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the list
Your 16-page week by week listings guide

PEPPERLAND
Mark Morris Dance Group pay tribute to The Beatles

URBAN FOLK QUARTET
play Huntingdon Hall

MCM COMIC CON
action-packed celebration of pop culture at the NEC
J. S. BACH
ST. JOHN PASSION

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ALDWYN'S
at Ellerslie
March 2019

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**RSC to work its magic on David Walliams kids’ classic**

The Royal Shakespeare Company’s (RSC) winter 2019 season includes the world premiere of a new musical adaptation of David Walliams’ The Boy In The Dress.

Helmed by the RSC’s Artistic Director, Gregory Doran, the show will feature songs by Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers.

Commenting on the announcement, David Walliams said: “I’m delighted to be working with the Royal Shakespeare Company to bring this, my first children’s novel, to the stage. I’ve always loved musicals, and somehow I’d always imagined this book would be made into a musical, so to be working with the RSC and songwriting partners Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers feels like a dream collaboration.”

The production runs at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre from Friday 8 November to Sunday 8 March. For more information about this and other shows in the RSC’s winter 2019 season, visit rsc.org.uk

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**Roll up! The circus visits Warwick Racecourse...**

The Netherlands National Circus is back in the region this month.

Showcasing a fusion of classic and contemporary circus acts - including death-defying aerial stunts, ‘warm and original’ clowning and stylish and daring acrobatics - the company is presenting its new production at Warwick Racecourse from Wednesday 20 to Sunday 24 March. For more information, visit thenetherlandscircus.com

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**Popular Stratford visitor attraction re-opens**

Mary Arden’s Farm - the 23-acre Tudor working farm and childhood home of William Shakespeare’s mother - is reopening to the public on Saturday 16 March.

The popular visitor attraction, located in the village of Wilmcote near Stratford-upon-Avon, boasts a wide range of family-friendly entertainment to enjoy, including geese herding, archery and bird-of-prey displays. Commenting on the new season, Mary Arden’s Farm Manager Abi Moore said: “As always we’ve been very busy over the winter with new additions to the farm and our events programme. We’re eagerly awaiting our first Ryeland lambs and are particularly excited about our new peasants’ hovel, which opens another window into life in Tudor times. The hovel is not what most people would associate with the term, and peasants were people who were considered self-sufficient, living off the fruits of their own labours. Our visitors will be surprised at just how impressive our structure is.”

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**Miniatura back at the NEC**

The ever popular Miniatura show makes another welcome return to Birmingham’s NEC this month. Featuring hundreds of selected exhibitors and fascinating displays, the event has been running for more than 30 years and showcases high-quality miniature craftsmanship by exponents from around the world.

The show takes place at the NEC on Saturday 30 & Sunday 31 March. For more information, visit miniatura.co.uk

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**Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra play Mahler**

More than 100 musicians and singers will come together at Warwick Hall on Saturday 9 March, as the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra plays Mahler’s epic third symphony.

Joined by mezzo-soprano Gaynor Keeble, the choir of Kingsley School and the ladies of the Coventry Cathedral Chorus, the orchestra will also play Barber’s Adagio for Strings.

For more information, visit bridgehousetheatre.co.uk or wso.org.uk

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**Classic car racing at Droitwich Spa’s Chateau**

More than £500million-worth of classic cars, supercars and hypercars are set to feature at the fifth edition of the Chateau Impney Hill Climb in Droitwich Spa.

The popular racing event, this year taking place at the venue on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 July, will welcome up to 20,000 visitors for a programme of classic car racing, rallies, exhibitions, world record attempts, activities and events.

For more information, visit chateauimpneyhillclimb.com
An evening with Capt Krankypants
A show about depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), presented by a man known as Captain Krankypants, is among the highlights of the Albany Theatre in Coventry’s spring programme of entertainment. Captain Krankypants is actually Australian ex-serviceman Trace Dann, who’ll be explaining how he gets the most out of life despite his PTSD and depressive disorder. Trace presents his show at the Albany on Friday 15 & Saturday 16 March. For full details about the venue’s spring programme, visit albanytheatre.co.uk

In The Willows hip-hops into the Coventry Belgrade
A hip-hop version of Kenneth Grahame’s classic children’s story, The Wind In The Willows, visits Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre this month. Boasting ballads, beats and backflips, In The Willows features Olivier Award winner Clive Rowe, deaf street dancer Chris Fonseca (The Greatest Dancer), Seann Miley Moore (X Factor) and Matt Knight (Let It Shine). The show runs at the theatre from Wednesday 20 to Saturday 23 March. For more information, visit belgrade.co.uk

Festival provides Launchpad for young musicians
Shrewsbury Folk Festival has opened applications for its Midlands What’s On Magazine-sponsored Launchpad stage, which provides young musicians with a platform to showcase their talents. The festival is inviting people aged 16 to 26 who live in Shropshire, Mid Wales or the West Midlands to pitch for a performance slot. To apply, send a short biography, links to performances (Soundcloud, YouTube etc) and your contact details to jo@shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk before 6 May. Only selected performers will be contacted.

Headlining stars announced for Midlands festival
Soft Cell icon Marc Almond, ’80s favourites Human League (pictured) and electronic superstars Faithless are among the acts performing at this year’s Birmingham Pride festival in the city’s gay village. The two-day event, as usual being held across the May bank holiday weekend (Saturday 25 & Sunday 26 May), is this year taking the theme of Love Out Loud. Tickets are available from birminghampride.com.

After-hours programme of events at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has launched a special programme of after-hours events, inviting visitors to enjoy a range of unique talks and creative workshops in the surroundings of the historic Shakespeare Family Homes. Commenting on the new series, Lucy Brant, Creative Programme Officer at the Trust, said: “The after-hours events are the perfect way to discover our wonderful properties, try something different and learn something new. We have a superb lineup, with events ranging from life drawing and flower-arranging workshops to fascinating talks and ale tasting.” For more information about the after-hours programme, visit shakespeare.org.uk
Billy Bragg to headline the 40th Warwick Folk Festival

Billy Bragg will this summer headline the 40th Warwick Folk Festival, taking place at Warwick School and in the surrounding town from Thursday 25 to Sunday 28 July. The event will also feature performances by Skerryvore, Karan Casey, Calan, Will Pound & Eddy Jay, Breabach, O’Hooley & Tidow and Nancy Kerr.

Commenting on this year’s festival, director Dick Dixon said: “We’re delighted to be celebrating our 40th year and want everybody to come and enjoy that special Warwick Folk Festival magic. We have something for everyone, whether it’s great music, camping, workshops, singing, dancing sessions or giggles galore. Billy is an exciting addition to a lineup that features some truly superb award-winning folk stars.”

For more information, visit warwickfolkfestival.co.uk

A Stitch In Time...

A team of Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) staff are limbering up to take part in this year’s Stratford Half Marathon. The Running Wardrobe team, comprising 11 people from different RSC departments and headed by Executive Director Catherine Mallyon, are aiming to raise money for Stitch In Time, a campaign which supports the restoration and redevelopment of the Company’s costume workshop.

Stitch In Time is closing in on its fundraising target, with £250,000 left to raise. To support Catherine and the Running Wardrobe team, visit justgiving.com/campaign/stitchintime

The stars come out for Stratford Literary Festival

Former ballet dancer and Strictly judge Dame Darcey Bussell, The Great British Bake Off’s Prue Leith, actress Juliet Stephenson and screenwriter Andrew Davies are among the celebrities appearing at this year’s Stratford Literary Festival, which kicks off on 27 April.

“We’re really excited by this year’s lineup,” says Festival Director Annie Ashworth. “Our growing audiences have shown that they love a variety of events to choose from, and this year we’ve included a very wide buffet of choices. I’m especially pleased that the programme includes some lighthearted, late-evening events to enjoy with a glass of wine - including our Live Lit evening, which showcases emerging local writers.”

For more information, visit stratlitfest.co.uk

Warwick Castle ticket offer for ‘little warriors’

Warwick Castle has introduced ‘little warrior’ discounted tickets when booking online. The tickets, priced at £10 for an adult and child under five, allow entry to the attraction’s daily shows and history tours, including the Horrible Histories maze, the Kingmaker experience and the Princess Tower.

For more information, visit warwick-castle.com

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Peaky Blinders boxing event

A themed charity boxing event inspired by popular BBC TV series Peaky Blinders makes a welcome return to Worcester Guildhall on Saturday 30 March.

The 1920s-style event, organised by Worcester Charity Boxing Association, will raise money for Birmingham Children’s Hospital. Attendees are encouraged to dress for the occasion, so dig out your flapper dresses and baker boy caps!

Putting the jigsaw pieces together at Coughton Court

The National Trust’s Coughton Court in Warwickshire is this month hosting its ever-popular annual jigsaw Festival, returning for a sixth year from Friday 1 to Sunday 10 March.

The festival helps raise money for vital projects such as rewiring the mansion, conserving the dining-room carpet and providing day-to-day care for the venue’s collection of paintings, tapestries and documents.

David Guetta to play Soundscape

French dance supremo David Guetta is to headline Coventry’s inaugural Soundscape Festival this summer.

Guetta, who has sold over nine million albums and 30 million singles worldwide, is joined at the event by Anne-Marie, Clean Bandit, Years & Years, Mabel and Rak-Su. Soundscape takes place at the city’s Ricoh Arena on Sunday 16 June. For more information, visit ricoharena.com

Charity dance fun

Annual charity dance event Strictly Worcestershire returns to Droitwich Spa’s Chateau Impney on Thursday 23 May. Organised by Worcestershire Ambassadors and supporting mental health initiatives at St Paul’s Hostel and Worcester Community Trust, the event sees eight competing couples strutting their stuff in a bid to lift the coveted glitterball trophy.

Casting their eye over the performances will be a judging panel including former trade minister Lord Digby Jones and veteran broadcaster Bob Warman.

More information is available at strictlyworcestershire.co.uk
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SYMPHONY HALL

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WISE CHILDREN

Emma Rice talks about her stage adaptation of Angela Carter’s final novel
Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre next month presents a stage adaptation of Angela Carter’s novel, Wise Children - produced by a theatre company that’s also called Wise Children! What’s On caught up with Artistic Director Emma Rice to find out more...

Showbiz, sex, scandal and family drama lie at the heart of Wise Children, the late Angela Carter’s final novel. Emma Rice’s theatre company of the same name is next month presenting a stage adaptation of the book at the Coventry Belgrade. Indeed, Wise Children will be Wise Children’s debut production!

“I’ve loved Angela Carter’s work for many, many years,” says Artistic Director Emma. “I previously did an adaptation of Nights At The Circus, so have been thinking about doing Wise Children for a long time. I was certainly thinking about putting it on at The Globe before I left the post of artistic director there. After I’d had artistic differences with the board at The Globe, I decided to start my own theatre company so that I could work for myself and have complete creative licence. So when I woke up with a clean slate in front of me, I already knew I was going to do this piece. It’s really a love letter to theatre, so it felt perfect for me at this time. With this piece, I could celebrate theatre, the family of choice that is theatre, and all the work, the highs and the lows that is theatre. I thought Wise Children would be perfect for the company name as well. I’m at a time in my life where I need to be really smart and clever with the direction I take myself in, but at the same time I don’t want to lose that joy in theatre which is almost like childhood innocence. I thought that me being a wise child and my company being Wise Children was just perfect.”

Wise Children closely follows the trials, tribulations and triumphs of theatrical twins Nora and Dora Chance. Emma explains why she thinks their story makes for such good theatre: “I think Wise Children really encapsulates why people go to the theatre - the glamour, the sawdust, the threat! It’s a cracking good story. We’ve really put time and care into our characters, and we go through an intense history with them that’s very theatrical. It really sends the audience out into the world afterwards feeling positive about their ability to endure hardship, and feeling aware of what a joy it is to dance and sing, which is what my lead characters say all the way through the play.

“Nora and Dora are just fantastic birds! Top birds, as I like to call them! They work hard. They talk a lot about being illegitimate in every way throughout the play. They were born on the poor side of the tracks and have really grafted through showbusiness the hard way. They’re not completely identical twins. Dora has got secrets in her past and is much more guarded and sharp than Nora, while Nora is very emotional. With the Chance twins, we really go through their history in its entirety - their loves, their losses and the abuses that they suffer. Yet throughout, they’re such good fun and are never victims. They’re always joyful, irreverent and, actually, very sexy. We initially meet them when they’re 75 and they’re still sexy and full of sauciness!”

Emma made the decision to be fluid in terms of age, gender and race when casting Wise Children: “I just made the decision straight away that to cast a type for a lot of the characters in this play would be so narrowing. Imagine how hard it would be to find two 75-year-old women who look alike and could sing and dance! Honestly, when you’re telling stories, the audience will go anywhere with you. Anything is possible. It didn’t matter what gender, what background, what race anybody I cast was from. So I’ve gone for a completely diverse company where each person is cast because of their spirit, and it just works. The audience doesn’t for a minute start separating men and women. We tell them what gender each character is, what their relationship to each other is, and the audience just believe it because the actors are so brilliant.”

The Belgrade is one of only two venues where Emma herself will be taking to the stage as Nora - but it seems she didn’t have much choice in the matter: “The actor who’s playing Nora couldn’t do the last two dates, so the choice was either to get somebody else or for me to do it. So I thought I would, and I’m really looking forward to it!”

Organising Wise Children as an ensemble theatre company was an absolute no-brainer for Emma: “Ensemble theatre is what I’ve done all my life. I trained quite classically as an actor at the Guildhall, and then went on to do a lot of work in children’s theatre using storytelling forms where you work very tightly as a company. Then I spent some time in Poland and very much worked in an ensemble, and spent some time doing chorus work. I think ensemble is just the way I like to work. Everybody’s on stage all the time, everybody tells the story, everybody sings, everybody dances, and that’s just where my whole career and practice has led to. I never like choosing a famous play and just sticking a famous person in it. The focus for me is to find a great story and a great ensemble to tell it.”

She has high hopes for the future of the company: “I just hope we make fantastic, positive theatre that enhances the lives of the audience and those in the company creating it, and that we also train the next generation of brilliant artists at the same time.”

Emma is very secretive about what she has in the pipeline for Wise Children: “I do have specific plans, but they’re secret, so I’m not going to tell you! I have the next four years planned out, but I’m not going to tell anyone just yet.”

So why does she think people should visit the Belgrade next month to see Wise Children? “The show is a celebration of theatre. It’s funny, full of music, and is really a modern Shakespeare full of twists and turns, knots, twins and cases of mistaken identity. But ultimately, it’s a show about endurance, joy and hope.”

Wise Children shows at Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre from Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 April.

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Belgrade Theatre
Coventry

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It was only when we were half-way down the M5 and I thought I ought to google where exactly we were going for lunch that I twigged that Aldwyn’s, Malvern’s swish new bistro, is part of a massive new retirement complex, Ellerslie, that opened last autumn.

My heart immediately sank a little, thinking that we’d be spending an hour seated on easy-wipe formica chairs, feeling very out of place and surrounded by a death-like silence.

Happily, after a few hours at Aldwyn’s, I was able to reassess my prejudices, and I actually left wishing that I was 30 years older and therefore eligible to move in. To explain: like so many retirement villages that are popping up around the country, Ellerslie has made a point of putting in high-end facilities to tempt in visitors from the local community. There’s a state-of-the-art gym, pool and salon that rivals any expensive spa I’ve visited, not to mention a £4 million art collection on loan from regional galleries.

Then there’s the restaurant. Aldwyn’s is set within a sensitively restored Grade II listed Regency mansion, and the interiors most certainly fit the magnificence of the building (think plush velvet and ornate contemporary lighting). The menu is divided into starters, light bites, classics and mains. Pretty much all of it is home-made, from the haggis bon-bon that accompanied pan-seared scallops (£10.50) to the brioche buns for my three beef sliders (£10.50), not to mention the wonderful skin-on chips.

The house-cured salmon starter (£8.50) was presented with a tart cucumber pickle and rich beetroot puree, whilst the oven-roasted lamb rump with potato gratin (£18.50) was well executed, though perhaps needed more baby veg to sit alongside the generous heap of meat.

Dessert of tiramisu was dense and rich, served with home-made biscotti.

The chefs at Aldwyn’s are keen on paying attention to detail and doing things properly, and all credit to them for that. The kitchen was occasionally on the slow side, but this was more than made up for by the waiting staff, who were relaxed and yet perfectly on the ball: gold stars to the waitress, who magicked up crayons and paper from her apron for my tetchy one-year-old, and also to Simon, Ellerslie’s general manager, who knew all his residents by name and is clearly a perfect host.

To buy a property at Ellerslie will set you back upwards of £300k. A visit to Aldwyn’s provides a taste of this upmarket lifestyle, but for the price of a moderately expensive lunch. Visit if you can.

Helen Stallard

**REVIEW: Aldwyn’s at Ellerslie**

A taste of an upmarket lifestyle at Malvern’s swish new retirement-village bistro

Food: ★★★★★

Service: ★★★★★

Ambience: ★★★★★

Overall value: ★★★★★

OVERALL ★★★★★

Aldwyn’s at Ellerslie
Abbey Road
Malvern
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Tel: 01684 879233

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**SUMMER 2019 HIGHLIGHTS**

**WORDS & IDEAS**
An Audience with Joanna Trollope  
Thu 25 Apr

**COMEDY**
Stewart Francis  
Into the Sunset  
Thu 25 Apr

**MUSIC/THEATRE**
Le Gateau Chocolat  
Icons  
Fri 26 Apr

**FAMILY**
Le Gateau Chocolat  
Duckie  
Sat 27 Apr

**MUSIC**
Bill Laurance + James Heather  
Sat 27 Apr

**WORDS & IDEAS**
Sofie Hagen  
Bubblewrap & Happy Fat book launch  
Fri 10 May

**WORDS & IDEAS**
An Audience with Harry Redknapp  
Sun 12 May

**MUSIC**
Duke Special  
Sat 18 May

**MUSIC**
Catrin Finch & Seckou Keita  
Thu 23 May

**FAMILY**
Freckle Productions and Rose Theatre Kingston  
ZOG  
by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler  
Fri 24 - Sun 26 May

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Award-winning chef to oversee Stratford’s Hotel Indigo restaurant

The award-winning co-owner of the Michelin-starred Harwood Arms in Fulham is set to open the Woodsman restaurant in Stratford-upon-Avon’s Hotel Indigo this spring. Mike Robinson, who will be serving as executive chef in the restaurant alongside head chef Jon Coates, will create a menu that reflects his passion for British produce and sustainable wild food. The restaurant will have on-site butchery facilities and a feasting room to accommodate whole carcasses being served in front of guests.

Worcester’s popular gin jamboree returns

Worcester’s Gin Jamboree is returning to Hartlebury Castle on 9 March. With up to 150 different gins and even more tonic/garnish combinations available to try, this is an event that no gin enthusiast can afford to miss. Tickets are priced at £20 per person and include a keepsake glass and one gin & tonic of your choice.

New pizzeria set to open in Coventry

American-style restaurant MOD Pizza is the latest addition to Coventry city centre’s restaurant quarter, Cathedral Lanes. The brand, which has 300-plus branches across the UK and US, has taken ownership of the unit next to Zizzi. It will serve artisan pizzas with classic toppings and build-your-own-salad options. The restaurant’s opening date is yet to be announced.

The Butchers Social serves up nine-course tasting menu

Warwickshire bar & restaurant The Butchers Social has launched a brand new tasting menu. Costing £70 per person and boasting ‘the finest seasonal produce’, the nine-course menu features dishes including celeriac risotto, glazed pig cheek, pan-fried cod and lamb wellington. Commenting on the tasting menu, owner Mike Bullard said: “The Butchers Social has always been about serving up the best possible food in a more relaxed environment than traditional restaurants. In the kitchen, we aim to create dishes which have familiarity - food that people know and love - but taking it to the next level. That’s why we’ve launched this tasting menu; to celebrate the sophistication of our a la carte menu and showcase the fact that we can remove the formalities of traditional dining without compromising on incredible-quality food.”

New gourmet Jamaican jerk chicken restaurant brings the carnival spirit to Solihull’s Touchwood Centre

The UK’s first gourmet Jamaican jerk chicken restaurant will open in Solihull’s Touchwood shopping centre this month. Jamaya’s menu features traditional Jamaican charcoal-grilled jerk chicken, fried chicken, burgers, popular Irie sides and craft beers. The restaurant uses a traditional Caribbean slow-smoke method to give its food a tender texture and spicy-sweet flavour. Commenting on the opening, Jamaya’s Managing Director, Byron Carnegie, said: “My grandparents have always done a lot of authentic Jamaican cooking, which has been a big influence on my own cooking style and love for Irie food. The flavours of our jerk chicken are amazing, but I’d also recommend the really tasty ‘festivals’, which are like dumplings but sweeter.” Jamaya will be open seven days a week from 11am to 10.30pm.
TUE 12 MAR

LAUREN ZHANG
(PIANO)

1.05PM RECITAL HALL
ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVatoire

She won BBC Young Musician in 2018 after capturing millions of hearts with her thrilling rendition of Prokofiev’s Second Piano Concerto – this spring, the exceptionally talented Lauren Zhang graces Royal Birmingham Conservatoire once more.

RBC JAZZ ORCHESTRA & JOE SPINOZA: A CELEBRATION OF THE ART OF JAZZ SINGING
FRI 15 MAR
6.30PM

PETER DONOHOE PIANO RECITAL
FRI 22 MAR
7PM

YCAT AT THE CONSERVatoire:
BENJAMIN BAKER (VIolin) AND DANIEL LEBHARDT (PIANO)
WED 27 MAR
2.05PM

Full listings at:
WWW.BCU.AC.UK/CONCERTS | 0121 331 5909

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, 200 Jennens Road, B4 7XR

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Birmingham City University
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 14 March

Since its formation in 1946, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) has operated under the directorship of some of the world’s most respected conductors, Rudolf Kempe and Andre Previn included. Based in the beautiful surroundings of Chelsea’s Cadogan Hall, the orchestra is no stranger to the recording studio, regularly laying down soundtracks for films and enjoying a fruitful partnership with numerous commercial record companies. This Coventry appearance sees the RPO and veteran ballet maestro Barry Wordsworth (pictured) devoting the whole of the concert’s second half to Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake. Mozart’s Piano Concerto No.22 and Sibelius’ Karelia Suite complete the bill.

CBSO: Mirga Conducts Shostakovich
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 16 March

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Music Director Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla here gets her teeth into three works by Dmitri Shostakovich, one of which, his triumphant fifth symphony, received a standing ovation lasting more than half an hour when it was premiered in 1937. Not only was the piece a real crowd-pleaser, it also met with a favourable response from the authorities - a new experience for Shostakovich - with Stalin viewing it as being reflective of the composer’s new-found ability to tow the (Communist) Party line. Completing the evening’s programme is Shostakovich’s First Piano Concerto (played by Russian sensation Anna Vinnitskaya - pictured) and The Limpid Stream - premiered two years before the Fifth and one of the Shostakovich pieces to which Stalin had taken exception, claiming that it didn’t provide an accurate portrayal of peasant life on a collective farm.

Royal String Quartet
Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa, Fri 22 March

Poland’s Royal String Quartet visit Leamington for the eighth time, and as usual present a programme of real contrasts. Topped and tailed by Schubert compositions, the quartet’s latest concert also sees them rising to the challenge of Arvo Pärt’s Fratres, Karol Szymanowski’s String Quartet No.1 in C and James MacMillan’s highly acclaimed Memento.

Chandos Symphony Orchestra
Malvern Theatres, Sun 17 March

Malvern’s very own amateur orchestra are joined by pianist Aydin Onac for the first concert of their 40th anniversary season. The programme features Berlioz’s effervescent Roman Carnival Overture, Rachmaninov’s piano concerto no.2 and Mahler’s first symphony, Titan. Originally a work of five movements rather than the four it eventually became, Titan has long been a firm favourite of orchestras and audiences alike, despite having initially met with a decidedly mixed reception.

Ex Cathedra: Fire Burning In Snow
St Mary’s Church, Warwick, Tues 26 March

British choir and early music ensemble Ex Cathedra have based their reputation on the performance of choral music from the 15th century onwards, each year presenting a season of diverse programmes in a variety of venues in and around the Midlands region. Their latest concert sees them combining ‘the polyphonic music of the European Renaissance with a selection of joyous Latin American rhythms’. Ex Cathedra founder and conductor Jeffrey Skidmore takes to the podium.
“It’s a rollercoaster. People do end up on their feet often, and you try to take them along. I think that’s the point of music; it’s escapism, it’s about lifting people up and showing them something different. I think that’s important.”
Seth Lakeman

marks the 400th anniversary of The Mayflower’s journey to the New World

As a native of Devon, folk singer-songwriter Seth Lakeman is planning to mark an important historical landmark for the county next year.

“The most recent project I’ve been working on is the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower, the Pilgrim Fathers’ boat, and their journey over to the New World,” explains Seth. “So I’m writing the music for a theatre show that’s going to happen in June next year.”

The Puritans who became known as the Pilgrim Fathers set sail on the Mayflower from Plymouth in September 1620. By the end of that year, they had established the ‘Plimoth Plantation’, one of the earliest English settlements in North America.

Lakeman has ambitious plans to mark their momentous journey: “We’ll call it The Pilgrim’s Tale, and it will be music with visuals. It’s a real journey around the west country, from shipwrecks to farmers, to train drivers and legends of the moors. Musically, it’s very colourful, it’s very uplifting at moments, and it’s a very good show, we hope.”

Seth reveals that the recruitment of Kit Hawes on guitar helped to influence the overall sound of The Well Worn Path.

“We were exploring the [Fender] Stratocaster guitar - that Richard Thompson sound and the way he writes within it - and it’s certainly the sound that will come out in Shrewsbury and Birmingham. It’s probably the coolest sound we’ve ever had.”

The Well Worn Path is Seth’s ninth album release. His second album, Kitty Jay, earned him a nomination for the prestigious Mercury Prize in 2005, alongside some notable company.

“It was a big year. Coldplay, KT Tunstall, the launch of Kaiser Chiefs, Bloc Party’s first record - I was up against some big acts.”

The eventual winner of the award was Antony And The Johnsons, but Seth acknowledges his nomination as a real turning point in his career: “The Mercury seemed more of an event back then than it does now. I was performing, and it was the biggest step in my career. I’ve had some incredible hurdles, but that was the one that broke my career.”

Seth has since shared the stage with the likes of Billy Bragg, Jethro Tull, Mumford & Sons and the Levellers. More recently he’s added the name of one of rock’s legendary frontmen to his list of collaborators - Led Zeppelin’s Robert Plant: “He’s a bit like a father figure now. Robert is someone who’s a massive inspiration and a very energetic, creative force who you can only look up to. I feel quite honoured to be part of his whole setup and to be able to call him a mate. He’ll definitely come to some of the gigs that we do on this tour.”

If Plant decides to rock up in Shrewsbury or Birmingham, what can he expect to see when Seth walks on stage?

“It’s a real journey around the west country, from shipwrecks to farmers, to train drivers and legends of the moors. Musically, it’s very colourful, it’s very rhythmic, it’s quite high energy, but there are also very stripped-back moments that are quite emotional. “It’s a rollercoaster. People do end up on their feet often, and you try to take them along. I think that’s the point of music; it’s escapism, it’s about lifting people up and showing them something different. I think that’s important.”

Seth plays Shrewsbury’s Theatre Severn on Sunday 3 March and Birmingham’s Glee Club on Wednesday 27 March.

by Stephen Taylor
SOMEBWHERE SPECIAL...
Celebrating 40 years of 2-Tone at Coventry Music Museum...

In the summer of 1979, 2-Tone Records, an independent label from Coventry, released Gangsters by The Specials, as they would become known). The single signalled the start of a musical revolution. Over the next few years, 2-Tone would become a voice of protest against the Margaret Thatcher-led Conservative government.

The 2-Tone movement boasted an exciting roster of bands and a distinctive black-and-white chequered logo featuring a sharp-dressed man in a pork-pie hat. And, in Jerry Dammers - who, as leader of The Specials, would be responsible for some of the most memorable tunes of the 1980s - it had an iconoclastic and gifted founder.

Forty years on, 2-Tone’s contribution to British music is being celebrated at the Coventry Music Museum.

Pete Chambers, the museum’s director and curator, remembers when Gangsters skanked its way from his home city to the top 10 in the UK chart: “The Clash had been playing with reggae and punk, but I think The Specials took it to another level, and it was incredible. Britain – a response to escalating racial tension and social deprivation.

The band’s single, Ghost Town – a damning indictment of Thatcher-led policies - topped the charts in July 1981. Its success coincided with an outbreak of inner-city rioting across Britain - a response to escalating racial tension and social deprivation.

The video for Ghost Town featured a scene where the band are singing the song’s refrain in a classic Vauxhall Cresta. A re-creation of the car has become a popular new attraction at the Music Museum.

“We believe that parts of our Ghost Town car are from the original,” says Pete. “People love the car - everybody wants their photo taken in it.”

Just like the label that inspired a couple of female fans from east Asia to make a 6,000-mile pilgrimage, the Coventry Music Museum is an independent operation, with funding mainly provided by admission charges: “We’re part of the 2-Tone Village, made by the band announced they would play four nights in July in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. Also, one of the things we’re doing is ‘kids go free’. We want to educate the kids about 2-Tone, so throughout this year they can visit the museum for free, as long as they’re accompanied by an adult. We’ve also got a little comic book that explains about 2-Tone in a child-friendly way.”

While Pete acknowledges that the museum is inspired by 2-Tone, he’s also keen to celebrate the work of other musicians, not only from Coventry but also neighbouring towns and cities. These include Frank Ifield, Lieutenant Pigeon, The Enemy and The Primitives. But it’s the story of a Coventry-born woman who pioneered British electronic music which attracts a significant number of visitors to the museum... As a member of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, Delia Derbyshire took an original tune by Ron Grainer and helped to compose the Dr Who theme in 1963. Her innovative approach to recording music created some of the earliest electronic sounds, many of which were way ahead of their time. Derbyshire died in 2001 at the age of 64.

“After 2-Tone, she’s the next most popular pilgrimage people make. Delia’s definitely number two - we have a lot of people coming for that. It’s a shame she never saw any of this.

“We got a road named after her in Coventry. The local authority wanted to call it ‘street’ or ‘road’, but I said we should have the double meaning of ‘way’, because Delia liked to do things her own way. So it became Derbyshire Way.”

Coventry Music Museum is located at 80 Walsgrave Road, Coventry, CV2 4ED. For more information, visit covmm.co.uk

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The Coral
The Assembly, Leamington, Fri 15 March
After a five-year hiatus, The Coral released seventh studio album Distance Inbetween in 2016. Their return saw the band joined by guitarist Paul Molloy, formerly of The Zutons. Best known for singles Dreaming Of You, In The Morning, Pass It On and Don’t Think You’re The First, the influential five-piece are on tour following the release of latest album Move Through The Dawn.

Urban Folk Quartet
Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 16 March
The Urban Folk Quartet are like no other folk band. With Birmingham’s vibrant and diverse music scene having a significant influence on their work, they dabble in all kinds of sounds, from funk grooves and Middle Eastern melodies to afrobeat and north Indian rhythms. They tug their collective forelock in the direction of more traditional folk too, describing their music as ‘fiddle-led’ and drawing heavily on celtic dance forms and traditional song.

Erja Lyytinen
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 30 March
With a sound rooted in both traditional and modern blues that successfully blends styles including jazz, pop, soul and rock, Erja Lyytinen was voted best guitarist in the 2017 European Blues Awards. Her latest album, Stolen Hearts, sees the ‘Finnish slide goddess’ working alongside multi-platinum-selling engineer and producer Chris Kimsey, best known for his contributions to Rolling Stones albums Sticky Fingers and Some Girls.

Ferocious Dog
The Empire, Coventry, Fri 15 March
A popular act on the festival scene and well known for their high-octane live performances, Ferocious Dog are a full-on six-piece band that play folk music infused with rock, reggae and Celtic vibrations. Each gig sees them liaising with local food banks to organise a charity food drop for the homeless. It’s an undertaking which their fans have very much bought into, taking along non-perishable food, blankets and toiletries to their shows.

George Ezra
Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, 17 March
George Ezra enjoyed a certified 4x platinum success with debut album Wanted On Voyage. The 2014 release amassed an impressive 122 weeks in the charts, four of which were spent in the top slot. One of the biggest-selling male artists of the decade and often described as having a voice beyond his years, George recently released second album Staying At Tamara’s, featuring hit single Shotgun - another chart-topper. He visits the Midlands this month as part of his first ever headline arena tour.

Feet
The Tin Music & Arts, Coventry, Fri 8 March; The Bristol Pear, Birmingham, Sat 9 March
Whilst all juggling the demands of their final year at university in Coventry, indie newcomers Feet hit the road last summer to perform around the UK, appearing at festivals including Field Day, Truck and Tramlines, to name but a few. Due to release their debut album this summer, they’re here taking their raucous live show on its first national headline tour.
SAT 25TH & SUN 26TH MAY ‘19

MAIN STAGE

MIXMAG ARENA

THE LOS ANGELES CABARET STAGE

THE FUTURE STAGE

COMMUNITY STALLS

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Rising star Kiri Pritchard-McLean is making a name for herself as a standup comedian, podcaster, MC and sketch trouper. She’s also flying the flag for Wales - although born in Gloucester, she was raised on a farm in Anglesey. “I absolutely identify as Welsh. I love playing gigs in Wales because I think the audiences have got a peculiar sensibility. Maybe some of that seeps into my standup. I think it definitely shows in my sketch group because three out of four of us are Welsh.”

The sketch group to which Kiri refers is Gein’s Family Giftshop, which she formed with Kath Hughes and Edward Easton. Adam Scott-Rowley joined later. “Kath and Ed are the two funniest, most talented people I know, so spending time with them is amazing. When I start directing, they take direction so brilliantly and they’re just a joy to watch. There’s something about Geins that keeps us all coming back to working together and pursuing it. We love doing it so much and we love the little gang.”

When she’s not busy with standup, Kiri runs comedy musical night Amusical, where the audience enjoy (or are subjected to) standups performing their favourite musical numbers. “It’s a really fun, silly, joyous, underdog, campy, naughty vibe, which is not like anything else that I do. I love it. And the band are incredible, so everyone sounds great whether they are or not! The audience are just brilliant; we’re very, very lucky. I think Richard Herring is pencilled in to do it in June.”

So has Kiri ever thought about creating a musical? “I’d need to have some time off to actually write it, but I’d love to. But it’s also very hard at the moment, as the landscape’s changed because everyone watched Hamilton and went, ‘Well, what’s the point... that’s the benchmark!’ You only want to do something if it’s excellent, and do I think I could write an excellent musical? Probably not.”

As though standup and a musical night aren’t enough, Kiri also has a podcast with fellow comedian Rachel Fairburn, in which they discuss, amongst other things, serial killers - a macabre subject which seems peculiarly popular with comedians. Does she have any thoughts about why that might be? “People who do comedy tend to be weird outsiders, which that genre is all about. Comedians have a much darker sensibility with each other. Everyone I knew growing up, we were all into horror and comedy, and when you start doing comedy, you’re like, ‘That’s quite enough of that!’”

To top off her already-jampacked schedule, Kiri has been hosting BBC Radio 4extra’s topical comedy show, Newsjack. “It’s had some great hosts, and you don’t want to be the one who nobody talks about - or who everyone talks about! I just want to do a solid job and keep my integrity. I really believe in it as a programme because it’s crowd-sourced and is a genuine opportunity for people to hone their skills and get writing. It’s a dark art! Surely with so demanding a professional life, something is going to have to give for Kiri. Might she, for example, jettison the standup comedy? “I would never want to do that. I basically feel like I’ve got several plates spinning - some things I’m doing badly, some things I’m doing well. Geins is doing a new show in Edinburgh this year, so I won’t do a solo show there because I don’t have time to do a good job of both of them. It’s so annoying because you just wish you could do all of them! Sometimes stuff has to give, and at the moment it’s going to be my standup, and that’s fine, because it’s important to me that Geins do a good show. I love everything I do, and I don’t want to give up anything!”

Proving herself as a comedy force across so many different platforms, could a Netflix special be on the horizon? “Everyone would love a Netflix special, surely? I’ve just done a special for Comedy Central that’ll be out soon. That was really fun to do. It’s great because whole new audiences are opening up for people. The comedy coming out of Britain onto Netflix is only going to get better and better.”

Unless you’ve been under a rock or wearing a blindfold, you might recognise Kiri not just for her standup but also her signature style - dressed to the nines in sequins. “Where did it come from, I hear you ask. I have a respect for old-school showbiz and love all that stuff. When I first started, I didn’t think there was anything that stood out about me as a comic, so I thought maybe if I always wore something interesting and different, then people would at least remember that about me. I always like to dress up when I’m on stage because I spend my nights out gigging, so I’ve got all these great clothes I can’t wear because I’m working. It’s sort of a nod to working men’s clubs and musicals.”

Kiri definitely seems like she’s on the path to stellar success, even if she’s being modest about it. So what might she call her autobiography? - if she ever got round to writing it? “Well, I’m trying to push the agenda at the moment of ‘Wales’ favourite daughter’, which I’m determined to become, so I’m going to call it that. Riding on the back of a corgi, with a Welsh dragon draped round my shoulders!”

Kiri Pritchard-McLean brings her Victim, Complex show to Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham on Thursday 14 March and Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Friday 26 April

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Comedy

Carl Hutchinson
The REP, Birmingham, 9 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 23 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!”

Ken Cheng
Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 6 March; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 3 May
There’s plenty more to Ken Cheng than a standup comedy routine. The son of Chinese immigrants in the UK, he not only earned a place at Cambridge to study mathematics, he also decided to drop out. He’s a professional poker player too, so even if the jokes dry up, his cash flow hopefully won’t. Ken won the Dave Funniest Joke of the Fringe award in 2017, beating the opposition with the gag: “I’m not a fan of the new pound coin, but then again, I hate all change.”

Mark Steel
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 14 March; Evesham Arts Centre, Fri 29 March
“I started doing standup in 1982, around the circuit of bizarre gigs,” recalls highly regarded writer and comedian Mark Steel. “I’d go on after jugglers and escapologists and people who banged nails into their ear. Since then, I’ve spoken at lots of demonstrations, union meetings, protests and benefits - and yet capitalism still seems to rule the world. Maybe I’m a jinx!”

A well-established performer on the UK comedy circuit, Mark’s CV includes the BAFTA-nominated Mark Steel Lectures for BBC Two, BBC One’s Have I Got News For You and Radio Four’s News Quiz. He visits the Midlands with his latest touring show, Every Little Thing’s Gonna Be Alright.

Rhod Gilbert
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 3 March; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 7 March; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 17 - Sat 18 May
Welsh funnyman Rhod Gilbert has acquired a huge and still-growing following thanks to a high-energy brand of grumpiness that marks him out as one of the top comedians of his generation. With several sell-out UK tours to his name, the multi-award-winner is this month returning to the Midlands with a brand new show. Rhod’s best-loved gags include: “In the Bible, God made it rain for 40 days and 40 nights. That’s a pretty good summer for Wales. That’s a hosepipe ban waiting to happen.” And “A spa hotel? It’s like a normal hotel, only in reception there’s a picture of a pebble.”

Lucy Frederick
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 16 March
Lucy Frederick is a comedian who tries not to set the bar too high for herself. Asked in an interview what reaction she looks for in an audience, she replied: “Largely I look for laughter. But I will take smiling. Or not grimacing. Beggars can’t be choosers.” It’s in part this self-effacing attitude which has seen Lucy make her way up the greasy comedy pole at an impressive rate of knots. She’s also got some very good gags and isn’t averse to bearing her soul - a fact which goes some way towards explaining why she’s called this latest show Even More Naked.

Olga Koch
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 3 March
The daughter of a former deputy prime minister of Russia who went on to become a game-show host and live in exile, Olga Koch recounts the story of her father’s treatment at the hands of the country he once served with distinction. In the process, she invites her audience to join her on a journey through what is essentially a family album by sharing a selection of home videos from her childhood (as well as vintage clips of pro-Gorbachev TV adverts!). An autobiographical show with a heavy dollop of espionage thrown in for good measure, this debut offering from Olga was nominated in the best newcomer category at last summer’s Edinburgh Comedy Awards.

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Kieran Hodgson
Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Wed 27 March; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 28 March
With the epic Brexit saga continuing to excite and bore in equal measure, Kieran Hodgson here decides to take a stroll down memory lane and tell the tale of how Britain joined Europe in the first place. To do so, he returns to the decade that taste forgot and discovers that the 1970s were about way more than just ‘TISWAS, the colour brown and the words “Let’s go on strike again”’. A three-time Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee, character comedian Kieran has built an impressive reputation on the standup circuit and is well worth a look.

Stephen Bailey
The Core Theatre, Solihull, Wed 20 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 23 March
Potty-mouthed comedian Stephen Bailey may not be a household name but he’s certainly coming up fast on the tracks. Having supported Katherine Ryan and Jenny Éclair on sell-out UK tours, he’s now hitting the road with his own show, Our Kid. Describing himself as a ‘working-class, ginger, gay, northern comic’, Stephen has a black belt in tae kwon-do and freely admits to loving a conspiracy theory - preferably one involving a celebrity and a cucumber...

Podfest Birmingham
Town Hall, Birmingham, Sat 23 & Sun 24 March
Birmingham Town Hall is this month hosting the city’s first ever Podfest. The brand new event will see an array of podcasters bringing their expertise to the stage in an exclusive set of live shows. Contributors include Stuart Goldsmith, whose Comedians Comedian shines a light on the joke-writing process, and Richard Herring, who will be chatting with a surprise guest from the city. Others taking part include Scummy Mummies Helen Thorn and Ellie Gibson - whose podcast features YouTube and Instagram sensations Louise Pentland and Emma Conway - and Sofie Hagen with her Moh-Pod (Made Of Human) podcast, in which the UK-based Danish comedian ‘sits down with a lovely person and talks about life’. Joe Lycett with panel game Do The Right Thing, Sarah Millican and Beverley Knight in the ‘by women for women’ Standard Issue, and the ever-brilliant No Such Thing As Fish complete the weekend line-up of shows.
It’s been a whole decade since Les Misérables last visited the region, so to say that the production’s springtime return to Birmingham Hippodrome is eagerly anticipated would be something of an understatement.

On the eve of the show opening in Manchester, Killian Donnelly, who stars as Jean Valjean, chatted to us about all things Les Misérables...

How does it feel to have made your way through the Les Mis ranks, from starting as a swing to now playing Jean Valjean?

I feel a lot of pressure but am loving every minute of it. Starting as a swing in 2008, I looked up to the Valjeans of the day and asked them questions, but now I’m the one being asked questions! I just try to relay my experiences to them rather than saying, “Well, when I played so-and-so…” It’s hard not to do that, but it’s an incredible baton to be passed. I’m loving every minute of playing Jean Valjean - it’s just so surreal that I’m now the older guy!

Who was Jean Valjean when you started with the production in 2008?

An American guy named Drew Sarich, who brought rock to the role. Drew came to work smiling every day, and smashed it out of the park at every performance. He didn’t go round trying to inspire, he just naturally did. Following him, there was Simon Bowman and David Shannon, but I will never forget Drew. He gave the same performance on a Wednesday matinee as he did on a Saturday night and had a real swagger about him. He was a rock star!

Have you drawn inspiration from your predecessors for your interpretation of Jean Valjean?

I think Michael Bublé said that when you take something from another performer, people call it stealing. But if you take something from a bunch of other performers, it’s research! My Valjean is definitely a mixture of Drew, a bit of Colm (Wilkinson) and John Owen-Jones etc.

You’ve performed in the stage show, the Oz anniversary concert and featured in the film. Do you have a Les Mis highlight?

With the Oz concert, I was excited to work with James Powell, who’s our current tour director. I was able to see how he worked with a massive cast of 90, as opposed to a standard-size cast of thirtysomething. I played Courfeyrac (one of the students) in the concert, so it was a pleasure to watch James in action. Also, I managed to choose my moment backstage to speak to Colm Wilkinson - the original London Valjean and a special guest at the concert. He was so friendly, so encouraging, and asked me who I was playing in the show in town. I said Enjolras, and I had long blonde hair down to my shoulders at the time. He said, “Well at least you’ve got the hair for it!” It was nice Irish banter.

With the movie, my highlight was filming the barricade scenes. The director, Tom Hooper, had 60 extras dressed as peasants and students, plus five cameramen brought in about 20 minutes before the end of our call one day. We were stood on a purpose-built street in Pinewood Studios and Tom asked us to tear the place apart and build a barricade. So in 20 minutes, we ripped doors and shutters off their hinges, boosted each other up to get into houses and pushed pianos out of windows etc. We destroyed the place and couldn’t believe we were running around and getting paid to do it! The production team had built another barricade on a neighbouring sound stage, which was meant to come in at the weekend, removing our makeshift one. But ours was so good that they just put screws and bolts into it to hold it together and used that for the film. As we built it with our bare hands, I could say that I knew where that shutter came from, where that coffin came from or the elephant tusk that came from down the street there, on the right. Moments like that will never happen again, so it was very special.

Have you been able to watch the BBC TV version of Les Misérables?

I haven’t, but everyone’s saying how brilliant it is. There was a moment the other day when I was flicking through channels and saw the part where Valjean was going to meet Thénardier and Thénardier attacks him. His whole gang pin Valjean down to a table, but with his strength, he pushes the gang off and puts a hot poker to his arm. I saw that and thought it looked incredible. I’ve heard that Fantine’s story is stunning too and really

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shows what I Dreamed A Dream is all about. Things you can’t do on stage, you can replicate on TV and in film, so I’m dying to see it.

Do you have a favourite musical number in the show, either to perform or listen to?
Stars is the ultimate Les Mis moment for me. Ever since I was 23 and standing at the side of the stage watching Earl Carpenter sing it as Javert, it’s been a real pinch-me moment. I still have those moments today. One minute I’m talking to Katie Hall (Fantine) backstage about our dogs, then she goes on stage to sing I Dreamed A Dream and I think to myself, “That’s Fantine in Les Mis!” Also, when I sing I Dreamed A Dream and I think to myself, “Wow, it’s Éponine!”

The last UK tour of Les Mis was 10 years ago, for the 25th anniversary. Why do you think it’s taken so long to get the show back on the road?
I think it was about not sending it round again too quickly. It allowed things to settle, and when the producers decided to put another tour out, they knew that people would be hungry for it. The last time Les Mis was in Dublin, for instance, was 23 years ago, with Colm Wilkinson, and it was the fastest-selling show at the venue this time around. Cameron Macintosh has said that he’s still blown away by the passion which longstanding fans have for the show. I don’t think people can understand the power of Les Mis, especially in this version, until they see it. Also, I think people want to experience the cinematic feel of this new production.

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Do you have an opinion about this new production of Les Mis replacing the original in the West End? It’s a decision that’s caused quite a stir...
I didn’t realise what a ruckus it had created until recently, when I heard about a petition going round. When you compare the amount of signatures on it to the fact that, in one show, we perform the new version to 2,500 audience members who’re on their feet at the end, I think people are generally commenting on something that they don’t know the full facts about. You have to give new things a chance. Les Mis has always been a stunning production, but if you’re able to add to it with new technology, why wouldn’t you? It’s got real colour, it’s fast-paced and is much darker. My mam is the first person to say she loves or hates something, but the one thing she said after watching this version was that the storytelling was a lot clearer. There have been standing ovations every night of the tour so far, so we’re really excited to visit other UK venues and find out what the public reaction is to the new version.

Most recently you’ve been playing Charlie in Kinky Boots, both in the West End and on Broadway. Donning heels every night seems a far cry from the French Revolution! Do you find it easy to switch from one character to another?
No, not at all. It’s unlikely that I’ll perform in a concert or release an album because I like to get lost in a character - as ‘actor-y’ as that sounds. Whatever’s going on in my life, I can filter it out in some way. Valjean is the biggest gift ever because he takes me through every emotion. I had to go back and film the screening for Kinky Boots in the Les Mis break between Leicester and Dublin, so I still had the Valjean look. When I put the boots back on, my lower back was the first thing to go because I realised I didn’t have the body for it anymore! I had a bit of a Ned Kelly belly going on and my calves were in bits! However, after about four or five hours walking around backstage, I got used to them again and muscle memory brought it back to me.

Other than looking in the mirror and seeing Valjean, I had to almost separate myself from it and start being the English shoe salesman again. After finding a voice for Valjean, with my belly hanging out and needing to really use my diaphragm, I had to go back to singing Cyndi Lauper pop music as Charlie, which is using my upper chest. The musical director spent a long vocal session with me, and by the end of it, Charlie was back. But after filming ended, I only had one day of rest and then had to find Valjean’s voice again. It’s not like popping into one theatre and then another - it really strains you - but I wouldn’t change it for the world.

Are you looking forward to spending some time in Birmingham?
I can’t wait! I went to Birmingham to see my friend in Oliver! years ago, but I never got to experience the city properly. When I got offered the Les Mis tour, one of the main reasons I said an instant yes was so that I could see parts of the UK that I’d never seen before. When we get a proper sit-down for six weeks, like we have in Birmingham, I’ll be able to drive around with my dog and find different locations to take him for walks. Also, there are so many people I know who’ve toured before and who make suggestions about where to go, including bars to drink in and good places to buy your coffee etc. I’m really looking forward to it.”

Les Misérables shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 2 April to Saturday 11 May

26 whatsonlive.co.uk
War Horse
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 27 March - Sat 6 April
Described as ‘the theatrical event of the decade’ when it opened in the West End in 2009, War Horse has continued to garner great praise in the ensuing years. Based on Michael Morpurgo’s hugely popular 1982 novel, it tells the story of a young man named Albert, whose horse, Joey, is sold to the cavalry and shipped to France at the beginning of the First World War. Joey’s subsequent adventures lead to him finding himself alone in a no man’s land. But Albert is in no mood to give up on his beloved companion, and sets out to find him and take him home to Devon.

The show returns to the Midlands having played to more than seven million people in 11 countries around the world.

Bound
Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 14 March
Justice In Motion are the ensemble behind this thought-provoking work, a two-hour production that ably fulfills the physical-theatre company’s primary aim: to raise awareness of social injustice through powerful and visually stunning theatre.

Fusing dance, circus, music, poetry, parkour and projection, the performers present three very different but equally shocking accounts of human trafficking.

If My Father Only Knew
Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 5 - Thurs 7 March
Charlie is a young man grieving the loss of his mother, struggling in his relationship with his father, and determined not to reveal the secret with which he’s been living...

Birmingham writer Nathalie Bázan presents her fifth show at the Old Joint Stock - and is more than likely about to enjoy her fifth sell-out success too.

Focusing on themes of identity, sex and beauty in today’s society, as well as the difficulties faced by young people wishing to express their true self, the play was originally showcased as a devised performance at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 2017.

Bázan established her theatre company, Lying Lips, five years ago, and has previously staged A Slave To Love, Billy Young: A Life On Death Row, The Virgin Marias and Kanada. So if you caught and enjoyed any or all of those previous productions, If My Father Only Knew is an absolute must-see.

ART
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 18 - Sat 23 March
Yasmina Reza’s award-winning play revolves around a seemingly unremarkable painting and the major dispute it triggers between three old friends - a dispute that uncovers longstanding grievances and unspoken misunderstandings...

Nigel Havers, Denis Lawson and Stephen Tomkinson star.
LET’S GET
Kinky!

Kinky Boots struts onto the Birmingham Hippodrome stage...
IN CONVERSATION
WITH KAYI USHE

We caught up with West End star Kayi Ushe, who will be putting on the boots to play drag queen Lola when the show heads to Birmingham this month...

What's the best thing about playing Lola in Kinky Boots?
Being able to sink my teeth into such a multifaceted and exuberant character every day is such an incredible experience. But I can honestly say the best thing about playing Lola is knowing how many people resonate with the character and feel empowered to be themselves after seeing the show.

How easy is it for you personally to relate to the character/ What's your personal experience of drag?
I have no personal experience of drag. I've admired it from a distance as an art form and now having done it and continuing to do it as this character, I have a much deeper appreciation for the holistically transformative art form that it is. It's really easy for me to personally relate to the character, and I think that's what makes this part and this show so unique. We've all been the oddball at some point in our lives without realising that actually, oddness and uniqueness is what makes us who we are. We shouldn't shy away from it.

Give us 3 good reasons why people from the Midlands should bag themselves a ticket NOW!...
Everybody should come and see this show, it really is a show for all. Come and feel seen. Come and feel represented. Come and let us raise you up!

Do you have a favourite one-liner from the show?
My favourite one liner in the show is “I’m not looking for you to say anything.” I think it’s so poignant because how I look, how I dress, how I feel comfortable when I’m being me is not something I need your approval on. Be that men in dresses, women in miniskirts, people wearing their cultural garb, people with tattoos...the list goes on!

How long does it take you to get into character - tell us about the process?
On an average day I get into work about 2 and a half hours before the show, usually to stretch and warm up. Then about 2 hours before the show we start the makeup, which takes 45 minutes. Then there is company vocal warm up and parish notices. After that, it’s back to the dressing room to add the costume, mics and the wig. I’ll usually sing a few bits from the show and then head to the stage for my entrance.

Did you have to have your boots made specially?
All my heels were custom made by Jodie Morrison, owner of “Steppin’ out”. I was fitted for them on my 30th birthday in Chester as it was the only time that worked for all of us and I was already there performing in rep at the Storyhouse.

One of the Kinky Boots sentiments is Be Someone’s Reason To Smile! - what brings a smile to your face?
Seeing audience members up on their feet and singing along at the end of the show, it really is an incredible atmosphere that I feel so happy and grateful to be a part of.
**Theatre previews from around the region**

**Kunene And The King**
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 21 March - Tues 23 April

South African performer, activist and playwright John Kani has not only penned this brand new play, he’s also starring in it. The Black Panther actor is joined by Sir Antony Sher to tell the funny and moving story of two men from markedly different walks of life who are thrust together to reflect on a quarter-century of change in post-apartheid South Africa.

“The play marks 25 years since the first democratic elections in South Africa,” explains Royal Shakespeare Company Artistic Director Gregory Doran. “John started to write the play when he was playing Caliban in 2009, opposite Antony as Prospero, in The Tempest, so we’re thrilled to be staging Kunene And The King’s world premiere.”

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**The Life I Lead**
The REP, Birmingham, Mon 11 - Wed 13 March

Quintessentially English gentleman actor David Tomlinson is best remembered for playing Mr Banks in Mary Poppins - but away from the screen, his own life featured more than its fair share of difficulty and heartbreak...

“I was attracted to The Life I Lead firstly because of the character of Tomlinson himself,” says standup comedian Miles Jupp, who’s starring in this touring version of James Kettle’s biographical stage comedy. “He was a man whose acting performances seemed effortless but which concealed a great skill beneath the surface. It’s a script that contains both comedy and moments of extraordinary sadness and pain, and I hope that I can do the play, and Tomlinson, justice.”

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**Desert Island Flicks**
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 30 March

Two women and some of cinema’s most memorable scenes here combine to provide what’s being described as ‘a blockbuster adventure and rom-com rolled into one’. The ladies in question reimagine, remake and spoof all manner of magic movie moments from timeless classics and modern-day marvels. In the process, they present a production which they describe as existing somewhere between a dance performance, a sketch show, a night at the movies and an epic game of charades.

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**Romeo & Juliet**
The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 13 - Sat 16 March

Widely regarded as Shakespeare’s fifth tragedy, this story of a forbidden and secret love tends to fare less well critically than the rest of the playwright’s high-profile works. Its popularity is nonetheless ensured by its timeless themes and its regular appearance as a study text on the National Curriculum. The show is presented by the National Production Company.

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**Crimes On The Nile**
Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 March

The ever-inventive New Old Friends make another welcome return to the Garrick stage with their latest splendidly inventive comedy thriller. The sister production to last year’s Crimes Under The Sun, this brand new show finds Belgian detective extraordinaire Artemis Arinae embroiled in a challenging murder-mystery while taking a cruise along the Nile. Expect outrageous characters, clever set pieces and a highly motivated cast of four.

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**The 39 Steps**
New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Fri 8 - Sat 30 March

Anybody who remembers the various film versions of John Buchan’s classic spy thriller will be hard-pressed to call any of them ‘humorous’. So it’s a bit weird, to say the least, to think of Patrick Barlow’s stage version of the story having bagged the Olivier Award for best new comedy. Nonetheless, that’s exactly what it managed to do back in 2007, courtesy of some imaginative thinking on the part of its creative team. So why not catch up with handsome hero Richard Hannay as he battles to remain impressively stiff-upper-lipped in the face of dastardly murders and life-threatening encounters with double-crossing secret agents. Oh, and there are some beautiful and mysterious women involved too, so it’s not all bad news for our intrepid hero! Four fearless actors play no fewer than 120 roles in this real gem of a show.
EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF LIVE THEATRE
AT WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE

TUE 12 – SAT 16 MARCH
NATIONAL THEATRE PRESENTS MACBETH

WED 27 MARCH
AN EVENING WITH BRIAN BLESSED

THU 25 APRIL
ELKIE BROOKS

FRI 26 APRIL
JETHRO THE COUNT OF CORNWALL

SAT 27 APRIL
DES O’CONNOR & JIMMY TARBUCK

SUN 28 APRIL
ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

MON 29 APRIL – SAT 4 MAY
CLUB TROPICANA THE MUSICAL

TUE 7 – SAT 11 MAY
MADAGASCAR THE MUSICAL

WED 22 MAY
DREAMBOYS

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The Queen of Improv talks about starring in Edmond de Bergerac at The REP

Josie Lawrence

Improv Queen and renowned actor Josie Lawrence is no stranger to Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Previously she’s graced its stage with performances in Tom Stoppard’s Hapgood and his translation of Chekov’s The Cherry Orchard. She’s also appeared in Eugene Ionesco’s Amedee, Bill Alexander’s The Alchemist and Bryony Lavery’s production of Frozen.

Now she’s preparing to return to the venue for a sixth time, taking on numerous roles in Jeremy Sams’ translation of French theatre phenomenon Edmond de Bergerac. Directed by Roxana Silbert, the ensemble piece features Freddie Fox in the title role as Edmond Rostand, Henry Goodman as Constant Coquelin and Chizzy Akudulo as Maria.

“I play the actress Sarah Bernhardt, who just whisks herself in and whisks back out again,” says Josie. “She’s just one of the many parts I perform in the play. As well as Sarah, I play a prostitute, an old actress, a waitress and a can-can girl, so there’ll be lots of different hats to wear…”

The winner of five Molière awards, Alexis Michalik’s critically acclaimed comedy continues to play to packed houses at the Théâtre du Palais-Royale in Paris.

“It’s a very funny ‘what if’ play,” Josie continues. “It’s about how Edmond Rostand, the writer of Cyrano de Bergerac, got the idea to write his play. Everyone at the time thought it wasn’t going to work because numerous things kept going wrong, but when it was first performed at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin in 1897, it received 40 curtain calls and the applause lasted for an hour. Cyrano made Edmond a huge hero in France, and here we have this slightly fictionalised version of a young man - played by Freddie - his journey, his woes and his success.”

Midlands-born Josie is always happy to return to the region - and in particular to the Birmingham Repertory Theatre - to perform.

“It’s a very friendly theatre, very well run, and I love working with Roxana. The space itself is lovely because it’s huge. It has the feel of a studio to it because the seats go straight down onto the stage. It’s still my local theatre, so I love it.”

Born into a working-class family in Cradley Heath - her father worked at British Leyland - her mother was ‘a lovely mum and housewife’, Josie’s early experiences of theatre consisted of trips into Birmingham to see pantomimes.

She made it known that she wanted to act from the age of five, and at 16 joined local theatre group Oldbury Barlow Players, where her first role was Honey in Who’s Afraid Of Virginia Woolf. Three years at Devon’s Dartington College of Arts (1978 - 1981) resulted in her receiving a Bachelor of Arts honours degree, since which time she’s enjoyed a bountiful career on stage and radio and in television and film.

So which does she enjoy most?

“I love them all. My career trajectory hasn’t followed any particular path. When I finished Theatre College I did a lot of serious theatre. If I had to choose my first love, it would be when I was playing someone who was manically depressed at the Donmar Warehouse with Peter Capaldi. It would’ve been in the early to mid-’80s, and they were doing late-night cabaret there. I stayed behind one night because they were doing improv and needed more girls, so I joined in.

“I then joined the Comedy Store Players, and a producer came along who asked if I’d be interested in doing this thing called Whose Line Is It Anyway. I’m very thankful for that because it made my name. It only used to take two weekends to film, and for the rest of the year I would carry on doing my theatre work, but Whose Line Is It Anyway was what I became mostly known for. “People immediately started to refer to me as a comedian. I didn’t mind that, as I like making people laugh. Equally, though, I like to be challenged, and to do things that I can really get my teeth into. This year is already turning out to be good. After playing Sarah here, I move straight into playing Aunt Ellie in Oklahoma! , which is a fantastic part.”

As she approaches her 60th birthday in June, and with her career still in full flow, is Josie more selective about the roles she accepts?

“I’m not a huge fan of touring anymore. I’m a bit of a home bird. I love my home and where I live. I love coming up to the Midlands, but I don’t think I could spend a year or so touring; it just not me. Some people love it, but I like to get back home in the evening - I like my own bed too much. When I was younger, I loved the partying every night and all of that, but now I live the quieter life, so that impacts on the decisions I make.”

Regular performances with the Comedy Store Players - a troupe of six who turn up at London’s Comedy Store with ‘no script and not the faintest idea what will happen’ - are still a big part of Josie’s life. So what is it about improvisation - and her role with the Players - that holds such appeal?

“It’s the best part-time job in the world and is so much fun to do. I’ve been part of the Comedy Store Players since 1985, on a Wednesday and a Sunday, and when I can’t do it - like when I had to have two years off to perform with the Royal Shakespeare Company - they get guest performers in. Then, when I’ve finished the job, I come back again. It’s immensely funny to do. I did the 30th birthday of Whose Line Is It Anyway at the Royal Albert Hall. It sold out for three shows and we played to about 17,000 people. It was like being a rock star!”

Edmond de Bergerac shows at The REP, Birmingham, from Friday 15 to Saturday 30 March.
Theatre previews from around the region

**Vulvarine: A New Musical**

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 2 March; Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 20 - Sat 23 March

Women intending to check out this brand new musical comedy are advised to grab their tights, spanx and most supportive sports bra in preparation for an evening of female superheroics.

The superhero in question is the astoundingly average Bryony Buckle, whose life seems to be heading nowhere fast. Until, that is, a dose of hormone therapy gone wrong and a well-timed bolt of lightning turn her into Vulvarine, the superhero saviour of all womankind...

**Under The Umbrella**

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 2 - Sat 16 March

This Belgrade run marks the world premiere of a play about a UK-based Chinese woman whose grandmother fears she may be left ‘on the shelf’.

Amy Ng’s Under The Umbrella is set in Coventry and Guangzhou - the capital of Guangdong province in southern China - and is described by the playwright as ‘an exploration of tradition, trauma and triumph in the art of finding love’.

After its run at the Belgrade, the play will visit Poole, Liverpool and London.

**Rouse, Ye Women!**

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Tues 5 March; Netherton Arts Centre, Dudley, Thurs 7 March; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 8 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 31 March; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Tues 9 April; Cradley Heath Library, Thurs 18 April

In 1910, the women chainmakers of the Black Country laid down their tools to strike for better money. They were inspired to do so by charismatic union organiser Mary Reid Macarthur, whose campaign struck a real chord with the nation and led to the introduction of the minimum wage...

Townsend Theatre Productions are the company behind this lively and informative show, revealing the horrors of sweated labour through a selection of rousing traditional songs and moving ballads.

**Truth**

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 March

In an era of fake news, what better time can there be to turn the spotlight on the (maybe) once-simple notion of ‘truth’?

Singer-songwriter Helen Chadwick and Olivier Award-winning Steven Hoggett team up to present this thought-provoking evening of song theatre, basing their production around a selection of real testimonies collected from across the world. “Some are brutal, some hilarious,” says Helen, “but we intend that all are presented in a fresh and exhilarating style!”

**A Song At Twilight**

Malvern Theatres, Mon 25 - Sat 30 March

Noel Coward’s A Song At Twilight was first performed in 1966 at London’s Queen’s Theatre. The production not only marked the legendary actor/playwright’s farewell stage appearance - Coward played the semi-autobiographical role of Sir Hugo Latymer - but also a revival in his fortunes with the critics.

“The most incredible thing has happened,” the playwright wrote in his diary. “Not only has A Song At Twilight opened triumphantly, but the press notices have on the whole been extremely good. Most particularly the Express and the Evening Standard. Fortunately the Sun struck a sour note... which convinced me that I hadn’t entirely slipped.”

Simon Callow and Jane Asher star in this touring revival of the play, in which the old, rude and haughty Sir Hugo sees life take an unexpected turn with the arrival of an old flame...
CHERRY TREE WALK
Sunday 5th May, 2019
See our Cherry Tree Walk in full bloom. Enjoy the beauty that Spring brings to Mitton Manor Gardens. Treat yourself to Afternoon Tea and a glass of beer or champagne to celebrate the Bank Holiday weekend.

LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS
Saturday 29th June, 2019
We are thrilled to be hosting the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra at Mitton Manor Gardens. This spectacular classical concert promises to be a night to remember for the whole family.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2019

SPRING – CHERRY BLOSSOM PAINTING IN ACRYLIC Saturday 11th May, 2019
Following our Cherry Tree Walk, come along to a Painting Workshop in association with local artist, Debbie Chatfield.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE Thursday 4th July, 2019
Garden Theatre production of Pride & Prejudice, in association with Chapterhouse Theatre Company.

NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME OPEN DAY Sunday 7th July, 2019

AUTUMN – FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE PAINTING IN ACRYLIC Saturday 14th September, 2019
As the Autumn foliage starts to turn into fiery colours, join us for another Painting Workshop with local artist Debbie Chatfield.

AUTUMN TOUR & TALK Sunday 29th September, 2019
Our annual Autumn Tour & Talk with Elizabeth Gooch MBE and guests, with an optional three-course Autumn lunch.

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Mitton, Near Penkridge, Staffordshire ST19 5QW
EastEnders’ star rolls into the Midlands with The Girl On The Train

First a bestselling book, then a hit film, The Girl On The Train took the world by storm. Now, a touring stage adaptation of Paula Hawkins’ 2015 novel is rolling into the Midlands, with EastEnders star Samantha Womack in the lead role of Rachel Watson.

“I think the stage version is a response to the obsessions of the public,” says Sam, who shot to stardom in 1991 when she represented the UK in the Eurovision Song Contest.

“Thrillers, detective & police programmes and real-life crime drama are incredibly popular. I know that all the shows I like to watch on Netflix are things like Making Of A Murderer and the new Ted Bundy Tapes series. I think people are more interested in things that are, or could be, real life now. I think people are moving away from genres like fantasy and towards thrillers. The book was such a strong brand and such a success that people are excited to see the story presented how it was in the book. A lot of people were disappointed in the film, I think - some people loved it and others really didn’t. I mean, I loved it because I just love Emily Blunt and everything she does. But really, people just love a good thriller - they really do!”

The Girl On The Train combines thriller with voyeurism. Sam’s character Rachel watches two couples from the train and over time becomes obsessed with them. Sam thinks the immense popularity of the story is largely down to Rachel.

“I think it’s been so popular because Rachel is an anti-hero. She says the wrong things, she’s inappropriate, broken and damaged, which the audience seems to really respond to. I know for sure that the audiences I’ve experienced in the theatre respond really well to Rachel’s bad behaviour and the racy things she says. I think sometimes people enjoy characters who kind of rally against the appropriate way to behave.”

This is also the main reason that Sam was drawn to the role.

“When Rachel is broken - covering up all her damage with drinking - and has this devil-may-care attitude, she also has this really interesting arc to her character. She’s an incredibly bright, strong woman - she’s just kind of lost her way. I was attracted to the recklessness that makes her so interesting. I like the whole renegade vibe she has, where she just disorientates everyone with her madness. I’ve never really been in a situation where I’ve felt the way Rachel does and gone off the rails like she has, so I don’t have any direct inspiration for how to play her character, but sometimes these parts just come and get you. They appear right in front of you and you know exactly how you’d like to play them, so you just go and do it.”

Sam also thinks the book lends itself well to theatre: “There’s actually a lot more licence with theatre to do the dream-like flashback and memory scenes from the book, so you can access Rachel’s brain in these scenarios a lot more than I think you can with film. I think theatrically the plot of the book works really well because you’re able to delve deep into what Rachel is thinking and feeling. Obviously with every new production and adaptation it will change. New actors will play the roles differently, and each adaptation adds things in and cuts things out, but the format is very much the same. I think what happens when audience members come to see it is that they almost forget the exact details of what they’ve already read because they’re so involved in the piece - it’s very captivating.”

Rachel turns amateur detective when Megan, one of the women she’s been watching from the train, goes missing. Sam explains why her character becomes so engaged with the disappearance.

“Rachel sees Megan going missing as the way to get herself back on track. For the first time in months she feels needed by other people. I really got to know that character very well - I knew exactly how to play her. I feel like, with theatre, you just get so much more time to rehearse and build the character before going straight in. I’m also a bit of a control freak! I like the way I have complete control over creating the character. What you see is what you get: the adaptation itself can’t be changed in writing, or edited afterwards, so you completely know what you’re signing up for. I really like that element of control, where what I put out at that very moment is exactly what the audience will see.

“I would say I prefer stage to screen, partly because I’m very impatient and like being able to work the story from start to finish in one night. Television and movies take such a long time to film. Sometimes you’re doing the same scene for a whole day! It’s hard to stay fresh in that kind of environment. With theatre, as soon as you set off playing your character on the night, it feels like you’re in a big race of emotions and acting - it’s very exciting!”

Although she’s thoroughly enjoying starring in The Girl On The Train, Sam admits that she’s looking forward to taking a break afterwards.

“The production is proving very popular, so I know there’s incredible demand for it to continue until after the already-scheduled dates and until the end of the year. I think I need to decide what it’s going to take out of me. I’ve only been playing Rachel for one month and she’s such a hard part to play, as she’s just so emotional. Sometimes it kind of gets under my skin a bit. But I’m definitely having a long break over the summer.

The Girl On The Train shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 18 to Saturday 23 March. The show then visits Shrewsbury’s Theatre Severn from Mon 27 May to Sat 1 June; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry from Mon 13 to Sat 18 May & The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham from Mon 26 August to Sat 31 August
The last chance to see them dance, Vicky Edwards gets the naked truth from the cast of The Full Monty as they embark upon the final tour of the show...
It may be the last ever tour of this particular production, but it is the story that keeps on giving. Originally an award-winning movie, as a stage play The Full Monty has won both awards and hearts. In fact, such is the show’s popularity that as fast as one tour gets underway, producers David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers are compelled to map out the next. Few shows can sustain that level of repetition. But then The Full Monty isn’t an ordinary show.

“It is special,” insists Gary Lucy (famous for playing Luke Morgan in Hollyoaks as well as for roles in EastEnders, The Bill, Footballers’ Wives and as a Dancing on Ice winner) who plays Gaz. Having starred in almost every ‘Monty’ tour to date, he knows just how readily people fall for this funny, poignant and bitter-sweet story.

“We all love it. From proper theatregoers in Cambridge to Blackpool hen parties, everyone has an absolute ball. It is a gift of a role for me.”

Louis Emerick, recently on our screens in Coronation Street, concurs. “This is the third tour for me and it really is a special show. It is a great story that still resonates now. They are also a lovely company to work and travel with.”

Telling the story of six out-of-work steelworkers from Sheffield who put on a strip show to raise much-needed cash, the film went on to become one of the most successful British movies of all time. Writer of both the screenplay and the stage script, Simon Beaufoy is also the talent behind The Hunger Games: Catching Fire and Slumdog Millionaire. Joe Gill (familiar to Emmerdale viewers as Finn Barton) believes the play’s credibility is key to its success.

“It is my first time on the show [he plays Lomper] but everyone knows how iconic it is and what a culture it has, so they come knowing that they will enjoy it.”

Another ‘Monty’ virgin, James Redmond has done lengthy stints in Hollyoaks and Casualty but has never toured in a stage play before. However, that doesn’t stop him recognising the show’s broad appeal.

“We can all relate to it and it is very moving. The poverty these guys lived in; Maggie Thatcher encouraged them to buy their council houses and then closed the steelworks so they were desperate. It’s a heart-warming story that still feels relevant today. Because half of us voted remain and half voted leave none of us know what the future holds.”

Liz Carney who plays Jean is keen to chip in. “It appeals to men and women of all ages and from all classes. The girls in the play tell their own story, so audiences connect with them too.”

Playing Mandy, Amy Thompson voices her agreement, adding: “And the thing that I find really special is that it gets people coming to the theatre who haven’t been before.”

Well known for roles including Rhys in Torchwood and Pete in Hollyoaks, Kai Owen returns to the role of Dave and admits that he loves the audience reaction.

“They may start shouting at the start, but this isn’t Dream Boys or The Chippendales and as soon as they realise that it is a story they settle down. It is so well written that they get immersed and carried along until the end. Then everyone goes crazy!”

A play that covers a huge range of modern issues – as well as unemployment themes include financial insecurity, mental health, divorce, sexuality and body image – the mix of comedy, pathos, warmth and sadness is perfectly balanced.

And then there are the bums and willies. There’s no way to pussy foot around the subject of the boys getting naked, so I ask outright: Is it absolutely terrifying?

“I’m sure we’ll break Joe and James in gently,” says Louis with a naughty grin, recounting the first day in 2014 when he first had the ‘undress’ rehearsal.

“We had only been rehearsing for three days and we hardly knew each other. But we did it, although we all looked each other firmly in the eye! From then on it was pretty easy. It’s much more of a man’s story in many ways and it is great when you see blokes in the audience.”

“It is done really well on stage, although you do have to trust the lighting technicians, and some venues do have slow-closing curtains,” chuckles Andrew, best known for playing Tony in TV’s Dinnerladies.

Talking of different venues, the tour schedule is so full that it gives me motion sickness just reading it.

“I’ve been on stand-up circuit for nine years and I do like to explore and learn about where I am. I am looking forward to it,” declares James, while Andrew admits that he hates the rigmarole of searching for digs. Joe, nodding his head, chimed in: “It’s my first tour and finding accommodation is more daunting than getting my kit off!”

“I’m not a veteran tourer like Andrew, and it is difficult in the sense that I have three young children and I do like my own bed. That said, it’s great to absorb different towns and cities,” says Louis, explaining that he and Andrew generally share digs, trying to book places that will give them a daily walk into the theatre.

With most venues being return visits there are some that the cast are especially looking forward to revisiting.

“Shrewsbury has a lovely theatre and is a great little town,” Andrew tells me. The pub at the back of the theatre did such good business last time we were there that the landlord did the full Monty to celebrate!”

It sounds very much like the good publican should up the ante this time – rope in a few barmen to join him and then they can all drop ‘em to raise money for a local charity, perhaps?

“Good idea,” laughs Gary.

The youngest member of company, sixteen-year-old Fraser Kelly is an old hand, having already been in the production previously. Telling me that they have been blessed with some excellent children playing the role of Nathan, the returning cast are unanimous that Fraser has something special. He in turn can’t wait to embark on his first tour without needing to be formally chaperoned. Over the chorus of fond banter and mickey taking, he says:

“I can’t wait to start. It is a privilege working with such great people and great actors.”

Ah, but are they great role models?

“No! He’s our role model!” says Kai, as they all collapse into fits of giggles.

The last word goes to Gary: “There is no better show on the road. Come along and I’ll prove it to you.”

That sounds like a challenge, Mr Lucy. And one that I am delighted to accept.

The Full Monty will show at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury Monday 4 - Saturday 9 March
Tom Gates Live On Stage
The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 13 - Sat 16 March
Birmingham Stage Company makes a welcome return to present this brand new production inspired by author and illustrator Liz Pichon’s award-winning Tom Gates stories. Liz’s series of books about the character have been translated into 40-plus languages, selling more than four million copies worldwide. “So far there are 15 books in the series, with the 16th due out this year,” says Liz. “But there could be 17 books, or maybe more, if I have loads of other ideas!” The new show, written especially for the stage, finds young Tom doing his best to stay out of trouble and make sure he doesn’t miss the school trip.

Rabbit Girl & The Search For Wonder
Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 31 March
Rabbit Girl and her dad pack their tent, head out into the wilderness and share campfire tales of love, loss and wonder... Designed for children aged between four and eight, the production is presented by the North Kirklees-based Creative Scene as part of Arts Council England’s Creative People & Places programme. The initiative funds projects in parts of the country where involvement in arts and culture is significantly below the national average.

Bing Live!
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 12 & Wed 13 March; The REP, Birmingham, Sat 6 - Sun 7 April
Bing Live!’s promoters are confident that their show is a perfect ‘first theatre trip’ for pre-schoolers and their families. And why wouldn’t they be, given that it’s awash with ‘fun, laughter, music and dressing-up’?... For those not in the know, the show is based on an animated CBeebies television series. The stage production is visiting Shrewsbury for the very first time.

Dinosaur World Live
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 18 & Tues 19 March; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 28 - Wed 29 May; Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 30 - Fri 31 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 13 - Sat 15 June
Dinosaurs are once again roaming the earth this spring, thanks to this interactive family show. Youngsters get to meet a host of impressive prehistoric creatures - including, of course, every child’s favourite flesh-eating giant, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. A special meet-and-greet after the show offers brave explorers the chance to make a new dinosaur friend.

The Girl, The Bear And The Magic Shoes
Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 16 March
Not only a girl, a bear and some magic shoes but also mermaids, unicorns and a whole host of glittering characters are visiting Town Hall for this live draw-along session. Long-time Julia Donaldson collaborator and award-winning illustrator Lydia Monks is in attendance too, for a show that’s being presented as part of Birmingham’s annual Bookfest event.

The Sooty Show
Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford, Sat 9 March; Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sat 20 April
One of the 20th century’s best-loved children’s characters makes a welcome return. A simple glove puppet created by Harry Corbett almost 70 years ago, Sooty continues to go down a storm with generation after generation of youngsters, impressively bucking the trend for far more sophisticated, high-tech entertainment. Richard Cadell is the fella now operating Sooty and his longtime companions, Sweep and Soo, and is here joined by circus star Michael Jordan and ultraviolet specialists Fantasie de la Nuit. Expect magic, music, mayhem and plenty of audience participation.

Animalcolm The Musical
Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Sun 31 March; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 20 & Sun 21 April
The award-winning Story Pocket Theatre present a stage adaptation of David Badiel’s much-loved book. Malcolm’s family are wild about animals. Malcolm himself, though, is less than impressed. But when he goes on a school trip to a farm, he starts seeing his four-legged ‘friends’ in an altogether different light...
**Fagin’s Twist**
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 13 & Thurs 14 March

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

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

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**Juliet And Romeo**
The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 14 March

Ben Duke and Lost Dog’s brilliant dance-theatre piece has been showered with praise by audiences and critics alike - and little wonder. Clever, sexy and utterly absorbing, it takes the story of Romeo & Juliet as told by William Shakespeare and steers it in an altogether different direction - one in which the star-crossed lovers survive into middle age, only to find that familiarity has started to breed a level of contempt. Their passion having subsided, the couple find themselves re-living and re-assessing the key moments in their shared history - an exercise that leads them to some staggering and unexpected conclusions...

“At the point that this piece is set, Romeo and Juliet are in something of a marital crisis,” explains choreographer Ben Duke. “Basically they love each other and sometimes they wish the other one were dead. The bloom of teenage romance has faded but it haunts them...”

“I was inspired to make this piece by a feeling that we aren’t all that honest about relationships in our culture, and that too many stories focus on how relationships start rather than how they continue. My hope is that audiences will take away a sense of realistic optimism about the state of their relationships - past, present or future.”

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**KOKO**
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 16 March

‘KOKO is a piece which revolves around sequins and sadness,’ explain Fin Projects of their brand new production. ‘There’s an unravelling of muchness through a bizarre and garish fantasy, where he becomes she and she becomes he.

‘Featuring eclectic music, a weird toopia of dysfunctional feelings embodies a party of self-understanding. Struggling to balance comfort into one person, the ghosts of the past visit, represented through a single ever-changing character, depicting and directing the revelations of inner-self until he is deconstructed, the real flesh and bones, an extravagant mess.’

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**Here Come The Girls**
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 30 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sun 23 June; Lichfield Garrick, Sun 30 June

Strictly stars Dianne Buswell and Amy Dowden are here joined by one-time Britain’s Got Talent semi-finalist Chloe Hewitt for a show that blends individual performances and group numbers. Featuring a mix of ballroom and Latin routines, the production has been choreographed by another Strictly dancer, Patrick Helm.

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Pepperland

The internationally acclaimed Mark Morris Dance Group pay tribute to The Beatles' groundbreaking album, Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
It’s probably the most iconic album ever made and is still a much-loved bestseller, 50 years on. So it’s a brave man indeed who dares to meddle with Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. As composer Ethan Iverson admits: “There’s nothing potentially more terrible than a Beatles’ covers project.” Thankfully he’s pulled it off, and his innovative score is far from terrible. He provides the music for Pepperland, a production from the acclaimed Mark Morris Dance Group.

The New York-based contemporary company was asked to create the piece by the City of Liverpool to mark the 50th anniversary of Sgt Pepper. Pepperland made its debut in May 2017, with one critic describing it as a “truly joyous, celebratory work of art,” and is now embarking on a seven-week international tour, including 11 UK dates presented by Dance Consortium.

Frequently at the top of lists of the greatest albums of all time, and described by Rolling Stone magazine as “the most important rock & roll album ever made”, Sgt Pepper is packed with Beatles’ hits. Ethan interperses his own arrangements of With A Little Help From My Friends, A Day In The Life, When I’m Sixty-Four, Within You Without You, Penny Lane and the title track with six original Pepper-inspired pieces.

Speaking from his New York home, the talented pianist said: “When Mark Morris called me to say he’d been asked to create a piece on Sgt Pepper and would I like to compose the music, I realised what a daunting project we were taking on. It could be awful, but Mark’s such a genius that I thought I could do it with him.”

“The album is a favourite record of mine from high school. They made a masterpiece, really. It has that kind of weight, and each new generation discovers it with awe.

“I was Mark Morris’s musical director for five years around the turn of the century and played hundreds of performances with him. I quit that wonderful job to become a jazz pianist with my own band, The Bad Plus, but kept in touch with Mark.”

“We became known for our reconstruction of rock and pop music by everyone from David Bowie and Nirvana to Black Sabbath and Pink Floyd. I know Mark liked our version of Blondie’s Heart Of Glass. I had experience of looking at material in a way that’s intriguing and trying to do something new with it, which is what I’ve done with Sgt Pepper.”

“It’s important to note that Pepperland isn’t like a Beatles’ concert and people shouldn’t expect that. Their music is the fundamental backbone of the piece, but the album now is essentially a piece of folk music. We take liberties with it like we would with Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, pieces we know so well but can change.”

“It’s a hit show and audiences love it, though there are still one or two people who don’t quite get it because they’re expecting a Beatles’ show. Instead The Beatles open a door to thinking about other things, like dance and the Swinging ‘60s.”

“The score is played by these remarkable jazz musicians, the best in the world. They need to be, as it’s an incredibly complicated album. Your average bar band couldn’t play covers from it. It’s almost symphonic in scope.”

Ethan, 45, is a pianist in Pepperland’s half-a-dozen strong ensemble, which includes voice, saxophone, percussion, trombone and organ, plus the more unusual instruments of harpsichord and theremin.

“Part of the commission was to request to include an electronic element. They probably wanted a DJ or hip-hop sampling, but trying to do the latest thing felt forced. So I went for the first electronic instrument, which is nearly 100 years old. Invented by Leon Theremin in the 1920s, it’s incredibly difficult to play it well and it requires a particular type of genius.”

“I’d listened to this wonderful theremin player, Rob Schwimmer, playing Bach’s Air On A G String. It was one of the most beautiful things I’d ever heard, and it made me cry. I really wanted to work with him, and Pepperland was the perfect opportunity.”

“When Rob starts to play our version of A Day In The Life on the theremin, it stops the show. It’s a heck of a moment which makes the hairs stand up on the back of your neck.”

Sgt Pepper has a wide range of musical styles - from psychedelic and Indian to music hall - and Pepperland has a nod to them all. Ethan’s six original pieces are based on the classical forms of Allegro, Scherzo, Adagio and the blues, and take their cue from specific parts of the album.

For example, a single line of trombone from Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band is turned into a fully-fledged sonata for the Allegro section, while a chord progression becomes a cut-and-mouse chase for harpsichord and piano in the Scherzo section.

“The first thing we hear on the album is a guitar blues lick, which I expanded into a blues piece for horns. I know Mark so well that while I was composing, I kept thinking of dance moves he could put to it. It was like giving him a softball and saying, ‘Go on, knock this one out of the park!’ Of course, the choreography didn’t really turn out like that.”

Ethan is a self-confessed anglophile who is very much looking forward to the UK tour. “I grew up watching the BBC. I’m a huge fan of Agatha Christie, and as a child I was obsessed with Doctor Who. I really like the composition of the new theme tune.

“I’ve been to England a lot and love your music. I wouldn’t say The Beatles were the best British band ever, but I do think the best rock has been made by British bands.

“I had to come on the tour. It’s a thrill-and-a-half to be part of Pepperland, and as long as they perform it, I want to do it. It’s a really fun show. There’s a certain amount of darkness, but it’s a very joyful piece. At the end we feel good, and I hope the audience does too.

“It’s a soul-destroying, dark time out there in some ways, but Pepperland has no political commentary whatsoever. It’s joy for joy’s sake, an escape which takes you to another place.”

Pepperland shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 26 & Wednesday 27 March.

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**The Aftermath** CERT tbc (108 mins)

**Starring** Keira Knightley, Alexander Skarsgård, Jason Clarke  
**Directed by** James Kent (UK/USA/Germany)

Based on the 2013 novel by Rhidian Brook, this drama sees an English woman (Keira Knightley) move into a Hamburg house still occupied by its owner, a German widower (Alexander Skarsgård) and his daughter. It is Keira’s husband, a British colonel (Jason Clarke), who is tasked with helping to rebuild Hamburg after the Second World War.  
**Released Fri 1 March**

**Serenity** CERT tbc (106 mins)

**Starring** Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, Jason Clarke, Diane Lane, Djimon Hounsou, Jeremy Strong  
**Directed by** Steven Knight (USA)

Shades of Double Indemnity and Body Heat here as a woman approaches a man to help knock off her abusive husband. The twist is that the man she approaches is her former husband, the skipper of a fishing boat. From the co-creator of **Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?**  
**Released Fri 1 March**

**What They Had** CERT 15 (101 mins)

**Starring** Hilary Swank, Michael Shannon, Robert Forster, Blythe Danner, Taissa Farmiga, Josh Lucas  
**Directed by** Elizabeth Chomko (USA)

What they had was a life together, but when Ruth Everhardt develops Alzheimer’s, her husband must learn to say goodbye to the woman he has always known and loved. Premiered at the Sundance festival last year, the film received glowing reviews from American critics.  
**Released Fri 1 March**

**Captain Marvel** CERT tbc (128 mins)

**Starring** Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, Ben Mendelsohn, Djimon Hounsou, Lee Pace, Lashana Lynch, Gemma Chan, Annette Bening, Clark Gregg, Jude Law  
**Directed by** Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck (USA)

After Patty Jenkins steered Wonder Woman to box-office glory in the summer of 2017, it made sense to get a woman on board the next female superhero behemoth. Well, at least one-half of the directorial team of Boden and Fleck is female and, to be fair, they do tend to work together. This is the story of Carol Danvers, a bright spark and former US Air Force fighter pilot who, when her DNA is accidentally merged with that of an alien race, finds that she can fly and is much stronger than she used to be. Perfect, then, to help out when Earth is threatened by the repercussions of two extraterrestrial species battling each other to the death.

Incidentally, Birds Of Prey, the Harley Quinn movie with Margot Robbie, is also being directed by a woman, Cathy Yan.  
**Released Fri 8 March**
Miss Bala  CERT 15 (104 mins)
Starring Gina Rodriguez, Ismael Cruz Córdova, Anthony Mackie, Aislinn Derbez
Directed by Catherine Hardwicke (USA/Mexico)

A remake of the Mexican film of the same name, this action-thriller stars Gina Rodriguez (Deepwater Horizon) as a make-up artist from Los Angeles who visits her friend Suzu in Tijuana. When the latter is kidnapped by a Mexican drug cartel, our heroine takes the law into her own hands...

Released Fri 1 March

Everybody Knows  CERT 15 (113 mins)
Starring Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Ricardo Darín, Bárbara Lennie
Directed by Asghar Farhadi (Spain/France/Italy)

Returning to Spain for her sister’s wedding, Buenos Aires native Laura (Cruz) is confronted by bruising secrets from her past. From the Iranian director of the Oscar-winning A Separation (2011) and The Salesman (2016).

Released Fri 8 March

The Kindergarten Teacher  CERT 12a (97 mins)
Starring Maggie Gyllenhaal, Parker Sevak, Anna Baryshnikov, Rosa Salazar, Michael Chernus, Gael García Bernal
Directed by Sara Colangelo (USA)

Films about child prodigies always make for interesting viewing, but this one takes an unexpected route. Maggie Gyllenhaal is the eponymous teacher who discovers a prodigious literary bent in a boy in her charge.

Released Fri 8 March

Rosie  CERT 12a (84 mins)
Starring Sarah Greene, Moe Dunford, Natalia Kostrzewa
Directed by Paddy Breathnach (Ireland)

When her landlord sells her Dublin flat, Rosie Davies (Sarah Greene) must learn what it means to be homeless. From an original screenplay by Roddy Doyle.

Released Fri 8 March

Fisherman’s Friends  CERT 12a (112 mins)
Starring Daniel Mays, James Purefoy, David Hayman, Dave Johns, Tuppence Middleton, Noel Clarke Directed by Chris Foggin (UK)

Not a film about the menthol lozenges, but a true story in which a group of Cornish fishermen regularly get together to sing sea shanties. What they didn’t expect was an executive from Universal Records to show a commercial interest in their music.

Released Fri 15 March

Girl  CERT 15 (109 mins)
Starring Victor Polster, Arieh Worthalter, Katelijne Damen
Directed by Lukas Dhont (Belgium/Netherlands)

Lara, 15, is undergoing hormone replacement therapy and dreams of being a ballerina... Inspired by the story of Nora Monsecour, a trans female dancer from Belgium, the film won the Caméra d’Or at Cannes last year.

Released Fri 15 March

The Prodigy  CERT 15 (92 mins)
Starring Taylor Schilling, Jackson Robert Scott, Colm Feore, Paul Fauteux, Brittany Allen
Directed by Nicholas McCarthy (USA)

Young Miles may be a child prodigy but when he starts to exhibit more disturbing behaviour, his mother (Schilling) suspects that evil forces are at play. Expect some “disturbing and bloody images.”

Released Fri 15 March

What Men Want  CERT 15 (117 mins)
Starring Taraji P Henson, Aldis Hodge, Richard Roundtree, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Tracy Morgan
Directed by Adam Shankman (USA)

A vague remake of the Mel Gibson romcom What Women Want (2000), this comic fantasy sees a struggling sports agent (Henson) discover the ability to read men’s thoughts. Shiver her timbers.

Released Fri 15 March

Ben Is Back  CERT 15 (103 mins)
Starring Julia Roberts, Lucas Hedges, Courtney B. Vance, Kathryn Newton
Directed by Peter Hedges (USA)

Not a million miles from the subject of Beautiful Boy, this drama focuses on a mother (Julia Roberts) attempting to reconcile her son’s drug addiction. Lucas Hedges, from Boy Erased, is Ben and is the son of the writer-director Peter Hedges.

Released Fri 15 March
Us CERT tbc
Starring Lupita Nyong’o, Winston Duke, Elisabeth Moss, Tim Heidecker
Directed by Jordan Peele (USA)
Well, there’s us and then there’s them. Here, the ‘them’ are doppelgängers and they are very threatening indeed. From the writer-director of modern horror classic Get Out.
Released Fri 22 March

The White Crow
CERT 12a (127 mins)
Starring Oleg Ivanko, Adèle Exarchopoulos, Chulpan Khamatova, Ralph Fiennes
Directed by Ralph Fiennes (UK/France)
Inspired by Julie Kavanagh’s book Rudolf Nureyev: The Life, this biography of the legendary ballet dancer is scripted by Sir David Hare. It marks Ralph Fiennes’ third directorial outing, following Coriolanus (2011) and The Invisible Woman (2013).
Released Fri 22 March

Captive State CERT 12a (110 mins)
Starring John Goodman, Ashton Sanders, Jonathan Majors, Colson Baker, Vera Farmiga
Directed by Rupert Wyatt (USA)
The state in question is our own planet in the future, when it has been occupied by an alien force seeking a peaceful unification. But even now, in a Chicago neighbourhood, there are collaborators and dissenters.
Released Fri 29 March

At Eternity’s Gate
CERT 12a (111 mins)
Starring Willem Dafoe, Rupert Friend, Mads Mikkelsen, Mathieu Amalric, Emmanuelle Seigner, Oscar Isaac, Amira Casar
Directed by Julian Schnabel (USA/UK/France)
Willem Dafoe received an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Vincent Van Gogh in this biopic from the American painter and filmmaker Julian Schnabel. The film focuses on the artist’s last years in the South of France. Oscar Isaac plays Paul Gauguin.
Released Fri 29 March

Dumbo CERT tbc
Starring Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, Eva Green, Alan Arkin, Roshan Seth, Finley Hobbins, Nico Parker
Directed by Tim Burton (USA)
An elephant with outsize ears is able to fly (“The ninth wonder of the universe! The world’s only flyin’ elephant!”) and is the star attraction of a circus that subsequently falls into the hands of a dastardly entrepreneur (Michael Keaton). Tim Burton is still one of the most anarchic, top-dollar filmmakers working today.
And, like Roald Dahl, he seems to have tapped into a different kind of ‘family-friendly’ audience. Here, he takes the classic Disney cartoon of 1941 and gives it his own inimitable, live-action spin.
And this is just the first of three live-action remakes of animated Disney classics to be released this year, preceding Aladdin and The Lion King. Thandie Newton’s daughter, Nico Parker, co-stars as Dumbo’s little friend, Milly.
Released Fri 29 March
Kidtropolis returns to Birmingham’s NEC for a second year running

Not sure where to take the kids during the Easter holidays? Fear not, for popular children’s event Kidtropolis is returning to Birmingham’s NEC for a second year.

Packed full of live shows, activities, much-loved brands, characters and entertainment, this year’s event is taking place from Saturday 13 to Monday 15 April.

Founder Gemma Gallagher launched Kidtropolis in London in 2016. She has since organised a further two events in the capital, as well as last year’s sell-out show in Brum.

So what was the idea behind the event?...

“We really wanted to produce a great experience full of lots of activities and shows which was cost-effective to attend. Days out are generally expensive and there aren’t many family experiences which are affordable."

Tickets for Kidtropolis cost £12, and visitors can currently take advantage of a limited ‘buy one get one half-price’ adult offer.

“Kidtropolis is an amalgamation of inflatables, rides, different brand activities, live shows, character meet-and-greets and more. We like to give families the opportunity to meet celebrities too. It’s a bit different to a festival, as there’s no overnight camping, but it’s a very similar mechanic. Luckily for us, it doesn’t matter what the weather’s like, as we’re located indoors. We don’t need to worry if it’s raining, and obviously the price is a lot different to what a festival ticket would cost. We saw a gap in the market to create something that families could enjoy together, with lots of different things going on for different age groups, all under one roof. We then decided to branch out into Birmingham because it’s pretty central. Travel-wise it’s great; the NEC is very accessible as a venue, so it seemed completely sensible to host it there.”

Attractions at the 2019 edition of Kidtropolis include a Baby Shark live mini show on the Saturday - in which Pinkfong and his best friend get dancing - and appearances by TV royalty Sam and Mark, who’ll be hosting their very own live show on the Saturday and Sunday.

Also announced for this year is a 200ft-long inflatable assault course that allows children to venture through a number of different and imaginative zones, including the Arctic and a jungle.

Kidtropolis events are aimed at children aged 12 and under, as Gemma explains: "We say 12 because we do get a lot of parents asking if older siblings can come along too. We do recommend that people look at the website to see what’s on before they purchase a ticket. Ultimately, it’s up to the parents to decide whether it’s appropriate for their child.

“People have asked us why we don’t zone our events as a three-year-old zone, a five-year-old zone etc, and that is purely down to visitor experience. If mum or dad is on her or his own with two children of completely different ages, it would be harder to manage. We like our content to be presented in a way that means everyone can enjoy it at the same time. We try to bring in lots of different content related to all age groups.

“Kidtropolis isn’t just about putting inflatables into an event or putting live shows in the auditorium, it’s about putting exciting and fun content on the showfloor too, so that when people are walking past, they can see something that they might not have realised was on - something that families can all enjoy together; an immersive experience. It’s all about the atmosphere. We try and book lots of things that appeal to different people - things that are entertaining as well as hands-on, so that the whole family can get involved together.”

Kidtropolis takes place at Birmingham’s NEC from Saturday 13 to Monday 15 April. For further information, visit kidtropolis.co.uk/birmingham/tickets/
Visual Arts previews from around the region

Painting Childhood: From Holbein To Freud
Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 16 March - Sun 16 June

This celebration of children, childhood and innocence brings together a selection of iconic paintings, sketches and sculptures.

Painting Childhood: From Holbein To Freud explores the creative process and specific challenges posed by producing artwork featuring children as the subject matter. It also contemplates the place of family within an artist’s life, and the ongoing tension between biography and creativity.

Addressing themes such as royal portraiture, play and learning, the exhibition features loans from, among other venues and sources, the Royal Collection and the National Gallery. Hogarth, Gainsborough and Millais are among the artists whose work is featured.

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Come and join the conversation
Tess Jaray  The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, until Sun 12 May

The celebrated Art Deco architecture of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts provides the inspiration for From Outside, the Tess Jaray exhibition currently showing at the venue. One of the UK’s most distinguished living artists, Tess uses the show to continue her career-long meditation on space, colour, form and pattern, presenting minimal, abstract compositions in subtle shades of green, blue, buff and pink.

A selection of drawings made by Tess throughout her career accompanies the exhibition, not only shedding light on her method of work but also demonstrating her interest in experimentation and her meticulous eye for detail. A display of 1930s photographs and architectural blueprints of the Barber further complements the exhibition.

Make Art Not War
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Sat 23 - Sun 31 March

‘What does peace mean to you?’ That was the question asked of young people nationwide, who were invited to present their answer via a creative response. The artwork on show in this exhibition has been produced by students at City of Wolverhampton College, the Midlands’ chosen representatives for the project. Make Art Not War is being presented by 14-18 NOW, a major cultural programme designed to mark the centenary of the First World War.

Leonardo da Vinci: A Life In Drawing
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until 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.

Handsworth Self-Portrait: 40 Years On
Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 23 March - Sun 2 June

A groundbreaking ‘selfie’ project in 1979 saw Derek Bishton, Brian Homer and John Reardon create a pop-up photography studio in Birmingham’s Handsworth area, inviting passers-by to take their own photograph by handing them the shutter release.

More than 500 people participated in the project, which is here being celebrated 40 years on. Offering a snapshot of a vibrant, multicultural community at the moment it first became visible, the exhibition features the original photographic prints, many of which have never before been on public display.

Daniel Silver
New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 2 June

Juxtaposing existing works and new pieces - including a series of mannequins presenting links between the classical and contemporary depiction of the human body - Daniel Silver’s New Art Gallery exhibition is his most ambitious in the UK to date.

The display not only celebrates the venue’s long-standing commitment to sculpture but also marks the 60th anniversary of the death of sculptor Jacob Epstein. The gallery has a strong connection with Epstein via his widow, Lady Kathleen, whose family hailed from the Black Country and who gifted the Garman Ryan collection to Walsall in 1973.
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Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships

Arena Birmingham, Wed 6 - Sun 10 March

Now in its 109th year, Yonex is one of badminton’s five ‘majors’, as well as being the sport’s oldest and most prestigious competition. This latest edition of the championship features 155 matches, more than 50 hours of live badminton and appearances by the world’s greatest players. In short, it’s a must-attend event for dedicated fans of the sport...

Practical Classics Classic Car & Restoration Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 22 - Sun 24 March

Midlands classic car enthusiasts can really immerse themselves in their passion at this specialist event. Featuring in excess of 1,000 magnificent motors, the show also boasts live demos, expert tutorials, workshops, celebrity appearances and hundreds of exhibitors selling a wide range of popular products. Other attractions include an autojumble, a ‘cars for sale’ area, the Practical Classics Live Stage and the UK’s biggest collection of barn find displays.

Pit Stop

Enginuity, Ironbridge, Sat 9 & Sun 10 March

Ironbridge Gorge Museums have partnered with the University of Wolverhampton Race Team to stage this high-energy family event. Including four interactive sessions based around engineering, racing and science, the show’s highlights include a talk by Shane Kelly about his life as a Formula 3 race driver. There’s also a wealth of hands-on activities to enjoy, including the chance to change a racing-car tyre and the opportunity to try out Forensic, Biology & Physics STEM (science, technology, engineering & maths) experiments.

Robot Day

Coventry Transport Museum, Sat 9 March

A major science & technology event aimed at everyone from toddlers to academics, Robot Day explores ‘all things robotic’. Visitors to the free get-together have the chance to build their own robot, get hands-on with coding, hear from experts about how robots improve people’s lives and experience virtual reality. Bomb disposal, industrial robot and drone displays also feature, as does a specially created performance in which Imagineer Productions’ six-metre-high Lady Godiva engages with the Urban Astronaut and the Hummingbird drone. Other attractions include craft and dance workshops, a range of static and moving exhibits, and inspirational talks and lectures from some of the world’s leading robotics experts.

Crufts

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 March

The world’s biggest dog show is back. With over 22,000 canine companions competing for the coveted title of Best In Show, the event features a range of displays and competitions across its four days. Away from the arena, there are more than 550 trade stands to explore, a Good Citizen Dog Scheme training ring and plenty of activities to keep the kids entertained. Youngsters under the age of eight get free entry into the show. In short, if you’re a dog lover, you’d have to be absolutely, er, ‘barking’ not to attend...

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IT'S BACK!
LAST YEAR'S SELL OUT NEC SHOW!

GRAB YOUR TICKETS NOW!

OFFICIAL MINI SHOW

13 - 15 April 2019 NEC Birmingham

CHECK WEBSITE FOR APPEARANCE DAYS KIDTROPOLIS.CO.UK
Events previews from around the region

MCM Comic Con Birmingham
NEC, Birmingham, Sat 23 & Sun 24 March
Thirty-five thousand fans are expected to descend on the NEC for this action-packed celebration of pop culture. The two-day show features brand new interactive content, numerous talks and panel-based events, a selection of exclusive screenings and multiple opportunities to meet the stars and creators of some of the world’s most popular movies, video games, comics and TV shows. Celebrities making live appearances at the event include Game Of Thrones’ Ser Meryn & Syrio Forel, Supernatural’s Felicia Day and Osric Chau, and Merlin favourites Alexander Vlahos, Tom Hopper and Rupert Young.

You Are Here!
Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Sat 2 & Sun 3 March
Join the hosts of Wow Tours for a family show combining live theatre with an immersive 360-degree full-dome planetarium experience. A 30-minute presentation designed for children and their families, You Are Here! sees the show’s hosts ‘attempting to put everything in its place - in the solar system, the universe and beyond!’ In the process, the hosts are confident they’ll provide audiences with a truly out-of-this-world experience - as they’re happy to explain: “With Jupiter as the ultimate ‘behind you’ moment, a zoom through Saturn’s rings and a voyage down to the surface of Mars, this is a tour you’ll never forget!”

Springtime Babies
The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 16 March
Families can celebrate the arrival of spring by checking out this utterly delightful ‘farm on wheels’, which visits Stoke complete with baby chicks, ducklings, rabbits and young lambs. Children can pet and bottle-feed the new arrivals while at the same time finding out about the life processes of the animals and their young.

Elizabethan Living History
Harvington Hall, Kidderminster, Sat 2 & Sun 3 March
Presenting a wide range of displays and activities across the weekend, this interactive event invites visitors to abandon modern comforts, travel 400-plus years back in time and learn about the lives of the Elizabethans. Attractions include archery and musket-firing displays, cookery and craft presentations, and music recitals and dancing. There’s even the possibility of stumbling across a secret chamber or two...

whatsonlive.co.uk 49
Homebuilding & Renovating Show
28–31 MARCH
NEC 2019
BIRMINGHAM

Dreaming about building your own home?
Find out how at the National Homebuilding & Renovating Show

To get your 2 FREE TICKETS worth £36* visit
homebuildingshow.co.uk/whatsonmidlands
hurry offer ends 3pm 27 March 2019

*Saving based on one day ticket price. Offer expires 3pm 27 March 2019. Children under 16 go free.
What’s On

Fri 1 to Sun 10 March

My Darling Clementine play
The Fleece Inn in Bretforton
Sun 3 March

Mon 11 to Sun 17 March

Ferocious Dog at
The Empire, Coventry
Fri 15 March

Mon 18 to Sun 24 March

Shanghai Hostage perform at
Coventry’s Tin Music & Arts
Fri 22 March

Mon 25 to Sun 31 March

Barmy Britain unleashed at
Palace Theatre, Redditch
Wed 27 March
Visual Arts

NEW ODDFELLOWS ARTS Showcasing the talents of nine very different artists who’ve joined together to form a group that creates work using a variety of mediums, Thurs 7 Mar - Sun 7 Apr.

Rugby Art Gallery & Museum PETER RABBIT: MISCHIEF & MAYHEM Exhibition telling the story of the creation of Peter Rabbit, including an original rarely exhibited artworks and manuscripts, until Sat 27 Apr

EDUCATING RUGBY Explore the history of schools and colleges in Rugby with objects from the museum’s social history collection, until Sat 27 Apr

NEW COLIN AND CHRISTINE PRICKETT A mix of photography and music from husband-and-wife team Colin and Christine Prickett, who are both Royal Photographic Society members, Sat 2 - Thurs 14 Mar

The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum A WORLD WAR ONE COMMEMORATION Exhibition including work by contemporary artists and work by artists from the period of the war, until Sun 3 Mar

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR Exhibition from the Natural History Museum featuring breathtaking animal portraits, dramatic landscapes, bizarre species and endangered habitats, until Sun 2 June

Worcester City Museum & Art Gallery MATISSE Two exhibitions combine to provide a spectacular, colourful show: Matisse: Drawing With Scissors - a Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition from the Southbank Centre, London - and Diaghilev's Ballet Russes; a unique collection of costume and ephemera telling the story of the spectacular and sometimes scandalous 20th century ballet company, until Sat 27 Apr

Compton Verney Gallery, Warwick NEW PAINTING CHILDHOOD: FROM HOLE IN THE FLOOR TO FREUD A celebration of children, childhood and innocence, bringing together some of the most iconic paintings, sculptures and scuptures of children from the past 500 years, Sat 16 Mar - Sat 16 June

NEW CHILLOOD NOW Exhibition bringing together the works of three contemporary figurative painters - Chantal Joffe, Mark Fainington and Matthew Krishanu, Sat 16 Mar - Sun 16 June

NEW ART IN THE PARK - GREEN DWELLING Installation by Dutch artist Krijn de Koning consisting of a collection of differently sized green blocks ranged across the Old Town Meadow, Sat 16 Mar - Sun 15 Dec

Forge Mill Needle Museum, Redditch RODS, REELS, BAITS AND LURES Exhibition looking at the famous fishing tackle of old Redditch and featuring some of the museum’s rarely seen fishing-tackle treasures, until Sun 3 Mar

Music

NO VIOLET Fri 1 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester
SUPREME QUEEN Fri 1 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch
PURE WHITNEY HOUiston Fri 1 Mar, The River Rooms, Stratford-upon-Avon
BLVF Fri 1 Mar, The Empire, Coventry
GODSMACK Fri 1 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham
THE ELO EXPERIENCE Fri 1 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
SIXTIES INVASION TOUR Fri 1 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry
KEITH SLATER’S 60S CELEBRATION Fri 1 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch
CATAPULT CLUB FT. THE BUTTERS ALIENS Fri 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
BELL LUNGS, RAIMENTs Fri 1 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry
DAN SHAKE Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
BILLIE EILISH Sat 2 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham
CLOUDBUSTING - THE MAGIC OF KATE BUSH Sat 2 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove

FM Sat 2 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa
ASHA BHOSLE Sat 2 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham
OCTAVIAN Sat 2 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham
SCOTT BRADLEE’S POST-MODERN JUKEBOX Sat 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
GUS DAPPERTON Sat 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
WOOD AND NAiLS, DEARiST, GEORGE GADD, LAST LIGHT Sat 2 Mar, The Flapper, B’ham
RAYMOND FROGATT ACOUSTIC Sat 2 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull
RANNOCH, WITCH TRIPPER, EFFIGY FOR SLEEP Sat 2 Mar, Scruffy Murphy’s, Birmingham
SONIC BOOM Sat 2 Mar, The Golden Cross, Coventry
DREADZONE Sat 2 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham
IMPERIAL WAX Sat 2 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry
G2 DEFINITIVE GENESIS Sat 2 Mar, Huntington Hall, Worcester
THE TOTAL STONE ROSES Sat 2 Mar, The Empire, Coventry
THE UB40 BEATLES Sat 2 Mar, Bedworth Civic Hall
FOREVER QUEEN Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester
PAUL CARRACK Sun 3 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
GEORGE FAME Sun 3 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove
MY DARLING CLEMEN-TINE Sun 3 Mar, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton

Music at The List

Gigs

NO VIOLET Fri 1 Mar, The Marr’s Bar, Worcester
SUPREME QUEEN Fri 1 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch
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PAUL CARRACK Sun 3 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
GEORGE FAME Sun 3 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove
MY DARLING CLEMEN-TINE Sun 3 Mar, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham
CATE CODY Sun 3 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury
Classical Music

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: ENGLAND’S DREAMING Featuring David Las Page (violin) & Richard Laing (conductor), Fri 1 Mar, Number 8 Community Arts Centre, Pershore

NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE Featuring Daniele Rosina (director) & Sabrina Ko & Olivia Tait (conductors), Fri 1 Mar, The Barber Institute, B’ham

Comedy

JETHRO Fri 1 Mar, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Fri 1 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RACHEL PARBIS Fri 1 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

BILL BURREN Fri 1 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

TONY LAU Fri 1 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CROFT & PEARCE Sat 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

DANA ALEXANDER, CHRISTIAN REILLY, PAUL PIRIE & FREDDY QUINN Sat 2 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

JOHN-LUKE ROBERTS Sun 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SINDHU VEE Sun 3 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

OLGA KOCH Sun 3 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

AURIE STYLA, JASON PATTERSON, SPECIAL, P, MR FEE & DIZZY Sun 3 Mar, 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, until Sat 2 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ART Nigel Havers, Denis Lawson & Stephen Tomkinson star in Yasmina Reza’s study of friendship, prejudice and tolerance, until Sat 2 Mar, Malvern Theatres

THE KING’S SPEECH The Nonettes present an amateur staging based on the Oscar-winning screenplay, until Sat 2 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

GUYS AND DOLLS Music Theatre Warwick present an amateur staging of the classic Broadway production, until Sat 2 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE BAND Tim Firth’s much-acclaimed jukebox musical, featuring the songs of Take That, until Sat 2 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CONCUBINE Urgent look at woman-hood, sexuality and faith, written and performed by Amahra Spence, until Sat 2 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

ME AND MY DOLL Birmingham-based theatre company Paperback explore the challenges, joys and pitfalls of allowing yourself to be vulnerable, until Sat 2 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

METAMORPHOSIS Beyond The Horizon bring Franz Kafka’s acclaimed novella to life using state-of-the-art makeup and prosthetic effects, until Sat 2 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

AS YOU LIKE IT Kimberley Sykes directs a riotous version of Shake-speare’s romantic comedy, until Sat 31 Aug, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

POPSTARS THE 90S MUSICAL SOSage Factory (the youth wing of Solihull On Stage) present a boy vs girl band jukebox musical, Thurs 28 Feb - Sat 2 May, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN The Bear Pit Theatre Company present an am- ateur staging of Martin McDonagh’s strange comic tale... Fri 1 - Sat 9 Mar, Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

UNDER THE UMBRELLA New play by Amy Ng exploring tradition, trauma and triumph in the art of finding love, Sat 2 - Sat 16 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry


FEEL Proforca Theatre Company present a critically acclaimed new piece of writing about a search for full- fulment, second-hand love and the hope of one day becoming something better than you are, Sun 3 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

Kids Shows

THE CAT IN THE HAT Rottonary & infectious laughter in a new stage show based on the much-loved book by Dr Seuss, until Sun 3 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Interactive show for children aged three-plus featuring excerpts from Beauty And The Beast, performed by Birmingham Royal Ballet’s dancers & orchestra, Fri 1 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

GOOD MORNING MR PUNCH Fun, songs and plenty of audience participation for two to nine-year-olds, Sat 2 Mar, Swan Theatre, Worcester

Dance

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Royal Ballet presents its version of the classic fairytale, until Sat 2 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

ASIAN SPRING Sampad hosts an evening of performances from some of the most exciting dance groups in the country, Sun 3 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

Talks

DAVID STARKIE - A MONARCHY OF MIS- FITS? Join historian David Starkey as he traces the radical shifting marriage customs of the British monarchy, Fri 1 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

RAY & LIZ (15) Drama. Starring Richard Ashton, Michelle Bonnard. Malvern Theatres, Fri 1 Mar

THE RAFT (12a) Documentary. Directed by Marcus Lindeen. Malvern Theatres, Fri 1, Sat 2 & Mon 4 Mar

ALL IS TRUE (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Kenneth Branagh, Lolita Chakrabarti. Malvern Theatres, Fri 1 - Thurs 7 Mar

VICE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Christian Bale and Amy Adams. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 1, Mon 4 & Thurs 7 Mar


BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (12a) Biogra- phy/Music. Starring Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton. Number 8, Pershore, Sat 2, Mon 4 & Wed 6 Mar

DESTROYER (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Nicole Kidman, Toby Kebbell. Malvern Theatres, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 1 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

THE AFTERMATH (18c)

SERENITY (18c)

WHAT THEY HAD (12a)

Events

JAWSOME SHARKS Come face-to-fin with some of the venue’s most ‘jaw- some’ species, until Sun 10 Mar, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

THE GOBLIN’S REVENGE The Goblin of Eymore Wood is back to seek his re- venge on the Little Folk of Arley who live in the woods... until Fri 12 Apr, Arley Arboretum, Bewdley, Nr Kiddermin- ster

TAXI: THE STORY FROM A TO B Exhibi- tion featuring a wealth of taxis from both the museum’s own collection and private lenders, until Sun 12 May, Coventry Transport Museum

BODEN CLOTHING SALE Huge savings on clothes for all the family, Fri 1 - Sat 2 March, Warwickshire Event Centre, Royal Leamington Spa

JIGSAW FESTIVAL 2019 Sale of hun- dreds of donated jigsaws. All money raised goes towards vital conserva- tion work at Coughton, Fri 1 - Sun 3 Mar, Coughton Court, Alcester

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Featur- ing hundreds of wedding specialists, from bridal boutiques and florists to jewellers and photographers, Fri 1 - Sun 3 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

FOLLOW THAT HARE: AN ART AND NA- TURAL HISTORY TRAIL Self-led art and nature trail around campus, Sat 2 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE GIN TRAIN A gin-tasting experi- ence with a twist, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

YOU ARE HERE! Live theatre combines with an immersive 360-degree full- dome planetarium experience, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar, Thinktank Science Mu- seum, Birmingham

NICK SHARRATT’S RIGHT ROYAL DRAWING Join children’s writer and illus- trator Nick Sharratt as he hosts a family-friendly drawing session, Sun 3 - Mon 4 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

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Gigs

SHAKIN’ STEVENS - GREATEST HITS - AND MORE! Tues 5 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BAS Tues 5 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BRIT FLOYD - ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL Wed 6 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE FUREYS Wed 6 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

VONDA SHEPARD & SHARON CORR Wed 6 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

JOEL CULPEPPER Wed 6 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DUSTY & THE SHADES OF THE 60S Thurs 7 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Redditch

JUAN MARTIN Thurs 7 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JON BODEN & THE REMNANT STRINGS Thurs 7 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

P.O.D. | ALIEN ANT FARM Thurs 7 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HIS WAY: THE FRANK SINATRA STORY Thurs 7 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ELIZA Thurs 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MR EAZI Thurs 7 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham

ROY HEMMINGS - HITS OF MOTOWN Fri 8 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ELKIE BROOKS IN CONCERT Fri 8 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

MAN OF MOON Fri 8 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

MATT FORD’S SALUTE TO SINATRA & THE KINGS Fri 8 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

OF COOL Fri 8 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Fri 8 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CLIMAX BLUES BAND Fri 8 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

FEET Fri 8 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

BLAK TWANG, ROONEY P & TY Fri 8 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CATAPULT CLUB FT. SHALLOW GLOW Fri 8 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JACK & JACK Fri 8 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham

UPFO Fri 8 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

THE SENSATIONAL 60’S EXPERIENCE Fri 8 Mar, Malvern Theatres

CROOKED COLOURS Fri 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MUSED Fri 8 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

THE OFFICIAL RE-CREIVERS Fri 8 Mar, The Mar’s Bar, Worcester

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED (JIMI HENDRIX TRIBUTE) Sat 9 Mar, The Mar’s Bar, Worceter

VOODOO ROOM Sat 9 Mar, Evesham Arts Centre

UK FOO FIGHTERS Sat 9 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

THE BEST OF WHAM Sat 9 Mar, Malvern Theatres

10CC Sat 9 Mar, Symphony Hall, B’ham

WOMEN IN ROCK Sat 9 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

OSLO PHILHARMONIC: SIBELIUS’ FIFTH Featuring Vasily Petrenko (conductor) and Nikolai Lugansky (piano). Programme includes works by Delius, Grieg and Sibelius, Fri 8 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WARWICKSHIRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Gaynor Keeble (mezzo soprano) & Roger Coull (conductor). Programme comprises Barber’s Adagio for Strings & Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 in D minor, Sat 9 Mar, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

FRENCH CONNECTIONS WITH THE ELGAR CHORALE OF WORCESTER Featuring Piers Maxim (conductor), Sat 9 Mar, Worcester Baptist Church

ENGLISH STRING ORCHESTRA Featuring Kenneth Woods (artistic director) & Nicholas Daniel (oboe). Programme includes works by Bacewicz, Vaughan Williams & Dvorak, Sat 9 Mar, Great Malvern Priory

SIR KARL JENKINS: 75TH BIRTHDAY CONCERT Featuring Sir Karl Jenkins (conductor), Manchester Concert Orchestra, Kathryn Rudge (mezzo soprano) and Jonathan Scott (organ soloist), Sun 10 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

At whatsonlive.co.uk 55

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME MUSIC: BEETHOVEN Featuring Rufan Xuan (piano), Olga Eckert (violin) and Elizabeth Haughan (piano), Mon 4 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PETER MOORE IN RECITAL Also featuring Jonathan Ware (piano). Programme includes works by Christian Gounigueu, Jacques Casterede, Roxanna Panufnik, Brahms & Gershwin, Tues 5 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

WHAN QUARTET Programme includes works by Haydn, Beethoven & Tchaikovsky, Thurs 7 Mar, Malvern Theatres

Theatre

ROUSE, YE WOMEN! Folk opera based on the story of Mary Macarthur and her universal campaign for equality in the workplace, Tues 5 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

INTO THE LIGHT An international cast of performers with and without learning disabilities present a show about the right to be seen and heard... Tues 5 - Wed 6 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham

IF MY FATHER ONLY KNEW Nathalie Bazil’s devised exploration of identity, sex and beauty in today’s society, Tues 5 - Thurs 7 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE COMEDY ABOUT A BANK ROBBERY Smash-and-grab comedy promising ‘swag-loads of laughter’, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ROUGH CROSSING John Partridge & Christian Clarke star in Tom Stoppard’s comedy, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Mar, Malvern Theatres

HANCOCK’S HALF HOUR The classic radio comedy, live on stage, Wed 6 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, B’ham

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA Welsh National Opera present Verdi’s tale of love, power and politics, Wed 6 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

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Comedy

LOST VOICE GUY Mon 4 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BARBARA NICE, MANDY MUDEN, JULES OLIVER & MAUREEN YOUNGER Wed 6 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

FRANKIE PEOPLES Wed 6 Mar, The Civic, Stourport

RHOD GILBERT Thurs 7 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SIMON MUNNERY Thurs 7 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

DAN NIGHTINGALE & STEVE GRIBBIN, PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 7 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MARK STEEL Fri 8 Mar, The Civic, Stourport

PAUL MccAFFREY Fri 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAN NIGHTINGALE, STEVE GRIBBIN, EM-MANUEL SONUBI & COMIC TBC Fri 8 - Sat 9 Mar, The Glee Club, B’ham

GLENN WOOL Sat 9 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ED GAMBLE Sat 9 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

CARL HUTCHINSON Sat 9 Mar, The REP Birmingham

MATT RICHARDSON Sat 9 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

JESSIE CAV Sat 9 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

LAUREN PATTISON, DAVE LONGLEY & NICK DODDY Sat 9 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

MAUREN YOUNGER, JUDI LOVE, GLENDA JAXSON & DANA ALEXANDER Sun 10 Mar, The Glee Club, B’ham

Monday 4 - Sunday 10 March
FLATPACK FESTIVAL

FILM, AND THEN SOME
30 APRIL - 5 MAY 2019
VENUES ACROSS BIRMINGHAM
FLATPACKFESTIVAL.ORG.UK

The Art of Design with Lee Lapthorne
9 Mar | Hall’s Croft | £10*
Join textile artist Lee Lapthorne for an intimate evening where he will unveil two pieces of furniture inspired by our Collections.

‘Here’s flowers for you’
11 May | Shakespeare Centre | £30*
Join award-winning florist Carole Patilla and learn how to create a colourful floral bouquet, using beautiful hand-picked flowers.

Giving Birth to the Tudors
13 Apr | Shakespeare Centre | £10*
Lesley Smith will talk all things childbirth during the Tudor period. This fascinating talk will enlighten you on all the weird and wonderful advice doctors would give to help women give birth.

Poetry with Punch
8 Jun | Shakespeare Centre | £10*
Flex those poetry muscles with Matt Windle, the ‘Poet with Punch’. A unique workshop full of tips and advice that really packs a punch.

SHAKESPEARE After HOURS
Discover something different in 2019
shakespeare.org.uk/afterhours

* Adult price. For concession and friends prices visit shakespeare.org.uk/whats-on. Registered Charity No. 209002

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THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS: Motown Mission: The Chicago Blues Brothers head for Detroit to take on some of the biggest and best-loved Motown anthems. Fri 8 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

ROUSE, YE WOMEN! Folk opera based on the story of Mary Macarthur and her universal campaign for equality in the workplace. Fri 8 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

DORIAN Contemporary retelling of Oscar Wilde's acclaimed novel, Dorian Gray. Fri 8 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ORLANDO Dyad Productions explore 'what it means to find our place in the world whilst remaining utterly true to who we are'. Fri 8 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

second novel, On The Come Up, Tues 5 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome?

AN EVENING WITH CHRIS TARRANT Fri 1 Mar, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

AN EVENING WITH TERENCE STAMP Fri 1 Mar, Arena Birmingham

THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER (12a) ROSIE (12a)

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:
Released from Fri 8 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

CAPTAIN MARVEL (12c)

EVERYBODY KNOWS (15)

MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - RUN THE WORLDS Become a marble-run engineer and build a giant marble run (and a lot of little ones) to test with marbles, balls and other rolling things. Wed 6 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS Featuring some of the world's best players, Wed 6 - Sun 10 Mar, Arena Birmingham

JIGSAW FESTIVAL 2019 One-day celebration of jigsaws. All money raised goes towards vital conservation work at Coughton, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 Mar, Coughton Court, Alcester

SOLIHULL BOOKFEST One-day celebration of stories and storytelling. Sat 9 Mar, Solihull Arts Centre, Coventry

FILM INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:


BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (12a) Biography/Music. Starring Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton, Number 8, Pershore. Sat 2, Mon 4 & Wed 6 Mar

FREE SOLO (12a) Documentary. Starring Alex Honnold. Malvern Theatres, Sun 3, Tues 5 - Wed 6 Mar

TRANSIT (15) Drama. Starring Franz Rogowski, Paula Beer. Foreign language, subtitled. Malvern Theatres, Mon 4 Mar

VICE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Christian Bale and Amy Adams. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 4 & Thurs 7 Mar; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 5 - Thurs 7 Mar

CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME? (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Melissa McCarthy, Richard E. Grant. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Mon 4 - Thurs 7 Mar

A STAR IS BORN (15) Musical/Drama. Starring Bradley Cooper, Lady Gaga. Number 8, Pershore, Tues 5 March


GREEN BOOK (12a) Comedy/Biography. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 7 Mar; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Fri 8 - Tues 12 Mar; Number 8, Pershore, Sat 9 Mar; Malvern Theatres, Fri 8 - Thurs 14 Mar


LEAVE THAT HARE: AN ART AND NATURE TRAIL Self-led art and nature trail around campus, Sat 9 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SOLIHULL BOOKFEST One-day celebration of stories and storytelling. Sat 9 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

ROBOT DAY Build your own robot, get hands-on with coding, find out how robots improve people’s lives and experience virtual reality. Sat 9 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

PIT STOP Brand new interactive event packed with hands-on activities based on science, technology, engineering and maths. Sat 9 - Sun 10 Mar, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

VINTAGE IN THE VILLAGE Give your wardrobe a retro refresh. Sat 9 - Sun 10 Mar, FarCo Village, Coventry

WORLD BOOK DAY WEEKEND Weekend of displays and workshops, Sat 9 - Sun 10 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

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TOUR

Thurs 14 Mar, UFO 50TH ANNIVERSARY, Albany Theatre, Thurs 14

THE JERSEY BEATS - OH TURE

Thurs 14 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

Embrace

Tues 12 Mar, Birmingh

YUNGBLUD Tues 12 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingh

ROY HARPER Tues 12

SMOKEPUPP Tues 12 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

ELLES BAILEY Wed 13 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ARCADE HEARTS + HARICO + RISCAS DJ S ET Wed 13 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

HOODIE ALLEN Wed 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NSG Wed 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

EMBRACE Thurs 14 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

THE PHIL BEER BAND Thurs 14 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

CASH & CARTER, TOGETHER Thurs 14 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

NICKI MINAJ AND FUTURE Thurs 14 Mar, Arena Birmingham

THE JERSEY BEATS - OH WHAT A NITE Thurs 14 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

UFO 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Thurs 14 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

DODIE Thurs 14 Mar, Birmingham, B’ham

LARKIN POE Mon 11 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SWMRS Mon 11 Mar, O2 Institute, B’ham

SELF Esteem Tues 12 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

YUNGBLUD Tues 12 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TOUR
Thurs 14 Mar, The Sun Ban, Worcester

BECKY HILL Thurs 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BOOTLEG BLONDIE Fri 15 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

MAWKIN Fri 15 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

NATHAN CARTER AND HIS BAND Fri 15 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

FEROUS DOG/SHE MAKES WAR Fri 15 Mar, The Empire, Coventry

DIIO + BLACK ANGUS Fri 15 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

TUES 12

Birmingham

YUNGBLUD Tues 12

O2 INSTITUTE, BIRMINGHAM

DIODIE

Tues 12

Birmingham

YUNGBLUD

SWMRS

Birmingham

Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NATIONAL MONKEYS Fri 15 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH
THOMAS TROTTER Programme comprises Fauré’s Requiem, Mon 11
Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DI XAO FEMMES DE LÉGENDE Featuring Di Xia (piano). Programme includes works by Schu-
mann, Modwall, Chopin and Melanie Hélène Bonis. Tues 12 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

LAUREN ZHANG (PIANO) RECITAL Tues 12 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring British pianist Leon Mc-
Cawley & Barry Wordsworth (con-
ductor). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Mozart & Tchaikovsky, Thurs 14 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

LONDON WINDS: COMMUTER CONCERT Featuring Michael Collins (clarinet/director), Thurs 14 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY SINGERS & YALE GLEE CLUB Featuring Simon Carrington & Jeffrey Douma (con-
ductor). Programme includes works by Byrd, Paul Crabtree, Schumann, Bohm, Scott & Bernstein, arr. Edger-
ton, Fri 15 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Sheffield

CBSO: MIRGA CONDUCTS SHOSTAKOVICH Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mirga Gradynte-Tyla (conductor), Anna Vinnitskaya (piano) and Jonathan Holland (trumpet). Sat 16 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MALVERN FESTIVAL CHORUS Featuring Alison Ponsford-Hill (soprano), Richard Coxon (tenor), Quentin Hayes (baritone), Ruth Faber (harp), Julian McNamara (organ) & Penny Vere (piano). Programme includes works by Goodall, Janecek & Vaughan Williams, Sat 16 Mar, Malvern Theatres

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina (conduc-
tor), Sabrina Ko & Oliver Tait (stu-
dent conductors) & Joshua Rapley (cello). Programme includes works by Saint Saens, Dukas, Berlioz & Fauré. Sun 17 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

CHANDOS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor) & Aydin Onac (piano). Programme includes works by Berlioz, Rachmaninov & Mahler. Fri 17 Mar, Malvern Theatres

BRING YOUR OWN BABY COMEDY Tues 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KIRI PRITCHARD MCLEAN Thurs 14 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, B’ham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY RICHARDSON PLUS COMEDIC TALK Thurs 14 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDREW MAXWELL Fri 15 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

STEV HENNS HENN NIGHT Fri 15 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

NISH KUMAR Fri 15 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

ROB ROUSE, VIKKI STONE, ALISTAIR BARRIE & TOM LUCY Fri 15 – Sat 16
Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT RICHARDSON Sat 16 Mar, Eveshams Arts Centre

LUCY FREDERICK Sat 16 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

EDDIE BRIMSON, JESSICA FOSTEKEN, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & FREDDY GUINNIE Sat 16 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

BEST OF BE FESTIVAL 2019 An ‘exhila-
rating’ evening of circus, theatre and illusion, Mon 11 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE LIFE I LEAD Miles Jupp brings to life the story of author David Tomlin-
son, best remembered for playing Mr Banks in Mary Poppins, Mon 11 – Wed 13 Mar. The REP, Birmingham

ROCK OF AGES Smash-hit musical featuring ‘more than 25 classic rock anthems, big hair, big dreams and serious rock’n’roll debauchery’. Casting includes Zoë Birkett, Kevin Kennedy & Kevin Clifton, Mon 11 – Sat 16 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

MADE IN DAGENHAM THE MUSICAL Pre-
sented by Kidderminster Operatic & Dramatic Society, Mon 11 – Sat 16 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

KINKY BOOTS Acclaimed musical which takes audiences on a journey from the factory floor of Northamp-
ton to the glamorous catwalks of Milan. Songs come courtesy of pop icon Cyndi Lauper, Mon 11 - Sat 23 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

DNA - WE KNOW WHAT YOU’RE THINK-
ING UK TOUR Join the Britain’s Got Talent finalists for an evening of mind-reading, Tues 12 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

MACBETH The National Theatre brings Shakespeare’s bloodiest play into the 21st century, Tues 12 – Sat 16

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Monday 11 - Sunday 17 March

**Talks**

**AN EVENING OF RUGBY WITH SIR CLIVE WOODWARD**

*OBE* Evening of anecdotes from England’s World Cup-winning coach, Thurs 14 Mar, Rugby Library

**LEO HOLDING - THE SPECTRE EXHIBITION**

*TO THE END OF THE EARTH* Talk about ambition, adventure, friendship & endeavour, illustrated with inspirational photography, Thurs 14 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**THE STORM KEEPER’S ISLAND**

With Catherine Doyle. Part of Bourville Book Festival, Sun 17 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**THE WAY PAST WINTER**

With Kiran Millwood Hargrave, Sun 17 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**Film**

**INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:**

**EVELYN**

(12a) Documentary. Malvern Theatres, Mon 11 Mar

**COLETTE**


**ALL IS TRUE**

(12A) Biography/Drama. Starring Kenneth Branagh, Lois Chakrabarti. Number 8, Pershore, Mon 11, Wed 13 & Thurs 14 Mar

**THE WHITE CROW**

(12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Jeté Thomas. Number 8, Pershore, Tues 12 & Wed 13 Mar

**GREEN BOOK**

(12a) Comedy/Biography. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Number 8, Pershore, Tues 12 & Thurs 14 Mar

**CINEMA PARADISO**


**POND LIFE**

(15) Drama. Starring Tom Varey, Esme Creed-Miles, Malvern Theatres, Thurs 14 Mar

**WILD ROSE**

(12a) Drama/Music. Starring Julie Walters, Jessie Buckley. Malvern Theatres, Fri 15 Mar

**CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?**

(15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Melissa McCarthy, Richard E. Grant. Number 8, Pershore, Fri 15 Mar

**OLD BOYS**

(15) Comedy. Starring Alex Lawther, Jonah Hauer-King. Malvern Theatres, Fri 15 - Sun 17 Mar

**CAPERNAUM**

(15) Drama. Starring Zain Al Rafeea, Yordanos Shiferaw. For- eign language, subtitled. Malvern Theatres, Fri 15 - Sun 17 Mar

**BOY ERASED**

(15) Drama/Biography. Starring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kid- man. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Fri 15 - Thurs 21 Mar

**Events**

**MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK SPECIAL - ROBOTS/COOKING**

Robot-related fun, Wed 13 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

**THE BIG BANG FAIR 2019**

The UK's largest celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) for young people, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**SEWING FOR PLEASURE/FASHION & EMBROIDERY**

Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW**

Featuring knitting, cross stitch, paper crafting, jewellery, dressmaking, felting or new craft trends, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**MEDIEVAL BANQUET**

Immersive evening of medieval entertainment and hearty food & drink, Sat 16 Mar, Warwick Castle

**FASHION & BEAUTY WEEKEND**

*BEHIND THE SCENES* with fashion experts, Wed 13 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**BLUE PLANET II LIVE IN CONCERT**

Based on the Baffa-winning BBC One television series, Sat 16 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**LYDIA MONKS: THE GIRLS, THE BEAR & THE MAGIC SHOES**

Long-time Julia Donaldson collaborator Lydia Monks visits BookFest with a draw-along show, Sat 16 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**DisCovery your Irish family history**

Celebrate St Patrick’s Day by tracing your Irish family history with expert Maggie Loughran, Sat 16 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

**DAD’S DAYS OUT - BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK**

Celebrating British Science Week with this special edition of Dad’s Days Out, exploring this year’s theme of journeys by investigating how machines move, Sat 16 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

**THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW**

Offering everything an amateur or pro could need to take their stills creations to the next level, Sat 16 - Tues 19 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**ST PATRICK’S FESTIVAL**

Parade through Digbeth followed by St Pat Rocks featuring the legendary Finbar Furey, Sun 17 Mar, Zellig Car Park, opposite Irish Centre, Digbeth, Birmingham

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March 2019
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Wednesday 6 March
STAND UP FOR WOMEN
FEAT: BARBARA NICE, MANDY MUDENA JULES OLIVER

Saturday 9th March
WOMEN IN ROCK
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GREATEST FEMALE ANTHEMS!

Saturday 16 March
MOTHERSHIP
A SHOW NOT TO BE MISSED FOR ANY ZEPPELIN FAN.

Tuesday 19 March
SIR GEOFF HURST
AN EVENING WITH ENGLAND’S HAT TRICK HERO

Thursday 28 March
THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY
THE UNIQUE STORY OF DARE SHIRLEY BASSEY

Saturday 30 March
JULIAN DUTTON: DO YOU THINK THAT’S WISE?
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN LE MESURIER

COMING SOON: Croft & Pearce, Cloudsuring, Sindhu Vee, Georgie Fame, Rouse-Ye Women
Glenn Wool, Women in Rock, Gordon Hendricks, The Phil Beer Band, Mawkin, Mothership
Lucy Frederick, Eblana Trio, Barnstormers Comedy, Soul Manifesto, Julian Dutton, Erja Lyytinen
Ed Gamble, Piatti String Quartet, Harriet Kemsley, The Counterfeit Stones, Vamos Theatre
The Lindisfarne Story, Genesis Connected, Stuart Goldsmith, Urban Folk Quartet, Morgan & West,
Scottish Falsetto Sock Puppet Theatre, The Sound of Springsteen, Frankie’s Guys...

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All the classics from 90s to the present day, incl. Robbie’s hits

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£20
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Wednesday 20 March
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Thursday 28 March
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Saturday 30 March
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Gigs

**GAMO SUZUKI** Tues 19 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**HAYSEED DIXIE/JUST TOM & PETE** Tues 19 Mar, The Empire, Coventry

**THE SLOW READERS CLUB** Wed 20 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**K TUNSTALL** Wed 20 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**DISTRICT 7** + **YIKES + DEADIST + VEDA** Thurs 21 Mar, The River Rooms, Reading

**THE DRIFTERS** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BOB HALL & HILARY LIL 'JIMMY REED - THE MANILOW SONGBOOK** Fri 22 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**D BLOCK EUROPE** Fri 22 Mar, The Snug, Coventry

**THE WORLD OF HANS ZIMMER** Fri 22 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**WIZARDS OF OZ** Sat 23 Mar, The Assembly, Birmingham

**I LOVE REGGAETON** Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR** Sun 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE WORLD OF HANS ZIMMER** Thurs 21 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**DEARIST + VEDA** Fri 22 Mar, The Assembly, Birmingham

**PICTURE THIS** Fri 22 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TOM & PETE** HAYSEED DIXIE/JUST A PALE HORSE NAMED LOGICAL TRAMP

**JAMES** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**NORTHSTAR** Thurs 21 Mar, The Vinyl, Digbeth, Birmingham

**THE ORBISON STORY** Fri 22 Mar, The Boulevard, Birmingham

**MIRANDA SYKES - BEHIND THE WALL** Fri 22 Mar, Palace Theatre, Worcester

**BARRY STEELE & FRIENDS AS THE ROY ORBISON STORY** Fri 22 Mar, Bedworth Civic Hall

**LOUISIANA BLUES WITH BOB HALL & HILARY BLYTHE** Fri 22 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**LIL’JIMMY REED** Fri 22 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**SHANGHAI HOSTAGE** Fri 22 Mar, The Tin Music & Arts, Coventry

**THE DRIFTERS** Thurs 21 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**THE WORLD OF HANS ZIMMER** Thurs 21 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**SHARON VAN ETEN** Thurs 21 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**SMOKESAC** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**JAMES** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham

**YUNGBLUD** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PICTURE THIS** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**AJ TRACEY** Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CORDUROY** Thurs 21 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE ELVIS YEARS** Thurs 21 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**SHERIDAN SMITH: A NORTHERN SOUL** Thurs 21 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**NIRVANA UK** Fri 22 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**FAITH - THE GEORGE MICHAEL LEGACY** Fri 22 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**JIZZY PEARL/LOVE/HATE** Fri 22 Mar, The Slade rooms, W’hampton

**SHANGHAI HOSTAGE - Tin Music & Arts, Coventry**

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Monday 18 - Sunday 24 March

Classical Music

**CBSO: SCHUMANN’S RHEINISH SYMPHONY** Featuring Jac van Steen (conductor) and Steven Osborne (piano). Programme includes works by Smetana, Shostakovitch and Schumann, 20 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE WORLD OF HANS ZIMMER** Thurs 21 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**CBSO: LET THERE BE LOVE, A CELEBRATION OF NAT KING COLE Featuring Guy Barker (conductor) and Gary Williams & Chennie Adams-Burnett (vocalists) plus the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Fri 22 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**UNIVERSITY WOMEN’S CHOIR** Featuring Patrick Barrett (conductor). Programme includes works by Sarah Quartet, Oliver Tanney, Kerry Andrew, Andy Broke, Cecilia McDowall & Toby Young, Fri 22 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**EBLANA STRING TRIO** Programme includes works by Purcell, Finzi, Beethoven, David Matthews & Morcan, Fri 22 Mar, Artix, Bromsgrove

**ROYAL STRING QUARTET** Programme includes works by Schubert, Arvo Part, James MacMillan & Szymanowski, Fri 22 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**PETER DONOHOO PIANO RECITAL** Programme includes works by Schumann, Tchaikovski & Mussorgsky, Fri 22 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY** Featuring Susanna Andersson (soprano), Catherine Carby (alto), Ruarai Bowen (tenor), Edward Seymour (bass), Meridian Sinfonia & Christophe Allsopp (conductor). Programme comprises Mendelssohn’s Elijah Op 70, Sat 23 Mar, Worcester Cathedral

**UNIVERSITY CHORUS** Featuring Toscana Strings, Julian Wilkins (conductor) & Nick Weare (organ). Programme includes works by Whitacre, Beethoven, Gibbons, Olga Gjelio, Haydn & Monteverdi, Sat 23 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

**CBSO: MUSICAL MYSTERY** FAMILY SHOW Featuring Tianyi Lu (conductor) and Tom Redmond (pianist). Programme includes works by Elgar, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Quincy Jones and Britten, Sun 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, B’ham

**UNIVERSITY PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Daniele Rosin (conductor). Programme includes works by Ives, Respighi & Shostovitch, Sun 24 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

**TOADDALLY FREE COMEDY** Mon 18 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, B’ham

**STEPHEN BAILEY** Wed 20 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**BRUM CRAC** Wed 20 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**LEE NELSON** Wed 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DAVE SPIKEY** Thurs 21 Mar, Malvern Theatres

**SINDHU VEE** Thurs 21 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**NATHAN CATON, GARY LITTLE, HAYLEY ELLIS & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 21 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ANDREW BIRD** Fri 22 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**NATHAN CATON, GARY LITTLE, HAYLEY ELLIS, JENNY COLLIER & MICK PERRY** Fri 22 - Sat 23 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**STEPHEN BAILEY** Sat 23 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**ROB ROUSE, PIERRE HOLLINS, MARK SIMMONS & HAYLEY ELLIS** Sat 23 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**LIMMY** Sun 24 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROUGH WORKS** Sun 24 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR** Teatro presents Nikolai Gogol’s satirical masterpiece, Wed 20 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**PRONOUN** The Crescent Youth Theatre presents its version of Evan Placey’s love story about transition, testosterone and James Dean, Wed 20 - Sat 23 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**IN THE WILLows** Hip-hop version of Kenneth Grahame’s Riverside tale, Olivier Award winner Clive Rowe, deaf street dancer Chris Fonseca (The Greatest Dancer), Sean Miley...
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Monday 18 - Sunday 24 March

Children

ZOG Julia Donaldson & Axel Schef- fler’s larger-than-life creature stars in a captivating tale for young audiences, Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Mar, Swan Theatre, Worcester

TOM THUMB Lyngo Theatre brings this Brothers Grimm tale to life with feathery spinning birds, a flying house and a portable forest, Sat 23 Mar, Henry Sandon Hall, Worcester

Dance

SWAN LAKE Classic ballet presented by Ballet Theatre UK, Fri 22 Mar, Al- bany Theatre, Coventry

BEREMLING THE MOVIES Strictly’s very own Aljaz and Janette are back on tour with a brand new show, Sat 23 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

HORRID HENRY: UP, UP AND AWAY Brand new collection of ‘wickedly funny’ stories, Sun 24 Mar, Albany Theatre, Coventry

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 22 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

Crime/Drama. Starring KiKi Layne, Stephan James, Arttix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 21 Mar

AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Virginie Efira, Niels Schneider. Foreign language, subtitled. Number 8, Pershore, Thurs 21 Mar

BURNING (15) Drama/Mystery. Starring Ah-in Yoo, Steven Yeun. Foreign language, subtitled. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Thurs 21 - Tues 26 Mar

BOY ERASED (15) Drama/Biography. Starring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kid- man. Number 8, Pershore, Fri 22 Mar

Talks

SIR GEOFF HURST An evening with England’s World Cup-winning hat- trick hero, Tues 19 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

A CELEBRATION OF SPOKEN WORD Hosted by Don Barber, Wed 20 Mar, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

GHOST TOURS Providing fantastic panoramic views of Worces- ter, Sat 23 Mar, Croome Park, Worcester

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 22 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

US (tbc)

THE WHITE CROW (12a)

Monday Ever Forgive Me? (15)


CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME? (15) Biog- raphy/Comedy. Starring Melissa Mc- Carthy, Richard E. Grant. Number 8, Pershore, Tues 19 Mar

MINI MOTORISTS Activity morning al- lowing under-fives to discover, through play, the world’s largest col- lection of historic British cars, Mon 18 Mar, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - BUILDING IT UP Anything goes in this themed ses- sion - as long as you get building, Wed 20 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE GIN TRAIN Gin-tasting experience with a twist, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

MINI MOTORS - ALL DAY Long day for comic-book fans, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

TOLKIEN READING DAY Two-day cele- bration of the life and works of JRR Tolkien, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Mar, Sare- hole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham

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Wednesday
24th April 2019

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Gigs

THE MOUSE OUTFIT
Mon 25 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham
PISTON
Mon 25 Mar, O2 Academy, B’ham
THE INTERNET
Mon 25 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
NEON WALTZ
Mon 25 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
PANIC! AT THE DISCO
Thurs 28 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
PIGS PIGS PIGS + CATS
Thurs 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
STEWART COPELAND
Fri 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
THE ZUTONS
Tues 26 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
TRA LIGHTS UP THE ORCHESTRA
Fri 29 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham
THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA
Mon 25 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT
Programme includes works by Bach, Dove, Vaughan-Williams, Delius & G. Litaize, Mon 25 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
ALBION QUARTET IN RECITAL
Featuring Tamsin Waley-Cohen & Emma Parker (violins), Rosalind Ventris (viola) and Nathaniel Boyd (cello), Programme includes works by Kate Whitley, Elizabeth Maconchy and Kate Soper, Tues 26 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
EX CATHEDRA: FIRE BURNING SNOW
Featuring Frances Kelly (harp), James Johnstone (organ) & Simone Rebello (percussion). Directed by Jeffrey Skidmore, Tues 26 Mar, St Mary’s Church, Warwick
CBSO FUNDRAISING CONCERT: RATTLE
Includes works by Jonathan Dove, Imogen Holst and Beethoven, Thurs 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
MENDELSSOHN & ENESCU STRING OCTETS
Featuring Jeffrey Armstrong, Alicja Huminicki, Olga Eckert & Mark Lee (violins); Mabon Llyr & Yue Yu (cellos), Thurs 28 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Reigate Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: MUSIC FOR PASSIONTIDE
Sat 30 Mar, St Philip’s Cathedral, Birmingham
CBSO: WEINBERG’S VIOLIN CONCERTO
Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mirga Gražinyte-Tyla (conductor) and Gidon Kremer (violin), Programme includes works by Schubert and Weinberg, Sat 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
QUEEN OF ROCK
Sat 30 Mar, Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon
DUCK THIEVES
Sat 30 Mar, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry
IOLANTHE
Sat 30 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Comedy

KIERAN HODGSON
Wed 27 Mar, Rich Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
FOIL, ARMS AND HOG
Thurs 28 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome
KIERAN HODGSON
Thurs 28 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
DANA ALEXANDER, JOHN MOLONEY & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON
Thurs 28 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham
DANA ALEXANDER, JOHN MOLONEY, HENNING WEHN
Fri 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
DARY LOWN & FRIENDS
Fri 29 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall
MARK STEEL
Fri 29 Mar, Evesham Arts Centre
JOHN LYNN & STUART MITCHELL
Fri 29 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
SINDHU VEE
Sat 30 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

MACBETH
English Touring Opera presents Verdi’s interpretation of Shakepeare’s famous tragedy, Mon 25 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
A SONG AT TWILIGHT
Simon Callow & Jane Asher star in Noel Coward’s bittersweet play, Mon 25 - Sat 30 Mar, Malvern Theatres
MALCOLM STENIT IN THE AFTERNOON
Tues 26 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull
IODMENEO
English Touring Opera present Mozart’s story of high ideals and deep emotions, Tues 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
NOUGHTS AND CROSSES
A story about love, revolution, and what it means to grow up in a divided world, Tues 26 - Sat 30 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

Laughter in the Dark

MINGO
Fri 29 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Friday 22 - Sunday 31 March

the list
**Monday 25 - Sunday 31 March**

**Film**

- **COLETTE (15)** Biography/Drama. Starring Keira Knightley, Eleanor Tomlinson. Number 8, Pershore, Mon 25 - Tues 26 Mar

**Talks**

- **TED X YOUTH@BRUM 2019** A day of discussions, conversations and ideas dedicated to young people in Birmingham. Wed 27 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**Events**

- **MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - RAMPS AND RACERS** Session exploring ramps and racers. Practise your engineering skills and make the highest ramps, the fastest racers and the longest racetracks, Wed 27 Mar, Coventry Transport Museum

- **THE NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING SHOW** Featuring interior design, exterior landscaping, roofing, flooring, restoration and new builds, Thurs 28 - Sun 31 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

- **ASTON HALL LATE: JACOBEAN MUSIC AT THE MANSION** Pay a nighttime visit to the grand old mansion at night, Fri 29 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham

- **MEDIEVAL BANQUET** Immersive evening of medieval entertainment and hearty food & drink, Sat 30 Mar, Warwick Castle

- **THE MURDER OF CHARLES LANE** Charles Lane has suffered an unfortunate fate. Can you solve the mystery of his death? Sat 30 Mar Birmingham Back to Backs

- **EASTER CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL** Featuring some of the best chocolate makers and traders in the Midlands, Sat 30 - Sun 31 Mar, FarGo Village, Coventry

**Children**

- **HORRIBLE HISTORIES: BARMY BRITAIN** A history of Britain... with the nasty bits left out! Wed 27 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

- **RABBIT GIRL & THE SEARCH FOR WONDER** New show for younger audiences inspired by stories from families about coping with loss and finding wonder in the world again. Sun 31 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**Horrible Histories: Barmy Britain - Palace Theatre, Redditch**

**Wise**

- **AFFECTIONATE TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE** and times of John Le Mesurier, Sat 30 Mar, Atrix, Bromsgrove

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**AN EVENING WITH BRIAN BLESSED** The actor and mountaineer shares anecdotes from his illustrious career, Wed 27 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**AN AUDIENCE WITH SIMON REEVE** Simon recounts tales from his trips to the remote and extreme corners of the planet, Thurs 28 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**AN EVENING WITH AGGERS** One of cricket's best-known commentators talks about his life in sport, Thurs 28 Mar, Malvern Theatres

**I TALK TOO MUCH: AN EVENING OF CHAT AND MUSIC WITH FRANCIS ROSSI** Anecdotes aplenty from the Status Quo star, Sat 30 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**COLLABORATION** Exploration of the relationship between composer Richard Strauss and his librettist, Stephan Zweig, Sat 30 Mar - Sat 6 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH TYSON FURY** Sat 30 Mar, Second City Suite, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH THE HARRY BIKERS** Sat 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, B’ham

**DAN SNOW - AN EVENING WITH THE HISTORY GUY** The historian and TV presenter shares anecdotes from his career, Sat 30 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

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LEONARDO DA VINCI

A Life in Drawing
birminghammuseums.org.uk

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
1 February – 6 May 2019

Image: Leonardo da Vinci, The head of an old bearded man, c.1517-18, Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019
Sweet is about to get Sinister
Curated by Rachel Maclean

26 January – 12 May 2019 😊 Free entry
birminghammuseums.org.uk 😊 #ACCNationalPartners 😊 #TooCute

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