER REIMAGINED Fri 15 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WAKENING THE HOLLOW Fri 15 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RUTS DC Fri 15 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WHITE LIES Fri 15 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

BEANS ON TOAST Fri 15 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

HRH METAL Sat 16 - Sun 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ADRIAN COX PRESENTS 'PROFOUNDLY BLUE' Sat 16 Feb, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Sat 16 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

PEACH Sat 16 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BILL RYDER JONES Sat 16 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

THE CURV3 Sat 16 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

SUM CELLAR Sat 16 Feb, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

I.O.T.A Sat 16 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall

POST MALONE Sat 16 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

THE SEARCHERS FAREWELL CONCERT TOUR Sat 16 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE DEAD SOUTH Sun 17 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sun 17 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

AMINÉ Sun 17 Feb, The Mill, Birmingham

JAPANESE TELEVISION + GUESTS Sun 17 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VENUS VOICES AND MAGIC VOICES IN CONCERT Sun 17 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE X FACTOR LIVE TOUR 2019 Sun 17 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

ROY G HEMMINGS Sun 17 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

FAIRPORT CONVENTION 2019 WINTOUR Sun 17 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove



Danielle de Niese - Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT: PEDAL POWER Mon 11 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

BOCCHERINI CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL Mon 11 - Tues 12 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BINCHOIS CONSORT: MUSIC FOR ST CATHERINE & THE HISTORIC SCOTLAND Programme includes works by Walter Frye & John Dunstaple, Wed 13 Feb, The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham

CBSO: SIBELIUS & GRIEG Featuring Mirga Gražinyte-Tyla (conductor), Klara Ek (soprano), CBSO Chorus & the CBSO Youth Chorus. Programme includes Esa-Pekka Salonen, Rautavaara, Sibelius & Grieg, Thurs 14 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DANIELLE DE NIESE - VALENTINE'S SPECIAL Thurs 14 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND DANCE WITH BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET & THE ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA Programme includes works by Verdi, Orff/Bintley, Copland, Prokofiev/Bintley, Berlioz, Elgar, Brubeck/Bintley & Smetana, Fri 15 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FRANÇAIS WIND TRIO Featuring Jacob Perkins (oboe), Will Hammond (clarinet) & Dominic O'Sullivan (bassoon). Programme includes works by Ibert Cinq, Beethoven, Bradbury, Françaix & Poulenc, Fri 15 Feb, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

CONSORTIUM 5 Part of Birmingham's Early Music Festival. Programme includes works by Dowland, Tye, Purcell & Byrd, Fri 15 Feb, The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: PEER GYNT AND THE SEA Featuring Mirga Gražinyte-Tyla (conductor), Klara Ek (soprano), Norman Perryman (artist). Programme comprises works by Čiurlionis & Grieg, Sat 16 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

RUSSELL WATSON Featuring Laura Wright (guest singer), Simon Chalk (conductor) & Manchester Concert Orchestra, Sun 17 Feb, Symphony



Hall, Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: PURCELL, THE INDIAN QUEEN Programme features evocative Latin American Baroque music unearthed by Jeffrey during his visits to Mexico and Bolivia, Sun 17 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

Comedy

ROB DEERING, JANE GODLEY FEATURING COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON (THURS). ALISDAIR BECKETT-KING & ROBIN MORGAN (FRI & SAT) Thurs 14 - Sat 16 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

ANDREW MAXWELL - SHOWTIME Fri 15 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

MANDY MUDEN - CUNNING STUNTS Fri 15 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

STUART GOLDSMITH (PICTURED), KANE BROWN, IGNACIO LOPEZ & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 16 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham



GLEE FAMILY COMEDY CLUB Sun 17 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ZAKIR KHAN Sun 17 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham



Ruts DC - O2 Institute, Birmingham

Theatre

WOLF Following sell-out performances at the Edinburgh Fringe, Lewis Doherty brings to life 30 characters, car chases and multi-man brawls as he goes on 'a hilarious adventure across a cyber-punk landscape', Mon 11 - Wed 13 Feb, The REP, Birmingham



BEN HANLIN - 50 Ben presents 50 'fantastic tricks' in this fast-paced magic show, Mon 11 - Sat 16 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

DAD'S ARMY RADIO SHOW Stage show based on scripts from the original BBC TV comedy series, Tues 12 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

AVENUE Q Tues 12 - Sat 16 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

QUENTIN CRISP: NAKED HOPE Mark Farrelly's critically acclaimed solo play, Wed 13 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

LES VACHES DANS LE CHAMP (THE COWS IN THE FIELD) A haunting story from Theatre d'Europe, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

AS YOU LIKE IT Kimberley Sykes directs Shakespeare's romantic comedy, Thurs 14 Feb - Sat 31 Aug, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

CIRCUS OF HORRORS Brand new show featuring sword swallowers, demon dwarfs, knife throwers, contortionists and more... Fri 15 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

AN EVENING OF ERIC AND ERN Olivier-nominated comedy duo Ian Ashpitel & Jonty Stephens present an evening of iconic routines, songs & sketches, Sat 16 Feb, Lichfield Garrick



IN OTHER WORDS 'Intimate, humorous and deeply moving' love story exploring the effect of Alzheimer's disease and the transformative power of music, Sun 17 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

Kids Shows

LORI HOPKINS: SOURPUSS Playful adventure for three to eight-year-olds featuring string and shadow puppets, Sun 17 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Dance

THE NUTCRACKER Performed by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Mon 11 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SWAN LAKE Performed by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Tues 12 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BRENDAN COLE: SHOW MAN Brendan presents 'a thrilling extravaganza of music and dance, from ballroom to high-energy Latin', Thurs 14 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

AN EVENING OF MUSIC & DANCE Featuring Birmingham Royal Ballet & the Royal Ballet Sinfonia Fri 15 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TORUS A 'tribal hurricane of effortless fluidity' from contemporary dance company Humanhood, Fri 15 - Sat 16 Feb, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

ROMY & MICHELLE'S HIGH SCHOOL RE-UNION (15) Comedy. Starring Mira Sorvino, Lisa Kudrow. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 14 Feb

LOVE AND DESIRE IN PALESTINE: BON-BONE; CONDON LEAD & GAZA CALLING Three films explore Palestinian experiences of both family and romantic love under conditions of occupation and dispossession. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 14 Feb

FANTASTIC BEASTS - CRIMES OF GRINDELWALD (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 15 Feb

COLETTE (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Keira Knightley, Eleanor Tomlinson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 15 - Wed 20 Feb



GREEN BOOK (12a) Comedy/Biography. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 15 - Thurs 21 Feb

A STAR IS BORN (15) Musical/Drama. Starring Bradley Cooper, Lady Gaga. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 15 - Thurs 21 Feb



Lori Hopkins: Sourpuss - Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

BURNING (15) Drama/Mystery. Starring Yoo Ah-in, Jun Jong-seo. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 16 - Wed 20 Feb

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Nicolas Cage, Hailee Steinfeld. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 16 - Fri 22 Feb

GONE WITH THE WIND (PG) Romance. Starring Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 17 Feb

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Thurs 14 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U

INSTANT FAMILY (12a)

A PRIVATE WAR (15)

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC

THE KID WHO WOULD BE KING

Events

JAWSOME SHARKS Help Professor Finn find the missing sharks' teeth to

become a Jawsome Shark Ranger, until Sun 10 Mar, Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

ADULT ONLY EVENING An evening for big kids where adults can explore Birmingham's 'ultimate indoor playground', Wed 13 Feb, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS Thurs 14 Feb, Birmingham Back to Backs

GREAT BRITISH SHOOTING SHOW The shooting industry's leading manufacturers, distributors, retailers and shooting organisations come together to offer visitors Europe's largest and most varied choice of shooting-related products, Fri 15 - Sun 17 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS Hear the stories of the ordinary people who called Court 15 home for over 160 years as you walk around the houses, Sat 16 Feb, Birmingham Back to Backs

CADBURY CHARACTER SHOWS Sat 16 - Sun 24 Feb, Cadbury World, B'ham

OPEN ASTON Wander around the grand old mansion, Sun 17 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham



Adult Only Evening - Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

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Gigs

MAYDAY PARADE & THE WONDER YEARS Mon 18 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

OHME Mon 18 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham



LAMONT DOZIER PLUS SUPPORT FROM JO HARMAN Mon 18 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

HIPPO CAMPUS Mon 18 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JAY ROCK Tues 19 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE ORIELLES Tues 19 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DU BLONDE Tues 19 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ARIEL POSEN Tues 19 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

RIOT ENSEMBLE WITH EVAN PARKER, ALEX HAWKINS AND KIT DOWNES' ENEMY Tues 19 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

NILS FRAHM Wed 20 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JASON MANNS & PAUL CARELLA Wed 20 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LAU Wed 20 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

GLYM JACK Wed 20 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

JAMES SAYER BAND Wed 20 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

PETE KENT Wed 20 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

K-TRAP Thurs 21 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

AVI BUFFALO Thurs 21 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE VIRGINMARYS Thurs 21 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

RICKY COOL & THE IN

CROWD Thurs 21 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE JOY FORMIDABLE Thurs 21 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LOST TIGER Fri 22 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

BANG BANG ROMEO Fri 22 Feb, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BRIDGES Fri 22 Feb, The Flapper, B'ham

THE BLOCKHEADS Fri 22 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

FATBOY SLIM Fri 22 Feb, Arena B'ham

BLUE OCTOBER Fri 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MIKE MCGOLDRICK, JOHN MCCUSKER & JOHN DOYLE Fri 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

NATHANIEL MORRISON AND FRIENDS Fri 22 Feb, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

BROKEN MINDS PRESENTS GROOVERIDER Fri 22 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EMO DISCO - FROM UNDER THE CORK TREE SPECIAL Fri 22 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PERCOLATE WITH DENIS SULTA Fri 23 Feb, The Mill, Birmingham

WAKEDOWN Sat 23 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

REACH OUT TO MOTOWN Sat 23 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

FLING + MARC Sat 23 Feb, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

SOUL FUSION - SEAN MCCABE & GROOVE ASSASSIN 4HRS

BACK2BACK Sat 23 Feb, Mama Roux's, B'ham

COOL AND THE GANG: A CELEBRATION WITH "THE SOUNDS OF KOOL" Sat 23 Feb, Pizza Express, Birmingham

THE WHITNEY HOUSTON LIVE EXPERIENCE Sat 23 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ENTER THE DRAGON Sat 23 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

FRENCH BOUTIK Sat 23 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

DODGY Sat 23 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MY GENERATION: THE WHO STORY Sat 23 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE CLAUSE Sat 23 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HOSPITALITY Sat 23 Feb, The Mill, B'ham

THE SWINGING SIXTIES SHOW Sat 23 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

RYAN ROXIE Sat 23 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

STEELY DAN Sat 23 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE MANCHESTER NIGHT - PART 2 Sat 23 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

H.E.R. Sat 23 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

JOE & KEYSIA COLE Sun 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PETAL Sun 24 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE STRUTS Sun 24 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham



The Struts - O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

LOVE'S CONSEQUENCES: AN EVENING OF OPERA Directed by Emily Sloan. All proceeds from the evening will go to Action for Children, Mon 18 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ZAKIR HUSSAIN AND THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF INDIA Featuring Zane Dalal (conductor) & Zakir Hussain (tabla). Programme includes works by Berlioz, Hussain & Rimsky-Korsakov, Tues 19 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FRANCK LAURENT-GRANDPRE PIANO CONCERT Tues 19 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

XIZI ZHANG PIANO CONCERT Programme includes works by Chopin, Debussy & Schumann, Tues 19 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

STRING MOTION SENSOR Millennial Percussion produced by Serge Vuille & Adrian Spillelt. Featuring Maximilian Haft (electric violin) & Serge Vuille (percussion), Tues 19 Feb, Centrala, Minerva Works, Birmingham

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: YAMADA CONDUCTS MANFRED Featuring Alexander Gavrylyuk (piano) & Kazuki Yamada (conductor). Programme includes works by Schumann, Prokofiev & Tchaikovsky, Wed 20 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

JACK MCVEILL (CLARINET), DAVID LE PAGE (VIOLIN), CLARE O'CONNELL (CELLO) & VIV MCLEAN (PIANO) Programme includes works by Knussen, Thomas Adés, McCabe & Ryan Latimer, Fri 22 Feb, The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham

ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE COMPOSER'S ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor), Fri 22 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

LAWSON PIANO TRIO Programme includes works by Panufnik, Rachmaninov, Paul Juon, Shostakovich & Dvorak, Fri 22 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: A NIGHT AT THE OSCARS Featuring Anthony Weeden (conductor) plus Norman Bowman & Louise Dearman (vocalists). Programme includes works by Korngold, Stothart, North, Rozsa, Bernstein, Mancini, Jarre, Sherman Brothers, Kostal & Williams, Fri 22 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE MIDLAND CHAMBER PLAYERS: THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION Programme includes works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin & Shostakovich, Fri 22 Feb, Birmingham Midland Institute

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: SYMPHONIC POP Featuring Nick Davies (conductor), Capital Voices & Phil Upton (presenter), Sat 23 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO YOUTH ORCHESTRA: COPLAND'S THIRD Featuring Cristian Măcelaru (conductor), Tasmin Little (violin) & the City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Anna Clyne, Szymanowski & Copland, Sun 24 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

TOADALLY FREE COMEDY Mon 18 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

ROB NEWMAN - TOTAL ECLIPSE OF DESCARTES Thurs 21 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ADAM ROWE, SEAN COLLINS PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 21 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

ADAM ROWE, SEAN COLLINS, JARRED CHRISTMAS & ASHLEY STORRIE Fri 22 Sat 23 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

BACK IN OUR DAY - THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE DANCING GRANNIES Fri 22 Feb, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

JACK BARRY - TANGO Fri 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

ROBERT WHITE - THE TANK TOP MAN Fri 22 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

CAREY MARX, BRENNAN REECE, SARA BARRON & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 23 Feb, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

BARNSTORMERS COMEDY NIGHT Sat 23 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Theatre

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS Nigel Harman and Mark Benton play a couple of cut-throat salesmen in a revival of David Mamet's Olivier and Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, Mon 18 - Sat 23 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ANNIE Anita Dobson stars as Miss Hannigan in a revival of the much-loved rags-to-riches story, Tues 19 - Sat 23 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CIRQUE BERSERK! Featuring contemporary artistry, adrenaline-fuelled stunt action and 'the world's most hair-raising circus act' - the legendary motorcycle Globe of Death, Tues 19 - Sun 24 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

THE HOLE National Youth Theatre present a new play by Rachel De-la-hay, Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

IDA BARR: GRANARCHIST Music hall

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singer turned rap star Ida presents her brand of artificial hip-hop, Thurs 21 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

TINA T'URNER TEA LADY'S STEAMY BINGO The award-winning domestic diva spins her cage of balls to an '80s soundtrack, Thurs 21 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

BACK IN OUR DAY: THE LIFE & TIMES OF THE DANCING GRANNIES Comedy charting the friendship of three remarkable Black Country women, Fri 22 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LIVING SPIT: GIANTS OF SCIENCE Dim-witted duo Howard Coggins and Stu McLoughlin present a raucous romp through the history of scientific stupidity, Fri 22 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

POETIC THEATRE-MAKERS' SHOWCASE Showcase of new work from the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Apples & Snakes Poetic Theatre Makers development programme... Fri 22 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

THE SHY MANIFESTO Bittersweet comedy-drama about a boy who's fed up of being told to come out of his shell, Fri 22 - Sat 23 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS WITH KARL LOXLEY New touring show, Sat 23 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Children

MARK THOMPSON: SPECTACULAR SCIENCE The strange and magical properties of matter are explored with fireballs, fire tornadoes and explosive chemical reactions, Mon 18 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham



EXCITING SCIENCE SHOW Half-term show 'full of wiz, bang, pop and splurt!', Wed 20 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

WOW! IT'S NIGHT TIME Little Angel present a staging of Tom Hopgood's nocturnal sequel. Suitable for children aged between two and five,

Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

MIMI AND THE MOUNTAIN DRAGON Michael Morpurgo's tale of friendship, courage and adventure, presented by Skewbald Theatre, Thurs 21 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

FIRST STAGES: LITTLE GIFT Puppetry & original music combine in this brand new story from M6 Theatre & Andy Marley. Suitable for children aged between three and seven, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

BRAINAC LIVE! SCIENCE ABUSE Expect exploding dustbins, combusting microwaves and loads of daredevil stunts in this family show based on the award-winning TV series, Fri 22 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

SHLOMO'S BEATBOX ADVENTURE FOR KIDS Become the sonic superhero's sidekick in a world of funny sounds, brilliant noises and cool music, Fri 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

MILKSHAKE! LIVE 2019 Sing and dance with your kids' favourite Milkshake friends, Sat 23 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

Dance

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Birmingham Royal Ballet presents its version of the classic fairytale, Tues 19 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

SAME SAME BUT DIFFERENT A fusion of kathak and contemporary dance, live music and physical storytelling, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 Feb, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

HALE COUNTY THIS MORNING, THIS EVENING (15) Documentary. Directed by RaMell Ross. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Tues 19 Feb

FROZEN (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Kristen Bell, Idina Menzel. This is a sing-a-long showing. Lichfield Garrick, Wed 20 Feb

A STAR IS BORN (15) Musical/Drama. Starring Bradley Cooper, Lady Gaga. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 18 Feb; The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Wed 20 - Sun 24 Feb

BEST F(R)IENDS: VOLUMES 1 & 2 (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Greg Sestero, Tommy Wiseau. Followed by Q+A with Greg Sestero. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 21 Feb

THE MULE (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Clint Eastwood, Bradley Cooper. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 22 - Thurs 28 Feb



The Shy Manifesto - Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham & The Core Theatre, Solihull

A PRIVATE WAR (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Rosamunde Pike, Jamie Dornan. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 22 - Thurs 28 Feb

PETERLOO (12a) Drama/History. Starring Rory Kinnear, Maxine Peake. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 23 - Thurs 28 Feb

ON HER SHOULDERS (12a) Documentary/Biography. Directed by Alexandra Bombach. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 24 Feb

DARKEST HOUR (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Gary Oldman, Lily James. Highbury Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 24 Feb

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 22 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

COLD PURSUIT

CAPERNAUM

ON THE BASIS OF SEX (12a)

RHYTHM SECTION

Events

CADBURY CHARACTER SHOWS until Sun 24 Feb, Cadbury World, Birmingham

MAKING MONSTERS Join Anna Roebuck and unleash your inner creative, Mon 18 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

RECYCLED SCULPTURES Join sculpture expert Anna Roebuck to expand your creative abilities and hone new skills, Mon 18 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

OPEN ASTON Wander around the grand old mansion, Tues 19 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

CREATE THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON SKYLINE Use a variety of craft materi-

als to create and decorate your own 17th century London buildings, Tues 19 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

LITTLE SKIPPERS - WONDERFUL WATER A 45-minute boat trip followed by a 'things to make and do' session, Tues 19 - Fri 22 Feb, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

THE CARAVAN, CAMPING AND MOTORHOME SHOW The UK's biggest showcase of motorhomes, camper vans, caravans, caravan holiday homes and lodges, plus new-season tents of all sizes, trailer tents and folding caravans, Tues 19 - Sun 24 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

BEGINNERS CLOWNING SKILLS Join experienced comedy performer Jonny McClean - from the New Old Friends crimes series - for a workshop exploring the ins and outs of clowning, Wed 20 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

ANIMAL MANIA A chance to meet Animal Mania's cute and furry animals, Wed 20 Feb, Blakesley Hall, B'ham

OPEN ASTON Wander around the grand old mansion, Wed 20 - Sun 24 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

RACE RETRO Showcase of classic cars, motorsport legends, specialist exhibitors and live rally action, Fri 22 - Sun 24 Feb, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth

WHODUNNIT? A FAMILY-FRIENDLY MYSTERY TRAIL 'Drop-dead fun time-travelling mystery trail aimed at families, and those who're young at heart', Sat 23 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: JRR TOLKIEN AND SAREHOLE GUIDED WALK Guided introduction to Tolkien, the area of Sarehole and its influence on The Hobbit and The Lord Of The Rings, Sun 24 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham



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Leif Erikson - *The Flapper*, Birmingham

Gigs

TRIXIE MATT Mon 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DEMOB HAPPY Mon 25 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TROY SIVAN Tues 26 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SEA GIRLS Tues 26 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MOTHERS Tues 26 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE LEMON TWIGS Tues 26 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LEIF ERIKSON Tues 26 Feb, *The Flapper*, Birmingham

IDR Tues 26 Feb, The

Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ONLY THE POETS Wed 27 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

AREA 11 Wed 27 Feb, The Asylum, B'ham

MEGAN DAVIES Wed 27 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GABBIDON Wed 27 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

SHE DREW THE GUN Wed 27 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

DARIA KULESH & JOHNNY DYER Wed 27 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

BLUE OYSTER CULT Wed 27 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TRAGEDY: ALL METAL TRIBUTE TO THE BEE

GEES & BEYOND Wed 27 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

TWENTY ØNE PILOTS Wed 27 Feb, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

POP EVIL Thurs 28 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

ERIC BENÉT Thurs 28 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALINA BZHEZHINSKA Thurs 28 Feb, The Tin Music & Arts Centre, Coventry

JAY PRINCE Thurs 28 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ROXY MAGIC Thurs 28 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

JEROME THOMAS Thurs 28 Feb, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham



Twenty One Pilots - *Resorts World Arena*, Birmingham

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Mon 25 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

CALLUM SMART (VIOLIN) & RICHARD UTTLEY (PIANO) Programme includes works by Beethoven, Schubert & Ginastera, Tues 26 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THE BRITISH PARAORCHESTRA - TERRY RILEY'S IN C Featuring Extraordinary Bodies, Charles Hazlewood (conductor), Claire Hodgson & Billy Alwen (directors), Wed 27 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

CASTALIAN QUARTET Featuring Sini Simonen & Daniel Roberts (violin), Charlotte Bonneton (viola) & Christopher Graves (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven & Brahms, Wed 27 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THE TROUT QUINTET Featuring Jonathan Martindale (violin), Louise Landsdown (viola), Hannah Roberts (cello), Anthony Alcock (double bass) & John Thwaites (piano). Programme comprises Schubert's Quintet in A major D.667 'The Trout', Wed 27 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: MOZART & BRAHMS Featuring Olari Elts (conductor), Lucas & Arthur Jussen (pianos). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Mozart & Brahms, Thurs 28 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CHAMBER MUSIC SHOWCASE Commuter concert featuring director & violinist Caroline Pether, Thurs 28 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ALLYSON SMITH, JOHN FOTHERGILL PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 28 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE FULL MONTY Gary Lucy, Andrew Dunn, Louis Emerick, Joe Gill, Kai Owen & James Redmond star in Simon Beaufoy's staging of the Oscar-winning film, Mon 25 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THE BAND Tim Firth's much-acclaimed jukebox musical, featuring the songs of Take That, Tues 26 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



CONCUBINE Amahra Spence takes a look at womanhood, sexuality and faith, Tues 26 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

METAMORPHOSIS Beyond The Horizon bring Franz Kafka's acclaimed literary novella to life using state-of-the-art makeup and prosthetic effects, Tues 26 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

PSYCHIC SALLY - 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY TOUR Evening of mediumship, Thurs 28 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

THE MISOGYNY TRIALS Snapshot of some of the cases brought before Judge Serendipity Hope, who's made it her mission to stamp out misogyny in all its ugly forms, but at the same time is grappling with her own dark secrets, Thurs 28 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

THE SHY MANIFESTO Bittersweet comedy-drama about a boy who's fed up of being told to come out of his shell, Thurs 28 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

ME AND MY DOLL Birmingham-based company Paperback present a romantic comedy exploring the challenges, joys and pitfalls of allowing yourself to be vulnerable, Thurs 28 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

POPSTARS: THE 90S MUSICAL Packed with smash hits from the '90s by

Comedy

ROB AUTON Tues 26 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY Thurs 28 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove



artists including The Spice Girls, Backstreet Boys, N*Sync, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Mariah Carey and MC Hammer, Thurs 28 Feb - Sat 2 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Children

THE CAT IN THE HAT Family theatre based on the much-loved book by Dr Seuss, Tues 26 Feb - Sun 3 Mar, The REP, Birmingham



I AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOST Nostalgic trip back to the '80s and a comic ex-

ploration of a childhood haunting where nothing is quite as it seems, Wed 27 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

ELMER THE PATCHWORK ELEPHANT Theatre for younger audiences based on the classic children's book series by David McKee, Wed 27 - Thurs 28 Feb, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

Talks

TRUST FAST HEALTH WITH MICHAEL MOSLEY The man behind the iconic 5:2 diet explodes common health myths and offers fascinating insights into the workings of the human body, Mon 25 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

DAN SNOW: AN EVENING WITH THE HISTORY GUY Historian and TV presenter Dan recounts anecdotes from his career, Tues 26 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

KENDALL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL UK TOUR 'Amazing films and awe-inspiring talks' from some of the world's most dedicated adventurers, Thurs 28 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Dance

TIRABASSO & MASUI Double bill of work from two rising female choreographers, Thurs 28 Feb, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

BALLETBOYZ - THEM/US Double bill of new works, Thurs 28 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

STAN & OLLIE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring John C. Reilly, Shirley Henderson. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Tues 26 Feb



BLACK PANTHER (12a) Action/Adventure. Starring Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Tues 26 - Wed 27 Feb

Events

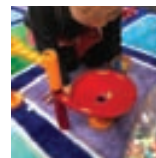
MINI MOTORISTS

Under-fives activity morning, allowing youngsters to discover through play the world's largest collection of historic British cars, Mon 25 Feb, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire



MINI MUSEUM

ENGINEERS - TOOL SKILLS Enjoy playing with real tools, Wed 27 Feb, Coventry Transport Museum



CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO

BACKS Hear the stories of the ordinary people who called Court 15 home for over 160 years as you walk around the houses, Thurs 28 Feb, Birmingham Back to Backs

FEBRUARY HALF TERM

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18 - 22 February 2019

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Image: Leonardo da Vinci, *The head of an old bearded man*, c1517-18, Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019