

Birmingham

ISSUE 399 MARCH 2019

# What's On

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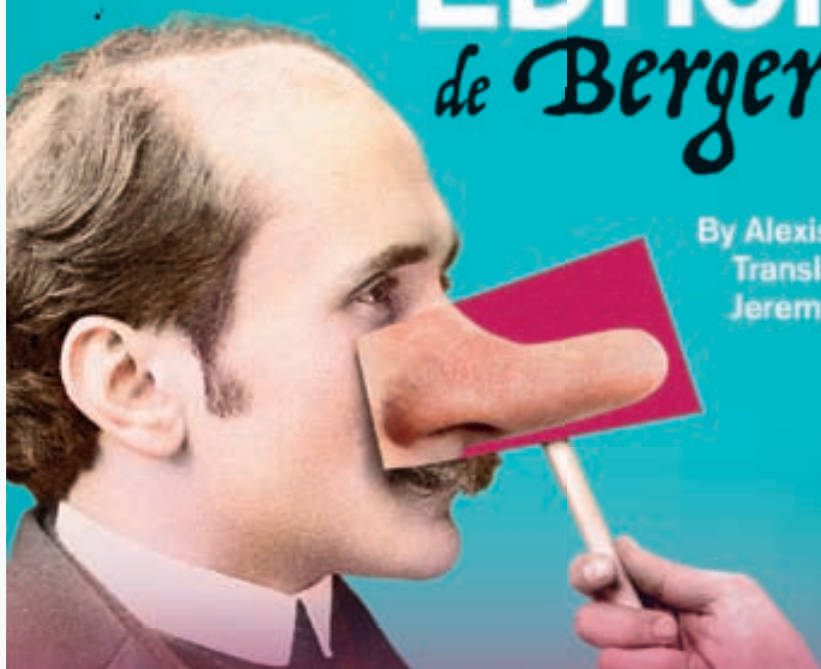


15-30 MARCH

Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Adam Blanshay Productions present

## EDMOND *de Bergerac*

By Alexis Michalik  
Translated by  
Jeremy Sams



The hilarious romantic comedy featuring Freddie Fox,  
Henry Goodman, Josie Lawrence and Chizzy Akudolu



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Mark Morris Dance Group  
pay tribute to The Beatles



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makes its debut at Town Hall

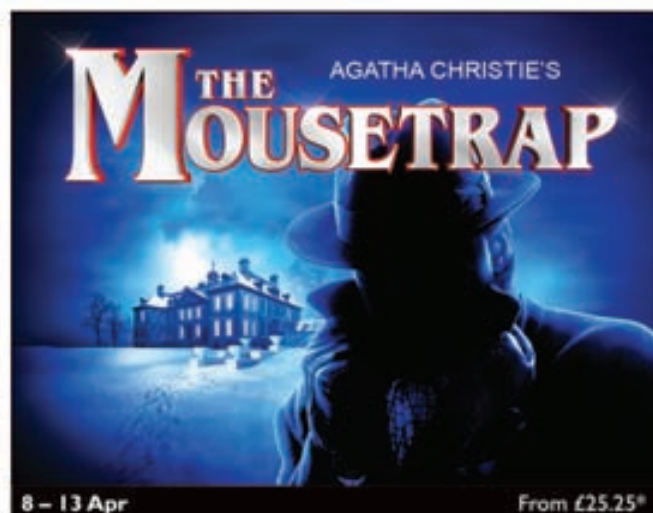


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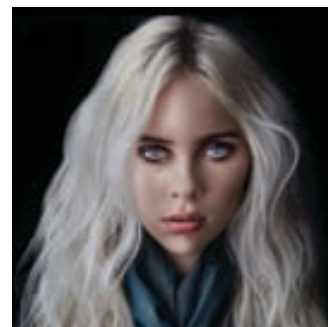
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## Get Grinched at the Alex!

Dr Seuss' *How The Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical* will stop off at Birmingham's Alexandra Theatre this winter (Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 December) as part of a UK tour. Featuring hit songs *You're A Mean One Mr Grinch* and *Welcome Christmas*, the production broke box-office records for two consecutive years on Broadway.

Commenting on the show, its UK producer, Simon Friend, said: "I'm so thrilled that *The Grinch* will be travelling the UK this year, stealing Christmas all around the country! The musical has been enchanting audiences across the US for over a decade, and we've been lucky enough to secure some of the best theatres in the country for its UK premiere. We can't wait to see the UK going green over the coming year!"

For more information and to book tickets, visit [grinchmusical.co.uk](http://grinchmusical.co.uk)

## An icy Christmas tale at the Old Rep Theatre!

Birmingham's Old Rep Theatre has announced that its Christmas show for 2019 will be *The Snow Queen*.

The Hans Christian Andersen classic will run from Saturday 16 November to Monday 30 December. It will be the fifth festive show to be produced alongside Birmingham Ormiston Academy. Commenting on the news, Michael Penn, Executive Director of the Old Rep, said: "Once again we'll be bringing the best theatre and digital skills to the stage from both a professional and student team. The Old Rep is becoming an established part of the city's festive celebrations, and we look forward to welcoming families for what will be a magical winter adventure!"

## Birmingham date for Impractical Jokers



High school buddies Joseph Gatto, James Murray, Brian Quinn and Salvatore Vulcano - otherwise known as live improv troupe *The Tenderloins* - are coming to Birmingham. Best known from TV's *Impractical Jokers* - a

4 [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)

reality series in which they coerce one another into doing public pranks while being filmed by hidden cameras - the boys are stopping off at Arena Birmingham on Friday 11 October as part of a UK tour. For more information, visit [arenabham.co.uk](http://arenabham.co.uk)

## Plans revealed for new Birmingham hotel



A new 225-bedroom hotel is set to open in Birmingham city centre in two years time. Whitbread's Premier Inn will occupy a new 13-storey building on a new public square. Commenting on the news, Premier Inn's Stuart Rose explained that the deal was part of the company's wider acquisition drive in Birmingham.

## Bournville's the place to be for bookworms...

Birmingham's only dedicated book festival for children under the age of 12 is this month taking place for the sixth time.

Bournville Bookfest this year features storytelling sessions, singalong events, drawing, drama and model-making workshops, and special appearances by high-profile kids' writers and illustrators.

The event is joined for the first time by three sister festivals, taking place in Barnt Green, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield.

For more information and dates, visit [bournvillebookfest.com](http://bournvillebookfest.com)

## RSC to premiere David Walliams kids' story

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*.

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

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](http://rsc.org.uk)





## Blue Planet II heads for Brum

Blue Planet II-Live In Concert, the stage show inspired by the BAFTA-winning television series, visits Birmingham's Resorts World Arena on Saturday 16 March.

The concert, hosted by Anita Rani (pictured), shows highlight sequences from across the TV series on a gigantic 4K Ultra HD LED screen. The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra provide an emotive musical accompaniment to the visuals.

To book tickets for the show, visit [theticketfactory.com](http://theticketfactory.com)



## 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](mailto:jo@shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk) before 6 May. Only selected performers will be contacted.



## Banksy duo join forces with Birmingham Opera Company

Banksy collaborators Block9, who created the dystopian fairytale castle at the centre of the artist's Dismaland 'bemusement park' in 2015, are bringing their anarchic creativity to Birmingham this month for their first opera collaboration.

Stephen Gallagher and Gideon Berger are joining forces with the award-winning Birmingham Opera Company to mount Shostakovich's Lady Macbeth Of Mtsensk at the city's Tower Ballroom. The show runs from Saturday 9 to Sunday 17 March. For more information, visit [birminghamopera.org.uk](http://birminghamopera.org.uk)

## Headlining stars announced for city's Pride 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](http://birminghampride.com).

## Springing into spring in Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio

A daring piece of physical theatre incorporating an international cast of performers with and without learning disabilities kick-starts the spring season lineup of entertainment in Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio this month.

Directed by Frantic Assembly's Scott Graham, Into The Light shows at the venue on Tuesday 5 & Wednesday 6 March.

Tickets for performances in the Patrick Studio can be booked by visiting [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com), where you can also find information about the rest of the spring season programme.





## Paper installation marks iconic art school's centenary

Birmingham City University students have marked 100 years since the formation of the iconic and hugely influential Bauhaus art school by creating a life-size exhibition crafted entirely from paper and cardboard.

Opened in Weimar, Germany, in 1919, the Bauhaus was closed in 1933 under pressure from the Nazis. Commenting on the project, Birmingham City University lecturer Hollie Wright said: "Our students were asked to build this installation entirely from paper and cardboard, drawing on a range of different artistic skills to echo the multi-disciplinary nature of the Bauhaus."

The project is now on display to the public at the University's Parkside Building.

## Comic art festival

An international festival celebrating the medium of comic art in all its forms takes place in Shrewsbury across the first weekend in June.

Comics Salopia features sessions with big-name comic-book artists, film screenings, Jedi fight training, face painting, a small press comics market, an interactive Judge Dredd event, live music, boat trips, a zombie walk, a Cosplay competition and live art events. Highlight of the festival is sure to be an exhibition by local artist Charlie Adlard of Walking Dead fame.

For more information about the event, visit [comicssalopia.com](http://comicssalopia.com)



## Celebrating Women's History Month in Birmingham



### City theatre dedicates the month of March to female-led creatives

Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre has joined in with Women's History Month celebrations by dedicating the entirety of its March programme to 'female-led creatives'.

Highlights of the venue's lineup include *Vulvarine: A New Musical*, by feminist musical theatre company Fat Rascal, and the critically acclaimed *Narcissist In The Mirror*, by Rosie Fleeshman.

To check out the whole programme, visit [oldjointstock.co.uk](http://oldjointstock.co.uk)

### Women's Day version of Hit The Ode

A special International Women's Day version of performance poetry night *Hit The Ode* is being held in Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio on Friday 8 March.

Contributors to the show include actor, writer and poet Rosie Fleeshman, music project AGAMA and international writer Malika Booker. For more information, visit [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)

### Helen Pankhurst at the Custard Factory

The great-granddaughter of suffrage leader Emmeline Pankhurst is this month headlining a free event at Birmingham's Custard Factory.

Dr Helen Pankhurst CBE will deliver the keynote address at West Midlands Women's Voice's 'in conversation' event, taking place at the venue on Wednesday 6 March. Commenting on the announcement, organiser Jane Kemp said: "Dr Pankhurst is such a fascinating woman with a breadth of experience as both a women's rights activist and through her charity work in the UK and abroad."

### Women composers celebrated in concert

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire is hosting a concert to celebrate 17th and 18th century female composers on Friday 8 March, as part of the city's International Women's Day celebrations.

The afternoon concert takes place in the Organ Studio and comprises vocal and instrumental music by Francesca Caccini, Barbara Strozzi, Jacquet de la Guerre, Isabella Leonarda and Elizabeth Turner.





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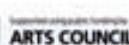


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# Josie Lawrence

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

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 Theatre 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 and her mother was 'a lovely mum and housewife', Josie's early experiences of the 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's 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.**



## REVIEW: Little Blackwood Magnificent food and exemplary service at Moseley gem

Known for its cosmopolitan community and vibrant social scene, the Birmingham suburb of Moseley plays host to a number of popular and high-quality bars and eateries.

A relatively recent addition to the area's eating-out offer is Little Blackwood, opened a year ago by award-winning chef Ben Taylor.

Boasting innovative, seasonal and locally sourced British food, the restaurant is Ben's first venture since moving back to his home town, having previously made a success of stints at Cen at Celtic Manor, The Boot at Lapworth and Malmaison in Liverpool, to name but a few.

On arrival, my partner and I were politely greeted by Zsafia, the restaurant's bubbly and wonderful manager, who showed us to our table. We were wowed from the moment we walked in. 'Oysters?' she asked. We couldn't have wished for a more perfect introduction - she evidently knew the way to our hearts from the off! The restaurant's trendy

décor and relaxed atmosphere further added to our sense of wellbeing.

The aesthetically pleasing interior features exposed brick, velvet chairs and brightly coloured statement lampshades. Set within the wooden floor is a circular glass section which exposes the underground wine cellar - a fantastic feature in a splendidly quirky establishment.

Following a couple of delicious oysters came our starters. Choosing from a mouthwatering selection, my partner and I opted for the Scottish salmon tartare served with a seaweed tapioca cracker, caviar and nasturtium, and the braised pig cheek served with a langoustine bisque topped with black olive tapenade. Each dish was elegantly presented and wonderfully tasty. The pig cheek was tender and without doubt the nicest I've eaten anywhere, the creamy, strong-flavoured langoustine bisque was beyond delicious, and the saltiness from the tapenade worked as the perfect addition. A warm, comforting and

thoroughly enjoyable dish.

The fresh and delectable salmon provided a nice contrast. Visually it was a work of art, and the unusual tapioca added some real texture and crunch.

For the main event, we chose fillet of beef served with bone marrow, potato croquette and Bordelaise sauce, and monkfish tail and king prawn curry with sautéed sea vegetables and butternut squash, served with banana leaf sticky rice.

The steak was cooked perfectly, resulting in a melt-in-the-mouth sensation, the knife gliding through the meat as if it were butter. The sweet, nutty flavour provided by the bone marrow, along with the light and fluffy croquette, complemented the steak perfectly. Featuring red wine, bone marrow, butter and shallots as the main ingredients, the sauce was rich, flavoursome and helped bring the dish together.

On to the curry. As with the steak, the monkfish tail and king prawns were cooked perfectly.

The sauce was creamy and the samphire and butternut squash cooked nicely. It was a dish that I'd definitely order again.

Zsafia suggested we tried a few of the side dishes, and the moment they touched my lips, I absolutely knew why. The crispy sprouts, served with kimchi puree, were just to-die-for - I didn't know it was possible for a sprout dish to taste so wonderful! I love kimchi, and the flavour combination was something of dreams. The hipsi cabbage with nori dust and parmesan, and the parsnip served with pumpkin seed were both fantastic too. Featuring an inventive choice of accompanying ingredients, it's rare to find side dishes that are so good.

To end the evening, we shared two naughty desserts - the Little Blackwood chocolate bar with peanut butter, salted caramel and strawberry gel, and the chocolate brownie with white chocolate ice cream, popcorn and burnt white chocolate. The descriptions more than speak for themselves - although I feel it's appropriate to mention just how tasty the brownie in particular was. The sweet, homemade treats were the perfect end to a perfect evening.

Our visit to Little Blackwood was one of our most enjoyable evenings out in the city to date. From the exemplary and welcoming service to the downright magnificent food, this is a Moseley gem that you'll want to return to again and again.

*Lauren Foster*

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall value:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
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## Derek Bishton, Brian Homer and John Reardon **Handsworth Self Portrait: 40 Years On**

**Sat 23 March - Sun 2 June**

In 1979, a pop-up photography studio set up on a street in Handsworth invited local people to take their own self-portraits. Now, 40 years on, this exhibition presents the original photographic prints, kindly on loan from Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council, along with images never before seen in public.

The striking collection of images presents a unique snapshot of a vibrant, multicultural community at the moment it first became visible.

Image: Stephen aka 'Stoppers' from Handsworth Self Portrait (1979) © Bishton, Homer & Reardon

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## Birmingham Wine Weekend is back

Birmingham Wine Weekend is back for a second year, taking place at a number of destinations across the city from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 March.

This year's participating venues include The Cosy Club, Chung Ying Central, Gaucho, Harvey Nichols, Hotel Du Vin, Jekyll & Hyde, Opus and Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill.

To find out about the 2019 programme of events and for information about how to make the most of the weekend, visit [birminghamwineweekend.co.uk](http://birminghamwineweekend.co.uk)

## Family-run eatery wins coveted award

Sutton Coldfield eatery Sushido has been named Midlands Japanese Restaurant Of The Year in the English Asian Food Awards 2019.

Commenting on the success, a spokesperson for the family-run business said: "We couldn't be more proud and happy to receive this award. Thank you to our amazing staff for their hard work, loyalty and for always going the extra mile - without you and our amazing customers this wouldn't have been possible. Onwards and upwards for many more happy events together!"

## Colmore Food Festival back for ninth time

The ever-popular Colmore Food Festival will take place in Birmingham's Victoria Square on Friday 5 & Saturday 6 July.

The annual celebration of Colmore Business District restaurants, bars, cafés and hotels attracts more than 30,000 visitors each year and is one of the city's most popular summer events. This year's festival will be the biggest yet, with more venues than ever before taking part.



## Award-winning Digbeth Dining Club launches weekly vegetarian and vegan street food nights

Award-winning street food event Digbeth Dining Club has introduced a weekly get-together for vegans and vegetarians following the success of its No Bones evening last year.

Taking place every Thursday from 4pm, the event features four or five meat-free traders.

Commenting on the new initiative, Digbeth Dining Club co-founder Jack Brabant said: "We were amazed at how quickly our No Bones event gathered pace. It was an instant hit with our diners, so this was an obvious choice for us. While our regular traders are out the front serving a selection of their much-loved dishes, the space at the rear of Digbeth Dining Club is reserved for vegan and vegetarian foods."

## A mid-May return for the Great British Gin Festival

The 2019 edition of the Great British Gin Festival takes place at The Mill in Birmingham on 17 & 18 May.

The event will feature over 100 international gins, from household names to exclusive small-batch varieties.

Event attractions include gin games, tasting samples and demonstrations.

Musical entertainment will be provided by a live swing band performing hits by icons including Amy Winehouse and Frank Sinatra.

Tickets for the festival cost £13.50 and are available by visiting [thegreatbritishginfest.co.uk](http://thegreatbritishginfest.co.uk)





# 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 re-

ally 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."

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

**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.

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**Kinky Boots shows at  
Birmingham Hippodrome from  
Monday 11 to Saturday 23 March**







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## Oslo Philharmonic Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 8 March

The Oslo Philharmonic's reputation as Scandinavia's finest orchestra has been emphatically underlined in recent times, thanks in the main to the arrival of the dynamic Vasily Petrenko (pictured) as chief conductor.

The St Petersburg-born 42-year-old is best known for his contribution to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, of which he's been chief conductor since 2006. During his time with the orchestra, he's presided over not only a refashioning of its sound but also an impressive increase in concert ticket sales... Petrenko's trademark energy is sure to be much in evidence when the Oslo Phil take to the stage to present Sibelius' fifth symphony. Works by Delius and Grieg also feature on the bill.

## Birmingham Bach Choir: Music For Passiontide

St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham, Sat 30 March

One of the city's oldest and most distinguished musical groups here gets its collective teeth into two 20th century small-scale masterpieces: Kenneth Leighton's powerfully dramatic cantata, *Crucifixus pro nobis* - a mini Passion for choir, organ and tenor soloist (sung by Robin Morton) - and Herbert Howells' moving Requiem.

The concert is part of the choir's centenary season and also features Lotti's timeless *Crucifixus*, Bruckner's magisterial motets and *Ruht Wohl*, one of Bach's most famous and beautiful pieces.



## Quatuor Bozzini

The Barber Institute, Birmingham, Wed 13 March



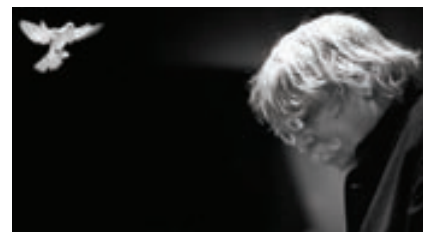
When it comes to forging collaborative projects, presenting new works and taking musical risks, Quatuor Bozzini's reputation precedes them. Indeed, the Canadian performers have even been dubbed 'one of the most daring string quartets in the entire world'.

Their visit to Birmingham sees them premiering two works: John Woolrich's *Débricolage* - from his current project, *A Book Of Inventions* - and fellow Canadian Scott Wilson's a mezza voce. Works by Linda Caitlin Smith, Stravinsky and Bartók also feature.

## Sir Karl Jenkins: 75th Birthday Concert

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 10 March

"Karl Jenkins," says opera and concert star Bryn Terfel, "produces always impeccable writing for a multitude of voices and instruments. I wish I had his talent to compose tunes but am proud to consider myself one who adores to sing them." Terfel is far from alone in his admiration of his fellow Welshman. A recent exhaustive survey revealed that Sir Karl is the most-performed living composer in the world. Indeed, his best-known work, *The Armed Man: A Mass For Peace* (which he conducts in this birthday concert, along with 6000 Pipes Organ Concerto, Palladio and excerpts from *Symphonic Adiemus*) has been performed more than 1,500 times in 20 different countries.




## Di Xiao - Femmes De Legende

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 12 March

Celebrated Chinese pianist Di Xiao is in no doubt about the professional ambition which she holds closest to her heart. "I want to become an international ambassador for the piano," she explains, "combining Chinese and Western repertoire in the programming of my concerts, thereby creating a bridge between two cultures." Although in her relatively short career Xiao has displayed a real flair for that aforementioned bridge building, her programme on this occasion focuses on the theme of women - both as composers and as inspiration.





“ 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 Pilgrims' Tale, and it will be music with visuals - there'll be narration in between some of the songs - but the actual theatre show itself will be a big 80-person performance. It's a bit more of an epic, and we'll have a spin-off album alongside it."

Instead of following the usual pattern of presentation for a show - a West End debut followed by a tour of provincial theatres - Seth is hoping to take the production on a very special and unique route: "We'll pick the 11 towns and cities that the Puritans came from. We're going to be quite specific about it, so it'll include Nottingham, Leiden, in Holland - where they spent time - Dartmouth, Southampton, Boston, Darlington and Scrooby in Nottinghamshire. It'll be quite an unusual tour, not the usual venues."

And like the Pilgrim Fathers, Seth is hoping to head across the Atlantic: "Fingers crossed, it'll have a run in Boston in Massachusetts. That would be fantastic."

"When I was touring America, I met the

Wampanoag tribe, the descendants of the original Native American Indians who met the settlers, and they're going to be part of the theatre show. So there's a lot that's going into it to cross the sea, cross the divide and make sense in Massachusetts, as well as over here in Plymouth. It's a big moment."

Before he follows in the Pilgrims' footsteps, though, Seth will continue to promote his most recent album, *The Well Worn Path*, which was released on Cooking Vinyl late last year.

"It's done incredibly well. The way people are receiving and responding to it is really positive. It's gone down very well, so it's certainly an exciting time, with a brand new line-up. It's always good to keep the cogs turning, keep things evolving, and it feels like we're doing that with this new band."

"It's a really strong band, so we're quite excited by it all. There's a guitarist, double bass player, drummer and myself. It's very groovy, quite 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."

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



# SOMEWHERE 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 Special A.K.A. (or 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 for Coventry. We happened to go on holiday to Lloret De Mar in Spain, and we were all there, skanking. *Gangsters* was being played and we were so proud. Some cities have got their own bands, but we ended up with a whole movement!"

As Chambers recalls, Coventry was "the epicentre of the British music scene for a while", but it was 2-Tone's international popularity that fired his passion to recognise the contribution the label had made to the city.

"A friend of mine was approached by two Japanese girls in Coventry city centre who were looking for the '2-Tone'. He reported this back to me, and I was disgusted that there was nothing. I decided to write a book called

The 2-Tone Trail, and that's where it started."

The museum opened five years ago, and while its 2-Tone exhibits include items relating to Selecter, Madness and The Beat, all of whom released records on the label, it's The Specials who remain the chief reason why people visit the venue.

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 fans for the fans. We've got two shops, the 2-Tone café, the Coventry Music Wall of Fame outside, and we've got the museum, so it's a lovely little enclave."

As 2-Tone nears its 40th anniversary, it seems appropriate that *Encore*, the first album of original material by The Specials in more than 20 years, went straight to number one in the UK album chart, less than a week after 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."

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**Coventry Music Museum is located at  
80 Walsgrave Road, Coventry, CV2 4ED.  
For more information, visit [covmm.co.uk](http://covmm.co.uk)**



## 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 Birmingham this month as part of his first ever headline arena tour.

## Paul Carrack

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 3 March

Paul Carrack's most recent album, *These Days*, has been hailed the most accomplished collection of songs in his distinguished career. Described as 'grown-up pop music made by, and for, people who've had the ups and downs that life unfailingly provides', it features 11 brand new compositions - six Carrack solos and five co-writes with old Squeeze bandmate Chris Difford. "It's about getting to an age and appreciating what you've got," says Carrack. "I hope it will resonate with people who're going through the same stuff. It's not being frightened of it, and just trying to enjoy it."



## Dreadzone

The Mill, Birmingham, Sat 2 March

Presenting an eclectic fusion of dub, reggae, techno, folk and rock music, Dreadzone formed in 1993, during their early years employing backing vocalists who included Melanie Blatt, Denise van Outen and Alison Goldfrapp.

One of the most energetic, exciting and powerful live bands to emerge from the post-rave scene, they last year released the album *Dread Times*, tracks from which will feature in this gig.

## Panic! At The Disco

Arena Birmingham, Tues 26 March

Fronted by vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Brendon Urie, Panic! At The Disco first came to prominence with the release of their debut album, *A Fever You Can't Sweat Out*, in 2005.

Fourteen years later and the band are embarking on their biggest-ever European tour, to promote sixth studio album *Pray For The Wicked*. The new record has debuted at number two in the UK Official Album Chart and number one on the USA's Billboard 200.

## Erja Lyytinen

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Thurs 28 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*.



## The Cinematic Orchestra

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Fri 29 March

The Cinematic Orchestra are a British nu-jazz and electronic music group created in 1999 by Jason Swinscoe, whose background in fine art inspired him to 'translate visual art into audible art'.

The group's sound, in both live and studio contexts, is created by a live band improvising along with a turntablist and electronic elements, including samples provided by Swinscoe.

Their definitive new album, for which Swinscoe and longtime partner Dominic Smith have enlisted contributions from collaborators old and new - including Roots Manuva and Moses Sumney - explores a timeless question of vital importance in 2019: what should we believe?







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# KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN

hoping to become *Wales' favourite daughter...*

**Comedian and podcaster Kiri Pritchard-McLean is proving to be a major hit on the UK comedy circuit, not least as writer and director of highly rated sketch group Gein's Family Giftshop. What's On chatted to her ahead of her upcoming Midlands dates...**

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 game."

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 some-

thing 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!"

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**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**



## 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.



## 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*.





## 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.







# Do You Hear The People Sing?

## Storm the barricades! Les Misérables is returning to the Midlands...

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 Bubl  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 O2 anniversary concert and featured in the film. Do you have a Les Mis highlight?**

With the O2 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 stu-

dents, 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 Th nardier and Th nardier 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



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 grab Fantine and Éponine's hands towards the end of the show, I look at Tegan Bannister (Éponine) and think, "Wow, it's Éponine!" These things will never escape me, and it inspires me to love the show all over again. But the first moment for me was definitely Stars. Even now, when I hear *our* Javert, Nic Green-shields, belting it out over the tannoy, it's just incredible. I'm a huge fan!

### **You clearly still have an overwhelming passion for the show...**

That's Drew Sarich again. Drew spoke so highly of the show and loved every minute of it. I think even if you sound like a crazy fan, it's important to love what you do. I don't work for a living because I get to perform Valjean in Les Mis every night. It's the show that keeps on giving, and once you get used to a moment, another one flashes up.

### **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.

### **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**







## 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 Bázán 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. Bázán 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 Tompkinson star.







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Foil, Arms and Hog: Craicling

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**Les Misérables**

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Sat 11 May



**BBC  
young dancer  
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Sat 18 May



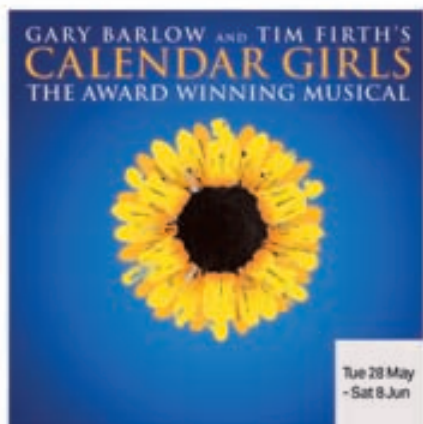
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Tue 16 -  
Sat 20 Jul





## 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."

## 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 heart-break...

"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."



## 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.

## 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 fair 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.

## 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.

## 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.





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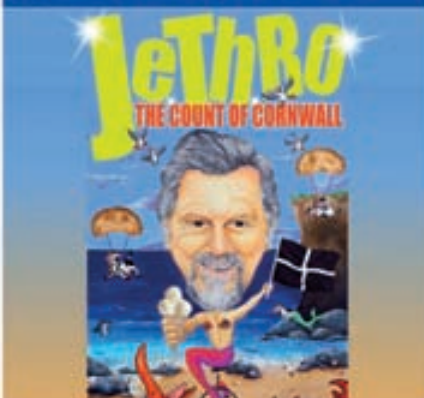
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TUE 7 – SAT 11 MAY

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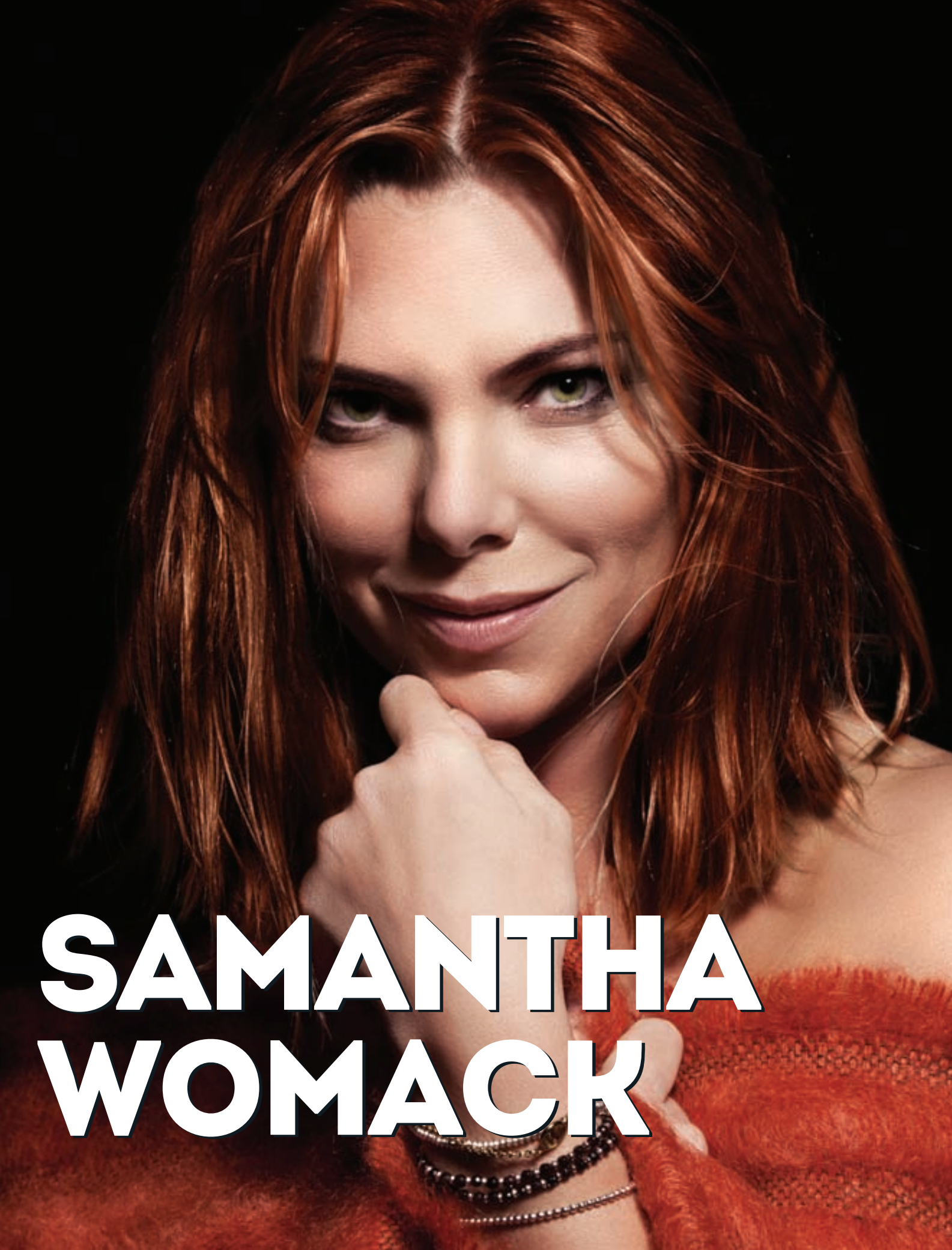


WED 22 MAY

**DREAMBOYS**







**SAMANTHA  
WOMACK**



# 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.

"While 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 disorients 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 really 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 and has a purpose. At this point, she's very much been consumed by her alcoholism and her lies about going to work, so trying to figure out the mystery brings her back from the abyss."

Playing Rachel is certainly a departure from the role for which Sam is best known - Ronnie Mitchell in *EastEnders*.

"I played Ronnie on and off for nine years, so I really got to know that character very well - to the point where, once I'd learnt the lines, I

didn't really need to rehearse because 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**



# STRIP ADVISOR

**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.

"People really 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," de-

clares James, while Andrew admits that he hates the rigmarole of searching for digs. Joe, nodding his head, chimes 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**



## 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...

## 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.



## 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!"

## 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.







# MITTON MANOR



 The Gardens  
will open from  
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## 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.



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**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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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## 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 Bad-

diel'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...

## 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 Book-fest 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.





## 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."

## 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.



## 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."



## 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 *she* becomes *he* and *he* becomes *she*.

'Featuring eclectic music, a weird topia 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.'

# 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 intersperses 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 a 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 cat-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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**2019**

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## 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**



**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

## Film highlights released in March...

### 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**

## 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 Darin, 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 Kozarzewa**  
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, Ariele 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**

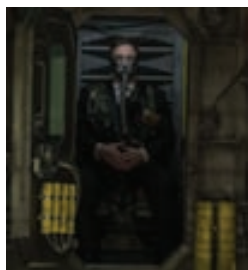


## Captive State CERT 12a (110 mins)

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**



## 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**

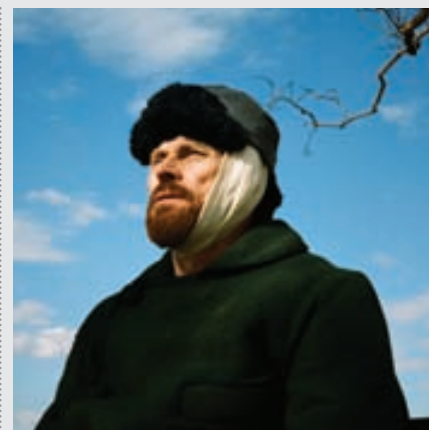
## At Eternity's Gate CERT 12a (111 mins)

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**









# Child's Play

## 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/](http://kidtropolis.co.uk/birmingham/tickets/)**



## 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 re-

sponse. 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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# Kidtropolis

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## 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.

## 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...



## 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!"



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Your week-  
by-week  
listings guide  
**March 2019**

# the list



*Billie Eilish plays the O2 Institute, Birmingham, on Sat 2 March*

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

## What's On

Fri 1 to Sun 10 March



Good Dog at  
The REP, Birmingham  
**Wed 6 - Sat 9 March**

Mon 11 to Sun 17 March



Jack Lukeman plays  
the Glee Club  
**Fri 15 March**

Mon 18 to Sun 24 March



KT Tunstall at  
Birmingham Town Hall  
**Wed 20 March**

Mon 25 to Sun 31 March



The Hairy Bikers at  
Symphony Hall  
**Sat 30 March**

## THROUGHOUT MARCH

### Visual Arts

**Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery**

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

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

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



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

### Eastside Projects

**NEW SOMEWHERE IN THE CROWD THERE'S YOU** Cardiff-based artist Freya Dooley works with writing, moving image, sound and performance, Sat 2 Mar - Sat 27 Apr

### Grand Union

**LAUREN GAULT: DRYE EYES** A series of sculptural moments, through objects and sound, until Sat 13 Apr

**JOANNE MASDING: BRUNTWOOD CORNERBLOCK COMMISSION** Permanent installation made by artist and Grand Union studio holder Joanne Masding, until Fri 5 July

### Ikon Gallery

**NEW HEW LOCKE: HERE'S THE THING** Work involving a wide range of media - painting, drawing, photography, sculpture and installation - making extensive use of collage and found objects, Fri 8 Mar - Sun 2 June

**NEW KE - FLY** Performance video screened in the Tower Room and featuring a young Chinese artist facing a laptop camera, his meditative position foiled by the irritating movement of his mouse cursor, as if it were a flying insect, Fri 8 Mar - Sun 2 June

### MAC, Birmingham

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

**NEW ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY: INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION IPE 161** Comprising 100 images by 54 contemporary photographers, Sat 30 Mar - Sun 12 May

**NEW BRAVE: THE GIRLS OF SOUTH SUDAN** Exhibition by award-winning photographer Kate Holt showing girls' everyday lives as they survive in the world's youngest country, Sat 30 Mar - Sun 19 May

### RBSA Gallery

**NEW RBSA OPEN ALL MEDIA 2019** Featuring jewellery, ceramics, sculpture, textiles, drawing, painting and print-making, Thurs 14 Mar - Sat 13 Apr

**NEW NEXT WAVE ASSOCIATE SHOWCASE** Group exhibition featuring work by artists from the 2018 Next Wave exhibition, Mon 25 Mar - Sat 11 May

### The Barber Institute

**THE LAST ROMAN** Emperor Justinian I (527 - 565 AD), the so-called 'last Roman emperor', rose from peasant beginnings in Serbia to become the most powerful man on earth, until Sun 14 Apr

**DRAWING OUT THE SOUND** Featuring artists ranging from Dürer to Renoir, this print display brings together works that reflect on the changing meanings of music in society, until Sun 19 May

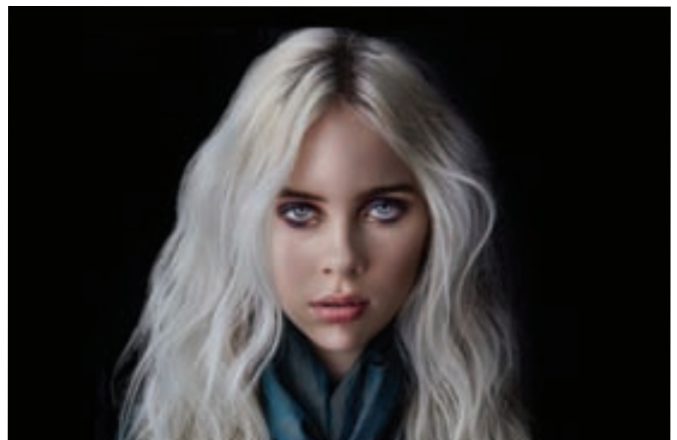
### Other VISUAL ARTS

**ONCE UPON A TIME: WOMEN WHO DARED TO DREAM** Exhibition of the 30 illustrations commissioned for the book Once Upon A Time In Birmingham: Women Who Dared To Dream, all of which were created by up-and-coming female illustrators, until Thurs 18 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

**NEW DIGITAL DIASPORA** Exhibition based on the topics of unity and division, Fri 1 Mar - Sun 14 Apr, Centrala Gallery & Cafe, Birmingham

**NEW CARL KNIBB - LIFE IN LIGHT** Exhibition by the Midlands artist who competed as a semi-finalist in Sky Arts Landscape Artist Of The Year, Sat 2 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, Artifex Gallery, Sutton Coldfield

**NEW CATHERINE DE BARNES ART SOCIETY & SOLIHULL SOCIETY OF ARTS SPRING JOINT ART EXHIBITION** Showcasing for-sale paintings, pottery, jewellery and cards, Wed 20 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, The Core Theatre, Solihull



Billie Eilish - O2 Institute, Birmingham

### Gigs

**OASIS MAYBE AT COME TOGETHER** Fri 1 Mar, Night Owl, B'ham

**PURE WHITNEY HOUSTON** Fri 1 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**GODSMACK** Fri 1 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THE ELO EXPERIENCE** Fri 1 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**GREEN HAZE (GREEN DAY) & ONE EIGHTY TWO (BLINK 182)** Fri 1 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**CATAPULT CLUB FT. THE BUTTERS ALIENS** Fri 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**AN ORCHESTRAL RENDITION OF DR. DRE: 2001** Fri 1 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**JESSOP JESSOP JESSOP** Fri 1 Mar, Pizza Express Live, B'ham

**DAN SHAKE** Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds,

Birmingham

**MR BEN** Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**BILLIE EILISH** Sat 2 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**CLOUDBUSTING - THE MAGIC OF KATE BUSH** Sat 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**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 TRIP-**

**PER, EFFIGY FOR SLEEP** Sat 2 Mar, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

**BASS DRUM OF DEATH** Sat 2 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, B'ham

**MAET LIVE** Sat 2 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**HARRY JORDAN + RAI KAH MERCURY** Sat 2 Mar, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**DREADZONE** Sat 2 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**IMAANI 'ECLECTIC ACOUSTIC SOUL'** Sat 2 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW & THE LOW RIDERS SOUL REVUE** Sat 2 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**PAUL CARRACK** Sun 3 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**GEORGIE FAME** Sun 3 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove



Dan Shake - Hare & Hounds, Birmingham



## Classical Music

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

## Comedy

**RACHEL PARRIS** Fri 1 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**MATT FORDE** Fri 1 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

**BILL BURR** Fri 1 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**TONY LAW** Fri 1 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ALLYSON SMITH, JOHN FOTHERGILL, ANDREW RYAN & ED PATRICK** Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**CROFT & PEARCE** Sat 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

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

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

**SINDHU VEE** Sun 3 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**AURIE STYLA, JASON PATTERSON, SPECIAL P, MR CEE & DIZZLE** Sun 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**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 womanhood, 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 Shakespeare'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 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**A SMALL FAMILY MURDER & THE BUN-**

**DLE** Two short plays performed by Stourbridge Theatre Company, Fri 1 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

**A BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT** Featuring Black Country comedy act Dandy, musicians The Empty Can & compere Wayne Beese, Fri 1 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**SEX CELLS** Amateur staging of Anna Longaretti's funny and poignant play about motherhood, friendship, love and loss, Fri 1 - Sat 9 Mar, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

**SHOWSTOPPER! THE IMPROVISED MUSICAL** Brand new musical comedy created from scratch at each performance, Sat 2 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**DANGEROUS OBSESSION** Amateur staging of NJ Crisp's psychological thriller, Sat 2 - Sat 9 Mar, Oldbury Rep

**YAMATO DRUMMERS: PASSION** Theatrical performance of Japanese Taiko drumming, Sun 3 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

## Kids Shows

**THE CAT IN THE HAT** Riotous rhymes & 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

## Dance

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** Birmingham 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

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**TEDDY PENDERGRASS: IF YOU DON'T KNOW ME** Documentary. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 1 Mar

**ALIEN (18)** Horror/Sci-Fi. Starring Sigourney Weaver, Tom Skerritt. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar

**IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK (15)** Crime/Drama. Starring Kiki Layne,



## Lauren Zhang

Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Tues 12 March

A Birmingham resident from the age of nine, American-born 17-year-old Lauren Zhang is the current BBC Young Musician of the Year, winning the title for her performance of Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto, accompanied by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

In the 10 months since securing the coveted title, Lauren has performed at the BBC Proms with the BBC Concert Orchestra, and at Proms In The Park with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Forthcoming engagements include concerto performances with London Mozart Players, the European Union Chamber Orchestra and Brno Philharmonic. This Conservatoire concert sees her performing works by Beethoven, Brahms and Chopin.

Stephan James. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Thurs 7 Mar

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

**GREASE (18)** Musical/Romance. Starring John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John. Inc singalong brunch. The Mockingbird Cinema, Sat 2 Mar

**DESTROYER (15)** Crime/Drama. Starring Nicole Kidman, Toby Kebbell. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 2, Tues 5 - Thurs 7 Mar

**TURNER & HOOD (PG)** Comedy/Crime. Starring Tom Hanks, Mare Winningham. Dog friendly screening. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 3 Mar

**OF LOVE & LAW (15)** Documentary. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 3 Mar

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 1 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

**THE AFTERMATH (tbc)**

**SERENITY (tbc)**

**WHAT THEY HAD (12a)**

## Events

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

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

**SUTTON COLDFIELD BOOKFEST** A day of workshops and storytelling for children up to the age of 12, Sat 2 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Library

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

**OPEN ASTON** Take a wander around the grand old mansion, Sun 3 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham



# STRATFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL

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Jacqueline Wilson  
Prue Leith  
John Suchet  
Juliet Stevenson  
Barry Cryer  
Ali Smith  
Andrew Davies  
Alison Weir  
Francesca Simon  
Dr Adam Rutherford

Henry Marsh  
Nick Sharratt  
Dr David Nott  
John Lanchester  
Rosemary Shrager  
Lucy Parham  
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# FLATPACK FESTIVAL

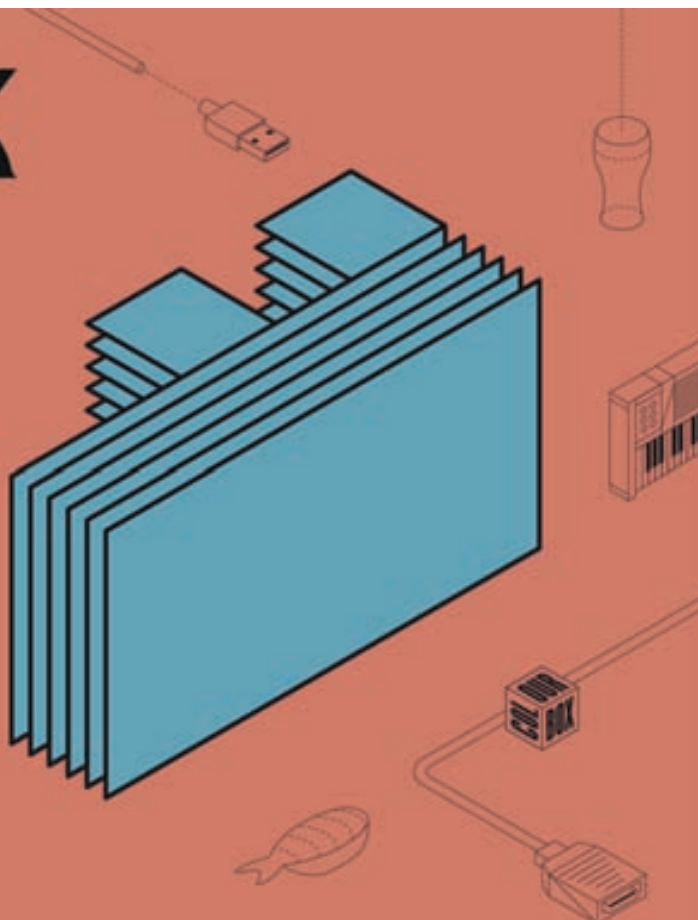
FILM, AND THEN SOME

30 APRIL - 5 MAY 2019

VENUES ACROSS BIRMINGHAM

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#FLATPACK2019





### Gigs

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

**ITCHY FEET** Tues 5 Mar, The Jam House, 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

**HANNAH JOHNSON & THE BROKEN HEARTS** Wed 6 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**THE TAKE THAT EXPERIENCE** Thurs 7 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**ODDITY ROAD** Thurs 7 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**QUILL** Thurs 7 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**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 Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**PETER ANDRE** Thurs 7 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**ELIZA** Thurs 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

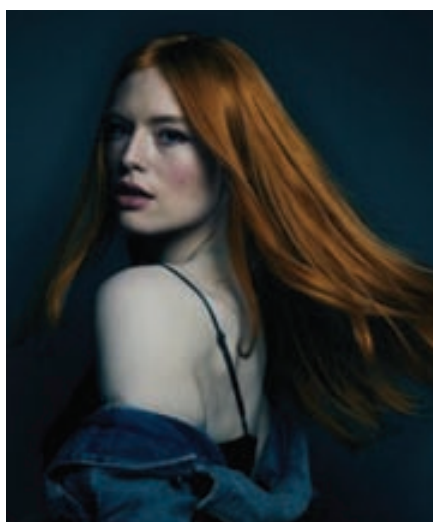
**OMAR** Thurs 7 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

**THE ESKIES** Thurs 7 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**MR EAZI** Thurs 7 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**ROY HEMMINGS: HITS OF MOTOWN** Fri 8 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

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



Freya Ridings - O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MATT FORD'S SALUTE TO SINATRA & THE KINGS OF COOL** Fri 8 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE VERY BEST OF BURT BACHARACH** Fri 8 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**STIFF LITTLE FINGERS** Fri 8 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SEAN DUGGAN BAND + BLACK KNIGHT SATELLITE + CALI ROW + GAZELLE** Fri 8 Mar, Actress & Bishop, B'ham

**BLAK TWANG, RODNEY 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

**CROOKED COLOURS** Fri 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE MERSEY BEATLES: THE ABBEY ROAD TOUR** Fri 8 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**URBAN INTRO** Fri 8 - Sat 9 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**ULTIMATE BUBLÉ** Sat 9 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**PEACH CLUB / KILLER BOB / DOLLCANOES** Sat 9 Mar, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

**NAUGHTY NINETIES** Sat 9 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**AMY WINEHOUSE TRIBUTE BY MARINA COOMBES** Sat 9 Mar,

The Night Owl, Birmingham

**10CC** Sat 9 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**WOMEN IN ROCK** Sat 9 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE SENSATIONAL 60'S EXPERIENCE** Sat 9 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**THE LANCASHIRE HOTPOTS - HIGHWAY TO HULL TOUR** Sat 9 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**FREYA RIDINGS** Sat 9 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CATS IN SPACE - ROCK GODDESS** Sat 9 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**BELLA AND THE BOURBON BOYS** Sat 9 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**GORDON HENDRICKS: UNPLUGGED** Sun 10 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CALVA LOUISE** Sun 10 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**ROAD TRIP - ROAD TRIP 2.0 TOUR** Sun 10 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**LOREENA MCKENITT** Sun 10 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE ORB** Sun 10 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LUTHER - LUTHER VANDROSS CELEBRATION** Sun 10 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

### Classical Music

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

**ED PETHER (VIOLIN)** Programme includes works by Bartók, Webern & R Strauss, Tues 5 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

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



**LUCY RUSSELL (VIOLIN) & SEZI SESKIR (FORTEPIANO)** Programme includes works by Beethoven, Mozart & CPE Bach, Thurs 7 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**SPRING OPERA: THE MAGIC FLUTE** Featuring Michael Barry (director) & Christopher Bucknall (conductor), Thurs 7 - Sat 9 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**CHETHAM'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC** Featuring Rose McLachlan (piano), Joanne Lee (flute) & Nick Oliver (piano). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Sancan & Boehm, Fri 8 Mar, The Barber Institute, B'ham

**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

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - EARLY MUSIC TREASURES** Fri 8 Mar, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**SIR KARL JENKINGS: 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

### Comedy

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

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

**RHOD GILBERT** Thurs 7 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SCOTT BENNETT, ALAN HUDSON, JOBY MAGEEAN, DAVE WILLIAMS** Thurs 7 Mar, The George Hotel, Lichfield

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

**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, Birmingham

**JASON MANFORD** Sat 9 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

**RICH HALL** Sat 9 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**GLENN WOOL** Sat 9 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CARL HUTCHINSON** Sat 9 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**JESSIE CAVE** Sat 9 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**LAUREN PATTISON, DAVE LONGLEY, NICK DOODY** Sat 9 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**MAUREEN YOUNGER, JUDI LOVE, GLENDA JAXSON & DANA ALEXANDER (PICTURED)** Sun 10 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham



### 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 Hippodrome

**IF MY FATHER ONLY KNEW** Nathalie Bazán's devised exploration of identity, sex and beauty in today's society

# SUMMER 2019

## HIGHLIGHTS

WORDS & IDEAS

An Audience with  
Joanna Trollope

Thu 25 Apr



COMEDY

Stewart Francis

Into the Punset

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





ety, 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

**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

**HIS WAY: THE FRANK SINATRA STORY** Wed 6 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**GOOD DOG** Arinze Kene's story of growing up in a multicultural community and the everyday injustices that drive people to take back control, Wed 6 - Sat 9 Mar, The REP, B'ham



**THE PRODUCERS** MUSCOM present an amateur staging of Mel Brooks' classic comedy, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE MAGIC FLUTE** Welsh National Opera's production of Mozart's famous work, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ROBERTO DEVEREUX** Acclaimed production by Welsh National Opera. Sung in Italian, with English surtitles, Fri 8 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS: MOTTOWN 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, Do-

rian Gray, Fri 8 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**THE FOOTSY CLUB** An exclusive evening of 'delectable femme fatales, quirky comedy and extraordinary performances', Fri 8 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE TAMING OF THE SHREW** Justin Audibert directs Shakespeare's comedy of gender and materialism, Fri 8 Mar - Sat 31 Aug, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**OPEN MIC NIGHT** Featuring local companies and singers showcasing their talents, Sat 9 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**KNIGHTMARE LIVE** Comedy stage adaption of the cult TV classic, Sat 9 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK** Performed by Birmingham Opera Company with music by Shostakovich, Sat 9 Mar, Tower Ballroom, Edgbaston, Birmingham

**HOLDING BABY: THE REALITIES OF KINSHIP CARE** Rag City Productions present a poignant insight into the lives of carers and the cared for, Sat 9 - Sun 10 Mar, CircusMash, Kings Heath, Birmingham

## Dance

**U.DANCE WM 2019** A 'vibrant and exciting' mix of dance genres and themes, celebrating some of the best young performers from the West Midlands, Sun 10 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Talks

**ANGIE THOMAS IN CONVERSATION WITH RAKEEM OMAR** Author Angie Thomas talks about her highly anticipated second novel, *On The Come Up*, Tues 5 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Film

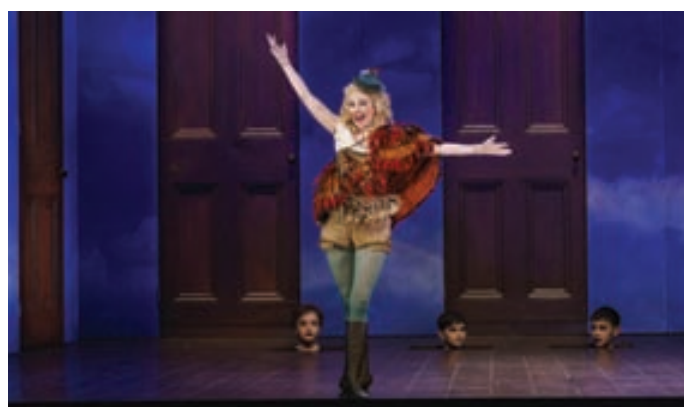
### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**GREEN BOOK (12a)** Comedy/Biography. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 7 Mar

**CAPTAIN MARVEL (12a)** Action/Adventure. Starring Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, from Fri 8 Mar

**ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (12a)** Action/Adventure. Starring Rosa Salazar, Christoph Waltz. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 8 - Thurs 14 Mar

**DIRTY DANCING (12)** Drama/Music.



## Welsh National Opera

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 6 - Sat 9 March

A regular visitor to the Midlands, Welsh National Opera is committed to producing works which are extremely accessible for its audiences, whether they be opera-going regulars or people attending an opera for the very first time.

The company's spring-season Hippodrome programme features Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* - based on the real-life assassination of King Gustav III of Sweden, who was shot at a masked ball in 1792 - Mozart's *The Magic Flute* - a fairytale-style story of good versus evil - and Donizetti's *Robert Devereux*, in which the eponymous character's life hangs in the balance when he leaves Queen Elizabeth I heartbroken.

Starring Patrick Swayze, Jennifer Grey. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 9 Mar

**BIRDS OF PASSAGE (15)** Drama. Starring Anastasia Carriña Martínez, José Acosta. Foreign language, subtitled. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 10 Mar

**TRON: DOUBLE BILL (PG)** Adventure/Sci-Fi. Starring Jeff Bridges. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 10 Mar

**POLINA (12a)** Drama. Starring Anastasia Shevtsova, Veronika Zhovnytska. Foreign language, subtitled. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 10 & Tues 12 Mar

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 8 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

**CAPTAIN MARVEL (tbc)**

**EVERYBODY KNOWS (15)**

**THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER (12a)**

**ROSIE (12a)**

**CHAMPIONSHIPS** Featuring the world's best players, Wed 6 - Sun 10 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**CRUFTS 2019** Twenty-two thousand dogs compete for the title of Crufts Best In Show, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**LICHFIELD LITERATURE FESTIVAL** This year's festival theme is *Frontiers, Borders And Barriers*, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 Mar, various venues across Lichfield

**THE MURDER OF LOUISA SMITH** There's been a murder at the Back to Backs. Can you get to the bottom of what happened to poor Louisa Smith? Fri 8 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

**DANCING WITH THE STARS WEEKEND** Featuring the stars of *Strictly Come Dancing* at the Alton Towers Resort Hotel, Fri 8 - Sun 10 Mar, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

**DISCOVER RAG RUGGING** Learn the art of rag rugging, Sat 9 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

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

**BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR** Discover the world behind the curtain, Sat 9 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

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

## Events

**CANDLELIGHT TOURS** Experience the atmospheric Back to Backs by candlelight, Tues 5 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

**YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON**

## Gigs

**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

**ROY HARPER** Tues 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DELANO MILL'S DREAD & JAZZ SESSION** Tues 12 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**SMOKEPURPP** Tues 12 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**ELLES BAILEY** Wed 13 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ARCADE HEARTS + HARICO + RISCAS DJ SET** Wed 13 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**HOODIE ALLEN** Wed 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**NSG** Wed 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE PHIL BEER BAND** Thurs 14 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**STEVE GIBBONS BAND** Thurs 14 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**NICKI MINAJ AND FUTURE** Thurs 14 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**UFO 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR** Thurs 14 Mar,

Birmingham Town Hall

**DODIE** Thurs 14 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**DESPERATE JOURNALIST** Thurs 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**APOLLO SOUL** Thurs 14 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**WOJTEK MAZOLEWSKI QUINTET** Thurs 14 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**BECKY HILL** Thurs 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BOOTLEG BLONDIE** Fri 15 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**NIGHT OF THE VALKYRIES** Fri 15 Mar, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

**MAWKN** Fri 15 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**OH! WHAT A FEELING** Fri 15 Mar, Lichfield Gar-rick

**JACK LUKEMAN** Fri 15 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**THIS FEELING - RORY WYNNE + YOUNG CHASERS + LOWER LOVEDAY + THE VERSE** Fri 15 Mar, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**THE WAILERS** Fri 15 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**LENE LOVICH BAND - STATELESS 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR** Fri 15 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MIKE AND THE MECHANICS** Fri 15 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**THE ATLANTIC PLAYERS** Fri 15 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**MARI WILSON** Fri 15 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**NAPOLEON** Fri 15 Mar, The Asylum, B'ham

**DETROIT SOUL COLLECTIVE** Fri 15 - Sat 16 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**THE STRANGE DOORS** Sat 16 Mar, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**MOTHERSHIP - LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE** Sat 16 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**LIVEWIRE - THE AC/DC SHOW** Sat 16 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**THE STRANGLERS** Sat 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**XY&O + DAME** Sat 16 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE AMY WINEHOUSE EXPERIENCE - A.K.A LIONESS** Sat 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR: THE RECKLESS HEART TOUR** Sat 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE DUBLIN LEGENDS** Sat 16 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**KIKI DEE & CARMELO LUGGERI 'AN ACOUSTIC JOURNEY'** Sat 16 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**GEORGE EZRA** Sun 17 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

## Classical Music

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

**DI XIAO FEMMES DE LÉGENDE** Featuring Di Xiao (piano). Programme includes works by Schumann, McDowall, Chopin and Mélanie Hélène Bonis, Tues 12 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

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

**QUATUOR BOZZINI** Featuring Clemens Merkel & Alissa Cheung (violins), Stéphanie Bozzini (viola) & Isabelle Bozzini (cello). Programme includes works by John Woolrich, Scott Wilson, Stravinsky & Bartók, Wed 13 Mar, The Barber Institute, B'ham

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

**FIDELIO TRIO** Featuring Darragh Morgan (violin), Adi Tal (cello) & Mary Dullea (piano). Programme includes works by Michael Zev Gordon & Fauré, Fri 15 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**LUNCHTIMES @BMAG** Featuring Mark Ashford, Fri 15 Mar, The Round Room, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY SINGERS & YALE GLEE CLUB** Featuring Simon Carrington & Jeffrey Douma (conductor). Programme includes works by Byrd, Paul Crabtree, Schumann, Bob Chilcott & Bernstein, arr. Edgerton, Fri 15 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University Birmingham

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

**UNIVERSITY CAMERATA** Featuring Sarah Charista, Mariana Rosas & Philip Townley (conductors). Programme includes works by Ken Steven, Britten, Mozart, Barber & Tallis, Mon 18 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

**UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor), Sabrina Ko & Olivia Tait (student conductors) & Joshua Rapley (cello). Programme includes works by Saint Saëns, Dukas, Berlioz & Fauré, Sun 17 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

## Comedy

**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 FEATURING COMEDIAN TBC** Thurs 14 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**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

**LUCY FREDERICK** Sat 16 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**EDDIE BRIMSON, JESSICA FOSTEKEW, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & FREDDY QUINNE** Sat 16 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

## Theatre

**LADY MACBETH OF MTSSENSK** Performed by Birmingham Opera Company with music by Shostakovich, Mon 11, Wed 13, Fri 15 & Sun 17 Mar, Tower Ballroom, Edgbaston, Birmingham

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

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

**MACBETH** The National Theatre brings Shakespeare's bloodiest play into the 21st century, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

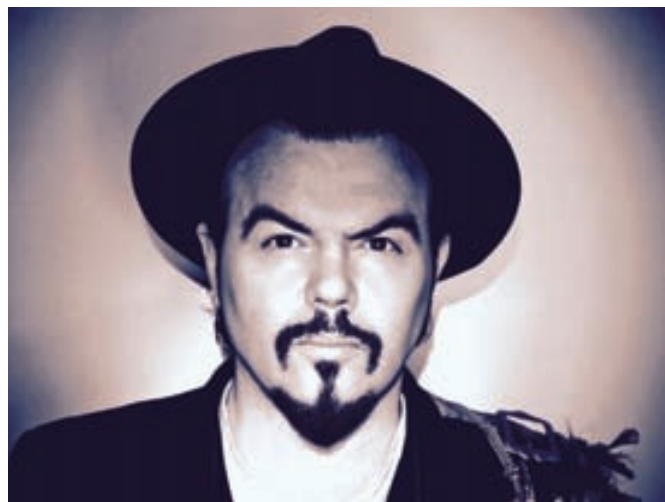
**TOP HAT** Knowle Musical Society present an amateur staging of the award-winning musical, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**NARCISSIST IN THE MIRROR** Dark comedy about life, ambition and millennial expectation, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**NANJING** Jude Christian's monologue about identity, flawed heroes and the consequences of war, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**ROMEO & JULIET** Presented by the National Production Company, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**LABURNUM GROVE** JB Priestley's tale of intrigue, set in sleepy suburbia, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Mar, The Blue Or-



Jack Lukeman - The Glee Club, Birmingham



ange Theatre, Birmingham

**THE TERROR** New physical theatre production fusing film, music and live action as characters and events from history crash into each other, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**BOUND** Justice In Motion fuse dance, theatre & aerial acrobatics in a thought-provoking tale of 'dreams & broken promises, hope, optimism and resilience in harrowing circumstances', Thurs 14 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY OF WITCHES** Dawn State's new play, inspired by the true story of Britain's bloodiest witch hunt, Fri 15 Mar, The Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

**TINA TURNER TEA LADY AND FRIENDS** The award-winning cult favourite returns with new musical comedy characters, including Audrey Heartburn and Milk Jagger, Fri 15 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**BLINDSIDE** One-eyed storytelling champion and cancer survivor Stephanie Morin-Robert recounts her life as a feisty seven-year-old who wields her glass eye as a superpower, Fri 15 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick



**PAPER CINEMA'S MACBETH** Shakespeare's tragedy, vividly told via illustration, puppetry and a live score, Fri 15 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**EDMOND DE BERGERAC** Josie Lawrence & Freddie Fox star in the award-winning play inspired by the story of Cyrano de Bergerac, Fri 15 - Sat 30 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR** The classic radio comedy, live on stage, Sat 16 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**A SELF-HELP GUIDE TO BEING IN LOVE WITH JEREMY CORBYN** Performance poetry show about Labour, the Tories and the division of the left, Sat 16 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

## Kids Shows

**NEST** Multi-sensory experience for very young audiences - a journey through the seasons, using playful poetry, sound and song... Tues 12 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

**TOM GATES LIVE ON STAGE!** Birmingham Stage Company bring Liz Pi-

chon's popular characters to life, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**RAINBOW FISH** Underwater tale with a universal message about making friends and sharing, Fri 15 Mar, Rowheath Pavilion, Bournville, B'ham

**LYDIA MONKS' THE GIRL, THE BEAR & THE MAGIC SHOES** Mermaids, unicorns and a whole host of glittering characters and sparkling stories come to life before your very eyes... Sat 16 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

## Dance

**FAGIN'S TWIST** Avante Garde Dance fuse hip-hop, music and narrative in a contemporary retelling of Dickens' Oliver Twist, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JULIET & ROMEO** Lost Dog Dance fuse dance, theatre & comedy in a performance that imagines what life would've been like for the world's most famous lovers if they had lived into their 40s, Thurs 14 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Talks

**AN EVENING WITH AGGERS** One of cricket's best-known commentators talks about his life in sport, Thurs 14 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**THE STORM KEEPER'S ISLAND** With Catherine Doyle. Part of Bournville 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:

**BEAUTY & THE BEAST (PG)** Fantasy/Musical. Starring Emma Watson, Dan Stevens. This is a sing-a-long showing. Lichfield Garrick, Tues 12 Mar

**CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME? (15)** Biography/Comedy. Starring Melissa McCarthy, Richard E. Grant. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Tues 12 - Thurs 14 Mar

**SNATCH (18)** Comedy/Crime. Starring Jason Statham, Brad Pitt. All accompanied by a Jameson Irish Whisky cocktail. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 15 Mar

**THE BLUES BROTHERS (18)** Adventure/Comedy. Starring John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd. All accompanied by a



Tom Gates Live On Stage - The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Jameson Irish Whisky cocktail. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 16 Mar

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 15 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

**FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS (12a)**

**GIRL (15)**

**MISS BALA (15)**

**THE PRODIGY (tbc)**

**WHAT MEN WANT (15)**

## Events

**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 & new craft trends, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**BOURNVILLE BOOKFEST** One of the biggest children's book festivals in the UK, Thurs 14 - Sun 24 Mar, various venues in Bournville

**CANDLELIGHT TOURS** Experience the atmospheric Back to Backs by can-

dlelight, Fri 15 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

**CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH JAMESON** A meet-the-distiller evening celebrating St. Patrick's Day and featuring traditional foods paired with whiskey tastings, Fri 15 Mar, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**BARNT GREEN BOOKFEST** One-day festival for children who love stories, Sat 16 Mar, Barnt Green Parish Centre, Birmingham

**BLUE PLANET II LIVE IN CONCERT** Based on the Bafta-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

**DISCOVER 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

**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 DAY FESTIVAL** The annual parade through the streets of Digbeth followed by a day of music on St Pat's Rock Stage opp The Irish centre, Sun 17 Mar, Digbeth, Birmingham



The Creative Craft Show - NEC, Birmingham





### Gigs

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

**ON STAGE WITH: IAIN BALLAMY QUARTET** Tues 19 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**D BLOCK EUROPE** Tues 19 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

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

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

**LOW ISLAND** Wed 20 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**JOSH SMITH** Wed 20 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**DISTRICT 7 + YIKES + DEARIST + VEDA** Thurs 21 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**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 Institute, Birmingham

**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

**JOHNNY2BAD** Thurs 21 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

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

**LOLLO MEIER QUARTET** Thurs 21 Mar, Pizza Express Live, B'ham

**FAT CAT + THE AROSA + BROOZER** Fri 22 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SKINNY LIVING** Fri 22 Mar, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE SENSATERIA** Fri 22 Mar, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**BARS AND MELODY** Fri 22 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**KAMELOT - THE SHADOW TOUR PT. II** Fri 22 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**NAO** Fri 22 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**PALUCH** Fri 22 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, B'ham

**KIM CYPHER** Fri 22 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**SUBTERRANEANS** Fri 22 - Sat 23 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**SOUL MANIFESTO** Sat 23 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**MY BABY** Sat 23 Mar, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**HIGHLIGHT + THE FAUNA + ESTATE + DEMI MARLINER** Sat 23 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge,

Birmingham

**THE SLEAZE BROTHERS** Sat 23 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall

**SLEAFORD MODS** Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE PINEAPPLE THIEF** Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SUGARTHIEF** Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**KRISTIN HERSH** Sat 23 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE HARA** Sat 23 Mar, The Asylum, B'ham

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

**RESPECT - THE ARETHA FRANKLIN SONGBOOK** Sat 23 Mar, Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**40 YEARS OF DISCO 2** Sun 24 Mar, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

**DYLAN CARLSON** Sun 24 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

**THE FISH BROTHERS** Sun 24 Mar, Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

**RIVERSIDE** Sun 24 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**A PALE HORSE NAMED DEATH** Sun 24 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**LOSKI - MAD MOVE TOUR** Sun 24 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CELLAR DARLING** Sun 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

### Classical Music

**LINES/REDGRAVE/MCCARTHY TRIO** Featuring Tim Lines (clarinet), Rose Redgrave (viola) & Eliza McCarthy (piano), Mon 18 Mar, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**NICHOLAS DANIEL (OBOE) & CHARLES MATTHEWS (PIANO)** Programme includes works by Bach, Pavel, Julian Anderson, Tues 19 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

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

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

**FRANCK LAURENT-GRANDPRE (PIANO)** Thurs 21 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CBSO: LET THERE BE LOVE, A CELEBRATION OF NAT KING COLE** Featuring Guy Barker (conductor) and Gary Williams, Cherise Adams-Burnett (vocalists) & 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 Quartel, Oliver Tarney, Kerry Andrew, Andy Brooke, Cecilia McDowall & Toby Young, Fri 22 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

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

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

**MIDLAND CHAMBER PLAYERS** Programme includes works by Beethoven, Fri 22 Mar, The Birmingham & Midland Institute

**UNIVERSITY CHORUS** Featuring Toscana Strings, Julian Wilkins (conductor) & Nick Wearne (organ). Programme includes works by Whitacre, Beethoven, Gibbons, Ola Gjeilo, 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 (presenter). Programme includes works by Elgar, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Quincy Jones and Britten, Sun 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**UNIVERSITY PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Daniele Rosina (con-

ductor). Programme includes works by Ives, Respighi & Shostakovich, Sun 24 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

### Comedy

**TOADALLY FREE COMEDY** Mon 18 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

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

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

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

**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 FERRY** Fri 22 - Sat 23 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**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

### Theatre

**THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN** Samantha Womack stars alongside Oliver Farnsworth in a stage adaptation of Paula Hawkins' bestselling novel, Mon 18 - Sat 23 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**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, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**APPROACHING EMPTY** Ishy Din's new drama lays bare the everyday struggles of a post-industrial generation of British men, Wed 20 - Sat 23 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**VULVARINE** The astoundingly average Bryony Buckle finds herself transformed into a superhero... Wed 20 - Sat 23 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre,



KT Tunstall - Birmingham Town Hall

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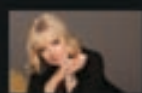
FRI 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH  
**JESSOP  
JESSOP JESSOP**



SAT 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH  
**IMAANI**



SAT 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
**BELLA & THE  
BOURBON BOY**



FRI 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
**MARI WILSON**



SAT 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
**KIKI DEE &  
CARMELO  
LUGGERI**



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**LOLLO MEIER  
QUARTET**



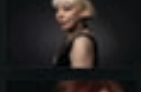
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SAT 6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
**DEBBIE  
GRAVITTE**



FRI 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
**JEREMY  
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**EDANA  
MINGHELLA**



FRI 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
**LIVE IN THE  
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SAT 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
**THE BOOM YEH**



FRI 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
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Birmingham

**PICNIC** Staging of William Inge's mid-20th century play, Wed 20 - Sat 23 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**SAVE EUROPE NOW: FRIENDS OF ENEMIES** Work-in-progress event with strong echoes of current political tensions... Thurs 21 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**NORTH** The whimsical story of John, a young man who finds himself lost in the harsh yet delicate wilderness of the north, Thurs 21 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

**CRIMES ON THE NILE** Award-winning theatre company New Old Friends return with another inventive comedy thriller, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**PHANTOM OF THE OPERA** Amateur staging presented by Birmingham Ormiston Academy's Year 13 musical theatre students, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

**OTHELLO** Scott Ellis directs Shakespeare's tale of jealousy, betrayal and deceit, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**KUNENE AND THE KING** World premiere of John Kani's 'moving and funny' play, which sees two men from contrasting walks of life thrust together to reflect on a quarter-century of change in South Africa. Sir Antony Sher stars alongside Kani himself, Thurs 21 Mar - Tues 23 Apr, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**SIGN OF THE MUSAAFIR** This fusion of text, spoken word, soundscapes, dance, visual projections and live music forms part of the Transforming Narratives Project - a three-year initiative which aims to establish Birmingham as a leading international centre for contemporary South Asian arts practice, for the mutual benefit of Birmingham and cities in Pakistan and Bangladesh, Sat 23 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**PODCAST BIRMINGHAM: NO SUCH THING AS A FISH** Now in its fifth year, No Such Thing As A Fish is at the forefront of the British podcast scene, Sat 23 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**PODCAST BIRMINGHAM: COMEDIANS CO-MEDIAN** Stuart Goldsmith shines a light on comedians' most furtive creative secrets to explore the joke-writing process, Sat 23 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**PODCAST BIRMINGHAM: MADE OF HUMAN** Podcast in which comedian Sofie Hagen 'sits down with a lovely person' and talks about life, Sun 24 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**PODCAST BIRMINGHAM: STANDARD ISSUE** Podcast magazine made by women, for women, and covering everything women are interested in, Sun 24 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**PODCAST BIRMINGHAM: SCUMMY MUMMIES** Join less-than-perfect parents

the Scummy Mummies for a podcast featuring YouTube and Instagram sensations Louise Pentland and Emma Conway, Sun 24 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**PODCAST BIRMINGHAM: DO THE RIGHT THING** Podcast panel game in which comedians try to work out the right thing to do in some weird and wonderful situations, Sun 24 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

## Dance

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

## Talks

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

**A GROWN-UP EVENING WITH MICHAEL ROSEN** Michael presents an evening of stories and performance poetry, Thurs 21 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**STORIES FROM THE OPERA** With author-illustrator James Mayhew and soprano Abigail Kelly. Part of Bournville Bookfest, Sun 24 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**GREEN BOOK (12a)** Comedy/Biography. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 18 & Wed 20 Mar

**H IS FOR HARRY (12a)** Documentary. The screening will be followed by a live onstage Q&A with directors Jamie Taylor and Edward Owles. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 20 Mar

**IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK (15)** Crime/Drama. Starring KiKi Layne, Stephan James. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 21 Mar

**RAFIKI (12a)** Drama. Starring Samantha Mugatsia, Neville Misati. Foreign language, subtitled. Presented by CineQ Film Festival. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 22 Mar

**A DEAL WITH THE UNIVERSE** Documentary. Starring Jason Barker telling the story of a very different kind of pregnancy. Presented by CineQ Film Festival. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 23 Mar

**LITTLE MERMAID (18)** Animation. With



Crimes On The Nile - Lichfield Garrick

the voices of Jodi Benson & Samuel E. Wright. This is a singalong brunch. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 23 Mar

**THE GREAT ESCAPE (U)** Adventure/Drama. Starring Steve McQueen, James Garner. On the 75th anniversary of The Great Escape, Dan Snow hosts a commemorative evening featuring The D-Day Darlings and special guests, culminating with a gala screening of the remastered 1963 cult film. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 23 Mar

**SAUVAGE (18)** Drama. Starring Félix Maritaud, Eric Bernard. Foreign language, subtitled. Presented by CineQ Film Festival. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 23 Mar

**SHAKEDOWN (18)** Documentary/History. Starring Egypt, Jazmyne. Presented by CineQ Film Festival. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 23 Mar

**M/M (18)** Drama/Mystery. Starring Antoine Lahaie, Nicolas Maxim Endlicher. Presented by CineQ Film Festival. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 24 Mar

**LITTLE MERMAID/MOANA (U)** Animation. Double Feature. The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 24 Mar

## Events

**MINI MOTORISTS** Activity morning allowing under-fives to discover, through play, the world's largest collection of historic British cars, Mon 18 Mar, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**PRACTICAL CLASSICS CLASSIC CAR & RESTORATION SHOW** Officially the UK's fastest-growing classic car show, Fri 22 - Sun 24 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**GYMNASTICS WORLD CUP** Featuring some of the world's best gymnasts, Sat 23 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**GHOST TOURS** An evening ghost tour of one of Britain's most haunted buildings, Sat 23 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham

**MURDER-MYSTERY DINNER** A pilot has been found dead. Was it an accident or did someone deliberately tamper with his Spitfire? Sat 23 Mar, Think-tank Science Museum, Birmingham

**MCM BIRMINGHAM COMIC CON** The ultimate show for comic-book fans, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**TOLKIEN READING DAY** Two-day celebration of the life and works of JRR Tolkien, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Mar, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham



Tolkien Reading Day - Sarehole Mill, Birmingham



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### Gigs

**THE MOUSE OUTFIT**  
Mon 25 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PIST.ON** 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**  
Tues 26 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**THE GALLERY'S LIVE**  
Tues 26 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**STEWART COPELAND LIGHTS UP THE ORCHESTRA**  
Tues 26 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**THE ZUTONS: WHO KILLED THE ZUTONS?**  
Tues 26 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DRAKE** Tues 26 - Thurs 28 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**MAKE FRIENDS** Wed 27 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SETH LAKEMAN** Wed 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**GRACE CARTER** Wed 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SLOWTHAI** Wed 27 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**POPPY AJUDHA** Wed 27 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**FRANKIE STEW & HARVEY GUNN** Wed 27 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DECLAN J DONOVAN**  
Wed 27 Mar, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

**JULIA JACKLIN** Thurs 28 Mar, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE LINDISFARNE STORY** Thurs 28 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**WE RUN THE WORLD**  
Thurs 28 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**WILLE AND THE BANDITS**  
Thurs 28 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**DEAF HAVANA** Thurs 28 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**NONAME** Thurs 28 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THE LOUNGE KITTENS**  
Thurs 28 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ERJA LYYTINEN** Thurs 28 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DEL CAMINO** Thurs 28 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**GABRIELLE** Thurs 28 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE ROLLING STONES STORY** Fri 29 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**ARETHA - RESPECT** Fri 29 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**YAK** Fri 29 Mar, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**ROCK AND ROLL REVOLUTION** Fri 29 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**STARMAN - THE STORY OF DAVID BOWIE** Fri 29 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**BUSTED** Fri 29 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**UB40 FEAT ALI CAMPBELL & ASTRO** Fri 29 Mar, Arena B'ham

**WATSKY** Fri 29 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS + CAT-TLE** Fri 29 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DAVID GRAY** Fri 29 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**TRU GROOVE** Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

**RODNEY BRANIGAN 'A FIRST CLASS U.S. IMPORT'** Fri 29 Mar, Pizza

Express Live, B'ham

**CUTE IS.. & RED JUMP-SUIT APPARATUS** Fri 29 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

**BLACK GRAPE** Fri 29 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

**THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA** Fri 29 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE MAGIC OF THE BEATLES** Fri 29 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**ERJA LYYTINEN** Sat 30 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE SWINGING SIXTIES SHOW** Sat 30 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**NETHERHALL** Sat 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE GOOD WATER + BEACH FOR TIGER** Sat 30 Mar, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**JAMES MORRISON** Sat 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BARB JUNGR 'SHELTER FROM THE STORM'** Sat 30 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

**ASHLEY HUTCHINGS**  
Sun 31 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall

**GERRY CINNAMON** Sun 31 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ORCHARDS** Sun 31 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**RIZWAN MUZZAM QAWWALI** Sun 31 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW** Sun 31 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham



David Gray - Symphony Hall, 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

**YCAT AT THE CONSERVATOIRE: BEN-JAMIN BAKER & DANIEL LEBHARDT** Programme includes works by Beethoven & Schumann, Wed 27 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CSO FUNDRAISING CONCERT: RATTLE CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN** Featuring The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sir Simon Rattle (conductor), Iwona Sobotka (soprano), Chrystal E. Williams (mezzo soprano), Joshua Stewart (tenor) and Eric Greene (bass). Programme includes works by Jonathan Dove, Imogen Holst and Beethoven, Thurs 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**MENDELSSOHN & ENESCU STRING OCTETS** Featuring Jeffrey Armstrong, Alicja Humeniuk, Olga Eckert & Mark Lee (violins); Mabon Llyr & Yue Yu (violons); Flora McNicoll & Bora Kim (cellos), Thurs 28 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**GIUSEPPE GUARRERA PIANO RECITAL** Programme includes works by Scarlatti & Liszt, Fri 29 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: GLORIA** Sat 30 Mar, St John's and St Peter's Church, Ladywood ARC, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: MUSIC FOR PASSIONTIDE** Sat 30 Mar, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM CHORAL UNION** Programme includes works by Bruckner, Brahms & Gounod, Sat 30 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CSO: 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, Sun 31 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Stravinsky & Brahms, Sun 31 Mar, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

### Comedy

**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

**HENNING WEHN** Fri 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**DANA ALEXANDER, JOHN MOLONEY, JOHN LYNN & STUART MITCHELL** Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

**SINDHU VEE** Sat 30 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull



**JARLATH REGAN, ADAM STAUNTON, ROGER MONKHOUSE, FREDDY QUINNE** Sat 30 Mar, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

**BARBARA NICE** Sun 31 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

### Theatre

**MACBETH** English Touring Opera present Verdi's interpretation of Shakespeare'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 STENT IN THE AFTERNOON** Tues 26 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**IDOMENEO** English Touring Opera present Mozart's story of high ideals and deep emotions, Tues 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**IOLANTHE** Birmingham Savoyards present Gilbert & Sullivan's political satire, Tues 26 - Sat 30 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**MACBETH** All & Sundry presents its version of one of Shakespeare's bloodiest plays, Wed 27 - Sat 30 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL** Midlands Academy of Musical Theatre presents its version of the musical comedy, based on the cult film starring Dolly Parton, Wed 27 - Sat 30 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

**GLORY DAZED** Dark comedy examining the plight of ex-servicemen in modern Britain, Wed 27 - Sun 31

Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

**THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY** Musical show chronicling Shirley Bassey's journey from the back streets of Cardiff's Tiger Bay to the glitz and glamour of Monte Carlo, Thurs 28 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THEY CAME FROM MARS AND LANDED OUTSIDE THE FARDALE AVENUE CHURCH HALL...** Amateur staging of David McGillivray & Walter Zerlin Jnr's farce, Fri 29 Mar - Sat 6 Apr, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

**WILLNE AND STEPHEN TRIES LIVE** An evening with two of YouTube's 'funniest (looking) men', Sat 30 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**JULIAN DUTTON: DO YOU THINK THAT'S WISE** Affectionate tribute to the life and times of John Le Mesurier, Sat 30 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**SING-A-LONG-A THE GREATEST SHOW-MAN** Sat 30 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**A BRAVE FACE** Worcestershire-based full mask theatre company Vamos explore the subject of post-traumatic stress, Sat 30 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**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

## Talks

**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

**HIT THE ODE** Unique performance poetry night featuring Kamil Mahmood, Amani Saeed and Oshanti, Fri 29 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**AN EVENING WITH THE HAIRY BIKERS** Sat 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham



## Dance

**GISELLE** Vienna Festival Ballet present a tale of innocence, love, betrayal and madness, Tues 26 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**PEPPERLAND** Mark Morris Dance present a 50th-anniversary tribute to The Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album, Tues 26 - Wed 27 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**CONFESSIONS OF A COCKNEY TEMPLE DANCER** One-man show in which Shane Shambhu combines Indian dance and standup comedy to lead audiences on a journey through his life, Thurs 28 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**SPIRIT OF BOLLYWOOD** Dance journey of Indian Cinema, from its early tunes to its current hits, Sat 30 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**HERE COME THE GIRLS** All-new show featuring ballroom and Latin routines choreographed by Strictly's Patrick Helm, Sat 30 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**GIOVANNI PERNICE - 'IL BALLO È VITA' (DANCE IS LIFE)** Strictly favourite Giovanni presents his smash-hit dance show, Sun 31 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**ALL IS TRUE (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring Kenneth Branagh, Lolita Chakrabarti. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Tues 26 Mar

**SAVING FACE (15)** Documentary. Starring Sarkar Abbas, Mohammad Jawad. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 27 Mar

**RAY & LIZ (15)** Drama. Starring Richard Ashton, Michelle Bonnard. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 29 - Sun 31 Mar

## Events

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

**ASTON HALL LATE: JACOBAN MUSIC AT THE MANSION** A chance to pay a nighttime visit to the grand old mansion, Fri 29 Mar, Aston Hall, B'ham

**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



## The National Homebuilding & Renovating Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 28 - Sun 31 March

This one-stop shop for homebuilding and renovating returns to Birmingham for another year, providing visitors with the chance to access everything they need for their next big building project (or small building project, come to that).

From interior design to exterior landscaping, roofing to flooring, restoration to new-builds, the National Homebuilding & Renovating Show has got it covered. There are thousands of products available to buy and plenty of experts on hand with free nuggets of sure-to-be-helpful timely advice. Free seminars and masterclasses, interactive features and practical demonstrations further add to the fun, while celebrity spotters are sure to recognise special guest Sian Astley, lady builder extraordinaire and presenter on BBC Two's Watch This Space programme.





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