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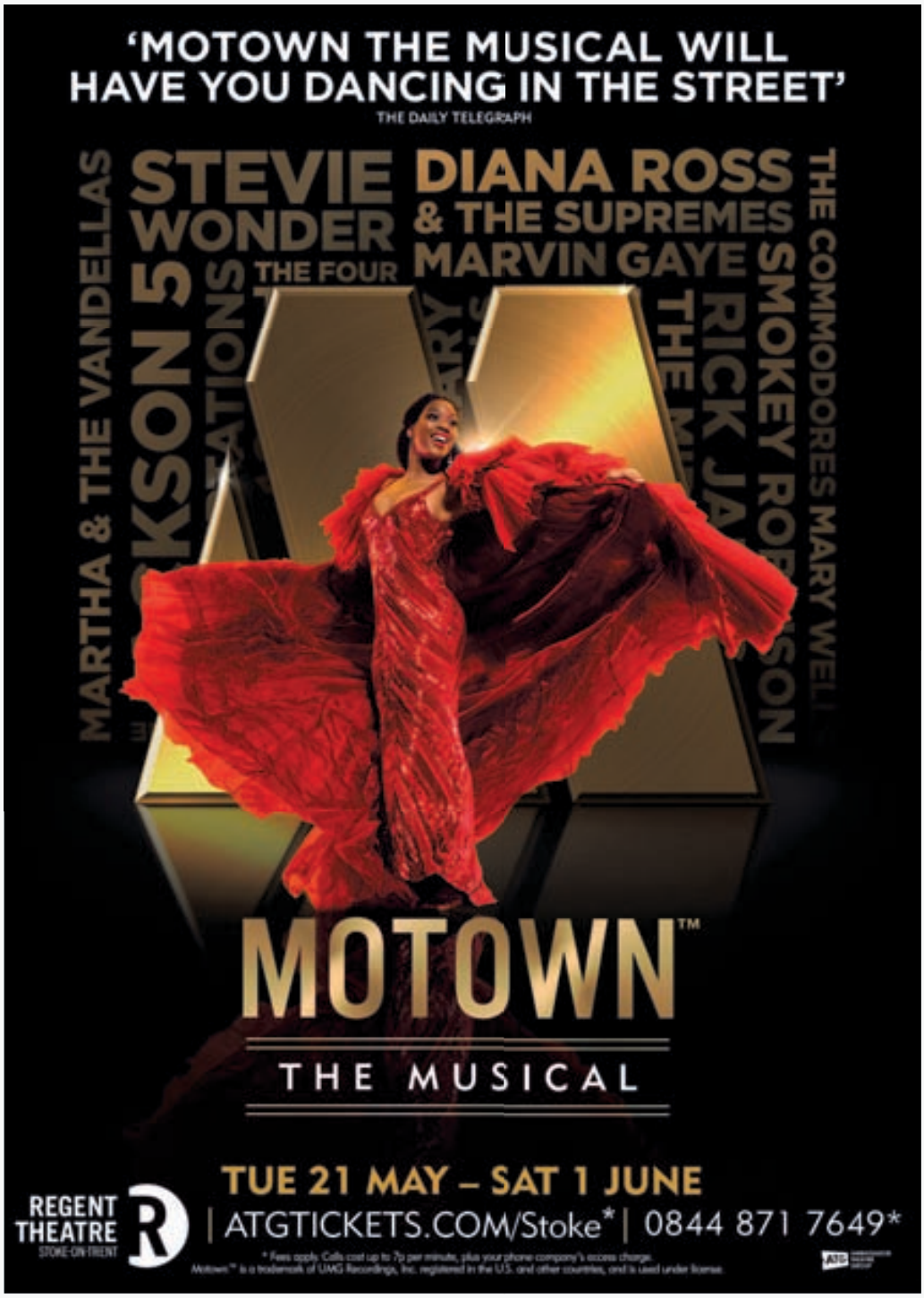


Staffordshire

What's On

ISSUE 401 MAY 2019

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inside:

thelist
Your 16-page week by week listings guide

BILL BAILEY
combines musical virtuosity and stand-up at Victoria Hall



YEARS & YEARS
headline the Midlands' biggest gay Pride festival



NORTHERN BALLET
brings Puss In Boots to The Potteries



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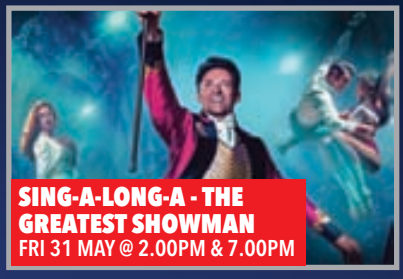
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Crucifixes at the ready as The Exorcist visits Stoke-on-Trent...

A stage version of Academy Award-winning 1973 horror movie The Exorcist will be stopping off at the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent this autumn.

The spine-tingling live production features the voice of Sir Ian McKellen as the demon.

The film version of William Peter Blattey's bestselling novel has achieved cult status in the 46 years since it was released, and tells the story of a priest's desperate attempts to save the life a possessed young girl...

The Exorcist shows at the Regent Theatre from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 October. For tickets, visit atgtickets.com/stoke

Shrewsbury's ukulele fest is back for a second year!

Shrewkfest, Shrewsbury's newly established ukulele festival, makes a welcome return in the summer.

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, organisers have confirmed that the 2019 get-together will take place at Eastridge Farm, Habberley, from 26 to 29 July.

The event will be headlined by Phil Doleman, with other festival highlights including ukulele jams, workshops, open mic sessions and live performances. Tickets for Shrewkfest are available at shroprock.co.uk



Movie magic in Dudley



Dudley Zoological Gardens is again teaming up with Flatpack Projects this summer to present its annual open-air cinema event, Beware The Moon.

Taking place in the Dudley Castle courtyard and featuring spine-chilling special effects projected onto the historic castle ramparts (and with a very spooky surprise or two thrown in for good measure!), the 2019 edition of the event features screenings of Tim Burton's afterlife comedy, Beetlejuice (Friday 2 August), and supernatural cult classic The Blair Witch Project (Saturday 3 August). For more information, visit dudleyzoo.org.uk

Stick Man trail leads the way at National Arboretum

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is hosting a free activity trail featuring the Julia Donaldson/Axel Scheffler children's book character Stick Man.

Offering an interactive learning experience for three to seven-year-olds, the trail has been designed to help youngsters enjoy their very own adventure with the character.

Brightly coloured boards featuring Stick Man and other favourites from the picture book are positioned along the trail, to be used alongside a map which can be collected free of charge from the Arboretum's 'welcome' desk. The Stick Man trail is available daily until early 2020.

Midlanders hungry for The Wizard's Brunch

Get ready to experience all the magic of a critically acclaimed immersive dining experience...

After huge sell-out success in Australia and Canada, The Wizard's Brunch is coming to Birmingham on Saturday 7 September, complete with 'a fantastic feast' and 'wonderful entertainment', including illusionists, fortune-tellers and living statues.

The event will take place at the city's Great Hall in the University Of Birmingham. The brunch is family-friendly, with under-18s requiring a parent/guardian in attendance.

Each ticket includes a meal and all entertainment. Fancy dress is encouraged but guests are welcome to wear whatever they wish. To find out more about ticket availability, visit designmynight.com



Opera a la Carte brings Tosca to Walcot Hall

Shropshire's Walcot Hall is once again hosting a production by the highly rated Opera a la Carte this summer.
Performing at the venue for the 16th time, the company is on this occasion presenting a 'film noir'-style version of Puccini's Tosca, an opera hailed for its rich mix of politics, religion, blackmail and murder.
The production is performed in Walcot Hall's Ballroom on Friday 7 & Saturday 8 June... For more information and to book tickets, visit walcothall.com

Celebrating life on the canal...

A free event celebrating life on Shropshire Union Canal makes a welcome return this month.
Norbury Canal Festival is being held at Norbury Junction on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border from 4 to 6 May. Attractions include: a narrowboat rally, with owners competing to win the 'best-looking boat' competition; a restored historic working narrowboat, open for the public to explore; and the chance to sample a taste of life on board one of Norbury Wharf's hire fleet.
Live music and a host of children's entertainment, including fairground attractions and face painting, also feature.





Scottish superstar Lulu 'still on fire' in the Midlands

Now this will surely make her legion of Midlands-based fans want to Shout... Lulu is heading to the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in the autumn as part of a mammoth UK tour!
The diminutive Scottish singer will be performing all the hits from her 50-plus years in showbusiness, including Shout, The Boat That I Row, To Sir With Love, Boom Bang-a-Bang and the James Bond movie theme, The Man With The Golden Gun.
Lulu: Still On Fire shows at the Grand on Sunday 6 October and Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Tuesday 8 October. To book tickets for the show, call 01902 42 92 12 or visit grandtheatre.co.uk

More cheese, Gromit?

An interactive experience featuring specially created animations, live orchestral accompaniment and Aardman Animations' much-loved characters Wallace & Gromit is heading to the Midlands.
Wallace & Gromit's Musical Marvels sees Wallace preparing to perform his musical masterpiece, My Concerto In Ee Lad, with help from faithful canine companion Gromit. What could possibly go wrong?...
The event also features a screening of the Academy Award-winning movie, Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers, with the soundtrack being performed by the orchestra live on stage.
Wallace & Gromit's Musical Marvels visits Victoria Hall, Hanley, on Monday 20 May and Birmingham Symphony Hall on Wednesday 29 May. There will be an afternoon and evening performance at both venues.

A laugh and a song at Hawkstone's Follies Fest

Shropshire's Hawkstone Park is bringing back its family-friendly Follies Festival this summer (Friday 5 to Sunday 7 July).
The three-day event, set against Hawkstone's woodland landscape of caves, crags and cliffs, will combine comedy and music, with standup comedians Gary Delaney & Paul Sinha (pictured), Mitch Benn and Eddy Brimson all performing on the Friday evening.
A Night At The Musicals is the festival's Saturday show, bringing together four leading West End vocalists to perform songs from, among other shows, Les Misérables, Phantom Of The Opera and Wicked.
The festival finishes with a day of family fun on the Sunday.
For more information, visit hawkstoneparkfollies.co.uk







A show of strength at Balloon Fiesta

This month's Telford Balloon Fiesta is playing host to Ultimate Strongman, a competition which sees 12 'strength athletes' battle it out to try and become national champion.
The strongman contest is just one of the highlights of this year's Fiesta, which takes place at Telford Town Park on Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 May.
Other attractions include a night-glow display of balloons and numerous family-friendly activities to enjoy.

Flagship gallery to open at Brum's Mailbox

The UK's leading fine art retailer is soon to unveil its biggest gallery yet in the heart of the Midlands.
Castle Fine Art's brand new gallery will open to the public on Saturday 8 June in a 6,000 sq ft space at Birmingham's Mailbox... To find out more, visit castlefineart.com





A musical journey into the past

Black Country Living Museum will come alive with the sound of music from Saturday 25 May to Sunday 2 June, courtesy of its Tunes Through Time event. Highlights include wartime music and radio shows in the venue's 1930s apartments, traditional music-themed street games including 'pass the parcel' and 'musical statues', street theatre featuring ukulele-toting buskers and musical miners, and a hands-on music lesson in the Edwardian school.

Shrewsbury's Finest Hour!

A theatre production to mark the 50th anniversary of Shrewsbury winning Europe's zaniest TV game show, Jeux Sans Frontiere (It's A Knockout), is being presented at the town's Theatre Severn in the autumn. Shrewsbury's Finest Hour is the work of Chris Eldon Lee, who has been liaising with the veterans of 1969 to create a play about 'the silliness and skulduggery of that glorious summer... when Shrewsbury reigned supreme'... The show runs at the venue from Wednesday 2 to Saturday 5 October.



Ibiza in the city...

A 25-piece orchestra is set to bring the very best beach-beats to Birmingham this month. Skyline Symphonica will be playing Ibiza club classics on Level 25 at The Cube on Sunday 26 May, with those in attendance at the event also having the opportunity to enjoy a three-course dinner. Full details can be found at seetickets.com

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by Jenny Ell

Rocking Out!

A quarter of one of the most successful boy bands of all time, Blue's Antony Costa is now turning his hand to playing rock star Stacee Jaxx in the UK tour of Rock Of Ages, which visits Wolverhampton late this month. We spoke to Antony a couple of weeks before he started his run in the show...

How are rehearsals going for Rock Of Ages?

I properly start rehearsals next week, so I'm excited about that. I can't wait to meet the cast and get my teeth into the material. Stacee Jaxx is a part I've loved since seeing it in the West End, so it's going to be good.

As the show is currently touring, you will be joining an existing company. How do you feel about that?

I'm very nervous, I'll be honest with you, but excited at the same time. I could join the company and find a friend that I'll have for the rest of my life. I'm told everyone is really lovely, so I'm looking forward to it.

Does Stacee spark recollections for you of being in Blue, with so many adoring fans following you around?

I can sort of relate, but I was never an idiot like Stacee Jaxx! He has fans swarming around him and thinks he's a rock god, but I certainly wasn't! Towards the end of the show, you see the real Stacee coming through, who is actually alright. His persona is more of a façade.

Do you have a favourite song to perform?

Dead Or Alive - 100%! It's just insane. My 15/16-year-old rock self is able to come through, and I can't wait to perform it to a live audience.

Has it been a difficult transition from singing pop songs to '80s rock classics?

Yes, I've been going to vocal lessons with a woman who specialises in singing rock music. I've got a powerful voice, but I'm having to learn how to sustain it over eight shows a week. It can take its toll on your voice, so I've got to treat it as a muscle that's new to me. When I'm singing Blue songs, I could do them with my eyes closed, not because I'm lazy but just because I've been doing them for so many years. However, when you're on your own and the spotlight's on you, there's a lot of pressure.

Do you think the 2012 film version of Rock Of Ages is a good representation of the stage production?

I saw the film when it came out, but I don't know if it did the show any justice. I understand why they made a film, but I wasn't sure about some of the casting decisions.

What do you enjoy most about being part of a musical company?

I love it because I get to meet and know different people from various walks of life. Speaking from a personal perspective as well, I love the fact that I can be someone else for two hours every night; that's what I'm looking forward to.

Have you toured to Wolverhampton before?

Yes, I came to Wolverhampton two years ago for a play I was in called Judgement In Stone. I was only in the city for two days, as I had to leave sharpish on the Thursday because my other half was having our second baby, but I do remember the Wolverhampton crew were brilliant and a lovely bunch of people, so it will be nice to go back there, for sure.

How long are you contracted with Rock Of Ages?

I start in Eastbourne in early April and finish in your lovely city of Wolverhampton on the first of June, so I'm in the show for eight weeks.

Does a shorter contract appeal to you?

I've never actually done a short contract, so it's quite new to me. Sometimes with a six to 12-month contract, by the third or fourth week, you feel really into it and could do it with your eyes closed. With my eight-week contract, I'll literally be in and out, which is a bit sad as I'll probably make some good friends whom I won't want to leave so soon. But that's life!

Do you have anything in the pipeline after Rock Of Ages?

I hope so. I've been speaking to a few producers about potential projects. I tend to do panto every year, but I don't know where I'll be yet. I love panto, it's my guilty pleasure!

Antony Costa joins Kevin Kennedy, Zoe Birkett, Jodie Steel, Luke Walsh, Lucas Rush, Andrew Carthy, Vas Constanti & Rhiannon Chesterman in Rock Of Ages at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from 28 May to 1 June.

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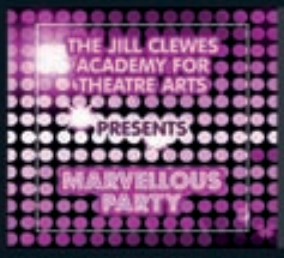
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THU 9 MAY VH

SUMMER OF LOVE
MON 13 MAY VH

PAUL YOUNG
TUE 14 MAY VH

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SAT 18 MAY VH

WALLACE & GROMIT'S MUSICAL MARVELS
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REVIEW: The Olive Tree
A chilled-out vibe and quality cuisine

Nestled in an old, winding street in Lichfield is a gem of an eatery called The Olive Tree. Offering a fine dining experience with a chilled-out vibe and quality cuisine, it was taken over by new owners at the end of 2018 and comes complete with an attractive new menu. The restaurant is in the process of establishing itself as an innovative and vibrant venue for eating and relaxing, presenting a different concept in socialising where the emphasis is on exciting food and excellent service.

Open Tuesday to Saturday for dining and on Sundays for afternoon tea, The Olive Tree has just been named 'best independent restaurant' in the What's On Readers' Awards 2019. And having recently visited to experience the eatery myself, I can quite understand why it's won that accolade.

I paid a visit on a Saturday evening with a friend, and we were both impressed from the moment we arrived. Small and intimate, it's a perfect venue for romantic dining, a family get-together or just chilling with friends.

On arrival we were greeted by a very sociable waitress named Cherry and shown to our table, which was at the back of the restaurant where we could see and experience the open kitchen and the efficient working of the staff. Cherry brought our à la carte menus and a carafe of water. She proceeded to enquire about drinks as we perused the imaginative menus, where the emphasis is on seasonal local produce and a modern interpretation of traditional cuisine. I ordered a small bottle of Rose Lunetta, a sparkling prosecco produced in Northern Italy with beautiful red fruit and rose petal aromas and a dry yet crisp finish. My friend chose another Italian classic, Peroni, a refreshing beer which suits a variety of food.

The Olive Tree has two young chefs, Lewis and Adam, who have extensive high-level experience and are passionate about the content and presentation of the food. The manager, Becky, came to take our order and was extremely knowledgeable and informative about the menu.

To start, I ordered the mushroom pâté, consisting of wild mushrooms including shitake and pickled woodland with avocado, chestnuts and sorrel. The taste and presentation were superb. The pâté was earthy, herby and intense, the avocado supplying a subtle Mediterranean note to what otherwise felt like a very traditional British dish. My friend chose the scallop with brown shrimp, pickled mushroom, almonds and samphire. It was, by all accounts, excellent. Presented in a shell, the seafood starter was perfectly cooked, with a delicate sauce benefiting from the acidity of the mushroom and the creaminess of the almond, and offset by the addition of the vibrant, crisp and salty samphire - an ingredient associated with the coast and one which is both unusual and exciting.

For the main, I decided on the canon of lamb with purple potato, pea gnocchi, lettuce and ginger. The plate arrived and, like all of the dishes presented, was visually akin to a work of art. The lamb breast was seared on the outside, deliciously pink inside, delicately tender in texture and distinctive in flavour - a triumph of cooking. The green pea gnocchi was divine and visually very enticing next to the purple potato puree. The ginger gave the dish an exotic kick and left a warm after-taste which balanced the extremely hearty meat element. It was very creative, boasting a real interplay of traditional fare with international ingredients.

My friend opted for the seabass with langoustine, feta, red pepper, olive, preserved lemon and bisque. What a combination! Again, visually, the dish could have been in a gallery, so impressive was its plating. Taste-wise it was sublime. The seafood elements with the bisque and langoustine elevated the seabass to another level, while the sharpness of the feta and lemon with the saltiness of the olives produced a dish which had memories of Mediterranean holidays stamped through it. It was a wonderful combination of flavour, texture and taste.

The Olive Tree prides itself on sourcing fresh ingredients, and the manager was proud to talk about the local dairy supplier and the fact that the fish and vegetables came from regional markets. This emphasis on local and regional produce where possible is an attractive one, and one which will inevitably stimulate interest from customers who want to support local business and have a proper understanding of where their food comes from.

After savouring the first two courses, we were presented with the dessert menu. This had six offerings, all of which were unusual takes on traditional themes, including a cheese option. I went for the chocolate ganache served with milk chocolate sorbet, caramelised white chocolate and honeycomb. It was a chocoholic's dream - sweet and indulgent.

My friend chose the blue cheese mousse served with treacle bread and pickled grapes in port - a very modern interpretation of a cheeseboard. The treacle bread was a sticky and melting alternative to the harsh traditional cracker, providing a beautiful contrast to the creamy, distinctively flavoursome blue cheese and the sharp port-infused grapes, which provided that perfect fruit acidity to offset the cream element of the cheese. Again, we here saw a variety of clever taste and texture combinations being created by the chefs in the kitchen.

We rounded off the evening with fresh coffee served in a cafetière whilst listening to the cool jazz vibes of what is a very impressive eatery in the heart of the cathedral city of Lichfield.
Carol Lovatt

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

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Shropshire company launches range of new vegan ice creams

The Shropshire Ice Cream Company has expanded its range to include vegan options. Mouthwatering flavours including chocolate, salted caramel and roasted strawberry are now available. Alongside the launch of the vegan range, the company has also been developing new retail tubs for sale in farm shops, and expanding the number of fine dining establishments it supplies.



Shrewsbury attains highest food hygiene rating in the West Midlands

Shrewsbury has scooped top spot for food hygiene in the West Midlands, according to a new report by High Speed Training.

The company analyses data from 250,000 food businesses across the UK to investigate how regions, towns and cities compare nationally.

Shrewsbury scored an average of 4.66 out of 5 in food hygiene ratings and was the only West Midlands town to feature in the top 10.

Star chefs lined up for Newport Show 2019

Regular television favourite Cyrus Todiwala and Shropshire-based celebrity chefs James Sherwin and Stuart Collins will all be appearing at this year's Newport Show.

Taking place at Chetwynd Deer Park on Saturday 13 July, the event features numerous food demonstrations and promises to be a real gourmet occasion. Live music, an education hub and competitive classes are among the show's other highlights.



Shrewsbury gets a coffee buzz from new cup scheme

Shrewsbury will be one of the first places in the UK to have a town-wide deposit-return scheme for reusable takeaway cups to help cut waste and promote sustainability.

Shrewsbury Cup is designed to replace single-use paper cups and will cost just £1, which is refunded when customers return them to participating cafes.

The project is being supported by Shrewsbury BID on behalf of town centre businesses.

Executive director Seb Slater said: "A big part of the BID's remit is to improve the visitor experience in Shrewsbury town centre, and reducing plastic waste in an exciting and innovative way like this fits that perfectly. We believe we are one of the first, if not *the* first town to create its own reusable cup, which is all down to the positive attitude of our business owners.

"It's fantastic that Shrewsbury is leading the way on such an important environmental issue, and we look forward to seeing people using the cup all over the town."

The Secret Gin Festival is returning to Wolverhampton



The Secret Gin Festival is returning to The Grain Store in Wolverhampton on Saturday 1 June.

The 2019 edition of the festival will showcase a selection of 500 gin brands, including some extremely rare world gins and garnishes.

People can take part in a free gin masterclass or join industry experts for samples and talks.

Street food, entertainment, live music, DJs, cocktails and craft beer bars also feature.

The event starts at midday. Tickets are priced at £7.70 and are available from seetickets.com



War. Corruption. Power.

Thomas Otway's tragedy, Venice Preserved, gets a contemporary reboot by the Royal Shakespeare Company this month.

by Lauren Cole

What's On chats to the show's director, Prasanna Puwanarajah, about the production, its socio-political resonances and his varied career...

"Venice Preserved follows disaffected Venetian nobles," the show's director, Prasanna Puwanarajah, explains. "Out of the two main male characters, one is the son-in-law of a senator and the other is a war veteran. Both of them join a conspiracy against the senate of Venice, as they believe it to be oppressive and in need of change. In order to join the plot, one of them, Jaffeir, has to demonstrate his allegiance by handing over his wife, Belvidera. One of the other conspirators threatens Belvidera, so she and Jaffeir go on the run and have to work out whether to reveal the conspiracy to the senate, or to carry on with it knowing how bloody the outcome will be..."

The work of Thomas Otway, Venice Preserved was a widely celebrated play when it was written and performed in the 1680s.

"I think theatre back then was very much a vehicle for celebrity," says Prasanna, "so this play would have featured some of the stars of that age. People would have gone to the theatre and seen characters and plotlines that were insinuating the political events and people who were in the limelight. This is the case even in drama now. To make something popular, it has to speak to the audience directly. Venice Preserved is talking about a nation coming out of the war, corruption in power and what happens when people are pushed into poverty. But it also explores what happens when people's relationships are threatened by the workings of the state. Mainly, this play has a really emotionally available quality to it."

Prasanna has been thinking about staging Venice Preserved for many years and feels the play has become even more relevant in recent times: "I started looking at the play because I found it really fascinating how people's relationships get pulled apart in times of great political upheaval. I was completely intrigued by the play, as it's famously long and difficult. Also, its setting and tone caught my eye. It has that kind of noir theme and feels almost like a graphic novel. When I first started looking at it, we were in the pre-Trump, pre-Brexit era and just after the financial crash. The idiot in power or the huge political change was somewhat removed from us back then: while it was something we were aware of, it wasn't driving our headlines as it does today. The political characters that were in the play felt a little satirical when I was looking at it originally - now they just feel like social realism! So, if anything, the play has only grown in its ability to relate to our present day."

Venice Preserved also explores feminist issues...

"One of the things that I wanted to do was not to shy away from the fact that, at the time this play was written, women suffered at the hands of playwrights - not literally as such, but in their representation. So we've done a lot of work looking at the genre of play called 'She Tragedy', where people got obsessed with the idea of watching women suffering on stage. Some of the plays we looked at were absolutely horrendous in their enjoyment of women suffering. Interestingly, Venice Preserved doesn't quite feel like those plays because 'She Tragedies' tended to be in the 20 or so years that followed Venice Preserved. This play, however, has a performance history that is quite operatic in style and obsessed by the notion of the virgin whore. Belvidera is pure until the point where she damages the men around her. When you actually read it, though, it's more about the horrendous abuse and attempted rape that Belvidera has to process, which is a direct consequence of her relationship with Jaffeir. I wanted to find the true story about human experience, in a way that feels like it isn't looking away from their suffering but that also isn't fetishising it like the 'She Tragedies' do."

Prasanna hopes that other directors follow his lead in producing works by Early Modern playwrights who aren't Shakespeare: "I definitely think more directors should look further than Shakespeare for playwrights in this period. Obviously a lot of plays don't survive this long because they don't have those universal, relatable themes that make good plays relevant to most time periods. Staging things which don't have that connectivity to contemporary audiences isn't really something I want to be doing, as then it feels more like a museum exhibition of sorts. That being said, there are a lot of gold mines out there."

Prasanna turned his hand to directing, writing and acting while he was working as a doctor for the NHS...

"It wasn't an instant switch that I made, it was more of a cross-fade that happened over four to five years. I did acting in my time off from the NHS in order to recharge. I was making little short films and doing the odd bit of acting in my free time. I remember I auditioned at the RSC because Helena Palmer, one of the casting directors, saw me in a play at the Arcola Theatre. So I ended up in Twelfth Night at the RSC. I finished my final job at Eastbourne General Hospital to do that role, and I haven't been back since, which was more than 10 years ago. So it's just lovely to be returning to the RSC now. I've been visiting as a punter for many years, so it's a wonderful thing to be coming back to direct."

In his early acting career, Prasanna was often subject to type casting: "In some ways I think we're going forwards and in other ways I think we aren't. There's still a sense that individuals from minority groups ought to be represented in drama, but they often only come in as frame characters, such as somebody's friend. I think there's still a lot of head counting being done, where the interest in diversifying these industries hasn't been met with a desire for that to be brought about in an organic way. I think it's a slow journey, as often the instruments of change are quite blunt."

He also hopes to continue with the many threads of his career: "At the moment I'm directing a film that's set in Northern Ireland, so that's a project for the next 12 months. Then I've got a few on-screen roles coming out soon - I have a BBC Two comedy about barristers called Defending The Guilty coming out later on this year, and then a couple of other bits and pieces there too. I'm also doing some writing on a new show on Channel Four."

Prasanna has some final words about why Venice Preserved is not to be missed: "We're making this show in a way that I hope really opens it up to the audience, while making it really exciting and emotional. It's a political thriller and feels like a really interesting mix of Restoration play and graphic novel. There really are wonderful actors in it who do some incredible things, so it's one of those rarities that's really worth travelling to see!"

Venice Preserved shows at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Friday 24 May to Saturday 7 September.

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BBC Philharmonic

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 10 May

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concert-goers with works from its impressive repertoire.
This latest concert sees conductor Vassily Sinaiski being joined by Sunwook Kim. (both pictured right).
The Korean pianist was the youngest winner of the Leeds Piano Competition when he took the title back in 2006, and it's an achievement of which he remains suitably proud. "The good thing about winning the competition was that I had many great opportunities to introduce myself and share my music with the world," he explained in an interview with bachtrack. "But there is no shortcut to becoming a mature artist. I have never thought of myself as a successful musician - I just try to practise every day and to get new inspiration from the music of all the greatest composers."
Kim here joins the BBC Phil for a programme that features Elgar's In The South, Grieg's Piano Concerto and Dvorak's Slavonic Dances.





CBSO: Yuja Wang Plays Prokofiev

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 9 May

She's currently one of the world's most talked-about pianists, not least for her daring wardrobe choices, and she's coming to the Midlands this very month...
Fast-rising Chinese star Yuja Wang joins the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and its Music Director, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, to perform a programme featuring Ligeti's Concert Românesc, Brahms' Symphony No2 and Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No5 - a work, we're reliably informed, that will see Wang 'going for broke'.



European Union Chamber Orchestra

Holy Trinity Church, Oswestry, North Shropshire, Thurs 2 May



Boasting some of Europe's finest young professional players, the European Union Chamber Orchestra (EUCO) was formed in 1981, since which time it's toured extensively both across Europe and further afield. Along the way, the orchestra has performed with a wealth of distinguished classical artists, including Nicola Benedetti and Julian Lloyd Webber.
This latest Midlands appearance sees the EUCO joined by clarinettist Emma Johnson (pictured) for a concert that includes works by Warlock, Mozart, Barber and Haydn.

Whittington Chamber Music Festival

Church Of St John The Baptist, Whittington, North Shropshire, Tues 21 - Sun 26 May

After last year scoring a hit with their Fantasia On A British Theme, the organisers of Whittington Chamber Music Festival are this month presenting Czech Mates, a musical celebration of Bohemian variety and vivacity. Featured composers include Dvořák, Smetana, Janáček, Martinů and Suk, with a total of 11 highly respected international artists contributing to the festival across its six days.
Image is of viola playerm, Lea Henninoe.



Russian Philharmonic Of Novosibirsk

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 22 May

Often referred to as 'Siberia's cultural gem', the Russian Philharmonic of Novosibirsk perform under the baton of the impressively energetic Thomas Sanderling and are here making their first ever appearance in Birmingham.
The programme for the evening features Tchaikovsky's Romeo And Juliet Fantasy Overture, Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol and Ravel's arrangement of Mussorgsky's Pictures At An Exhibition.
British violinist Alexander Sitkovetsky makes a welcome return to the city to perform Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto.





Rock n Roll!

The Bluejays chat ahead of musical Rock and Roll Revolution

Tell me more about The Bluejays...

Ollie (Vocals/Guitar): The Bluejays are a 1950s Rock 'n' Roll and from London. Our show Rock and Roll Revolution features over 40 of the biggest hits of the era by some of the biggest names in popular music - Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Cliff Richard, Connie Francis, The Everly Brothers... the list goes on!

You're all pretty young to be into fifties music. What got you started in Rock 'n' Roll?

Chris (Bass): Thank you! Yes, we're all in our 20s and 30s. I think we all had parents who loved the music, so we've known it from a young age. The big turning point, however, came in 2008 when we were cast together in Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story on its UK tour. Ollie played Buddy whilst Dan and I were The Crickets.

Have you been in any other West End shows?

Dan (Drums): We have! Quite a few actually. After Buddy we all went on to appear in Dreamboats and Petticoats on a yearlong tour of the UK. Ollie then starred as Carl Perkins in the West End production of Million Dollar Quartet. Matt Wycliffe who plays keys for us has just finished playing the same role on the recent world tour and spent a couple of years in Jersey Boys in London.

What made you write Rock and Roll Revolution?

Ollie: There are a few Fifties shows out there but none of them do what we do. We wanted to make a show that not only featured all the songs that audiences know and love but also looked a little bit into the history of the time. How Rock 'n' Roll came into being and how it changed everything that followed. It really was a revolution.

What kind of people come to your shows?

Chris: What makes it really fun is that we have an incredible mix of people. All ages. From people just discovering the music for the first time to those that remember it the first time around. One of our favourite comments is always, "You took me back to my youth". We hear that after almost every show and it really means a lot to us.

What are your favourite songs to play?

Ollie: Tough question. There are so many. We love all the Buddy Holly stuff, I get to do all the lead guitar parts on those and don the glasses! Sharing lead vocals with Matt on the Everly Brothers songs is fun and the crowd really enjoy singing along to those. Other big sing-alongs include The Young Ones, A Teenager in Love and Johnny B. Goode.

What's been your most fun gig to date?

Dan: We post a lot of videos online. (Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheBluejaysUK. A couple of years ago we shared a video of us recording Buddy Holly's That'll Be The Day for a CD we were making. The video ended up being seen by Buddy's family who then invited us out to play for them in Lubbock, Texas - Buddy's hometown. It was completely surreal. His brother Larry was there, as was his wife María Elena, not to mention Duane Eddy. It was a crazy few days. We even got to record in Buddy's old studio in Clovis, New Mexico.

So you're big fans of Buddy Holly then?

Chris: I think that's fair to say! We love playing all the artists from the 1950s but I think our followers really enjoy the Buddy stuff we do. We recently made a video commemorating the 60th anniversary of 'The Day The Music Died'. On February 3rd we re-recorded Buddy's first posthumous hit It Doesn't Matter Anymore complete with a string quartet led by my wife Sally. It's the best thing we've ever done and has already had thousands of views. You can find the video online.

Which other artists can we expect to hear?

Dan: It's obviously not all about the male Rock 'n' Rollers. We have our wonderful female vocalist, Amelia Rendell covering all the Connie Francis, Brenda Lee, Wanda Jackson and Peggy Lee tunes. Amelia's our secret weapon and often ends up stealing the show. Her version of 'Fever' is unbelievable. We once overheard an audience members saying it sent chills up their spine. No pressure, Amelia!

Strangest gig to date?

Ollie: Again, so many to choose from! We've played lots of shows onboard Cunard and P&O cruise ships. That's always surreal. Particularly when you're three days from land in the middle of the Atlantic! Aside from that, we played at Brian May's daughter's wedding a few years back. The man himself got up and joined us for the encore of Johnny B. Goode. That was incredible. Most bizarre however must be being booked to play for Donald Trump in New York last year. It didn't end up happening in the end but the exchange of emails was enough to raise our pulses for the rest of time. You just never know who's going to book you!

So what can people expect when the come and see Rock and Roll Revolution?

Ollie: They can expect a really fun, energetic, slick and truly authentic 1950s experience. We actively encourage the audience to sing along throughout and the night always seems to culminate in everyone up and dancing in the aisles. If you're a fan of any style of music we think you'll love this show!

Where can we find out more about The Bluejays?

Chris: There's loads on Facebook as Dan mentioned but you can also check out our website www.thebluejays.co.uk for more info, videos, music and downloads plus all of our tour dates! Hopefully we'll see you at the Old Rep!

The Bluejays will star in the musical Rock and Roll Revolution at The Old Rep, Birmingham on Sunday 12th May


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Ian Prowse & Amsterdam

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Sat 18 May

Ian Prowse is currently frontman of Liverpool pop/rock group Amsterdam, having previously played with Cheshire indie rockers Pele.
Ian's new record, Here I Lie, took 18 months to make, used 17 magnificent musicians and rivals anything in the talented singer-songwriter's 27-year career.
Stand-out tracks include The Ballad Of North John Street, a song, explains Ian, about "the past, present and future of life on this Liverpool city centre thoroughfare" - Ten Second Journey - "Inspired by The Falling Man documentary" - and Here I Lie - "a song for the kids when we're gone".



Thea Gilmore

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 23 May

Thea Gilmore is globally acclaimed for making music not only of extraordinary beauty but also rare honesty and insight.
Often described as one of the finest songwriters of her generation, Thea's new album, Small World Turning, is released on the 17th of this month. "Okay, I won't lie, I love this record," says Thea. "I'm told that a lot of the songs make you think, a couple make you cry and the odd one may make you laugh. What matters to me is that you get to hear them. I'm joined by amazing guests including Seth Lakeman, Cara Dillon, Sam Lakeman, Ciaran Algar, Katriona Gilmore and Jamie Roberts."





Honeyblood

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Tues 7 May

Originally comprising Stina Marie Claire Tweeddale on vocals and guitar, and Cat Myers on vocals and drums, Honeyblood have shared stages with everyone from Belle And Sebastian and Foo Fighters to Courtney Barnett and Wolf Alice.

Now a solo venture, Honeyblood's third album, In Plain Sight, sees Tweeddale finding her most ambitious form and steely focus yet.
"Honeyblood is actually a mixture of water, honey, cornflour and red food dye," she explains. "It comes from a lazy Halloween costume I once made for a gig. I swirled it round in my mouth on-stage, and then I spat it over the audience."

Simone Felice

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 1 May

Best known for playing with his siblings as the Felice Brothers, Simone Felice's path through life has been far from smooth. As a young boy, he suffered a brain aneurysm which saw him pronounced clinically dead for several minutes. Then, as an adult, the loss of his child in a late-term miscarriage was swiftly followed by emergency surgery which saw him fitted with a mechanical heart... Little wonder, then, that his songs display such maturity and depth.
He returns to Henry Tudor House with his latest album, The Projector.

The Futureheads

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 4 May

Best known for their cover of Kate Bush's Hounds Of Love, and for being one of the most fun and interesting guitar bands in the UK from 2004 to 2013, The Futureheads return from a six-year hiatus from both touring and releasing with their first new album since 2012's critically acclaimed Rant.

Chantel McGregor

The Robin, Bilston, Thurs 16 May

Blues rock musician Chantel McGregor was once told by a major label that she had a "great voice, but girls don't play guitar like that!" Ignoring their comments, she enrolled at the Leeds College of Music and became the first student in the college's history to achieve a 100% pass mark at BTEC, with 18 distinctions.
She's since released two albums, Like No Other and Lose Control, and is currently writing her third.



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Birmingham Pride

Birmingham Gay Village, Sat 25 - Sun 26 May

Birmingham Pride attracts more than 50,000 visitors each year and boasts a diverse array of activities and entertainment, including music, cabaret, dance and a hugely popular carnival parade. This year's two-day celebration is based around the theme of Love Out Loud. Tickets are available from birminghampride.com.

2019 line-up includes: Years & Years (pictured), The Human League, Marc Almond, Lady Leshurr, 5ive, Mabel, Kate Nash, Sigala, Faithless (DJ Set), The Black Madonna, Hannah Wants, Alice Chater, M.O, Rogue Symphony, Aja and NAO.



Under The Hill

Ashton Under Hill, Worcestershire, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May

Back for a third year, Under The Hill is an eclectic, boutique festival with a line-up showcasing the best in brass, ska, balkan, electroswing, hip-hop and gypsy punk.
Run by a small team of arts enthusiasts who wanted to create a unique experience with a personal touch, the family-friendly event features music, crafts, fancy dress fun, live performers and face painting.
Children under the age of 16 go free with a paying adult.
All tickets offer access to the festival from Friday to Sunday (with camping) and cost no more than £50 depending on which tier ticket is purchased.

2019 line-up includes: Slamboree Soundsystem, Popes of Chillitown, Mr Tea and The Minions (pictured), onlyjoe, Town of Cats, Binbag Wisdom, Mista Trick Live, Jimi Needles, Stone Bear, Rob Why?, Ed Spinna and The Brass Funkeys.



Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Various venues arounds Cheltenham, Wed 1 - Mon 6 May



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

2019 line-up includes: Gregory Porter (pictured), James Morrison, Katie Melua, Level 42, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, Jamie Cullum, The Destroyers, Incognito and Friends, Alfa Mist, Katie Birtill, Charenee Wade, Andreya Triana, Alina Engibaryan, Carmel and Cherise Adams-Burnett.

Lichfield Arts Blues & Jazz Festival

Various venues around Lichfield, Staffordshire, Thurs 30 May - Sun 2 June

Having launched in 2015, this ever-growing festival is fast establishing itself as a firm favourite on Lichfield's cultural calendar. With events taking place at numerous city centre venues, the four-day get-together celebrates the best in local jazz and blues talent, as well as showcasing quality musicianship from further afield.

2019 line-up includes: Remi Harris (pictured), The Escape Committee, The Sleaze Brothers, The Alison Rayner Quintet and more.



Rock And Bowl

Picnic Area, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Sat 25 - Mon 27 May

Not-for-profit community event Rock And Bowl is described as 'a small festival with a big heart' and boasts a variety of acts, including some of the UK's best tribute performers, indie and rock bands, Bollywood dancers and blues & ska stars.
One of the festival's main aims is to promote up-and-coming local musical and production talent, both on and off stage.
"We don't fit into any one genre," explain the organisers proudly, "and we absolutely don't want to."
Rock And Bowl has a number of weekend camping tickets available for a friendly, family-run campsite just a short walk from the festival grounds, and also features plenty of children's entertainment.

2019 line-up includes: The Stones (pictured), Mercury, Re-Take That, Ego Friendly, Hipster, Guns 2 Roses and Boston Shakers.





Kevin Smith & Ralph Garman

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 11 May

All-round American creative Kevin Smith is here joined by fellow actor Ralph Garman to present a live touring version of their hit podcast, Hollywood Babble-On.

Blending comedy, impressions and improvisation, the seven-year-old podcast is well on its way to its 400th edition and brings together all manner of Tinseltown tittle-tattle for the delight and delectation of Kevin & Ralph's ever-expanding army of fans.

And it's not only showbiz gossip that they cover either - the boys will also occasionally wander into the murky waters of US politics. "We do dabble," Ralph told the Calgary Herald, "because there's a big crossover now between showbusiness and American politics. When the president is taking a serious meeting with Kanye West and Kim Kardashian and the guy used to host a reality show himself, you can't help but realise there's a connection between the two in this country."

Seann Walsh

The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Sat 11 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 16 May



"Every year I have to write a 100-word blurb for a new show," says Seann Walsh, "and basically I've now been doing this long enough to know that none of this bullshit makes any difference. I've never heard anyone say, 'I think the bloke's an unfunny c*nt, but my, what a cracking blurb - two tickets please!' Come, or don't come."

Rich Hall

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 22 May

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

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

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



Bill Bailey

Victoria hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 21 May; Arena Birmingham, Thurs 23 May

A member of a very select club, Bill Bailey is a musical comedian who actually manages to be funny, rather than just clever and smug.

Formerly the funniest of the two Rubber Bishops, Bill was brought up on a diet of Sex Pistols, Morecambe & Wise and Mozart, and presents an act that nicely mixes displays of his musical virtuosity with straight standup.

A British Comedy Awards winner, he's particularly known for a routine that unearthed a new musical genre: classical comedy. Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, it seems, contains the leitmotif, 'Ave A Banana! Inspired nonsense that's typical of the man. He visits the Midlands with Larks In Transit, a show that's been so well received he's touring it again.



Mark Watson

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 5 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 2 June



Well established on the UK comedy circuit, Mark Watson was born in Bristol to Welsh parents and initially delivered his act with a Welsh accent, claiming he felt "more comfortable talking in a voice that I didn't quite recognise as my own".

A regular contributor to the Edinburgh Fringe, Mark has the curious distinction of having performed standup shows which have lasted for a period in excess of 24 hours. "Comedy is certainly a time-consuming element of my life," he admits, "but then while I'm out touring and on stage, there are people at home doing far less glamorous things. There have certainly been times when I've been very happy to say, 'Of course I'd like to stay and help out with that plumbing crisis, but Birmingham awaits!'"

Tom Allen

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sun 12 May

Tom Allen is a master of camp comedy. Often likened in style to legendary raconteurs Kenneth Williams and Frankie Howard, he also doffs his comedian's cap in the direction of Michael McIntyre and Eddie Izzard. Jokes include: "For a long time I was in denial about my sexuality and being bald - I had a wig and a beard," and "I believe in gay marriage so that gay people can be as miserable as straight people."
Tom is here headlining the 'grand finale' of the first Coventry Comedy Festival.



Scott Bennett

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Fri 17 May; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 18 May

What a standup comedian surely needs after weeks and months of tough touring is a nice relaxing holiday. Well, unless you're Scott Bennett, that is. Scott's capacity to fully enjoy his vacations is currently somewhat compromised by his kids, the youngest of whom takes to joining mum & dad in bed. "We came back shattered," reveals Scott in writing about his daughter on his blog: "She'd always say, 'Daddy I'm scared, I've had a nightmare.' I felt like saying, 'So have I, mate. What's yours about? Mine started in 2016, looks exactly like you, and it doesn't end even when I'm awake. But why don't you pop in here with us and for the next eight hours, just use my back as a treadmill. I love the way you position yourself just at the perfect height to kick me repeatably in the kidneys until the sun rises.'"



The Guilty Feminist Live

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 24 May

This touring show will surely prove to be a winner with theatre audiences, given that the podcast of the same name (well, minus the 'live' bit) has been downloaded a staggering 50 million-plus times. Aimed at exploring the 21st century goals of feminists, as well as the insecurities, hypocrisies and paradoxes which work to hamper the achievement of those goals, the podcast is presented by co-median Deborah Frances-White. Deborah is joined for this stage version by Desiree Burch, Jess Fostekew and Kemah Bob. Music comes from Grace Petrie, who the Huffington Post describe as 'the musical soul of Corbynmania'.





Edinbrum

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, various dates between Thurs 23 May & Thurs 25 July

Yep, it's that time of year again, when all good comedians stop off at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) to try out their new material en route to the Edinburgh Festival.
The venue's regular line-up of mirthful merrymakers should certainly ensure a chuckle or several is never too far away. And the comedians in question will no doubt be measuring the audience reaction to their every gag, as they frantically try to hone their material in preparation for their forthcoming trip to Bonnie Scotland.
MAC's May Edinbrum shows are: Sarah Kendall & Michael Legge (pictured) on Thurs the 23rd, followed and Darren Harriott & Rob Kemp on Thursday the 30th.



Motown The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 21 May - Sat 1 June

Based on Motown founder Berry Gordy's bestselling book and presenting a potted history of the famous record label, this five-star production is crammed to its proverbial rafters with hit after legendary hit, transporting audiences back to a long-ago era of vinyl, flares, furs and feathers.

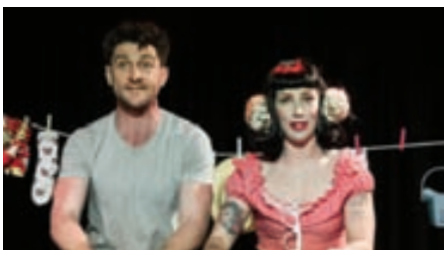
The musical's narrative is based around plans for a 25th anniversary bash for the record label - and a stubborn Gordy's refusal to attend. Reflecting on his career, the show tells the story of how the former boxer (with the help of an $800 loan from his family) took both black and popular music to spectacular new levels.

The show features more than 50 classic Motown hits, including My Girl, What's Going On, Dancing In The Street, I Heard It Through The Grapevine and Ain't No Mountain High Enough.

The Worst Little Warehouse In London

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 31 May & Sat 1 June

Faecal explosions, bathroom baskets and shockingly thin bedroom walls are very much in evidence when Aussie couple Lala and Robbie move into a north-London warehouse that's been reimagined as a bohemian living space. And they're not alone there either, with a houseload of archetypal hipsters also trying to make a life for themselves at One Daisy Mill... This high-energy cabaret was shortlisted for best musical and best cabaret at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.



Shylock

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 8 May



Gareth Armstrong's solo play is a sometimes moving, often humorous and always fascinating exploration not only of Shakespeare's Shylock but also of Jewish stereotypes in general. Along the way, all manner of characters are presented to the audience, 'from Portia to Pontius Pilate, Romeo to Max Reinhardt, and Barabbas to Richard Burbage'. Described as 'a dazzling dissection of The Merchant Of Venice', the production is no stranger to four and five-stars reviews.

The Girl On The Train

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 13 - Sat 18 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 27 May - Sat 1 June

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.

"There's actually a lot more licence with theatre to do the dream-like flashback and memory scenes from the book," says Samantha. "This means that you can access Rachel's brain in those scenarios a lot more than I think you can with film."



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TRUVOICE

La Voix

chats ahead of bringing her brand new tour to Brum...

Hello, La Voix! How exciting that you're back on tour! What are you most looking forward to?

Oh, I'm beyond excited. It's what I do! Travelling the country spreading the love! This year I'm let loose! You can expect to see me give my all, more than ever. It's all new! New songs, stories, confessions and costumes.
It's hard to describe what occurs in my shows, but it's an 'experience'! You will leave feeling empowered, exhausted and relieved, all in one. It's pure escapism entertainment mixed up with modern therapy.
You can escape the misery of life like Gemma Collins on television, or celebs go smearing, anything political is out, and most of all, phones are turned off.
I endeavour to make my audiences experience true variety. I recreate vaudeville-style cabaret, immerse them in quality entertainment and give them a blast of live music. There's no one doing what I'm doing... who hasn't been sectioned!

Have you been busy so far this year?

I haven't stopped. As soon as the curtain fell on my last panto show, on New Year's Eve, I hotfooted it to Heathrow to start my 2019 residency at the glamourous Limelight Club onboard P&O Britannia.
Alongside that, I was itching to get home and join my full band for this new Live, Loud And Fabulous touring show. Add to that new dress designs, endless visits to the hairdressers for blowouts and my new passion for yoga... if I'm not downward dogging, I'm upright in a fitting!

How do you prepare before performing on stage?

I always listen to one of my inspirational divas whilst getting ready, be it Liza, Judy, Cher or Shirley. I find it just gets me in the mood.
I have many rituals, which do include a cheeky vodka cranberry! My motto is, if the audience are at the bar in the theatre, I should join them backstage in having a tipple. I like to be on the stage in the wings, hearing the audience, rather than stuck in a dressing room. It's all about soaking up the atmosphere.

> **"You will leave feeling empowered, exhausted and relieved, all in one"**

Who was the first person you ever saw in concert, and what was the first album you bought?

It was Barbra Streisand at Madison Square Gardens and it blew my mind. It wasn't in person, it was on a VHS up north in Stockton-on-Tees, but she had a really profound impact on me.
My first single was Eternal Flame by The Bangles, and my first album was Kylie's first ever album! I was in the Kylie fan club! Well, maybe I still am - I never called her to cancel.

Which song is your personal favourite to sing live?

It has to be anything Liza. New York, New York was my first Britain's Got Talent audition song, and it still holds a great place in my heart. Her arrangement is so amazing.

What can people expect from you on this tour?

There are many surprises in the new show. Have you seen my Theresa May singing Dreamgirls? Or Judy Garland singing Adel? If not, then you need to grab a ticket! My favourite classic divas, like Liza, Tina, Shirley and Cher, are still featured of course. And some of the most phenomenal costumes!

If you hadn't become the UK's most glamorous performer, what would you be doing instead?

Hunting down whoever had robbed me of that title!

Is there anyone in particular who you'd like to work with?

The Dame Shirley Bassey! It would be a dream!

Finally, what have you learned from your experiences in the industry so far?

Chase your dreams and be nice to everyone! Give an audience your all, and they will give you it back in buckets! Also, feathers cost a fortune and Swarovskis are better than men!

La Voix plays The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, on Saturday 1 June



The Rocky Horror Show

Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 13 - Sat 25 May; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 3 - Sat 8 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Oct

Hook up your fishnets, tighten your corsets and prepare to 'do The Time Warp again' - The Rocky Horror Show's returning to the Midlands!
Richard O'Brien's cult production tells the tale of the straight-laced Brad and the deliciously corruptible Janet, who arrive at the castle of the alien transvestite Frank N Furter and witness the birth of the monster, Rocky. Along the way, they take the audience through a selection of love-'em-or-loathe-'em musical numbers, including Sweet Transvestite, Damn It Janet and The Time Warp.
Great fun's a guarantee - particularly if you get into the spirit of things and attend the show dressed in your very best stockings and suspenders (as many patrons do)!
Birmingham's Alison Hammond stars as the Narrator alongside Blue singer Duncan James, Strictly Come Dancing champion Joanne Clifton and A1's Ben Adams.

The Death Show

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 17 May



Much admired for their playful, dynamic and cross-artform approach to producing original, contemporary work, independent theatre makers Lucy Nicholls and Antonia Beck here get to grips with the grim reaper.
Preparation for The Death Show included the duo working as artists-in-residence at a funeral parlour, as well as spending time with patients at a hospice.
The pair here invite audience members to celebrate their own mortality, 'laugh, cry and stick two fingers up' at the aforementioned reaper, and discover why talking about death can ultimately be a life-affirming activity.

Cranford

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 14 - Sat 18 May

There's trouble in the sleepy village of Cranford, and the rector's daughter, Miss Matilda Jenkins, aka Miss Matty, has been left impecunious. Thank heaven, then, for the other delightful-if-a-bit-gossipy ladies of the village, who rally round to try and help their suddenly destitute friend... Elizabeth Gaskell's 19th century novel has been adapted for the stage by Martin Coleman and is here presented by the Stafford Players.

The Hound Of The Baskervilles

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 24 May

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is one of literature's most enduring characters, The Hound Of The Baskervilles his most famous adventure. Yet no matter how many actors don the deerstalker and solve the mystery of the moors-dwelling beast, the story remains a popular choice for both stage and screen adaptation. This latest version, which has been picking up its fair share of plaudits, should be well worth a look for anybody with a love of Victorian detective work or monstrous moorland mutts...

Martha, Josie And The Chinese Elvis

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Thurs 2 - Sat 18 May

It's dominatrix Josie's 50th birthday, but she's in no mood to celebrate. Her best client, the cross-dressing Lionel, who's determined to give her a party to remember, hires Chinese Elvis impersonator Timothy Wong, a man whose spectacular outfits are far more impressive than his knowledge of the King's rock'n'roll repertoire... Charlotte Jones' quirky comedy bagged awards galore when it premiered in the late 20th century, and is here produced by the New Vic in association with Scarborough's Stephen Joseph Theatre.

Les Miserables

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sat 11 May & Tues 30 Jun - Sat 18 Jul 2020



Les Misérables is lavish, magnificent and awesome in its power, an epic saga that grips from start to finish as it presents a heart-rending story of struggle and survival.
Based on Victor Hugo's classic 1862 novel, the show focuses on the character of fugitive Jean Valjean as he's pitted against the tenacious Inspector Javert in a lifelong struggle to evade capture. Their high-stakes conflict is a deeply personal one, brought to vivid life against a historical backdrop of unparalleled scale.
For all the show's drama, though, it's the majestic music composed by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil for which Les Mis is best known and most loved.
Blockbuster musical numbers include I Dreamed A Dream, Bring Him Home, On My Own and One Day More.
The production comes complete with brand new staging and the promise to be 'a Les Mis for the 21st century'.
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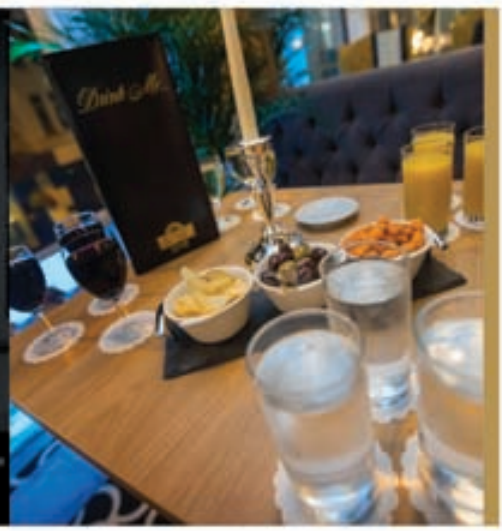
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Club Tropicana

Camp, witty, flamboyant and sassy - Joe McElderry stars in Club Tropicana...

It might be 10 years since Joe McElderry, then a fresh-faced 18-year-old, took X Factor and the nation by storm with his chart-topping rendition of The Climb, but the enthusiasm, passion and energy that endeared him to millions of viewers in 2009 remains undiminished.

He positively bounces into the interview room for our "usual natter", having already had the cast and company of Club Tropicana, the brand new '80s musical in which he stars, in absolute hysterics with his portrayal of Garry, a Club Rep with an eye for the outrageous and an impressive selection of barbed one-liners.

"Garry is camp, witty, very flamboyant and quite sassy," laughs the 27-year-old from South Shields. "I've never played a comedy role before, but it's been really fun. At first I was really nervous, but I'm excited by it now."

Joe ponders for a moment, then confesses, "There are no rules with Garry - he's probably me after four or five vodkas!"

Club Tropicana The Musical takes audiences on a trip back to the electric '80s, a time when hair was big, shoulders were padded, and mobiles weighed a ton. Set to a soundtrack of some of the most iconic chart-topping hits of the era, the story unfolds in the vibrant Club Tropicana Hotel, the 1980s answer to Love Island.

When a budding bride & groom get cold feet before their wedding, they decide to jet off separately to sunnier climes, but little do they realise they've checked into the same hotel. The sizzling summer season sees drinks flowing and tans glowing, but with the young lovers unsure whether to go through with the wedding, and hotel inspectors threatening to close the resort, it looks like there's trouble in paradise.

Joe is joined on stage by a stellar cast, including ex-EastEnder Neil McDermott, top impressionist Kate Robbins and former Sugababe Amelle Berrabah, who makes her musical theatre debut in the show.

Born in 1991, Joe missed out on the '80s himself but nonetheless admits the decade has since made a massive impression on him: "Club Tropicana has a great storyline. It's a fun family-friendly show that you can come and sing along to. It's really feelgood, and I've realised that '80s music is still massively relevant and that I know most of the songs. I don't remember them being played over the radio but subconsciously I must have heard them many, many times because when we first had a read-through of the show, I found that I knew not just the tunes but the lyrics to nearly all of them. That's the impact '80s music has had on me, even though I wasn't around at the time."

Club Tropicana is the latest in a long line of projects to have kept the singer busy in the decade since winning The X Factor.

"It's mad because when I first started in the industry, I was looking for some sort of longevity. People always used to ask us what I wanted to do, and I always used to say, I want to still be doing this in 10 years' time. The fact that I still am is crazy! It's feels like yesterday, yet I feel like a completely different



person now - it's been a huge learning curve, but I've had a good time and grown up a lot.

"If you ask most 18-year-olds, they will say they haven't really worked out who they are yet or where they fit in. I was really self-aware for the first three years of my career, until I realised I just had to be a good person and trust that.

"There were times people would pick apart the most ridiculous things, and I didn't know how to react, so I gave myself a bit of a pep talk and said, 'You know Joe, you're a nice person, just enjoy your job and have fun. Showbusiness is supposed to be lights cameras, fun'. So I learned to accept it for what it was and not take things too seriously."

As a person, Joe reflects that "becoming an adult" in the industry has made him a more confident performer: "I didn't trust my own ability as much as I do now; I was a bit unsure of myself. There was that pressure of being thrust into the public eye with lots of different people with different opinions behind the scenes telling me to do this or do that. I had to learn how to navigate a way through that, but I was lucky. I had a really strong tight-knit family behind me, and still do."

Having now done "loads of different things I never thought I'd do", one thing McElderry has been surprised to discover is that he copes very well under pressure, something he puts down to his time on The X Factor.

"I cope under pressure better than when I'm not under pressure!" he laughs. "I think that comes from the boiling pot that is The X Factor. It's so intense you have no choice but to get your head down and get on with it. So now something really big won't phase me, but something you might think wouldn't freak me out does. Little things like everyday worries I find a much bigger deal than preparing for a two-hour musical. It's really weird."

Joe's musical theatre career took off in 2015 when he was cast in the title role of the Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice musical, Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. He played the part on and off for two-and-a-half years, winning rave reviews for his performance.

"Joseph was a challenge because I was stepping into an iconic role that lots of very famous people have become very loved for playing: Philip Schofield, Jason Donovan, Donny Osmond and the rest. I'd seen them and grew up with them playing Joseph, so I realised the weight of the role I was taking on. I didn't want to be the worst person to play it!"

Joe was, and still is, aware of the stigma that comes with being discovered on a TV talent show and was determined to prove that he was the right person for the job.

"Coming from a show like The X Factor, I wanted people to come to Joseph and say, 'He deserves to be in that role and not because he was in The X Factor'. I didn't want to be one of those people just put in the job to sell tickets. So I felt the pressure to be good and worked really hard.



"I don't think the X Factor stigma ever goes, but in a way you can use it to your advantage because if people do come with that expectation, and you've grafted really hard to produce something really good, they go away happy and with a new appreciation of what you can do."

Despite his busy schedule, Joe has eschewed the usual path taken by performers and chosen to remain based in the north.

"I've always fought living in London because I love it in Newcastle. People in the industry come up to me and say, 'What, you still live in Newcastle?' But I'm very lucky because the work I do fits around my schedule and people incorporate my commuting into theirs. For me, Newcastle is where me sanity is. I do all the crazy work and everything that comes with it, then I go back to normality where I'm not immersed in the industry.

"All me childhood friends are there and me family. It's important to understand that although we work in a wonderful industry, it's not the be all and end all of life. I don't want to be lost so much that I lose perspective on real life. Going back to Newcastle, that's me real life, and this is the fun job I step in and out of."

That said, much of Joe's time these days is spent on the road, and another venue he's been looking forward to returning to with Club Tropicana is the Edinburgh Playhouse.

"Last time I was in Edinburgh with Joseph I got a huge apartment and all me family came up. We had a few crazy nights out, eating haggis and chips, and I even had a deep-fried Galaxy Bar, which was beautiful. I didn't feel so good in the loin-cloth the next day, but it was wonderful while I was eating it!"

He explodes with laughter as he confesses, "You certainly become very aware of mirrors and camera angles when all you're wearing is a loin-cloth; you see a camera in the front row and think, 'That angle is not going to be pretty' as you're singing Close Every Door!"

To celebrate 10 years in the business, Joe is also writing a new album of original songs. "But first I've got Club Tropicana, which takes me up to September," he says, gazing at the almost-lifesize picture of him that adorns the poster for the production.

So how does 'Newcastle Joe' respond when he looks at that image?

"He says, 'You don't look like that when you wake up!' It's always a very humbling thing to see yourself on a huge poster outside a venue. I'll never get used to that. It makes me appreciate that not everybody gets to do what they love, and I feel very lucky to have experienced that as much as I have. I really do feel blessed."

Club Tropicana shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 29 April to Saturday 4 May, and then at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 May.



Heart Of Darkness

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 8 - Sat 11 May

The company producing this show, Imitating The Dog, have already enjoyed success with a stage adaptation of another literary classic - Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell To Arms - so there's every chance that their version of Joseph Conrad's 1899 masterpiece will prove to be a similar tour de force.
Relocated in the forsaken landscape of a timeless Europe, the production tells the story of one man's journey into a perilous unknown - the 'heart of darkness' of the title - and comes complete with the benefits of some impressive digital technology.

A Thousand Splendid Suns

The REP, Birmingham, Tues 2 - Sat 18 May



Khaled Hosseini's spiritual sequel to The Kite Runner is here receiving its European stage première.
When orphaned Laila finds herself left alone in an Afghanistan ravaged by war, salvation comes in the form of her older neighbour, Rasheed, who takes her as his second wife and makes her pregnant.
Rasheed's decision kickstarts a rivalry between Laila and his first wife, Mariam - but as the Taliban take over and life becomes a desperate struggle against starvation and brutality, the two women find themselves engaging in an unlikely alliance...

Measure For Measure

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 28 June - Thurs 29 Aug

The darkest of Shakespeare's comedies, Measure For Measure is usually considered a problem play. Which means that it asks more questions than it answers - leaving doubt about which side of the political fence Shakespeare is really on. The structure is simple enough; poor old Angelo is left in charge of an anarchic Vienna, whilst the Duke pretends that he has work overseas. Instead, he uses the opportunity to spy on his diligent (though misguided) deputy, waits for a mistake to be made, then reappears to make Angelo a convenient scapegoat for Vienna's woes...
A stitch-up or just judicial authority?
No wonder politicians of all parties quote Shakespeare to justify their dark deeds...

Bells And Spells

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 21 & Wed 22 May

Taking the viewer on a journey through hallucinatory lands and libertarian countries, Victoria Thierrée Chaplin's new production sees Aurélia Thierrée getting inside the skin of a kleptomaniac - only to find herself manipulated by the objects that she steals...
Expect a spark of absurdity and more than a dash of surreal humour in a thought-provoking show in which the bizarre rubs shoulders with the supernatural...



Rotterdam

The REP, Birmingham, Mon 20 - Wed 22 May; Malvern Theatres, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 May



Engaging with a multitude of issues relevant to the LGBTQ+ community, Jon Brittain's heartwarming play features a majority cast of non-binary, transgender and queer actors.
'Rotterdam is a fantastic comedy with lots of heart," says cast member Ellie Morris, who plays out-and-proud Dutch party-girl Lelani.
"It's about a lesbian couple - Alice and Fiona - who live in Rotterdam, and Fiona comes out as transgender at the start of the play. The remainder of the play follows his journey from being Fiona to becoming Adrian, and looks at how that affects his relationship with Alice, his own identity and the people around him."
Ellie is returning to the role of Lelani having previously played her during Rotterdam's run at the Arts Centre in London.
"I honestly just adore this play. I think I've maybe performed it, like, 100 times, and every single time it's just as good as the last. If you want fireworks, balloons and a seriously good soundtrack, then this is the play for you!"

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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
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Calendar Girls

Award-winning musical comes to the Midlands...

by Lauren Cole

What's On speaks to playwright and screenwriter Tim Firth about his heartwarming production...

The original 'calendar girls' took the world by storm when they posed nude for a charity calendar following the death of one of their husbands from the blood cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Since then, their witty, uplifting story has touched millions across the world.

In 2003, Tim Firth took on the task of writing the screenplay for a film about their story, and then followed it up with a stage play. He then joined forces with Gary Barlow - and Calendar Girls The Musical was born...

"Gary and I have known each other for a very long time," Tim explains. "We'd talked about writing a musical together for ages but had nothing to write it about. Seeing as I'd already done Calendar Girls as a film and a play, it was the last place I was looking. But the play was always slightly straining to be a musical, I think. What then emerged was a different structure to the story. If you've seen the play, the calendar shoot comes at the end of the first act, but in the musical it only comes right at the very end. What this does is allow us to spend more time with the women, their husbands and their children. This little village becomes a small poem for the rest of the world that's full of hope and wit, and is all about defeating despair through comedy."

Tim admits Calendar Girls is close to his heart: "It's set in a tiny village in Yorkshire, which also happened to be the village where my parents went on their honeymoon about 50 years ago, and to which they took us back many times as kids. I knew the views and I knew the way the people spoke, so there was a degree of familiarity there for me that helped a lot. Purely by chance, my family and I had gone to a Yorkshire fete and bought the calendar a year before I was even approached to do the film. So I'd had it hanging on my wall for a year and I'd already met the real Calendar Girls! It felt as if fate and the Yorkshire Dales were pushing me towards this story. In fact, given all those coincidences, I think I'd have been really annoyed if someone else had written it!"

Tim has a number of theories as to why the original calendar was such a phenomenon: "In the first instance, it was completely unexpected and such a funny idea to do a nude calendar with normal people in their normal lives, especially for women at the local Women's Institute. They started an international phenomenon and raised so much money for the charity Bloodwise. The nude calendar rose in popularity as a way of raising cash for a variety of causes while at the same time having a really good laugh. What made the Calendar Girls' calendar so special was that, firstly, the photographs, taken by Terry Logan, were works of art within themselves, and secondly, that it was understated. It was all about what you *didn't* see; it was a fan dance. Also, if there had just been the idea of making the calendar, as opposed to making it in response to grief and loss, the mixture would have been a lot less potent. The reason people react to it in the theatre is because everyone has been touched by loss and grief, even if it's not directly through disease. The reason it works as a show is because people are laughing and crying at the same time. In a way, that's what people across the world were doing in response to the actual calendar; it was a witty act of war against grief. People respond to that bravery and valiance."

Tim views the original Calendar Girls as pioneers of body positivity, challenging the idea that a woman's body had to fit with a certain image: "It's 20 years since they made the calendar, and they were so forward-looking with regard to body-image issues. Obviously, they hadn't been airbrushed in any way. Also, in the lead-up to the calendar, they all decided to go on a diet, but that didn't work out and they gave up! I think what's so beautiful about the pictures on the calendar is that they're just human beings. These aren't women of an exactly similar shape and body type - and that should be celebrated. Without wishing to make a statement about body image, they actually made a very loud statement about it because it encouraged a great sense of collective support. What was great about the calendar, and what's great about the story subsequently being on stage, is that you get the idea of women sticking together, saluting everybody's individual body shape and encouraging each other for a common goal."

Calendar Girls isn't the only musical on which Tim has collaborated with Gary Barlow. They also worked together on the Take That-inspired show, The Band.

"There's a saying that all playwrights write basically the same play but from different angles throughout their career, and I think that could be applied to songwriters also. This can be pretty damaging for a musical because after two hours of sitting in a theatre, it can become pretty obvious that you're hearing almost the same song over and over. The great thing about Gary is that he gave me so many ideas. Also, I think because he's been working the length of time that he has, he responds to different lyrics with different kinds of songs. Originally we had over 90 songs, and it's like looking at the wall of an old-fashioned sweet shop. Through the story, you hit certain points and jars start to rattle on the shelf and everything falls into place. To do that, though, you have to have a very strong work ethic, and Gary certainly has that. So in Calendar Girls, we have the variety of songs and tones that you need for a musical - and in a more acoustic style too, rather than the pop music Gary is best known for."

Tim has other exciting projects in the pipeline: "I've got my new comedy, This Is My Family, and Gary and I have already started thinking of ideas for our next musical, so we're busy stockpiling songs. We've also been preparing for The Band's tour of Germany, and then Gary will be going out on tour but will also be writing during that time."

And finally, back to Calendar Girls. What does Tim think makes the production an experience not to be missed?

"I think it's an unusual show in that, for many, it will be the first time they've ever 'craughed', to use a borrowed phrase, which means crying and laughing at the same time. Calendar Girls is also funny enough for you to want to come back again. People just can't seem to get enough of it!"

Calendar Girls The Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 28 May to Saturday 8 June, and then at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 September.



Zog

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 8 & Thurs 9 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May; Malvern Theatres, Wed 5 & Thurs 6 June

With previous shows including Tiddler And Other Terrific Tales and Tabby McTat, it's fair to say that Freckle Productions know a thing or two about presenting stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler stories...
Zog is at Madam Dragon's school and is determined to win himself a gold star. He's *so* determined, in fact, that he tries a little bit too hard and finds himself bumping, burning and roaring his way through years one, two and three.

The Worst Witch

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 22 - Sun 26 May



Step aside, Harry Potter, Mildred Hubble is visiting town - and she's ready to unleash some family-friendly magic and mayhem!
Many a year before Harry's Hogwarts hocus-pocus took the world by storm, Jill Murphy wrote a series of books about ordinary-girl Mildred and her adventures at a school for witches. The Worst Witch, first published in 1974, spawned seven sequels, a movie and a television series, with worldwide book sales reaching the five million mark.
This brand new show is directed by Theresa Heskins and comes complete with original songs, music, magic and a healthy dose of Mildred-created pandemonium.

The Jungle Book

The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 27 May

Made universally popular by the classic Walt Disney movie, Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book tells the story of a young boy named Mowgli who's been raised in the jungle by a family of wolves. His friends, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther, are determined to save him from the evil intentions of Shere Khan the tiger. But keeping Mowgli safe is no walk in the jungle, as his two furry pals soon find out... Presented by Wicked Productions and featuring some brand new songs.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 May

In a career stretching back to the mid-1960s, Eric Carle has illustrated more than 70 books - writing most of them too. None have been more famous or successful than his 1969 story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar.
The popular picture book has been translated into more than 60 languages, selling in excess of 52 million copies...
This 50th anniversary stage version of Carle's much-loved tale is presented alongside three other popular children's stories by the same author: Brown Bear, Brown Bear; 10 Little Rubber Ducks; and The Very Lonely Firefly.
The show features no fewer than 75 'lovable puppets'.

Madagascar The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 7 - Sat 11 May

The smell of the greasepaint and roar of the crowd has tempted the furry cast of Madagascar the movie to forsake New York's Central Park Zoo in favour of treading the boards on a UK tour.
The blockbuster DreamWorks film comes to life in Wolverhampton when Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Melman the Giraffe and Gloria the hip hip Hippo stampede onto the stage with a great big jungle roar.
Imaginative sets and costumes are very much present and correct in a show that the producers are confident will send your kids home positively wild (which may or may not be a good thing!).
X Factor 2016 winner Matt Terry stars.

Aliens Love Underpants

Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford, Thurs 30 May



Given its title, it's perhaps not surprising that the producers of Aliens In Underpants are selling the show as one that's so funny 'you'll laugh your pants off'.
And they may well be right about that.
Based on the bestselling children's book by Claire Freedman and Ben Cort, the production features 'stunning effects, madcap action and original music'.
And if that little lot isn't enough to tempt you, the promise of a close encounter with 'lots of aliens' surely is...

The Flying Bath

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 25 May

Take a book by the brilliant Julia Donaldson, place it into the award-winning hands of Little Angel theatre company - and wait for the theatrical magic to happen...
When everyone has left the house in the morning, the bath toys spring into action and head off on exciting adventures in their magical flying bath!

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Image © Serge Sanghera



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PETER AND THE WOLF

gets an urban makeover

by Patsy Moss

Birmingham Royal Ballet choreographer and First Artist Ruth Brill talks about delivering an exciting new staging of Prokofiev's much-loved tale...

An hour-and-a-half spent watching Ruth Brill putting her choreography skills into action in rehearsals for Peter And The Wolf makes for a mesmerising experience. Seeing the rumble unfold between Bird and Wolf gave me a real sense of how technically challenging it is to put together a Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) production of this magnitude.

Commissioned by outgoing Director David Bintley, Peter And The Wolf is Ruth's fourth commission for BRB. She's been with the company for seven years as a First Artist, and her choreographic repertoire (for BRB) to date comprises Rhapsody In Blue (2014), Matryoshka (2015) and Arcadia (2017). But as Ruth herself admits, Peter And The Wolf is her most ambitious project to date.

Her excitement about presenting the show to a Midlands audience is palpable: "It's such an iconic, much-loved story that's familiar to so many people. Anyone of my age or older would probably recognise the music. A younger generation may not know it, so now seems a perfect opportunity for us to retell the story."

But this isn't just any old retelling of Peter And The Wolf...

In a quest to appeal to a wider audience, BRB's staging of one of Prokofiev's finest works has been given an urban feel - as Ruth explains: "One of the main slants is that Peter is going to be played by a girl. It feels very current to have a strong heroine at the heart of the story. This production has dance, narration and music all rolled into one, which makes it very accessible because the story is explained. People don't expect spoken word as a major element when they go to a ballet. It breaks down the barriers, so no-one should feel apprehensive that they won't understand the story or know what's going on."

Ruth's brief for Peter And The Wolf was a challenging one in that it's being performed as part of BRB's Home From Home tour, which means the production will visit Midlands venues outside Birmingham; in Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury and Malvern. It will then form part of a programme on the main stage at Birmingham Hippodrome and London's Sadlers Wells later in the year.

"My brief for the Home From Home tour is quite challenging. The show has to be widely accessible for families, but my work also needs to stand up in its own right when performed at Birmingham Hippodrome and London Sadler's Wells."

Ruth's approach to satisfying the show's diverse audience is to keep the narration and music true to the original but at the same time make the setting an urban one.

"Peter And The Wolf is a carefully protected work, and rightly so, as it's genius. That's why we're keeping the core as is. What we *are* doing, however, is transporting it to a new setting. Rather than being done in a traditional way, with a meadow, grandfather's house and a forest, we're setting it in an urban environment. I'm collaborating with Spike Kilburn on the set and costume design. The audience will see the tree represented by a huge scaffolding tower. It has different levels, a ladder, a pulley and rope with which to catch the wolf. The characters are dressed in street wear. Spike has a wealth of experience and great vision. It's really exciting, as this is the first time he's designed for ballet. There are certainly no tutus in sight!"

The music for Peter And The Wolf was originally written to explain to children about the instruments in an orchestra. Every character has an instrument depicting a theme which will be cleverly used throughout. Ruth is keen to point out that although construction of a production like this always begins with the music, it's very much a collaborative affair, and one in which she sees herself as the project manager, wearing many hats.

"I like to be really involved in every aspect of the process. I see all of the elements - set, costume, music, dancers, even the marketing campaign - as part of the choreographer's vision. I trust everyone in charge of those different aspects; they have their input and they take my ideas to a place that I wouldn't have got to on my own. However, it's down to me to ensure that all of these different threads combine to become a coherent whole. The whole process is a learning curve, and every day I'm learning. Principal Conductor Paul Murphy has been so pivotal in this journey because so much of this production comes back to the music. Speeds are really crucial in how everything builds. Paul knows this music inside-out, so it's best for me to say, 'What do you think on this, Paul?' The experts contribute their knowledge, I listen and learn.

I'm still performing with BRB. When I go back to that role, I find that my whole approach as a dancer has changed. I can't unsee what I've learned as a choreographer, on the other side."

Ruth believes that it's crucial to let the dancers find their own way in a production: "If there are two people doing the same role on different days, I don't feel that they have to do it in exactly the same way. Yes, the steps need to be the same. Yes, the key moments need to be the same, but within that there's stretch for them to find their own character. They then have ownership with their own interpretation of the role."

Each of the production's nine cast members has a crucial role in telling the story of Peter And The Wolf. "It's quite a small cast, but I think the amazing thing about this - and the dancers love it too - is that everybody has a character. There's no big ensemble. We have Peter, Bird, Cat, Duck, Grandad, Wolf, three hunters and that's it. Each member of the cast has a key role and has their own character to focus on."

So with the premiere of this much-anticipated production fast approaching, and with umpteen hours of rehearsal under her belt, what's Ruth's biggest concern about putting on her most challenging show to date? "When you've made your decisions and you've set the choreography on the dancers, the hardest thing is letting go, letting the performance happen. On the night of the premiere performance, I'm going to be sitting in the audience with everyone else, watching. It's about detaching and trusting that your team - the technicians, the musicians, the dancers - will pull it together and do you proud. Then the production becomes its own thing in its own right, living and breathing and going on..."

Birmingham Royal Ballet's performance of Peter And The Wolf shows at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury on Fri 17 & Sat 18 May; Malvern Festival Theatre, Tues 21 & Wed 22 May; and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 24 & Sat 25 May.

Rosie Kay: 10 Soldiers

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 21 May

The award-winning Rosie Kay Dance Company this month make a welcome return to present an expanded version of their highly acclaimed 2010 production, 5 Soldiers: The Body Is The Frontline - an exploration of how the human body remains essential to war in the 21st century.

"Working with soldiers over the last 10 years has been an incredible and eye-opening experience," says Rosie. "Over 8,000 people join the British Army each year, yet it's not a world that many members of the public get to access.

"Using dance, 5 Soldiers has clearly touched a lot of people, with the response from soldiers, veterans and audiences being incredibly positive. Inspired by my own experience of a career-threatening injury, I wanted to tell this story of how soldiers' bodies remain essential on the frontline. The show digs down into the foundations of their commitment to each other, inner strength and dedication in coping with war and recovery. It's a story that I hope inspires empathy and a greater understanding of life from a soldier's perspective."





Northern Ballet: Puss In Boots

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 4 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 7 June; Crewe Lyceum, Sat 8 June

Leeds-based Northern Ballet has developed a reputation for producing work which is as much about storytelling as it is about dancing - a fact very much in evidence in its latest children's production.

Puss In Boots follows on from the company's hugely successful adaptations of Goldilocks & The Three Bears, The Ugly Duckling and Tortoise And The Hare. The production is approximately 40 minutes in length and offers the - dare we say - purr-fect introduction to live ballet, music and theatre for younger children...

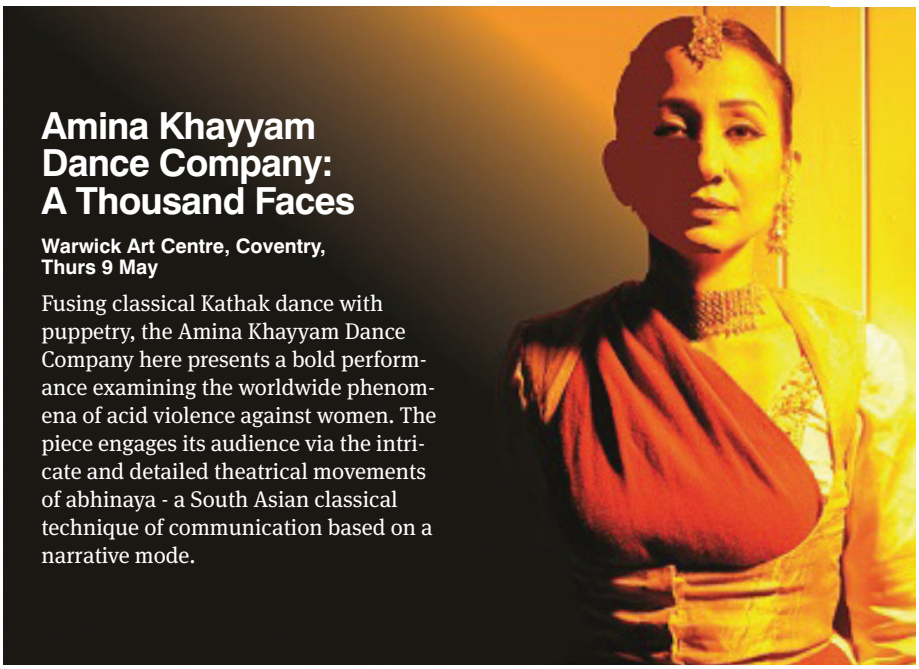
Autin Dance Theatre: Dystopia

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 31 May

"We draw on contemporary social issues and events to make work which is beautifully crafted, accessible and relevant," says Johnny Autin, the founder of Birmingham-based Autin Dance Theatre. "The company is gaining a reputation for creating powerful performances and catapulting audiences into intense dance worlds which we hope will resonate with them long after they leave the auditorium."

The company's latest work is a thought-provoking dance-theatre duet which takes a look at the human need for connection and belonging.





Amina Khayyam Dance Company: A Thousand Faces

Warwick Art Centre, Coventry, Thurs 9 May

Fusing classical Kathak dance with puppetry, the Amina Khayyam Dance Company here presents a bold performance examining the worldwide phenomena of acid violence against women. The piece engages its audience via the intricate and detailed theatrical movements of abhinaya - a South Asian classical technique of communication based on a narrative mode.

National Dance Company Wales: Awakening

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tuesday 7 May

With its mission statement to create extraordinary and inclusive dance which engages and resonates with audiences, National Dance Company Wales 'makes dance for stages large and small, in unusual spaces and online'.

The ensemble is here presenting three works designed to 'amuse and amaze'...

Afterimage makes use of mirrors to form a 'unique theatrical experience where the past and present collide with a poetic and creative style of dance'... Revellers' Mass, meanwhile, is a new work inspired by famous religious paintings such as DaVinci's The Last Supper... The triple bill is completed by Tundra, a piece that 'tears pages from the Russian history books on folk dance, mass parades and revolution, revitalising old ideas with renewed meaning'.



Strictly Come Dancing: The Professionals

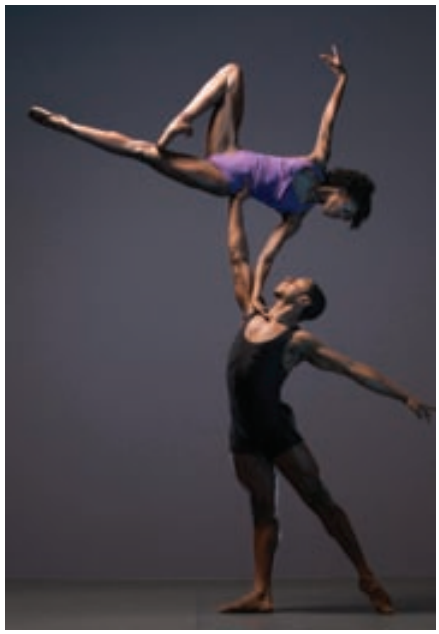
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 16 & Fri 17 May

The autumn may still be a summertime away, but fans of Strictly Come Dancing don't need to wait for darker nights and colder temperatures in order to enjoy their next fix of the hit television series' glorious glitz and glamour.

This ever-popular stage show brings together some of Strictly's professional dancers for an evening of 'sequins, sparkle and stunning production values', not to mention some truly fleet-of-foot presentations of the very best in ballroom and Latin dancing.

Ballet Black Triple Bill

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 23 & Fri 24 May



Eighteen-year-old company Ballet Black comprises British and international dancers of black and Asian descent and takes an impressively daring approach to its work. Under the guidance of highly rated Artistic Director Cassa Pancho, the company here presents Ingoma (Song) - a fusion of ballet, African dance and singing - Martin Lawrance's intimate duet, Pendulum - the choreographer's first work for the company back in 2009 - and the premiere of an original and lighthearted work by Scottish Ballet's choreographer-in-residence, Sophie Laplane.

First steps into dance

Dance takes centre stage in a new education initiative in Birmingham

Hundreds of children are taking their first steps into dance thanks to a new education initiative by Birmingham-based DanceXchange.

Launched in the autumn of last year, the dance agency's schools programme is reaching into classrooms across the city, introducing youngsters to dance and using movement to support the wider school curriculum.

This new focus on education is the latest step in a refreshed strategy for DanceXchange, which is based in the Birmingham Hippodrome campus. For more than 25 years, DanceXchange has supported the growth and development of dance in the Midlands, connecting people with great dance, nurturing young dancers and championing some of the UK's most exciting choreographers – as well as producing the award-winning Birmingham International Dance Festival.

Now the new education project sees dance artists visiting schools throughout the academic year, working with teachers in primary, secondary and special needs schools. They offer a tailored programme that meets the specific needs of each school, with options including themed and topic-based learning, specialist sessions for GCSE and BTEC levels and Continuing Professional Development for teachers.

DanceXchange's Executive Director Clare Lewis explains: "We are passionate about placing dance at the heart of the curriculum rather than positioning it on the periphery as part of PE. What we bring is the expertise to create a bespoke programme with each school.

"In order to ensure that we're making a long-term impact, we prefer to deliver sessions weekly across a whole academic year. Each school and each class can work differently, depending on the children's needs and focuses.

"While a final performance could be an important goal, our focus is predominantly on the process itself and the learning journey the children are on. Their responses and their voices are respected so that they feel a true sense of ownership and achievement by the end of the programme."

For some pupils, it is the first time they have taken part in organised dance activities.

"The children may see the sessions as a way to express themselves, they may develop dance as a hobby or they may find a real commitment to it," says DanceXchange's Head of Learning and Participation Alex Henwood. "The programme gives them the introduction to technical skills and creative expression so they can absorb the experience and use it for their own personal development.

"We enjoy taking a thematic approach and making sessions cross-curricular. For instance, we've been working on curriculum topics such as electricity and the weather, and we have also been working with groups on positive social interaction, empathy and well-being. Sessions begin by encouraging the children to think creatively, building on something they can relate to, for example the creative task might be 'imagine you're a soldier' or 'imagine you're splashing around in a puddle'. Our dance artist then guides them to develop movement material around this, to shape their own choreography," explains Alex.

The response to the new programme so far has exceeded expectations, with school teachers observing that the sessions have had a positive impact on the children, helping them to gain confidence beyond the classroom.

"We have found that many of the children have benefitted from increased self-awareness, getting to know themselves better and expressing themselves more confidently," says Alex.

"Dance has also proved a perfect fit with schools' well-being initiatives and can make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development as well-rounded individuals.

"Each child is unique and not every child has the chance to express their individuality within the school structure. We hope that dance allows those children to feel they have a chance to shine, find a new skill to excel in and express themselves."



This year the initiative has taken a huge leap forward with a project connecting five Birmingham schools which will lead to a performance by around 500 children and young people at the city's Town Hall in July. The work has been commissioned by Living Arts Network, supported by the West Midlands Bridge Organisation Arts Connect, and brings together pupils from five Roman Catholic Schools based in and around Chelmsley Wood – John Henry Newman Catholic College and St John the Baptist, St Thomas More, St Anne's and St Anthony's Primary Schools.

"It's a creative dance and music project which centres on the themes of identity, belonging and community and uses the schools' mottos as an artistic stimulus," says Clare. "For example one class has composed a really heartfelt and uplifting song around the John Henry Newman Catholic College motto 'Heart speaks to heart' – helping the young people to connect more deeply with their school values and also with one another. This song will be performed live by the students as well as being mixed to create a track for the dance piece they are soon to choreograph with our hip hop artist.

"For us, this is an amazing opportunity to deliver an authentic and empowering artistic experience for young people across all five project schools.

"It has been important to bring on board a team of artists who share our ethos and are able to work with the young people in a really bespoke way, so that each individual's responses are heard and reflected in the making of each piece," Clare adds. "For us, the value and legacy of this project is as much in the artistic process as it is in the final product. We want this to be a rich and engaging creative process for young people and teachers alike, and for them to own and be proud of what they share at the final performance event in July."

For the DanceXchange team, working with schools is a vital way to engage the next generation in dance at a grassroots level and to develop the audiences, performers and leaders of the future.

"Our schools work can be a first step for children to discover they have a talent and a passion for dance – which we can then nurture through our training and talent development programmes Generate and the Centre for Advanced Training (CAT), providing young people with the tools to reach their potential as dancers," explains Alex.

Successful CAT alumni include Vidya Patel, who was a finalist in BBC Young Dancer in 2015 and has been a guest artist with Richard Alston Dance Company. Vidya was also recently nominated for Outstanding Female Modern Performance at the 2018 National Dance Awards.

"Christian Griffin, another successful student, was talent-spotted on the streets of Birmingham where he was busking, doing hip hop," recalls Alex. "He came to CAT, then went on to dance in National Youth Dance Company for two years and now he has set up his own street dance youth academy Brums Dynasty in Birmingham and is investing back into his community and the region, helping the next generation."

It is success stories like those of Vidya and Christian which ensure DanceXchange will continue to foster young talent – whether this is in the school classroom or through its own training programmes.

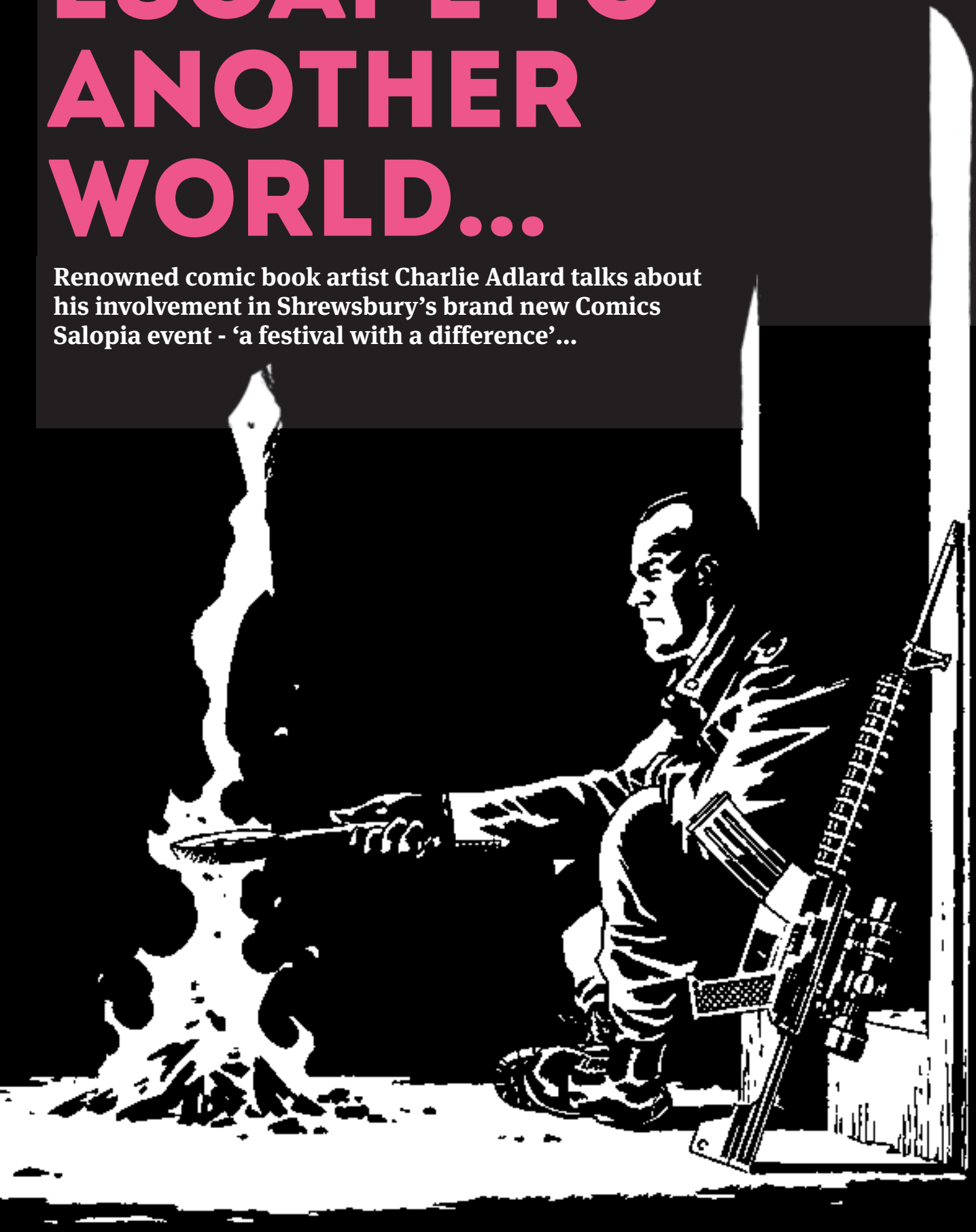
"It's really rewarding to know we are helping to create the next generation of successful dance artists who are highly skilled and really capable," says Alex. "We see it as our job to find these young people with real talent and invest in them so they can go onto the next stage."

Clare adds: "These young people are our reason for being. We want to inspire and facilitate their journey through dance, supporting talent right from the grass-roots, through engagement with those who want to enjoy dance just for itself, right through to encouraging excellence in young people who want to progress to careers in dance."

For more on all of DanceXchange's programmes see www.dancexchange.org.uk

ESCAPE TO ANOTHER WORLD...

Renowned comic book artist Charlie Adlard talks about his involvement in Shrewsbury's brand new Comics Salopia event - 'a festival with a difference'...



by Stephen Taylor

> **If, one day, The Walking Dead does finish, I'll be perfectly happy doing French comic books for the rest of my career**
>
> *Charlie Adlard*

Judge Dredd, The Beano and The Walking Dead are just some of the iconic publications showcased at a brand new event coming to Shrewsbury in early June.

Described as 'a festival with a difference', Comics Salopia will celebrate comic art and its associated wider culture with a series of events at numerous venues across the Shropshire town.

The festival is the brainchild of former Mayor of Shrewsbury, Councillor Jane Mackenzie. Conscious of the need to create something unique for the town, Jane approached local comic book artist Charlie Adlard with the notion of staging a comics event.

Charlie has been the artist on the hugely successful zombie apocalypse comic book series, The Walking Dead, for the past 15 years.

"My favourite conventions are not 'conventions', they're festivals," says Charlie, "and there's a fundamental difference between a convention and a festival. Festivals are celebrations that should be open to everybody."

A self-confessed devotee of French comic books, Charlie drew on Gallic inspiration for what could be achieved in Shrewsbury.

'There's this amazing festival in Angoulême, France, and it's one of the biggest in the world. It attracts over 100,000 people to a town that's not too dissimilar in size to Shrewsbury. I said to Jane, 'If we're going to do it, that's how I'd like to see it done; involve the town, be all-inclusive."

An interactive exhibition of Charlie's art - featuring original artwork from a complete issue of The Walking Dead - will form just one of the many attractions at Comics Salopia.

"We've got events going on in the prison, the castle and the Guildhall. Loads of shops will have displays, there'll be stuff in the Square, and we've got a big Judge Dredd experience happening in the prison. The object is to take over the town and turn it into comic books central."

Many visitors to the two-day festival will have grown up in a world of comics rather than comic books, with titles such as The Beano introducing generations of readers to the likes of Biffo The Bear and Lord Snooty. Comics Salopia's An Audience With The Beano promises to be an amusing discussion on the enduring success of one of Dundee's finest exports.

For Charlie, the Beano event exemplifies the broad appeal of the festival: "We're trying to say, 'Comics are for everyone, whether it's The Beano, Dandy, something from Redan [Publishing] - the local publisher that does pre-school and young kids' magazines like Peppa Pig - through to Marvel Comics, [Japanese] manga, French comics, underground comics, everything. We're trying to embrace the whole culture and show people that there's something for everyone."

While others of a similar age to him may have been devouring copies of The Beano in their youth, Charlie was developing a fascination for superheroes from across the Atlantic.

"When I was really young, my dad had a newsagent in Wellington. I remember there being a spinner rack which had American comic books. That was what I was brought up on, so, since 1972, I was able to access this stuff, from issue one, to two, to three, to four, to five."

Just over 30 years later, Charlie started work on The Walking Dead comic book series, unaware that it would still be paying the bills more than a decade later.

"When Robert [Kirkman] asked me to do it, I was thinking, 'Great, this could be my opportunity to do long-form storytelling'. I didn't know at the time that it would last this long, but here we are, 16 years later, still running with this zombie soap opera!"

The Walking Dead was adapted for TV in 2010, though it would appear that many of the show's viewers are ignorant of the original comic books, a fact that Charlie takes in his stride.

"I'd say one in 10 people would have heard of the comic. Most people go, 'It's a TV show,' and I inform them that it's a comic and we're the co-creators, blah-de-blah-blah, and they go, 'Oh my god, really?' But that's the way Hollywood eats up these things, and fair enough, it's not up to them to promote the original source material. It's there in the credits."

With issue 191 of The Walking Dead due to be published on the weekend of Comics Salopia, after several years of pencilling the comic book, Charlie is looking forward to taking on inking duties from issue 193.

"I've never really enjoyed just pencilling, to be honest. I'm my own best inker, if you see what I mean, so I've just gone back to inking. I wanted to give the guy who was inking The



Photo credit: Jamie Ricketts at Shropshire Star

Walking Dead good notice, so we gave him a year, saying, 'I want to get back into doing both' because I was getting frustrated and I didn't enjoy the process.

"He did a great job. He was the second-best inker on my work, after me, and he genuinely did a good job, but I wanted to get back and take full control."

Apart from his work on The Walking Dead, Charlie has also developed a passion for comic books from across the Channel. His second French comic book, Vampire State Building, was published in early April.

"I was a big fan of Asterix, which, when I was six or seven, I didn't realise was French. French comic books are probably my favourite part of the whole world of comics. I love the way they're produced, and I love the way the French call comic books the ninth art, so they respect it enough that they lump it in with painting, sculpture and the other arts.

"If, one day, The Walking Dead does finish, I'll be perfectly happy doing French comic books for the rest of my career."

Comics Salopia takes place at various Shrewsbury locations on Saturday 1 & Sunday 2 June. See overleaf for our pick of festival highlights...



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Top picks

You'll be surprised, amazed and thrilled by what the festival has in store...

For full festival listings, head to comicssalopia.com



How Do I Become A Comics Writer? with Jamali Maddix

A 'lively, fascinating and fun discussion' about creating stories for comic books, in which standup comedian Jamali Maddix quizzes a panel of international comic writers - Andy Diggle, Chip Kidd, Alex Paknadel and Star Wars writer Pierrick Colinet included - about industry trade secrets.



An Audience With The Beano: Live panel with 4 Beano Legends

Join Beano editor John Anderson as he welcomes to the stage four of the comic book's top artists and writers - Nigel Parkinson, Laura Howell, Lew Stringer and the legendary Hunt Emerson.



Interview with Tyler Kirkham

The Venom & Spider-Man cover artist talks to Ollie MacNamee about his professional career, which stretches back almost 15 years.
As well as working for the world's biggest superhero publishers, Tyler has also published graphic novels and children's books.



From Hellboy to Baltimore...

Exclusive event which sees Leonard Sultana interview Hellboy, Baltimore and BPRD artist Ben Stenbeck about his time in the movie industry, his working methods and what drives him to keep making comics...



The Zombie Walk

Be part of the festival and make yourself into one of the undead for a fun zombie walk through the town. The best zombies will be awarded special prizes by Walking Dead artist and co-creator Charlie Adlard. The walk starts at the Castle Grounds on the Saturday afternoon at 2pm and goes all the way down Pride Hill to the Square, where the winners will be awarded their prizes.



An Interview with Eric Stephenson by Kieron Gillen

Join Star Wars and X-Men writer Kieron Gillen in conversation with publisher and head honcho at Image Comics, Eric Stephenson. Together, the duo will cover subjects including creator-owned comics and how the '90s upstart publisher has become America's third largest publisher of comic books...

Rocketman CERT tbc

Starring **Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell, Richard Madden, Bryce Dallas Howard, Stephen Graham, Gemma Jones** Directed by **Dexter Fletcher (UK/USA)**



Reginald Dwight took up piano lessons at the age of seven and four years later won a junior scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music. But he was really a fan of Elvis and Bill Haley & His Comets, and it was this passion that was to steer him towards a career in rock'n'roll. In 1972 he changed his name to Elton John...
Although for technical reasons he never got a credit on Bohemian Rhapsody, Dexter Fletcher actually directed much of that film (after the original director, Bryan Singer, was dismissed) and high hopes are resting on his new musical biography.
The screenplay is by Lee Hall, whose script for Billy Elliot was nominated for an Oscar.

Released Fri 24 May

CRITIC'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in May...

A Dog's Journey CERT PG

Starring **Marg Helgenberger, Betty Gilpin, Henry Lau, Kathryn Prescott, Dennis Quaid** and the voice of **Josh Gad**
Directed by **Gail Mancuso (USA)**



Bailey, a dog of many colours and, indeed, breeds, finds his soul moving on in this unexpected sequel to the episodic and frightfully saccharine A Dog's Purpose (2017). Well, the first film did make over $200million.

Released Fri 3 May

Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil And Vile

CERT **tbc (108 mins)**

Starring **Zac Efron, Lily Collins, Kaya Scodelario, Jeffrey Donovan, Angela Sarafyan, John Malkovich**
Directed by **Joe Berlinger (USA)**

Talk about loyal. Elizabeth Kloepfer (Lily Collins) believed only the best of her boyfriend and it wasn't until many years after his conviction that she conceded Ted Bundy (Zac Efron) was the killer of at least 30 young girls and women. This is the eighth time the killer has been portrayed on the big screen.

Released Fri 3 May



Tolkien CERT 12a (112 mins)

Starring **Nicholas Hoult, Lily Collins, Colm Meaney, Derek Jacobi**
Directed by **Dome Karukoski (USA)**



Before he went on to write The Lord Of The Rings, John Tolkien was an orphan who found himself something of an outcast at Oxford. But he also formed a friendship with some of his fellow outsiders, a bond that was to inspire his creation of Middle-Earth.

Released Fri 3 May

The Hustle CERT 12a (94 mins)

Starring **Anne Hathaway, Rebel Wilson, Alex Sharp, Dean Norris, Tim Blake Nelson**
Directed by **Chris Addison (USA)**

It may look like Ocean's Two, but this comic story of a pair of female con artists is actually a remake of Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (1988) - which, itself, was a remake of Bedtime Story (1964).

Released Fri 10 May



Pokémon Detective Pikachu CERT PG (104 mins)

Starring **Justice Smith, Kathryn Newton, Suki Waterhouse, Ken Watanabe, Bill Nighy** and the voice of **Ryan Reynolds**
Directed by **Rob Letterman (USA/Japan)**

Ryan Reynolds supplies the voice of the eponymous Pikachu, an ace Pokémon detective who teams up with the son of his partner after the latter goes missing. Let's hope this is more successful than the previous human/creature crossover semi-animated shambles, The Happytime Murders (2018).

Released Fri 10 May



The Secret Life Of Pets 2 CERT PG

With the voices of **Patton Oswalt, Eric Stonestreet, Kevin Hart, Jenny Slate, Tiffany Haddish, Harrison Ford**
Directed by **Chris Renaud** and **Jonathan Del Val (USA)**

Max the Jack Russell has his life turned upside down when his owner gets married and has a child. Patton Oswalt takes over as Max, after the original voice artist, Louis C.K., was mired in sexual misconduct allegations. In 3D.

Released Wed 22 May



Aladdin CERT PG

Starring **Will Smith, Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott, Marwan Kenzari, Navid Negahban, Nasim Pedrad, Billy Magnussen**
Directed by **Guy Ritchie (USA)**

This might not be a subject one might associate with the director of Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels and Snatch, but then Guy Ritchie did dabble with fantasy in King Arthur: Legend Of The Sword. Aladdin, though, is very different, as it's aimed at a family audience and is a live-action remake of Disney's 1992 cartoon which really did present A Whole New World. Here, there will be new songs penned by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, who previously lit up the soundtracks of La La Land and The Greatest Showman, as well as the original numbers by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman and Tim Rice. Aladdin is played by the Egyptian-Canadian newcomer Mena Massoud, and Princess Jasmine by the London-born Naomi Scott. Will Smith is the Genie with the magic lamp.

Released Wed 22 May

Booksmart CERT 15 (102 mins)

Starring **Kaitlyn Dever, Beanie Feldstein, Jessica Williams, Billie Lourd, Lisa Kudrow, Will Forte, Jason Sudeikis**
Directed by **Olivia Wilde (USA)**

Marking the directorial debut of the actress Olivia Wilde, this comedy focuses on two high school over-achievers who realise that they have let academia get in the way of fun. And they have only one night to make up for all their years of hard work.

Released Mon 27 May



Godzilla: King Of Monsters

CERT **tbc**

Starring **Kyle Chandler, Vera Farmiga, Millie Bobby Brown, Bradley Whitford, Sally Hawkins, O'Shea Jackson Jr, David Strathairn, Ken Watanabe, Zhang Ziyi**
Directed by **Michael Dougherty (USA)**

An all-star cast steps up to the plate to marvel at the mighty combat of Godzilla and a variety of humongous beasties, including the three-headed King Ghidorah. This is the third instalment in the so-called MonsterVerse.

Released Fri 31 May

Ma CERT 15 (96 mins)

Starring **Octavia Spencer, Juliette Lewis, Diana Silvers, Luke Evans, McKaley Miller, Missi Pyle**
Directed by **Tate Taylor (USA)**

A lonely women (Octavia Spencer) befriends some teenagers and allows them to party at her place - on the condition that they call her 'Ma'. Among other things... From the director of The Help (2011) and The Girl On The Train (2016).

Released Fri 31 May

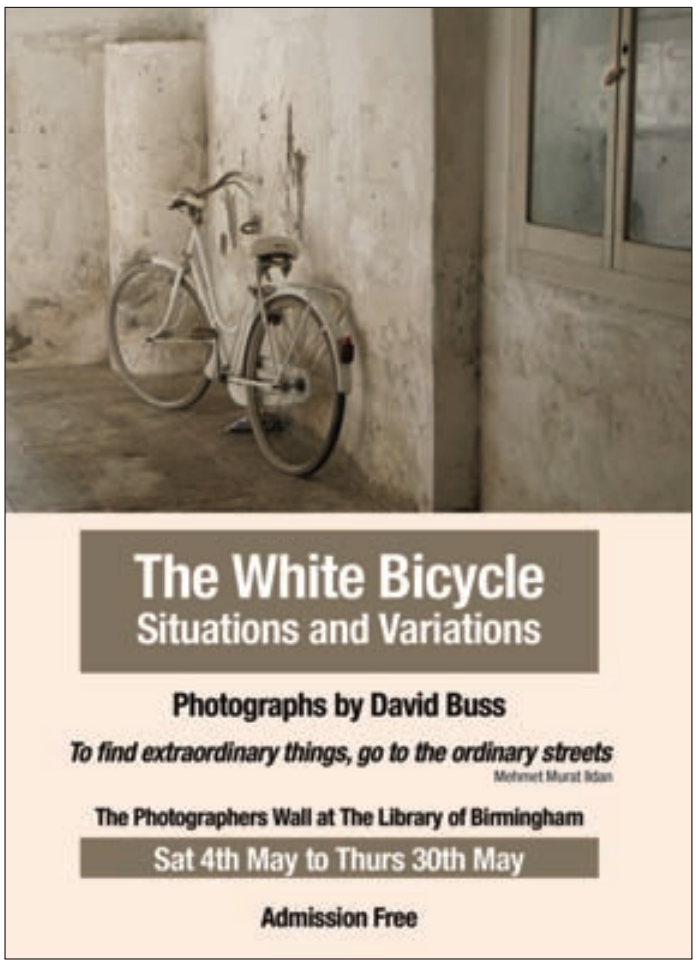


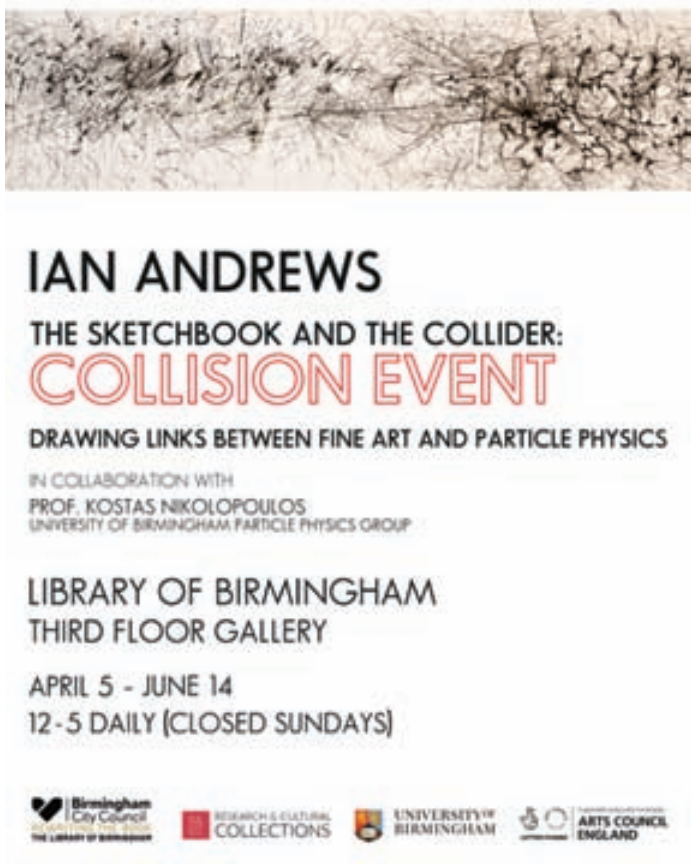
British Wildlife Photographer Awards Exhibition

Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire, Sat 11 May - Tues 10 September

"No other image in my portfolio had been so clearly conceived and yet so difficult to achieve," says Paul Colley in talking about Contrails At Dawn, the image with which he won last year's British Wildlife Photographer of the Year award, and which takes pride of place in this touring exhibition of the 2018 competition's best entries. "I experienced a huge gradient of emotion. There were the lows felt during months of long, cold and exhausting dusk-to-dawn sessions, sometimes waist deep in water and often without getting a single usable image. And then the natural highs of those lightbulb moments, when new ideas blossomed, problems were solved and the project inched closer towards having the potential to win this exceptional accolade."

Photo credit: David Bennett, Goose Barnacles, Sanna Bay, Highland







Childhood Now

Compton Verney Art Gallery, Warwickshire, until Sun 16 June

Three contemporary figurative British painters - Chantal Joffe, Mark Fairnington and Matthew Krishanu - here develop the conversation initiated in Compton Verney's Painting Childhood exhibition by depicting childhood in very different ways.
Joffe's expressive paintings chart the growth of daughter Esme from birth to adolescence. Mark Fairnington turns a scientific eye to the depiction of his twin sons with hyper-realistic precision. Matthew Krishanu's radiant paintings reveal memories of an exotic childhood in Bangladesh. Taken together, the works aim to present a fresh perspective on what constitutes childhood in the 21st century.

The White Bicycle

Library of Birmingham, Sat 4 - Thurs 30 May



Photographer David Buss's exhibition demonstrates that bicycles are used not only as a means of transport, but also for other often surprising purposes, whether that be as an object to personalise, a memorial (known as 'ghost bikes'), an artwork, a status symbol, a signifier or an item of nostalgia.
The exhibition's title comes from David's use of a white bicycle as a recurring motif in his photographs; sometimes as a major element of the image, on other occasions simply as an incidental fragment.
The show has been mounted to coincide with Velo Birmingham, a major cycling event taking place in and around the city on Sunday 12 May.

Andrew Lacon Exhibition

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 2 June

The value of materials when viewed in different contexts and historical periods, particularly in relation to public display, is the subject of sculptor Andrew Lacon's residency at the New Art Gallery.
During his time at the venue, Andrew will extend his knowledge into display strategies and the history of sculpture, drawing on photographs of the studio of sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein and the backdrop of sculpture on display from the Permanent Collection.

Digital Diorama

PACCAR Room, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sun 8 September

Augmented reality technology - similar to popular apps like Pokémon Go and BBC Civilisations - here brings to life a version of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon - complete with performances by RSC actors and associate artists.
To create the performances, the actors were recorded using photogrammetry and motion capture before being turned into avatars - digital versions of themselves.
Commenting on the exhibition, RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran said: "Dioramas were very popular in the 19th century. They involved large-scale models with vast panoramas which could transport excited audiences into the midst of a battlefield, a storm at sea, or onto the slopes of an erupting volcano.
"Our dioramas are digital. We've combined an old technique with the latest technology to take you right into Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon. We've invited a great cast of RSC alumni to perform tiny extracts from Shakespeare's plays to illustrate a journey from birthplace to graveyard, and introduce the Seven Ages of Man."

Royal Photographic Society: International Photography Exhibition

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Sun 12 May

The world's longest-running photographic exhibition makes a welcome return to the region and features 100 images taken by 54 contemporary photographers.
The images were selected from a shortlist of 189, which itself was created from a total of 7,327 entries. The exhibition's Midlands Arts Centre stop-off is its only one in the Midlands.




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Red By Night

The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 18 May

The Black Country Living Museum this month opens its doors 'after hours' to provide 'an atmospheric evening of industrial demonstrations, good food, living history and more'. Visitors to the Red By Night event will be invited to step inside period houses and shops to discover how Black Country folk used to live. The evening also features street entertainment and the chance to try the museum's 1930s-style fish and chips!

This Morning Live

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 May

The live version of the popular ITV daytime show returns to the NEC for a third year. Boasting inspiring and informative content presented by This Morning's very own stars, the show features more than 200 exhibitors offering shopping deals across four distinct areas - Beauty & Wellbeing, Fashion & Style, Home & Gifts and Food & Drink. New for 2019 are two evening stage shows - An Evening With The Speakmans and Loose Women Late: Girls' Night Out.



Donington Historic Festival

Donington Park, Fri 3 - Sun 5 May



Fifteen grids take to the track across 18 races this month when 400-plus classic racing cars converge on Donington Park from all over the world. New for 2019, the international historic series Sportscar 2000 grid will be added to the timetable for 1961-71 two-litre cars, while making its festival debut will be the HRDC Allstars grid for pre-'66 sports, GT and touring cars.

UK Slot Car Festival

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Sat 18 & Sun 19 May

Billed as Europe's biggest and best slot car event, this two-day festival promises great Scalextric fun for children and big kids!
All the major slot car manufacturers, including Scalextric, will be at the event, allowing fans not only to meet them face-to-face but also to swap, buy and sell cars. There will also be plenty of interactive activities to enjoy, including a Let's Go Racing competition, oval banger racing, a drag strip, Ho Scale tracks, digital layouts and a slot stunt show.



Freddo's Treasure Trove

Cadbury World, Birmingham, Sat 25 May - Sun 2 June

Ahoy, me hearties! Cadbury's Freddo is this half term donning his captain's hat and teaching little ones about becoming a pirate on the seven seas. Freddo's show comes complete with 'a barrel of laughs and a chestful of goodies' - but will your youngster have what it takes to become a pirate - or might they have to walk the dreaded plank instead?!...




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Shropshire Kids Festival

Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Sat 11 & Sun 12 May

Building popularity year on year, Shropshire Kids Festival is back and bigger than ever this month.
Event highlights include a specialised under-fives area featuring crafts and inflatables.
Kids who love an adventure can take part in circus skills workshops, slip down the giant water slide, roll around in zorb balls, jump around on the inflatable obstacle course or have a go at a host of sports.
For the more creatively minded youngster, there are music and drama performances to enjoy, relaxing storytime sessions in the book tent, the chance to play a variety of instruments and the opportunity to get delightfully messy via a number of arty workshops.

The Baby Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 17 - Sun 19 May

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





Telford Balloon Fiesta

Telford Town Park, Sat 11 & Sun 12 May

It's a case of up, up and away in Telford this month when the town's family-friendly balloon festival makes a welcome return.
As well as numerous arena performances and children's activities, the two-day event also offers visitors the chance to experience their very own balloon ride. The Saturday evening sees the balloons lit up and dancing in a special glow-in-the-dark musical display.

Knights' Tournament

Kenilworth Castle, Sun 26 - Mon 27 May

Go back in time and get closer to the action as rival knights compete in the ultimate test of strength and skill.
Arrows will fly, swords will clash and the winner will be decided in the Grand Melee finale.
Immerse yourself in medieval life in the encampment, where you can meet people from the Middle Ages and try on a knight's armour for yourself.
Budding warriors can join in with drills out on the field, and even get a taste of medieval combat in the kids' battle.



The Original Harlem Globetrotters

Arena Birmingham, Thurs 2 May

Featuring some of the world's finest athletes, the world famous Globetrotters bring their spectacular show to Birmingham as part of a worldwide tour.
Expect ball-handling wizardry, rim-rattling dunks, trick shots, plenty of humour and some brilliant fan interaction.




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RHS Malvern Spring Festival

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire, Thurs 9 - Sun 12 April

Green-fingered horticultural types can prepare for the upcoming gardening season by paying a visit to this ever-popular festival and taking a stroll around the always-impressive selection of show gardens. There's also the chance to gather inspiration from exhibitors in the floral marquee and acquire some handy hints and tips via numerous talks and demonstrations.

Famous faces appearing at this year's show include gardening favourites Monty Don, Joe Swift and Carol Klein, and culinary whizzes Raymond Blanc and John Torode, who'll be treating the crowds to a feast of food-related chat.

Seals in the City

The National Sea Life Centre in Birmingham has opened a state-of-the-art marine rescue facility following multi-million pound investment and an extensive remodelling of the popular visitor attraction.

Two of the newest residents of the rescue facility are Miley and Boo, seals who each have medical conditions which mean that they wouldn't survive in the wild.

Several rescued mammals will take up residency in the newly engineered open-to-the-public environment, which spans two floors of the venue. The new facility has been carefully designed and constructed to emulate the natural ocean habitat to which the mammals are accustomed.

Atmospheric effects in the themed area help create a replica environment to further enhance the experience.

For more information or to book tickets, visit sealife.co.uk/birmingham



Castle Capers Evening

Dudley Castle, Fri 24 May

There's the chance to go back in time at Dudley Castle this month to learn about the history of the popular visitor attraction. Highlights of the evening include ghost and history walks, archery demonstrations and the opportunity to try on arms and armour.

Attingham Camp

Attingham Park, Shropshire, Sat 25 May

Described as a 'one-night, fun-filled camping spectacular in the beautiful grounds of Attingham Park', this popular event is now in its fourth year.

Guests can enjoy the National Trust site after dark and take part in a wide variety of family activities, including storytelling and marshmallow-eating around the campfire, twilight bushcraft and star-watching.



Cherry Tree Walk

Mitton Manor, near Penkridge, Staffordshire, Sun 5 May

Enjoy the beauty that spring brings by admiring Mitton Manor's hopefully-in-full-bloom cherry trees and exploring the seven-acre country garden surrounding the Victorian manor house.

Visitors can also treat themselves to afternoon tea and a glass of beer or Champagne to celebrate the bank holiday weekend.


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Shrewsbury Wacky Races

Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Sun 26 May

Forty-four crazy soapbox cars descend on Shrewsbury's Quarry Park this Spring Bank Holiday Sunday, as the town hosts its first ever wacky races.

Spectators can watch as racers hurtle down the 300m track in their carefully crafted carts, hopefully avoiding the icy waters of the River Severn at the end of their journey!

Competitors will work their way through a knock-out-style competition, with only the fastest 10 cars making it through to the final, where they'll battle it out to take home the winner's trophy.

The event is free to attend, with pop-up street food stalls, bars and loads of family-fun activities all featuring.

Bellator Birmingham: Primus vs Wilde **Resorts World Arena, Sat 4 May**

Leading mixed martial arts promoter Bellator MMA's next event in the European Fight Series is headlined by a lightweight bout between former Bellator world champion Brent Primus and the Cannock-based Tim 'The Experiment' Wilde. Birmingham's hometown hero Fabian Edwards, who fights out of Team Renegade Gym, also competes on the card alongside a host of other local fighters.



Midlands Air Festival

Arbury Hall, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, Fri 17 - Sun 19 May

Taking place at Arbury Hall for the first time, the Midlands Air Festival offers three action-packed days of aviation-based fun.

More than 30 aircraft are on display across the weekend, 100 hot-air balloons take to the skies, and multiple exhibitors, rides and other forms of entertainment ensure there's plenty for the whole family to enjoy.

The Friday evening sees a Night-fire display lighting up the sky with pyrotechnics, a flying circus, glowing hot-air balloons and, of course, fireworks.



Unicorn Pony Rides

Arley Arboretum, Worcestershire, Mon 6 and Mon 27 May

Back by popular demand, the magical unicorns of Arley Arboretum are making appearances on both of this month's Bank Holiday Mondays.

Children can take a ride on a 'unicorn' through the enchanted woodland, ending their journey at the Unicorn Bar and enjoying some special treats.

The rides are suitable for youngsters aged three to 12, depending on size and height. Pre-booking is required.



Let's hear it for the...

Euro Boys!



EUROVISION superfan Dean Asker gives us the lowdown ahead of this month's Song Contest...

Brexit or no Brexit, one thing is certain: the UK will continue to take part in the Eurovision Song Contest. Thankfully entry to everyone's favourite musical event is not limited to EU countries.

Indeed, this year, following Netta's victory with Toy, we're in Tel Aviv in Israel, a full 20 years after the contest came from Jerusalem (thanks to Dana International's win in Birmingham in 1998).

The big news actually has nothing to do with the 41 countries taking part. Three years ago, Justin Timberlake was the Contest's interval act, and now it's Madonna's turn. Although not 100% signed and sealed, it's looking very likely that the Queen of Pop will perform two songs, including one from her forthcoming album.

The frontrunners

But what of the competition itself? Do we have any budding Madonnas in our midst? Well, maybe a couple, but this year's front-runners are all men.

The favourite to win comes from the Netherlands. Duncan Laurence, pretty much unknown in his own country, sings Arcade, a superb, atmospheric ballad that really does deserve to come out on top. The Dutch last won in 1975 with the classic Ding-A-Dong by Teach-In (YouTube it if you're under 40), so another win is very much overdue. Some readers might also be interested in YouTubing Duncan's promo video, which features him naked and underwater.

If unclothed men in water is your thing, then also take a look at the video for Azerbaijan's entry. The beefy and topless Chingiz sings the very catchy Truth, which, if you concentrate on the music (and not just the body!), could also be a contender for a top-five place.

This year's Eurovision has more than its fair share of good-looking guys. Switzerland's Luca Hänni is well fancied with She Got Me, which sounds a bit like the Latin hit Despacito. Luca's definitely been hitting the gym, and it's easily Switzerland's best entry since Celine Dion walked away with the crown in 1988.

If you can't get enough of Eurovision totty, then check out Italy's Mahmood, whose song, Soldi, is my personal favourite. And Sweden's John Lundvik (he looks after himself too!) should do well with the gospel-flavoured Too Late For Love.

The return of Sergey

One of the biggest stories in the lead-up to this year's contest has been the return of Sergey Lazarev for Russia. Sergey came third back in 2016 with the Eurobanger You Are The Only One. Expectations for another strong entry were high, but when he released his song, the bombastic ballad Scream, it was met with a muted response from fans. That said, Sergey is a great performer and Russia will throw the kitchen sink at the staging, so its chances must not be dismissed.

What about the girls?

What about the girls? Well, following the second-placed success of Fuego last year, Cyprus is sending another upbeat song, Replay, by Tamta. Fans who love it get a bit annoyed when you say it sounds like Fuego, but it does (not that that's a bad thing!). To



How will the UK's entrant Michael Rice fare on the Eurovision stage?

be fair, there are a few songs that seem to have been inspired by the Cypriot entry from 2018, including the aforementioned Swiss entry and Chameleon by Malta's Michela Pace. To prove a point, some joker's even created a mash-up of these four tunes.

And as for the UK...

The UK's hopes rest with Michael Rice, who won the first series of BBC One talent show All Together Now. Michael has a powerful voice, and the song, Bigger Than Us (written by Swedish contender John Lundvik), is, for me, the UK's best entry since Blue in 2011. Let's just hope Michael can nail the stage performance on the night.

If Europop is really not your thing, then Iceland's 'award-winning, anti-capitalist, BDSM, techno-dystopian, performance art collective' Hatari might be right up your street. Hatrið mun sigra is a slice of techno-punk sung in Icelandic. That's not something you hear every day, is it? But it's certainly different and should see Iceland back in the final after an absence of four years.

If Europop is your thing (and I suspect it is),

> **"Bigger Than Us is, for me, the UK's best entry since Blue in 2011. Let's just hope Michael can nail the stage performance"**

then I point you in the direction of Norwegian pop trio KEiiNO. Spirit In The Sky is pure Eurovision: poptastic, dramatic and with a bit of Sami joik - 'the traditional form of song of the Sami people' - thrown in. What more could you ask for? Well, maybe the entry from San Marino. Turkish crooner Serhat returns to the contest for a second time with Say Na Na Na, the title of which should really tell you everything you need to know. It's cliched, a bit trashy, and yes, utterly fabulous.

In a period when the world outside is a bit divisive and downbeat, Eurovision provides a welcome distraction from these uncertain times. So pour yourself some Bucks Fizz, make sure plenty of nibbles are on hand, and enjoy the most joyous musical experience of the year.

The Eurovision Song Contest 2019 takes place in Tel Aviv, Israel, from Tuesday 14 to Saturday 18 May.
The Grand Final will be broadcast on BBC One on Saturday 18 May.

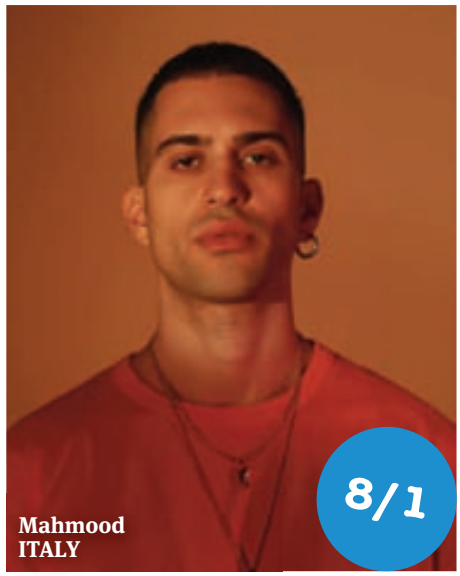
The contenders

Michael Rice has some stiff competition in Tel Aviv. Here are the bookies favourites...















ANSWERS:
1:B 2:C 3:A 4:A 5:B 6:C 7:B 8:A 9:C 10:B 11:C 12:A 13:A 14:C 15:B 16:A 17:C 18:B 19:A 20:A

EUROVISION QUIZ

Top marks or 'nul points'?

1. **ABBA's Waterloo won the 1974 Contest, but which song did the Swedish supergroup enter into their national heats the year before?**

A. People Need Love
B. Ring Ring
C. Hasta Mañana

2. **How many UK number one singles did 1981 winners Bucks Fizz have?**

A. One
B. Two
C. Three

3. **How many times has the UK finished in the Top 10 since 2010?**

A. None
B. Once
C. Twice

4. **Which of these countries has yet to win the Contest?**

A. Iceland
B. Serbia
C. Luxembourg

5. **Celine Dion won the 1988 Contest, but for which country?**

A. France
B. Switzerland
C. Monaco

6. **Blue represented the UK in 2011 with which song?**

A. I Will
B. I Do
C. I Can

7. **Who wrote the UK's 2009 entry, It's My Time, sung by Jade?**

A. Pete Waterman
B. Andrew Lloyd Webber
C. Jim Steinman

8. **How many times has Norway ended the Contest with 'nil points'?**

A. Four times
B. Three times
C. Twice

9. **Which of these songs did Jedward not sing at the Contest?**

A. Lipstick
B. Waterline
C. All The Small Things

10. **The last time the UK hosted the Contest, it was presented by Terry Wogan and which other presenter?**

A. Davina McCall
B. Ulrika Jonsson
C. Nathasha Kaplinsky

11. **Which of these countries is the only African country to have taken part in the Contest?**

A. Tunisia
B. Egypt
C. Morocco

12. **What was memorable about the 1969 contest?**

A. There were four winners
B. The contest wasn't broadcast live
C. It was the first contest to be broadcast in colour

13. **Which of these song titles is not a Eurovision winner?**

A. Pif Paf Pof
B. Diggi-Loo Diggi-Ley
C. La La La

14. **How many countries took part in the first Contest in 1956?**

A. Five
B. Six
C. Seven

15. **How is Thomas Neuwirth better known?**

A. Cliff Richard
B. Conchita Wurst
C. Alexander Rybak

16. **Which of these UK cities has not hosted the Contest?**

A. Manchester
B. Harrogate
C. Brighton

17. **Which of these pop groups unsuccessfully tried to represent Norway in the 2010 Contest?**

A. Brother Beyond
B. S Club 7
C. A1

18. **Which former UK entrant said they would rather put pins in their eyes than represent the UK again?**

A. Cliff Richard
B. Michael Ball
C. Sonia

19. **Which year did Australia first take part in the Contest?**

A. 2015
B. 2016
C. 2017

20. **The theme for this year's Contest is:**

A. Dare To Dream
B. Feel The Rhythm
C. Join Us

Check answers at the bottom of page 18

How did you score?

17-20
As Cliff Richard would say, 'Congratulations!' you're a Superfan

10-16
Gina G 'Ooh Aah... Just A Little Bit' more effort...

5-9
Bucks Fizz 'Making Your Mind Up' as to whether you like Eurovision?

0-4
Lynsey De Paul's 'Rock Bottom' - you're better off down the pub

NICK ZUPPAR & JOE ARDITTI PRESENT

'RELIVE EVERY 90s GAME SHOW FANTASY YOU EVER HAD'

TIME OUT

THE MONSTER

300 METRES OF BOUNCY MAYHEM FOR ADULTS!



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the list

Your week-by-week listings guide
May 2019



Madagascar The Musical at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre - Tues 7 - Sat 11 May

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

What's On

Wed 1 to Sun 12 May



Jarred Christmas at Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

Fri 3 May

Mon 13 to Sun 19 May



Palace Of Curiosities at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

Sat 18 May

Mon 20 to Sun 26 May



The Flying Bath at Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Sat 25 May

Mon 27 to Fri 31 May



Orlando at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Tues 28 - Wed 29 May

THROUGHOUT MAY

Visual Arts

New Art Gallery - Walsall

SARAH TAYLOR SILVERWOOD - DAPHNE Sarah uses drawing and language as material to produce publications, animation and installation works. Her exhibition considers the relationship between women and language, taking the ancient Greek myth of Daphne & Apollo as a focus, until Sun 12 May

DANIEL SILVER Exhibition by acclaimed contemporary sculptor Daniel Silver celebrating the gallery's longstanding commitment to sculpture, until Sun 2 June

SCULPTURE IN FOCUS The trail positions a key piece of contemporary sculpture from the Permanent Collection within each of the 10 themed collection rooms, until Sun 22 Dec

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

RECLAIM PHOTOGRAPHY FESTIVAL 2019: WINDOWS INTO INDUSTRIAL WORLDS Group exhibition by five regional photographers focusing on the people, places and industries of the Black Country, until Sun 30 June

HIMLEY HALL & DUDLEY CASTLE EXHIBITION New exhibition about Dudley Castle & Himley Hall from 1066 to the present day, until Sun 6 Oct

Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

OPEN ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION 2019 Annual exhibition featuring work by Staffordshire artists, until Sun 12 May

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

JULIE COPE'S GRAND TOUR: THE STORY OF A LIFE BY GRAYSON PERRY Exhibition showcasing two of the Craft Council's latest acquisitions for its national collection of contemporary craft: a pair of large-scale tapestries by Grayson Perry, winner of the Turner Prize in 2003. To complement the exhibition, artworks by Perry from the museum's own collection will also be on display, until Sun 30 June

THE COLLECTION OF TED WATKIN Ted Watkin was an active member and chairman of both the North Staffordshire Group of the Geologists' Association and the North Staffordshire Field Club. His vast collecting interests included minerals and fossils, until Mon 1 July

V&A DESIGNLAB LOANS Display of six ceramic objects from the V&A Museum, presented as part of their educational initiative, DesignLab Nation, until Sun 28 July

NEW QUEEN VICTORIA: 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF HER BIRTH A celebration of Queen Victoria and her 63-year reign as monarch, with every aspect of her life documented in ceramics, Sat 18 May - Sun 1 Sept

Qube Gallery, Oswestry

NEW HAPPINESS IS... Open photography competition and exhibition to celebrate art and wellbeing, Thurs 2 May - Thurs 13 June

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

NEW BORDERLAND VISUAL ARTS 2019 As part of Open Studios, the Willow Gallery presents a rich variety of work by emerging and established artists. All the artists are members of Borderland Visual Arts (BVA), Sat 18 May - Sat 29 June

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

MATERIALS AND MAKING Exhibition featuring a selection of sculpture, ceramics, glass, metalware and decorative art items from the art gallery's collection, until Sun 1 Sept

PAINTED LADIES: AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS Display of 20th century paintings depicting women painted by both female and male artists, until Sun 1 Sept

PICK OF THE POPS New exhibition includes works by famous Pop artists such as Pauline Boty and Andy Warhol, alongside a selection of rarely-seen pieces, until Sun 1 Sept, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Other VISUAL ARTS

NEW BIRMINGHAM WATERCOLOUR SOCIETY Display of work by members of the society, Wed 1 - Thurs 30 May, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal

NEW PICTURES OF RURAL HEALTH FROM THE PHILIPPINES Community-based exhibition co-created by local artists and rural communities from the Philippines, Thurs 2 May - Tues 4 June, Keele University, Staffordshire

NEW PAINTING WITH FABRIC EXHIBITION Artist Kate Findlay has been working exclusively in textiles for the past 12 years and is currently focusing on depicting the beauty of the British countryside and its wildlife, Sat 4 May - Sun 23 June, Museum of Cannock Chase, Staffordshire

NEW BAWDEN & ALFRED STOCKHAM Exhibition of new work by printmaker Richard Bawden and painter Alfred Stockham, Fri 10 May - Sat 8 June, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Ludlow, South Shropshire

Gigs

EDWINA HAYNES PLUS SONNY Wed 1 May, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

SIMONE FELICE Wed 1 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

CONNIE CONSTANCE Wed 1 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHARLIE LANDSBOROUGH: THE FAREWELL TOUR Thurs 2 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford

STEALING SHEEP Thurs 2 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ALABAMA 3 ACOUSTIC Thurs 2 May, The Mill Digbeth, Birmingham

JUNIORE Thurs 2 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

NAFE SMALLZ Thurs 2 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JOSEPHINE FOSTER Thurs 2 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HANNAH ALDRIDGE & THE GOAT ROPER RODEO BAND Thurs 2 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BOWIE EXPERIENCE Fri 3 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

DEFINITELY MIGHTBE V ADORED Fri 3 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

THE VAMPS Fri 3 May, Arena Birmingham

LANCO Fri 3 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE JAM'D Fri 3 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke on Trent

FLING + MARC + SHAI BRIDES Fri 3 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

KIT DOWNES Fri 3 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

SWAMPCANDY Fri 3 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CATAPULT CLUB FEAT. THE NEW REPUBLIC Fri 3 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Fri 3 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

AC/DC EXPERIENCE Fri 3 May, The Slade Room, Wolverhampton

THE MARLEY EXPERIENCE Fri 3 May, The Robin, Bilston

ESA Fri 3 - Sat 4 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

FREE RADIO HITS LIVE 2019 Sat 4 May, Arena Birmingham

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Sat 4 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE NELSON BROTHERS Sat 4 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE BAR-STEWARD SONS OF VAL DOONICAN Sat 4 May, Folowe Arts Centre, Leek

LOTTO BOYZZ: LOTTO LINGO TOUR Sat 4 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

SWEDE DREAMZ Sat 4 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FRENCH BOUTIK Sat 4 May, Newhampton Arts Centre,Wolverhampton



Simone Felice - Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



CREST GLIDER Sat 4 May, The Slade Room, Wolverhampton

THE FUTUREHEADS Sat 4 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent



JAMIE LAWSON Sat 4 May, Birmingham Town Hall

RAINBOW RISING Sat 4 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

DRESSED TO KILL Sat 4 May, The Robin, Bilston

OPEN ARMS Sat 4 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

DAVID RODIGAN & MIGHTY CROWN Sun 5 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PUNK RUNS WILD WITH HUNG LIKE HANRATTY Sun 5 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

IMAGINE - THE JOHN LENNON SONGBOOK Sun 5 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SON OF TOWN HALL Sun 5 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

WET WET WET Sun 5 May, Birmingham Town Hall

GETS WORSE / FETUS CHRIST / VILE SECT / ARCANE RITE Sun 5 May, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Sun 5 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

STRANGEFISH + JOHN HACKETT BAND Sun 5 May, The Robin, Bilston

Classical Music

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: PETER DONOHOE PLAYS MOZART Also featuring Jason Lai (conductor). Programme includes works by Vaughan Williams & Mozart, Wed 1 May, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EUROPEAN UNION CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Featuring Emma Johnson (clarinet). Programme includes works by Warlock, Mozart, Barber & Haydn, Thurs 2 May, Holy Trinity Church, Oswestry, North Shropshire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: MIRGA CONDUCTS THE FIREBIRD Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) & Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin). Programme includes works by Weinberg, Tchaikovsky & Stravinsky, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

CATHERINE BOHART, CHRISTOPHER MACARTHUR-BOYD & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 2 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROGER MONKHOUSE, BEN HARRINGTON, RUTH COCKBURN & DAN SMITH Thurs 2 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

GLENN MOORE, MIKE GUNN, ADAM BEARDSMORE & MATT STELLINGWERF Thurs 2 May, The George Hotel, Lichfield

JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Fri 3 May, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

ANDREW MAXWELL Fri 3 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JARRED CHRISTMAS Fri 3 May, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



CATHERINE BOHART, CHRISTOPHER MACARTHUR-BOYD, KEVIN MCCARTHY & COMIC TBC Fri 3 - Sat 4 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

STEPHEN BAILEY, NICK PAGE, DARIUS DAVIES & THOMAS GREEN Sat 4 May, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

Theatre

LES MISÉRABLES Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed Broadway production of the epic musical, until Sat 11 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW Shakespeare's energetic comedy of gender and materialism is turned on its head to offer a fresh perspective on its portrayal of hierarchy and power, until Sat 31 Aug, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

AS YOU LIKE IT Riotous version of Shakespeare's romantic comedy, until Sat 31 Aug, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

HAIR THE MUSICAL Fiftieth anniversary production of the legendary rock musical, starring Jake Quickenden, Daisy Wood-Davis & Marcus Collins, Mon 29 Apr - Sat 4 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

CLUB TROPICANA - THE MUSICAL Joe McElderry, Neil McDermott, Kate Robbins, Emily Tierne & Amelle Berrabah star in this 'ultimate holiday musical' homage to the 1980s, Mon 29 Apr - Sat 4 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE FULL MONTY A Musical Theatre Stafford Production, Tues 30 Apr - Sat 4 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HORMONAL HOUSEWIVES Vicki Michelle ('Allo 'Allo!) stars in a rollercoaster comedy, for women, about women... Wed 1 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

FORECASTING Flatpack Festival and Birmingham International Dance Festival present a one-woman (and her laptop) show where dance meets theatre meets YouTube mashup, Wed 1 May, The REP, Birmingham

LIBRARY OF SCREAMS Don't Go Into The Cellar present classic spine-tinglers from the golden age of horror, Thurs 2 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE Amateur production, Thurs 2 May, Lichfield Garrick

WOYZECK Newman University presents its version of Georg Büchner's tale of sexual jealousy and social exploitation, Thurs 2 - Fri 3 May, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

FAME Amateur staging presented by Youth On Stage, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 May, The Old Rep, Birmingham

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL HQPA present an amateur staging of the Dolly Parton musical, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG Everyone's favourite flying car returns in this musical adaptation by Mad Cow Productions, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS European stage première of Khaled Hosseini's spiritual sequel to The Kite Runner, Thurs 2 - Sat 18 May, The REP, Birmingham



Hair The Musical - The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

MARTHA, JOSIE AND THE CHINESE ELVIS Quirky comedy about learning to accept who you are and making the most of your moves, Thurs 2 - Sat 18 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE PROVOKED WIFE Outspoken Restoration romp that shocked 17th century society, Thurs 2 May - Sat 7 Sept, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

AN EVENING OF ERIC AND ERN Homage to British comedy's best-loved double act, Fri 3 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford, Shropshire

DEBUT: AN EVENING OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE Level 4 students present songs by West Midlands composers & lyricists in collaboration with Musical Theatre West Midlands, Fri 3 - Sat 4 May, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

A MOMENT OF MADNESS Gritty theatre fusing compelling drama with the excitement of real-time gameplay to create a visceral new live experience. The event forms part of Flatpack Festival, Fri 3 - Mon 6 May, The REP, Birmingham

THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP Camp classic presented by Blue Orange Arts, Fri 3 - Sat 11 May, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

KEVIN QUANTUM - VANISHING POINT Magic Circle member Kevin Quantum explores the concept of invisibility in a world of disappearing identity and vanishing privacy, Sat 4 May, Lichfield Garrick

I'M WOMAN Unbroken Angels present the hard-hitting true story of actress Ana Daud... Sat 4 May, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

WHODUNNIT? Join KRYPT's Junior Group as they delve into the murky world of detection, Sat 4 - Sun 5 May, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT Amateur staging of Graham Greene's popular novel, Sat 4 - Sat 11 May, Oldbury Rep

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Ever-popular production fusing comedy and music from the '50s to the '70s, Sun 5 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Kids Shows

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW Critically acclaimed production based on Eric Carle's much-loved children's book, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 May, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Dance

B-SIDE HIP-HOP FESTIVAL Featuring explosive dance battles on an outdoor stage, high-energy workshops, live music and DJ sets from legendary names on the international hip-hop scene, Fri 3 - Sun 12 May, various locations including Birmingham Hippodrome, The Arcadian, The Bullring and Digbeth

PUSS IN BOOTS Northern Ballet present a child-friendly performance based on the much-loved children's story, Sat 4 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

AVENGERS ENDGAME Action/Adventure. Starring Brie Larson, Robert Downey Jr. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 25 Apr - Thurs 2 May

THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER (15) Drama/Mystery. Starring Maggie Gyllenhaal, Gael García Bernal. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 26 Apr - Thurs 2 May

New Vic and Stephen Joseph Theatre Co-Production

NEW VIC SJT STEPHEN JOSEPH THEATRE



A quirky comedy about family, belonging and learning to accept who you are - flaws and all!

MARTHA, JOSIE AND THE CHINESE ELVIS

'sweet, quirky, delightful and funny... The cast of six are perfect together'
Scarborough News

FROM
THU 2 - SAT 18 MAY

By Charlotte Jones Directed by Gemma Fairlie

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newvictheatre.org.uk

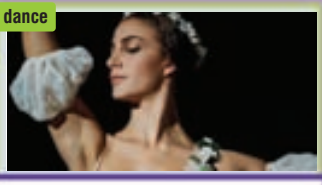
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Forthcoming Shows 2019

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dance



GISELLE
Wed 29 May @ 7.00pm

comedy



REGINALD D HUNTER
Thurs 6 June @ 8.00pm

music



SIMPLY RERED
Fri 7 June @ 7.30pm

comedy



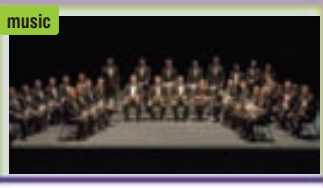
HORMONAL HOUSEWIVES
Thurs 13 June @ 7.30pm

music



THE BEACH BOYS TRIBUTE
Fri 14 June @ 7.30pm

music



GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND
Sun 16 June @ 3.00pm

music



SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY
Mon 24 June @ 2.00pm

music



80S MANIA
Thurs 4 July @ 7.30pm

music



THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW
Fri 5 July @ 7.30pm



Swingamajig - Birmingham Botanical Gardens

LANCASTER SKIES (PG) Drama/War. Starring Kris Saddler, Rosa Coduri. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 26 Apr - Thurs 2 May

AT ETERNITY'S GATE (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Willem Dafoe, Mads Mikkelsen. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 2 May

THE AFTERMATH (15) Drama/War. Starring Keira Knightley, Alexander Skarsgård. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Thurs 2 May; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Thurs 2 May

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring James Purefoy, Tuppence Middleton. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 3 May; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 3 May

STAN & OLLIE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring John C. Reilly, Shirley Henderson. Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Fri 3 May

OUT OF BLUE (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Patricia Clarkson, Toby Jones. Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 3 - Sat 4 May

BEN IS BACK (15) Drama. Starring Julia Roberts, Lucas Hedges. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 3 - Thurs 9 May

WONDER PARK (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Sofia Mali, Jennifer Garner. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sat 4 - Mon 6 May

SOULBOY (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Alfie Allen, Martin Compston. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 5 May

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 3 May, showing at selected cinemas

A DOG'S JOURNEY (tbc)

LONG SHOT (15)

TOLKIEN (12a)

EXTREMELY WICKED, SHOCKINGLY EVIL AND VILE (tbc)

Festivals

CHELTENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL Line-up features Gregory Porter, James Morrison, Katie Melua and Level 42, Wed 1 - Mon 6 May, various venues around Cheltenham

UPTON-UPON-SEVERN FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up features Melrose Quartet, Alice Jones, Cosmotheka and The Pigeon Swing, Fri 3 - Mon 6 May, various venues around Upton-Upon-Severn, Worcestershire

LEAMINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL WEEKEND Line-up features Roderick Williams, Tasmin Little, Jonathan Cunliffe and Howard Skempton, Fri 3 - Fri 10 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

NO FUTURE FESTIVAL Line-up features Angelic Upstarts, Anti-Nowhere League, GBH and 999, Sat 4 May, The Mill, Birmingham

HANDMADE FESTIVAL Line-up features Metronomy, The Futureheads, The Sherlocks and Ibibio Sound Machine, Sun 5 May, O2 Academy, Leicester

SWINGAMAJIG Line-up features Hackney Colliery Band, A.Skillz, Electric Swing Circus, Cut Capers, Sun 5 May, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Events

THE ORIGINAL HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS The world famous basketball stars visit Birmingham as part of a world tour, Thurs 2 May, Arena Birmingham

THE MURDER OF ALICE JOINER Follow the clues and question the suspects to discover the truth about the death of Alice Joiner, Fri 3 May, Birmingham Back to Backs

DONINGTON HISTORIC FESTIVAL Featuring more than 400 classic racing cars spanning nine decades, Fri 3 - Sun 5 May, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

ZOO CLUB Activities themed around animals, wildlife, nature and zoos for children aged between eight and 14, Sat 4 May, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

FIELD TO FORK One-day free event championing the country's single biggest manufacturing sector - food, Sat 4 May, Harper Adams, Newport, Shropshire

FLATPACK 2019: COLOUR BOX EXPLORER DAY Make yourself a pair of binoculars, grab a map and explore what's on offer, including a keyboard that projects images, oversized optical toys, an interactive audiovisual dome, green-screen madness, and plenty of crafting, Sat 4 May, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

BELLATOR MMA BIRMINGHAM Leading mixed martial arts promoter Bellator MMA's next event in the European Fight Series, Sat 4 May, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

CHAMPAGNE ON THE TRAIN Severn Valley Railway in partnership with Nicklolls & Perks welcome you aboard the Champagne Train, Sat 4 - Sun 5 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

MAY DAY BANK HOLIDAY WEEKENDER Featuring traditional May Day-themed activities. Make your own Green Man mask or May crown and join the horse-drawn procession, Sat 4 - Mon 6 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



LEGO SEA EXPLORERS Help the team unlock underwater secrets and get creative as you draw and colour your new discoveries, Sat 4 May - Sun 2 June, National Sea Life Centre, B'ham

CHERRY TREE WALK Visit Mitton Manor Gardens to see the Cherry Tree Walk in full bloom, Sun 5 May, Mitton Manor, Staffordshire

PIRATE WEEKEND Featuring 'thrilling pirate battles' throughout the day, Sun 5 - Mon 6 May, Tutbury Castle, Burton-on-Trent



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ENTERTAINMENT
CANNOCK CHASE
at the PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE

MAY

GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND
Sunday 19 May
3.00pm • £20



FAST LOVE
Friday 31 May
7.30pm • £24



JUNE

THE SECRET LIVES OF HENRY & ALICE
Saturday 1 June
7.30pm • £16



LIONEL RICHIE SONGBOOK
Sunday 2 June
7.30pm • £21



ROMAN ROMP
Friday 7 June
7.30pm • £17



BOB DYLAN STORY
Friday 14 June
7.30pm • £20



SIMPLY RERED
Friday 21 June
7.30pm • £20 • Conc. £18



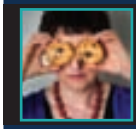
GIRL POWER
Friday 28 June
7.30pm • £24



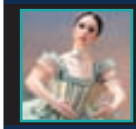
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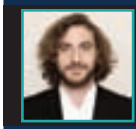
the brewhouse
arts centre & café bar



8th May, 7.30pm
Once Upon A Wednesday: Naomi Paul
Tickets: £7, £8.50 otd



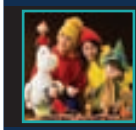
9th May 7pm
Vienna Festival Ballet: Coppelia
Tickets: £18, £16 conc.



11th May, 8pm
AT BURTON TOWN HALL:
Seann Walsh: After This One, I'm Going Home
Tickets: £15



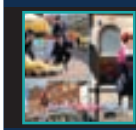
14th - 18th May 7.30pm
(2.30pm matinee)
Mellow Dramatics presents
The Wedding Singer
Tickets: £12, £10 matinee



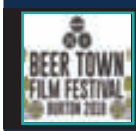
25th May 11am, 1.30pm & 4pm
Lost and Found: Mischief & Mystery in Moonin Valley
Tickets: £8 Adults & £5 Children



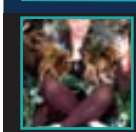
25th May 10am - 4pm
Festival Funday
A day of performances and activities for the whole family to enjoy together at The Brewhouse
Tickets: FREE



29th May, 10am - 3pm
Burton Market Hall & Place
Play in the Place
Pop-up performances, stories, installations and things to do for the whole family
Tickets: FREE



3rd - 8th June
Beer Town Film Festival
Find out more at www.beertownfilmfestival.co.uk



5th June, 7.30pm
Once Upon A Wednesday: Ursula Holden Gil
Tickets: £7, £8.50 otd

Box office:
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Brewhouse Arts Centre
Union Street, Burton-upon-Trent
Staffordshire DE14 1AA



Arcadia Roots - Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

Gigs

NUBYA GARCIA Mon 6 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

OLD SEA BRIGADE + FERGUS CHANNELL + MIDGE Mon 6 May, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

LOWLY Mon 6 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DERMOT KENNEDY Tues 7 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HONEYBLOOD Tues 7 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

TEN TONNES Tues 7 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BETHS Tues 7 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PREGOBLIN Tues 7 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TEN TONNES Tues 7 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

A CELEBRATION OF THE SONGS AND MUSIC OF GEORGE MICHAEL Tues 7 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CHRIS YOUNG Wed 8 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS RHYTHM 'N' BLUES ORCHESTRA Wed 8 May, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE BONFIRE RADICALS Wed 8 May, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

ELIZA AND MARTIN CARTHY Thurs 9 May, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

RICK WAKEMAN Thurs 9 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

MARINA Thurs 9 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

DRAHLA Thurs 9 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES Thurs 9 May, The Robin, Bilston

GRACE PETRIE Fri 10 May, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

SHOW OF HANDS Fri 10 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SUSTO Fri 10 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BOTH SIDES NOW – THE JONI MITCHELL CELEBRATION CONCERT Fri 10 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

SAM FENDER Fri 10 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MARTIN KEMP DJ SET Fri 10 May, The Mill, Birmingham

OLLY MURS Fri 10 - Sat 11 May, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

LOWER THAN ATLANTIS Fri 10 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

A CERTAIN RATIO Fri 10 May, Newhampton Arts Centre,Wolverhampton

THE MADCHESTER EXPERIENCE Fri 10 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE DANIEL WAKEFORD EXPERIENCE Fri 10 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE SMITHS LTD Fri 10 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

ARCADIA ROOTS Fri 10 May, The Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

VUKOVI + SUPERLOVE Fri 10 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BEE GEES FEVER Fri 10 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford

THE LEGEND OF SPRINGSTEEN Fri 10 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE ORB 30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Sat 11 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

WHOLE LOTTA DC Sat 11 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE COLOUR SIX Sat 11 May, Resorts World, Birmingham

OCCOEUR WITH I, ASSASSIN, SEVERN & SID Sat 11 May, Route 44, Birmingham

EXCALIBOW Sat 11 May, Lichfield Garrick

DAN WALSH TRIO Sat 11 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

SAMANTHA FISH Sat 11 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BRANDON ALLEN / TIM LAPTHORN QUARTET Sat 11 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

LEO SAYER Sat 11 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

80S PARTY NIGHT WITH JOHNNY 2 BAD Sat 11 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford

STRAIGHT FOR THE SUN Sat 11 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BLANCMANGE Sat 11 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

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

BLACK HEART ANGELS Sat 11 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

DOG OF TWO HEAD Sat 11 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

MICHAEL BALL Sun 12 - Tues 14 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

TAKE THAT Sun 12 - Tues 14 May, Arena Birmingham

Classical Music

PAVEL KOLENIKOV PIANO CONCERT Programme includes works by Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky & Couperin, Wed 8 May, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: YUJA WANG PLAYS PROKOFIEV Also featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor). Programme includes works by Ligeti, Prokofiev & Brahms, Thurs 9 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BRAHMS PIANO QUINTET Featuring Jane Wright (violin), Michael Jenkinson (viola), Helen Edgar (cello) & John Thwaites (piano). Programme comprises Brahms' Piano Quartet No.2, Thurs 9 May, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

PAVEL KOLESNIKOV PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky & Couperin, Thurs 9 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

CALLINO QUARTET Featuring Sarah Sexton & Tom Hankey (violins), Rebecca Jones (viola) & Sarah McMahon (cello). Programme includes John Woolrich's Scamander & Mendelssohn's String Quartet No.6 in F minor, Op.80, Fri 10 May, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

BBC PHILHARMONIC Featuring Vassily Sinaisky (conductor) & Sunwook Kim (soloist). Programme includes works by Elgar, Grieg & Dvorak, Fri 10 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BRILLIANT BAROQUE Shrewsbury School musicians present a selection of works from the eighteenth century, Sat 11 May, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN RECITAL Sat 11 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET SERIES Programme includes works by Schumann, Saint Saens & Brahms, Sun 12 May, Blackburn Theatre, Prestfelde School, Shrewsbury

Comedy

SUZI RUFFELL Tues 7 - Wed 8 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ZOE LYONS, DALISO CHAPONDA, ADAM ROWE & WAYNE BEESE Thurs 9 May, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

IAN COPPINGER, ANDY ASKINS & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 9 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

PAUL MERTON'S IMPRO CHUMS Fri 10 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

IAN COPPINGER, ANDY ASKINS, ELLIOT STEEL & SOPHIE WILLAN Fri 10 - Sat 11 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JIMMY CARR Sat 11 May, Dudley Town Hall



CROFT & PEARCE Sat 11 May, Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN, GAVIN WEBSTER, ARCHIE MADDOCKS & PETE OTWAY, Sat 11 May, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

TROY HAWKE & JACK GLEADOW Sun 12 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

THE HOUSE ON COLD HILL Peter James' modern-day ghostly thriller, Mon 6 - Sat 11 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

A LESSON FROM AUSCHWITZ One-man show exploring how and why the Nazis did what they did, shedding light on the mentality of the perpetrators and the disturbing reality of life in a death camp, Tues 7 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



THE DROWSY CHAPERONE Presented by University of Wolverhampton Musical Theatre students, Tues 7 - Wed 8 May, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

OLIVER! Bournville Musical Theatre Company present an amateur staging of Dickens' classic tale, Tues 7 - Sat 11 May, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE SOUND OF MUSIC Amateur staging presented by Brownhills Theatre Company, Tues 7 - Sat 11 May, Lichfield Garrick

SHYLOCK Gareth Armstrong's award-winning solo play, offering a fascinating insight into Shakespeare's infamous character, Wed 8 May, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham



Atlantic Ladies - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ONCE UPON A WEDNESDAY: NAOMI PAUL Satirical solo show with original songs, topical stories and Jewish humour, Wed 8 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

WHERE THE HELL IS BERNARD? Award-winning company Haste Theatre fuse visuals, movement, live song and clowning to create a darkly comic warning for the future, Wed 8 - Thurs 9 May, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

ATLANTIC LADIES The true story of three women in a boat (two from Shropshire, one from Wales) who bravely became the oldest female team to row right across the ocean, Wed 8 - Fri 10 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF CWAGMS present an amateur staging of the all-time classic musical, Wed 8 - Sat 11 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

KISS ME KATE Tinkers Farm Opera presents its version of Cole Porter's iconic musical, Wed 8 - Sat 11 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

THE GREATEST SHOWS Musical extravaganza presented by Walsall Junior & Senior Youth Theatre, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 May, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

THE BENCH Keir McAllister drama, described as Waiting For Godot meets Still Game, Fri 10 May, Lichfield Garrick

PAUL MERTON'S IMPRO CHUMS Also featuring Lee Simpson, Richard Vranch, Suki Webster, Mike McShane & accompanist Kirsty Newton, Fri 10 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHESS: THE MUSICAL University of Wolverhampton Musical Theatre present an amateur staging of the Tim Rice musical, Fri 10 - Sat 11 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,

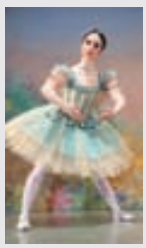
MUCKERS Created by award-winning theatre maker Caroline Horton and an international ensemble, Muckers is described as a mischievous show exploring what it takes to stand proud and be true to ourselves..., Fri 10 - Sat 11 May, The REP, Birmingham

SUMMER STREET - THE AUSSIE SOAP MUSICAL Take a trip down memory lane to the 1990s and the heyday of the Aussie soap opera, Fri 10 - Sun 12 May, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

Vienna Festival Ballet: Coppelia

The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Thurs 9 May

Founded in 1980 by celebrated Austrian dancer Peter Malleck, the now-UK-based Vienna Festival Ballet presents a repertoire which comprises both full-length classics and new commissions. Touring extensively for two-thirds of the year, the company this month visits the Midlands with its production of Coppelia, bringing together Leo Delibes' dazzling score with some truly breathtaking choreography. When Dr Coppelius's mannequin, Coppelia, is left on the workshop balcony, she causes quite a stir - not only in the heart of the red-blooded Franz but also in the mind of his jealous fiancee, Swanilda, who foolishly mistakes Coppelia for a flesh-and-blood rival...



THE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE Presented by European Arts Company, Sat 11 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DUMTEEDUM LIVE The Archers Fan Podcast featuring Emerald O'Hanrahan (Emma Grundy), Sat 11 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ANDREA MCLEAN: CONFESSIONS OF A MENOPAUSAL WOMAN One-woman show featuring 'stories of menopausal meltdowns, salacious secrets and take-away tit-bits that every woman needs to hear', Sat 11 May, The Old Rep, Birmingham

CONSTELLATIONS Thought-provoking comedy which questions the role of free will and chance, Sat 11 - Sat 18 May, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CATS West Bromwich Operatic Society present an amateur staging of the hit Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, Tues 14 - Sat 18 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Kids Shows

MADAGASCAR THE MUSICAL Matt Terry takes the lead in a musical adventure based on the smash-hit movie, Tues 7 - Sat 11 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ZOG Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved character comes to life in a new staging accompanied by a 'sumptuous' folk score, Wed 8 - Thurs 9 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HORRIBLE HISTORIES - BARMY BRITAIN The history of Britain - with the nasty bits left in!, Sun 12 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Dance

NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY WALES: AWAKENING Triple bill of works to 'amuse and amaze', Tues 7 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

STAFFORD'S GOTTA DANCE Wed 8 - Sat 11 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

KNOT Acclaimed circus and dance work by Nikki Rummer and JD Broussé that asks the question: How can we be honest with ourselves without hurting those we love? Thurs 9 May, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

COPPELIA Thurs 9 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

BURN THE FLOOR 'Jaw-dropping choreography and ground-breaking moves' with Strictly Come Dancing favourite Kevin Clifton and Italian heartthrob Graziano Di Prima, Sun 12 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Talks

MONOLOGUESLAM 2019 Showcase of local talent, from actors to musicians, Fri 10 May, The REP, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

BLINDSPOTTING (15) Comedy/Crime. Starring Daveed Diggs, Rafael Casal. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 7 May

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS (12A) Comedy/Drama. Starring James Purefoy, Tuppence Middleton. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 7 & Thurs 9 May

ANA DE DIA (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Fernando Albizu, María José Alfonso. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 8 May

DUMBO (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 10 May

FREE SOLO (12A) Documentary/Sport. Starring Alex Honnold, Tommy Caldwell. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 10 & Sun 12 May

THE WHITE CROW (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Oleg Ivenko, Ralph Fiennes. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 10 - Thurs 16 May

THE SISTERS BROTHERS (15) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, John C. Reilly. Stoke Film Theatre, Sat 11 May

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 10 May, showing at selected cinemas

DETECTIVE PIKACHU (tbc)

THE HUSTLE (tbc)

Events

MAY DAY FOLK DAY Featuring morris dancers, maypole dancing, trails, crafts and traditional games, Mon 6 May, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

UNICORN PONY RIDES Featuring unicorn-themed pony rides through the enchanted woodland and unicorn treats at the Unicorn Bar, Mon 6 May, Arley Arboretum, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BODYPOWER EXPERIENCE Whether you're new to health & fitness, a regular gym-goer or even an elite athlete, 'this show will provide everything you need to help you achieve your next goal', Fri 10 - Sun 12 May, NEC, Birmingham

CHERRY BLOSSOM PAINTING IN ACRYLIC Following the Cherry Tree Walk, take part in a painting workshop hosted by local artist Debbie Chatfield, Sat 11 May, Mitton Manor, Staffordshire

THE ART OF DEATH TOUR As part of the national Dying Matters week, this free tour takes in everything from Roman cremation chests to paintings of poisonings, Sat 11 May, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

TALES OF ACQUISITION TOUR As part of the national Dying Matters week, take the opportunity to explore objects and artworks left to Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery by supporters in their wills, or purchased using a legacy, Sat 11 May, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

DR DASHING AND NURSE NICE WILL SEE YOU NOW Doctor Dashing and Nurse Nice assess your cuteness and help you understand your diagnosis, Sat 11 May, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

ZOO CLUB Activities themed around animals, wildlife, nature and zoos for children aged between eight and 14, Sat 11 May, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

THE ANTIQUES RAILSHOW Join specialist valuers and TV experts from Stourbridge-based auctioneers Fieldings, Sat 11 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

MAKERS CENTRAL Show bringing together thousands of makers from around the world, from crafters & inventors to hobbyists and artists, Sat 11 - Sun 12 May, NEC, Birmingham

SHROPSHIRE KIDS FEST Hosted by Shropshire Festivals, Sat 11 - Sun 12 May, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: JRR TOLKIEN AND SAREHOLE GUIDED WALK A guided introduction to Tolkien, the area of Sarehole and its influence on The Hobbit and The Lord Of The Rings, Sun 12 May, Sarehole Mill, B'ham

For Foodies

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL A foodie day out for the whole family in the company of the finest local artisan producers, Sat 11 - Sun 12 May, Chillington Hall, Wolverhampton



Ludlow Spring Festival

Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire, Sat 11 - Sun 12 May

This annual festival ably illustrates why Ludlow is one of the country's most reputable foodie towns.

The two-day event features more than 200 beers alongside an array of food stalls, with vendors offering delectable delights ranging from artisan flours to charcuterie, award-winning cakes, gourmet sausage rolls and local cheeses.

The Marches Transport Festival and a wealth of musical entertainment complete the weekend's programme of attractions.



Gigs

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Mon 13 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MARTIN CARTHY & ELIZA CARTHY Mon 13 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE SUMMER OF LOVE Mon 13 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Tues 14 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PAUL YOUNG Tues 14 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

STONEFIELD Tues 14 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JASON DONOVAN Tues 14 - Wed 15 May, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

SONS OF THE EAST Wed 15 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PAUL YOUNG Wed 15 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ISHMAEL ENSEMBLE Wed 15 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KRS-ONE Wed 15 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

MARC ALMOND Wed 15 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Wed 15 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

WALKING ON CARS Thurs 16 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SPINN Thurs 16 May, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS Thurs 16 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TOM ROBINSON Thurs 16 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

ALEX AIONO Thurs 16 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FOREIGN BEGGARS Thurs 16 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHANTEL MCGREGOR Thurs 16 May, The Robin, Bilston

TAKE THAT Thurs 16 - Sun 19 May, Arena Birmingham

THE ROLLING STONES STORY Fri 17 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford

BLACK CELEBRATION - DEPECHE MODE Fri 17 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CREAM LIMOUSINE Fri 17 May, Resorts World, Birmingham

THE PEAK DISTRICT BIG BAND Fri 17 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

HALLOUMINATI Fri 17 May, The Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE BAR-STEWARD SONS OF VAL DOONICAN Fri 17 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

ALUNAH Fri 17 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GLENN HUGHES PERFORMS CLASSIC DEEP PURPLE Fri 17 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

OLI NG Fri 17 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

HATS OFF TO LED ZEPPELIN Fri 17 - Sat 18 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

JON RONSON Fri 17 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GLAM 45 PLUS SWEET 45 Fri 17 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

SWERVEDRIVER Fri 17 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CATAPULT CLUB FT. XILLA Fri 17 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LOVE DISTRACTION Fri 17 May, The Robin, Bilston

VOODOO ROOM: A NIGHT OF HENDRIX, CLAPTON & CREAM Fri 17 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RASCALTON + FEEDBAC + 2 HOUR OVERKILL Sat 18 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

NIRVANA UK (TRIBUTE) Sat 18 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

STONE FOUNDATION Sat 18 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DIRTY DC Sat 18 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

DIVAS THE LEGENDS Sat 18 May, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

CUSTARD CONNECTION Sat 18 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

KAMASI WASHINGTON Sat 18 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE COLDPLAYER Sat 18 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshir

THE ONE LOVE BAND Sat 18 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SOUL'D OUT UK Sat 18 May, The Robin, Bilston

RED HOT CHILLI PIPERS Sun 19 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LP: HEART TO MOUTH TOUR Sun 19 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BEAK> Sun 19 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DEAN FRIEDMAN Sun 19 May, Folowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

MR PUNCH - MARILLION: THE FUGAZI SHOW Sun 19 May, The Robin, Bilston



LP - O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

JOSEP-RAMON OLIVÉ - SCHUBERT, MAHLER & STRAUSS Featuring Josep-Ramon Olivé (baritone) & Ian Tindle (piano). Programme includes works by Schubert, Korngold, Raquel García-Tomás, Mahler & Strauss, Tues 14 May, Birmingham Town Hall

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON CELLO CONCERT Also featuring Isata Kanneh-Mason (piano). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Lutoslawski, Debussy, Fauré & Mendelssohn, Thurs 16 May, Birmingham Town Hall

FLORIAN KITT (CELLO) & CARLOS RIVERA-AGUILAR (PIANO). Programme includes works by Debussy, Friedrich Cerha & Prokofiev, Fri 17 May, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

NOX QUARTET Featuring Boglárka Gyorgy & Tomohiko Kimura (violins), Nichols Fidler (viola) & Flora McNicoll (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn & Schubert, Fri 17 May, The Round Room, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

PIANO RECITAL WITH ARTHUR YU Fri 17 May, Maidment Auditorium, Shrewsbury School

GORDON STEWART GALA ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Handel, Alfred Hollins, JS Bach, A Ketèlbey, Edwin Lemare, Zsolt Gárdonyi & Jules Grison, Sat 18 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

CITY OF BRISTOL CHOIR: SPIRIT OF SPRING Programme includes works by Walton, Dove, Parry, Britten, Wilby & Bob Chilcott, Sat 18 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND Sun 19 May, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

Comedy

MICHAEL MCINTYRE Tues 14 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

LARRY DEAN Tues 14 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL KANE Wed 15 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

MATT PRICE, MARK MAIER & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 16 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

JIM TAVARÉ Fri 17 May, Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham

JOHN-LUKE ROBERTS Fri 17 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT PRICE, MARK MAIER, MARK NELSON & LENNY SHERMAN Fri 17 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SCOTT BENNETT, NJAMBI MCGRATH, JARLETH REGAN & DAMION LARKIN Fri 17 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

MATT PRICE, MARK MAIER, MARK NELSON & COMIC TBC Sat 18 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

OUR TRACE Sat 18 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford

SCOTT BENNETT, JOSH PUGH, JUNIOR SIMPSON & DAMION LARKIN Sat 18 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

TOM BINNS, HAYLEY ELLIS & SIMON WOZNIAK Sat 18 May, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

THE NOISE NEXT DOOR Sun 19 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW Hot from a sell-out world tour and now having been experienced by more than 30 million theatre-goers across the globe, Richard O'Brien's timeless musical masterpiece returns, Mon 13 - Sat 25 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS The Lichfield Players present Bob Larbey's bittersweet comedy about growing old, Tues 14 - Sat 18 May, Lichfield Garrick

ROCKBETH South Staffordshire College present a retelling of Shakespeare's classic tragedy - with a musical twist, Wed 15 May, Lichfield Garrick

FRED JEFFS: THE SWEETSHOP MURDER On Good Friday 1957, Quinton sweetshop owner Fred Jeffs was murdered. Over 60 years later, the killing remains unsolved. Here, his great nephew, Graeme Rose, examines the case, Wed 15 - Sat 18 May, The REP, Birmingham

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM The National Production Company presents its version of Shakespeare's popular comedy, Wed 15 - Sat 18 May, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS: TRIBE 25 Brand new show featuring skill, stamina and red-hot rhythms, Sat 18 May, Dudley Town Hall



Dance

RITE OF SPRING Showcase of Indian classical dance, Tues 14 May, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

STRICTLY COME DANCING THE PROFESSIONALS 2019 Featuring Dianne Buswell, Pasha Kovalev, Giovanni Pernice, Katya Jones and AJ Pritchard, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BBC YOUNG DANCER 2019 GRAND FINAL Five outstanding young dancers battle it out in front of a panel of internationally renowned judges. The evening also includes a feature performance from 2017 winner Nafisah Baba, Sat 18 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE BALLROOM BOYS Strictly favourites Iain Waite & Vincent Simone join forces in a brand new show, Sat 18 May, Lichfield Garrick

Talks

AN EVENING WITH HARRY REDKNAPP I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here! winner Harry Redknapp shares stories from his football days and his time in the jungle, Mon 13 May, Birmingham Town Hall

DAVID STARKEY - A MONARCHY OF MISFITS A talk tracing the radically shifting marriage customs of the British monarchy, Tues 14 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

DUMBO (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Mon 13 May; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Mon 13 May

GREEN BOOK (PG) Biography/Comedy. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 13 May

THE WIFE (15) Drama. Starring Glenn Close, Jonathan Pryce. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 13 May

ALL IS TRUE (12A) Biography/Drama. Starring Kenneth Branagh, Lolita Chakrabarti. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 14 & Thurs 16 May

THE SISTERS BROTHERS (15) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, John C. Reilly. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 16 May

THE KEEPER (15) Biography/Drama. Starring David Kross, Freya Mavor. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 17 May

THE FAVOURITE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Olivia Colman, Emma Stone. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 17 - Sat 18 May

WILD ROSE (15) Drama/Music. Starring Julie Walters, Jessie Buckley. Stoke Film Theatre, Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 17 - Thurs 23 May

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 17 May, showing at selected cinemas

PAW PATROL: MIGHTY PUPS (tbc)

ALADDIN (tbc)

ROCKETMAN (tbc)

THE SECRET LIFE OF PETS 2 (tbc)

Events

STORE STORIES: A BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR See the hidden treasures in the collection stores at Attingham and meet the team carrying out some of the conservation work, Mon 13 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

WWE LIVE WWE superstars live in action, all under one roof, Wed 15 May, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

SPRING DIESEL FESTIVAL Featuring heritage and mainline diesels, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THIS MORNING LIVE Shopping festival with hundreds of well-known brands, small boutiques and unique retailers, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 May, NEC, Birmingham

WATT 2019: ILLUMINATING JAMES WATT Find out more about the great Georgian inventor, industrialist and steam pioneer, Fri 17 May, Soho House, Birmingham

THE BABY SHOW The UK's largest event for parents-to-be, new parents, grandparents and babies, Fri 17 - Sun 19 May, NEC, Birmingham

BIG BANG CAMPER & BUS SHOW - VW FESTIVAL Featuring racing, music and entertainment, Fri 17 May - Sun 19 Sept, Santa Pod Raceway, Wellingborough

THE DOORSLAMMERS Doorslammers returns in a bigger and better format, along with a huge prize fund, Fri 17 - Sun 19 May, Santa Pod Raceway, Wellingborough

ZOO CLUB Activities themed around animals, wildlife, nature and zoos for children aged between eight and 14, Sat 18 May, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

RED BY NIGHT Experience the industrial might of the Black Country as skilled craftsmen and live demonstrations bring the reality of 'black by day, red by night' to life, Sat 18 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



Whitchurch Food & Drink Festival, Shropshire

DISCOVER RAG RUGGING Learn the art of rag rugging with craft specialists, Sat 18 May, Birmingham Back to Backs

EDWARDIAN TEAROOMS LATE: MUSEUMS AT NIGHT FESTIVAL WITH HIDDEN SPACES An evening of dinner and live music, plus the chance to enjoy the Secrets Of The Museum tour, Sat 18 May, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

THE TWELFTH ANNUAL DUCK RACES Race a duck along the stream in Carding Mill Valley, Sat 18 May, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills, Church Stretton

PALACE OF CURIOSITIES Meet the Marcus Island Mermaid, Sat 18 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent



VICTORIAN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT See what it was like to be a policeman during the Victorian period - and also what happened if you ended up on the wrong side of the law... Sat 18 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

ASTON ALIVE: GEORGIAN HOUSE PARTY Join in the fun of a Georgian house party, witness sword-fighting duels and meet some glorious and gaudy Georgians, Sat 18 May, Aston Hall, Birmingham

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE GRAVEYARD TALK An illustrated talk about the archaeology of Park Street burial ground, which is being excavated as part of the preparatory work for the HS2 rail line, Sat 18 May, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

INDUSTRIAL MIGHT Discover the awe-inspiring industrial might of the Black Country, with live demonstrations and fun for visitors of all ages, Sat 18 - Sun 19 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

'MORRIS GANG' DANCING The Blists Hill Morris Gang perform traditional dances, Sun 19 May, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire

MIXED TRACTION DAY A selection of the visiting diesel locomotives will be operating alongside the steam trains, Sun 19 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THE COSMONAUT'S WIFE Enjoy an afternoon tea with the wife of the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin, Sun 19 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

For Foodies

FRESTIVAL Festival specialising in free-from foods and products, Sat 18 May, West Midland Showground, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM VIVA! MAGICAL VEGAN FESTIVAL Featuring vegan delicacies, ethical clothing, cruelty-free cosmetics and much more, Sat 18 May, New Bingley Hall, Birmingham

RUM & REGGAE FESTIVAL Sat 18 May, The Mill Digbeth, Birmingham

WHITCHURCH FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL Celebrating all things great about food & drink in the North Shropshire area, Sat 18 - Sun 19 May, Whitchurch Civic Centre

thelist

Gigs

MICHAEL BUBLÉ Mon 20 - Tues 21 May, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

THE RONNIE SCOTT'S ALL STARS Mon 20 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE SHOW Tues 21 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HELLOGOODBYE Tues 21 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BRY Tues 21 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

WILL BURNS & HANNAH PEEL Tues 21 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE JEEPS Tues 21 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE TREATMENT & BIGFOOT Wed 22 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

WHISKEY MYERS Wed 22 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHILDREN OF ZEUS Wed 22 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHRIS DIFFORD Wed 22 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LYNETTE WALTERS AND BAND Wed 22 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MIKE MASSÉ Wed 22 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE JAMES TAYLOR STORY Thurs 23 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Thurs 23 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THEA GILMORE Thurs 23 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HOWARD JONES Thurs 23 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR Thurs 23 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

INDIGO VELVET Thurs 23 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

POKE Thurs 23 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

DOOMSDAY OUTLAW Thurs 23 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

KSI & RANDOLPH Thurs 23 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MANIC STREET PREACHERS Thurs 23 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE FOLK ENSEMBLE Thurs 23 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

STEVIE NIMMO TRIO Thurs 23 May, The Robin, Bilston

WANNABE - THE SPICE GIRLS SHOW Fri 24 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford, Shrewsbury

BEAT FACTORY Fri 24 May, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

DEFINATELY MIGHTBE + ADORED Fri 24 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DAN WALSH TRIO Fri 24 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TAKE THE 5TH - AN APPRECIATION OF THE CLASH Fri 24 May, The Night Out, B'ham

RAYMOND FROGGATT Fri 24 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALICE IN CHAINS Fri 24 May, Arena B'ham

MAGNETIC JELLYFISH Fri 24 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

TOTAL STONE ROSES & OAYSIS Fri 24 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

KILLING EVE Fri 24 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE Fri 24 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shrops

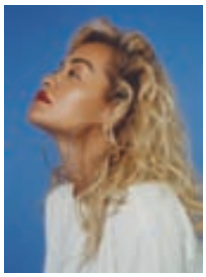
STING & SHAGGY Fri 24 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BAND OF FRIENDS FEATURING GERRY MCAVOY, TED MCKENNA & MARCEL SCHERPENZEEL Fri 24 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE BOMBPOPS Fri 24 - Sat 25 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NAVI KING OF POP Sat 25 May, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

RITA ORA Sat 25 May, Arena Birmingham



CHRIS BEVINGTON ORGANISATION + THE EMMA JONSON TRIO Sat 25 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

EGO FRIENDLY Sat 25 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE BIG BIRMINGHAM SOUL NIGHT Sat 25 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ROBIN NOLAN TRIO Sat 25 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrewsbury

THE SMITHS LTD Sat 25 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SMYTHS Sat 25 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

EXPLOSIVE LIGHT ORCHESTRA Sat 25 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE WATERBOYS Sat 25 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE ELVIS WORLD TOUR STARRING SHAWN KLUSH & DEAN Z Sun 26 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE SUMMER OF LOVE Sun 26 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JULIANA HATFIELD THREE Sun 26 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SONIC BOOM LIVE Sun 26 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ESTELLE Sun 26 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

WINTER IN EDEN Sun 26 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE DRIFTERS Sun 26 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

TALON - THE ACOUSTIC COLLECTION Sun 26 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME MUSIC Featuring Petrina Phua Wei Ching & Orestis Magou (pianos) & Jeffrey Armstrong (violin). Programme includes works by Schubert & Faure, Mon 20 May, The Lab, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

WALLACE & GROMIT'S MUSICAL MARVELS Interactive experience featuring specially created animations alongside a live orchestral accompaniment, Mon 20 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

WHITTINGTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL: CZECH MATES: DVORAK AND THE BOHEMIANS 1 - 6 Tues 21 - Sun 26 May, Church of St John the Baptist, Whittington, North Shropshire

RUSSIAN PHILHARMONIC OF NOVOSIBIRSK: PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION Featuring Thomas Sanderling (conductor) & Alexander Sitkovetsky (violin). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Rimsky-Korsakov & Mussorgsky arr. Ravel, Wed 22 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE OPERA BOYS Thurs 23 May, Dudley Town Hall

NICOLA BENEDETTI WITH THE SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Also featuring Benjamin Marquise Gilmore (violin/director). Programme includes works by Mozart & Anna Clyne, Fri 24 May, Birmingham Town Hall

THE LUDLOW ORCHESTRA Featuring Claire Tocknell (leader), Thomas Payne (conductor) & Daniel Browell (soloist). Programme include works by Liadov, Prokofiev & Shostakovich, Sat 25 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

A BEETHOVEN EXPERIENCE: COMPLETE WORKS FOR CELLO & PIANO Featuring Richard Jenkinson & Benjamin Frith, Sun 25 May, Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire

CORY BAND & ONLY MEN ALOUD; BRASS & VOICES FROM THE MOVIES Sun 26 May, Birmingham Town Hall

PROMS & PROSECCO IN THE PARK Featuring String Infusion, Belle Voci (opera duo), Charlie Green (vocals), David Lane (piano) & the Darby Singers, Sun 26 May, Weston Park, Weston-under-Lizard, Staffs

Comedy

BILL BAILEY Tues 21 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BILL BAILEY Thurs 23 May, Arena Birmingham

AL MURRAY Thurs 23 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SCOTT CAPURRO & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 23 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

SARAH KENDALL & MICHAEL LEGGE Thurs 23 May, Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham

ANGELA BARNES Fri 24 May, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

BARBARA NICE & LADS Fri 24 May, The REP, Birmingham

SCOTT CAPURRO, JOJO SMITH, CRAIG HILL & ALISTAIR WILLIAMS Fri 24 - Sat 25 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SUKH OJLA & BRYONY TWYDLE Sat 25 May, The REP, Birmingham

SOL BERNSTEIN, JOEY PAGE, MIKE NEWALL & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 25 May, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

WILL E, JUNIOR BOOKER, MARLON DAVIS & KANE BROWN Sat 25 May, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 25 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

STEWART FRANCIS Sun 26 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE COMEDY ROAST - SANDRA MARTIN FEATURING KANE BROWN, DIZZLE, ESTHERMANITO, AURIE STYLA & MR CEE Sun 26 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

Theatre

WALLACE & GROMIT'S MUSICAL MARVELS Interactive experience followed by a screening of the Oscar-winning Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers', with the soundtrack being performed by the orchestra, Mon 20 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ROTTERDAM Jon Brittain's bittersweet comedy about gender, sexuality and being a long way from home, Mon 20 - Wed 22 May, The REP, B'ham

LES MUSICALS Jonathan Ansell (G4) & Jai McDowall (Britain's Got Talent) join forces to create a celebration of musical theatre, Tues 21 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THEATRE SUPPER: FOR THOSE WHO MISSED IT THE FIRST TIME See new theatre work and enjoy a meal and drink for just £10, Tues 21 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

RUNNING BETWEEN THE LINES Central Youth Theatre perform a play about love, grief and learning how to move on, Tues 21 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

ANIMAL FARM Grand Arena Youth Theatre present an amateur staging of George Orwell's classic tale, Tues 21 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ERIC'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY We know he doesn't look a day over 19, but the rumours *are* true… Eric is turning

20! To celebrate, he's throwing one huge party and everyone's invited!, Tues 21 - Sat 25 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

MOTOWN THE MUSICAL Hit West Ender telling the story of Berry Gourdy, the legend behind the Motown record label, Tues 21 May - Sat 1 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE TOMMY COOPER STORY Complete with live musical accompaniment, this critically acclaimed tribute delivers plenty of magic and mirth, Wed 22 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Follow Sherlock Holmes and his incomparable sidekick, Dr Jane Watson, on their journey through the streets of London to the Devonshire Moors as they attempt to solve the mystery of the monstrous hound, Fri 24 May, Lichfield Garrick

FOOTLOOSE Curtain Call Theatre Company present an amateur staging of the 'explosive' rock'n'roll musical based on the 1980s hit film of the same name, Fri 24 - Sat 25 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BIN AND GONE One-man show telling the story of 3-2-1 host Ted Rogers, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

VENICE PRESERVED Fast-paced version of Thomas Otway's restoration tragedy, Fri 24 May - Sat 7 Sept, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

END THE SILENCE Agape Theatre Company examines the intoxicating effect of power, Sat 25 - Sun 26 May, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Cabaret

DREAMBOYS 'The UK's most famous girls' night out', Wed 22 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Kids Shows

PETER PAN THE MUSICAL Amateur staging presented by Five Towns Theatre, Wed 22 - Sat 25 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WORST WITCH Major new show bringing Jill Murphy's much-loved characters to the stage, Wed 22 - Sun 26 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

BEDTIME STORIES Series of scenes, loosely connected by place, time and 'a most unusual radio broadcast', that follows the interwoven lives of various characters on a single evening. Thurs 23 - Sat 25 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY Featuring singalong songs and colourful animal characters, Sat 25 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE FLYING BATH Little Angel Theatre bring Julia Donaldson's book to life, Sat 25 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

MISCHIEF & MYSTERY IN MOOMIN VALLEY Storytelling experience for younger audiences in which Lost & Found Theatre Company fuse puppetry, original music & interactive play, Sat 25 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

Dance

BLACK COUNTRY DANCE HUB TRIPLE BILL Mon 20 May, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

THE BALLROOM BOYS Strictly favourites Iain Waite & Vincent Simone join forces in a brand new show, Mon 20 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROSIE KAY: 10 SOLDIERS Portrait of army life told through dance-theatre, Tues 21 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

PETER AND THE WOLF Birmingham Royal Ballet presents a brand new staging of Prokofiev's classic tale. Poet Hollie McNish narrates, Tues 21 - Wed 22 May, Malvern Theatres

BALLET BLACK The popular dance troupe return with a showcase of modern ballets, Thurs 23 - Fri 24 May, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

PETER AND THE WOLF Birmingham Royal Ballet presents a brand new staging of Prokofiev's classic tale. Poet Hollie McNish narrates, Fri 24 - Sat 25 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Talks

DAVID GOWER An evening of anecdotes and chat with the Sky Sports presenter and former England cricket captain, Wed 22 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE The performance poet brings his Luckiest Guy Alive tour to the Midlands, Thurs 23 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MARK BEAUMONT - AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS Film & photography combine to provide an insight into Mark's career, Fri 24 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LUCY WORSLEY: QUEEN VICTORIA - DAUGHTER, WIFE, MOTHER, WIDOW... Join Lucy for an illustrated talk about the life, the palaces and the rich colourful age of Queen Victoria, Sun 26 May, Birmingham Town Hall

Festivals

BEARDED THEORY Line-up features The Cult, Suede, Doves and Stiff Little Fingers, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 May, Catton Hall, Derbyshire

STAFFS FEST Line-up features Pig Man & The Rubber Band, Kioko, Juniper Wolf and Cutch-I, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May, Lower Drayton Farm

MELLO Line-up features Brand New Heavies, Craig Charles, Incognito and The Wonder Stuff, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May, Severn End Country Estate, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire

DOT TO DOT FESTIVAL Line-up features Crystal Fighters, Jordan Rakei, Swim Deep and The Night Cafe, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May, various locations around Nottingham

CHESTER FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up features Blackbeard's Tea Party, The Askew Sisters, Crows, Belshazzar's Feast, Fri 24 - Mon 27 May, Kelsall, near Chester

HOWTHELIGHTGETSIN Line-up features Anna Calvi, Donovan, British Sea Power and Zero 7, Fri 24 - Mon 27 May, Hay-On-Wye

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE Line-up features Years & Years, Kate Nash, Marc Almond, The Human League, Sat 25 - Sun 26 May, Birmingham Gay Village

ROCK AND BOWL Line-up features The Stones, Mercury, Re-Take That and Guns 2 Roses, Sat 25 - Mon 27 May, Market Drayton, Shropshire

Events

MAY TILE DECORATING Create your own superbug-themed designs at family drop-in tile-decorating workshops on weekdays over the half-term break, Fri 24 May, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

CASTLE CAPERS EVENING Family-themed evening where visitors can learn about the history of the castle, take part in ghost & history walks, and try on arms & armour, Fri 24 May, Dudley Zoological Gardens

BENNETTS BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP Featuring familiar faces, big-name superstars and young guns battling it out for the title, Fri 24 - Sun 26 May, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

ATTINGHAM CAMP 2019 A 'one-night, fun-filled camping spectacular', Sat 25 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

WOMEN'S WORK IN THE JEWELLERY QUARTER A tour explaining the type of work undertaken by women from the late 1800s until the 1980s, Sat 25 May, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

INTERNATIONAL MARQUETRY EXHIBITION Featuring 200 examples of contemporary marquetry including the work of top golfer, Tony Jacklin CBE, Sat 25 - Thurs 30 May, Middleton Hall, Nr Tamworth

NIMROD TOURS Step on board the Nimrod XV249 and learn about its intelligence-gathering role in the Royal Air Force, Sat 25 May - Sun 2 June, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

FREDDO'S TREASURE TROVE Cadbury's Freddo dons his captain's hat to teach little ones what it takes to become a pirate on the seven seas, Sat 25 May - Sun 2 June, Cadbury World, Birmingham

FIRST WORLD WAR HALF TERM Insight into life as a pilot in the RAF during the First World War, with a chance to get a closer look inside the Sopwith Pup, Sat 25 May - Sun 2 June, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

LEGO CITY Explore what a city of the future would look like, Sat 25 May - Sun 1 Sept, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

SHREWSBURY WACKY RACES Racers hurtle along a custom-made route in carefully crafted carts, Sun 26 May, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

EASTNOR STEAM & VINTAGE Featuring steam engines, a tea tent, giant garden games, model steam engine rides, a vintage carousel, a chair swing and more, Sun 26 - Mon 27 May, Eastnor Castle, Ledbury

MAY DAY REVELS Sun 26 - Mon 27 May, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

1940S WEEKEND Featuring hundreds of reenactors dressed in 1940s uniforms and civilian dress, Sun 26 - Mon 27 May, Tutbury Castle, Burton-on-Trent

Foodie Events

MAC GIN & JAZZ CLUB Start your weekend off the right way - with a gin cocktail in hand, listening to 'the best live jazz around', Fri 24 May, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

DINING CRUISE - FISH & CHIP SUPPER Jump on board the newest narrowboat for a dining cruise around the local area, Sat 25 May, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

THE COCKTAIL EXPRESS The Severn Valley Railway in partnership with Nickolls & Perks welcomes visitors aboard the Cocktail Express, Sat 25 - Sun 26 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

thelist



Cara Dillon - Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

Gigs

THE MUFFIN MEN Mon 27 May, The Robin, Bilston

HUGH JACKMAN: THE MAN. THE MUSIC. THE SHOW. Mon 27 - Tues 28 May, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

LITTLE MIX EXPERIENCE Tues 28 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

YOLA Tues 28 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

20 GUILDERS Tues 28 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SAM DRAISEY AND THE REVOLT Wed 29 May, The Robin, Bilston

GAZ COOMBES Wed 29 May, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

KIP MOORE Wed 29 May, Birmingham Town Hall

KYLA BROX BAND Wed 29 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE MEAT LOAF STORY Thurs 30 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

MARK KNOPFLER Thurs 30 May, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

MAREN MORRIS: GIRL THE WORLD TOUR 2019 Thurs 30 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CARA DILLON Thurs 30 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek

GIO SPANO Thurs 30 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE ALLERGIES FT. ANDY COOPER Thurs 30 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PUNCH THE SKY + BLACKBEARD'S TEA PARTY Thurs 30 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

IAN PARKER AND HIS BAND Thurs 30 May, The Robin, Bilston

HIPSWAY Fri 31 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

HEAVY RAPIDS Fri 31 May, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

FRED ZEPPLIN Fri 31 May, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE DOORS ALIVE Fri 31 May, The Robin, Bilston

SHOP FRONT HEROES SUPPORT FIGHT THE BEAR Fri 31 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA Fri 31 May, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

REMI HARRIS Fri 31 May, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

FASTLOVE - GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE Fri 31 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE SKA45'S Fri 31 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

GOV'T MULE Fri 31 May, Birmingham Town Hall

SUBVERT PRESENTS DRUMSOUND & BASSLINE SMITH – 20 YEARS OF TECHNIQUE Fri 31 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury



Yola - Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

Classical Music

CATHEDRAL CLASSICS: AFTERNOON RECITAL Mon 27 May, Lichfield Cathedral

CBSO: BRAHMS' SYMPHONY NO.2 Featuring Mirga Gražinyte-Tyla (conductor), Programme includes works by Honegger, Ravel & Brahms, Fri 31 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

ANGELA BARNES Wed 29 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CARL DONNELLY, THE RAYMOND AND MR TIMPKINS REVUE & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 30 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

DARREN HARRIOTT & ROB KEMP Thurs 30 May, Midlands Art Centre, B'ham

SOFIE HAGEN Fri 31 May, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

KAREN BAYLEY, MICHAEL FABBRI & GERRY K (PICTURED) Fri 31 May, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton



CARL DONNELLY, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN, THE RAYMOND AND MR TIMPKINS REVUE & DAISY EARL Fri 31 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

MRS KAPOOR'S DAUGHTER'S WEDDING Bollywood comedy & dance production featuring YouTuber and BBC sensation Parle Patel, Mon 27 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN Adapted from Paula Hawkins' bestselling novel and starring Samantha Womack, Mon 27 May - Sat 1 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL Musical parody featuring a host of one-liners about hot flushes, memory loss and pop classics. Cheryl Fergison, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley & Hilary O'Neil star, Tues 28 May, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

ORLANDO Dyad Productions explores 'what it means to find our place in the world whilst remaining utterly true to who we are', Tues 28 - Wed 29 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



ROCK OF AGES Smash-hit musical featuring 25-plus classic rock anthems. Zoe Birkett, Kevin Kennedy & Antony Costa star, Tues 28 May - Sat 1 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CALENDAR GIRLS THE MUSICAL Tim Firth & Gary Barlow's award-winning production, Tues 28 May - Sat 8 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Ever-popular production fusing comedy and music from the '50s to the '70s, Wed 29 May, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN Based on the bestselling novel by Louis de Berniéres that inspired the hit film of the same name, Wed 29 May - Sat 15 June, The REP, Birmingham

BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS Starcross Youth Theatre present an amateur staging of the Dennis Potter classic, Fri 31 May - Sat 1 June, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE WORST LITTLE WAREHOUSE IN LONDON A 'mind-bogglingly funny story of companionship, shared accommodation, and how to grit your teeth and bare it', Fri 31 May - Sat 1 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows

THE JUNGLE BOOK A classic tale with brand new songs, creative staging and 'bags full of fun', Mon 27 May, The Old Rep, Birmingham

THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO Immersion Theatre present a brand new larger-than-life musical adaptation of the much-loved classic, Wed 29 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ALIENS LOVE UNDERPANTS Expect madcap action, original music and plenty of laughs, Thurs 30 May, Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford, Shropshire

DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE Interactive show for all the family, Thurs 30 - Fri 31 May, Lichfield Garrick

Cabaret

JULIAN CLARY - BORN TO MINCE Outrageously camp new show in which the prince of innuendo bares his soul in the interests of light entertainment, Fri 31 May, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Dance

GISELLE Romantic ballet presented by Vienna Festival Ballet, Wed 29 May, Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Telford

AUTIN DANCE THEATRE: DYSTOPIA Thought-provoking dance theatre duet looking at the human need for connection and belonging, Fri 31 May, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

MISSING LINK (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Hugh Jackman, Zach Galifianakis. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sat 25 - Fri 31 May

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN (15) Biography/Musical. Starring Hugh Jackman, Michelle Williams. Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, South Shropshire, Mon 27 May

BILLY ELLIOTT (15) Drama/Music. Starring Jamie Bell, Julie Walters. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 28 May

DUMBO (U) Family/Fantasy. Starring Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 28 & Thurs 30 May

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Margot Robbie. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 31 May

Events

UNICORN PONY RIDES Unicorn-themed pony rides through the enchanted woodland in the grounds of the beautiful Arboretum, plus unicorn treats at the Unicorn Bar, Mon 27 May, Arley Arboretum, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

WATT 2019: SOHO STEAM FAIR Watch a working traction engine in full steam and take a ride on a miniature steam locomotive, Mon 27 May, Soho House, Birmingham

MAY TILE DECORATING Create your own superbug-themed designs at family drop-in tile-decorating workshops on weekdays over the half-term break, Mon 27 - Fri 31 May, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

POETS AND STORY TELLERS ASSEMBLE An evening of poetry, storytelling and spoken word, presented by 'the best the Black Country has to offer', Tues 28 May, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

ANIMAL MASKS CRAFT ACTIVITY AT BLAKESLEY HALL Choose an animal mask or create your own, then colour and decorate it with a heap of craft materials, Tues 28 May, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

DEER PARK SAFARI Find out all about Attingham's deer and take a seat on a tractor & trailer safari ride to see if you can spot them, Tues 28 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

PETER RABBIT STORY TIME Special storytelling event with Beatrix Potter's most famous character, Wed 29 May, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

ANIMAL MANIA Featuring around eight to 12 small animals that children can see and interact with in slots of 30 minutes, Wed 29 May, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

FAMILY WILDLIFE DAY Including a guided tractor & trailer ride around the Deer Park and a woodland walk



Calendar Girls - Birmingham Hippodrome



Vienna Festival Ballet: Giselle

Oakengates Theatre @ The Place, Telford, Shropshire, Wed 29 May

Founded in 1980 by celebrated Austrian dancer Peter Malleck, the now-UK-based Vienna Festival Ballet presents a repertoire which comprises both full-length classics and new commissions. Touring extensively for two-thirds of the year, the company this month visits the Midlands with its production of Giselle, a surreal ballet which tells the story of a girl who kills herself when she finds out that her suitor, Loys, has kept his real identity from her - pretending to be a peasant when actually he's a member of the aristocracy. Loys, whose real name is Albrecht, and another suitor, Hilarion, who had jealously told Giselle of Albrecht's deception, visit Giselle's unconsecrated grave. There, they find themselves in all manner of trouble due to the presence of the Wilis - ghosts of girls jilted by their lovers. It falls to the spirit of Giselle to try and save her suitors from beyond the grave...

off the beaten path, Wed 29 May, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

ENCHANTED FOREST Featuring arts & crafts, a fairy dell, a fairy school, wand & wing making, wish lessons, a minibeast hunt & woodland creature care, Wed 29 May, Museum of Cannock Chase

LITTLE SKIPPERS - BOSTIN BLACK COUNTRY A morning of Black Country-themed activities, Wed 29 - Thurs 30 May, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

FAMILY FUN DAY Featuring a guided tour of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory and a craft activity in the Education Space, Thurs 30 May, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

ANIMAL FINGER PUPPETS CRAFT ACTIVITY Make your own finger-sized animals, add some tails, horns or stripes, and make a theatre for a finger-animal performance, Thurs 30 May, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

COMIC CON Drop-in art & craft activities celebrating all things superhero, sci-fi & film, Thurs 30 May, Museum of Cannock Chase

ATTINGHAM UNCOVERED Week-long live archaeological dig, Thurs 30 May - Thurs 6 June, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

PIRATES AND MERMAIDS NIGHT An evening of 'mer-mazing and swashbuckling fun, packed full of activities inspired by two of the most famous legends of the sea', Fri 31 May, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

UK GAMES EXPO Open to anyone of any age wanting to play, learn to play, buy, experience or know more about table-top games, Fri 31 May - Sun 2 June, NEC, Birmingham



ESL ONE BIRMINGHAM Three days of intense Dota 2 action, with participants battling it out for a share of the $300,000 prize pool, Fri 31 May - Sun 2 June, Arena Birmingham


Birmingham
Viva!
Magical Vegan Festival
Celebrating 25 years
SAT 18 MAY 2019
THE NEW BINGLEY HALL, 1 HOCKLEY CIRCUS B18 5PP
Amazing guests...
HEATHER MILLS, vegan athlete and entrepreneur
JULIET GELLATLEY, founder and director of Viva!
Harry Potter star EVANNA LYNCH
MATT PRITCHARD, author of Dirty Vegan and BBC cookery show host
Tickets: viva.org.uk/birmingham
EVERYONE WELCOME – ONLY £3, UNDER 16S FREE (TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE)
T: 0117 944 1000 W: viva.org.uk/birmingham BirminghamVivaVeganFestival Viva!


Lichfield Arts
Blues & Jazz
Festival 2019
Thursday 30th May to Sunday 2nd June
Lichfield Guildhall
Cathedral Hotel
and other Lichfield venues
SOFT MACHINE
Chris Bevington Organisation
Climax Blues Band
Remi Harris with Tom Moore
Alison Rayner Quintet
Nick Dewhurst Band with special guest Derek Nash
The Oxley-Meier Guitar Project
Steve 'Big Man' Clayton
Tom Hill's 70's Jazz Funk Machine
Fret and Fiddle
The Escape Committee
The Sleaze Brothers
South Staffordshire Youth Jazz Orchestra (East)
The Eagle Jazz Band
Robert Jackson
For all the latest festival information visit:
www.lichfield-jazz.co.uk
lichfieldarts.org.uk Box office: 01543 262225
Donegal House Bore Street Lichfield Staffordshire WS13 6LU info@lichfieldarts.org.uk


Burton Children's Festival
Saturday 25 May – Saturday 1 June 2019
25 May Festival Fun Day
10am - 4pm, The Brewhouse
25 May Mischief and Mystery in Moomin Valley
11am, 1.30pm & 4pm, The Brewhouse
26 May Barrel O' Fun: Aztecs, Incas & Mayans
10am - 3.30pm, Coopers Square Shopping Centre
26 May bDance Day
10am - 3.30pm, The Brewhouse
29 May Play in the Place
10am - 3.30pm, Burton Market Hall & Place
30 May Do Not Disturb: Craft Workshop
10am - 3.30pm, The Brewhouse
31 May Making Together: Family Clay Workshop
10am - 12.30pm & 1pm - 3.30pm, The Brewhouse
1 June Family Cinema: Nature Tales
1pm - 3pm, The Brewhouse
BARREL O' FUN
East Staffordshire Borough Council
The Brewhouse
For full listings
www.brewhouse.co.uk/childrens-festival
Kindly sponsored by Coopers Square Burton upon Trent

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE NEARLY A QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF CREATIVITY UNDER DAVID BINTLEY'S DIRECTORSHIP



brb.org.uk/whatson

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Birmingham City Council
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE

BIRMINGHAM pride

Supported by HSBC UK

SATURDAY 25TH MAY 2019

VIRGIN TRAINS MAIN STAGE

YEARS & YEARS

MABEL SIGALA MŸA KATE NASH

LADY LESHURR M.O ALICE CHATER

MIXMAG ARENA

- SATURDAY DAYTIME -

THE BLACK MADONNA PRESENTS
- WE STILL BELIEVE -

HORSE MEAT DISCO OCTO OCTA MOXIE HOOKER CLUB ADONIS

- SATURDAY NIGHTTIME -

SAM DIVINE

THE LOS ANGELES CABARET STAGE

THE VIVIENNE GALS ALOUD MISS PENNY THE VIXENS BAGA CHIPZ
SANDRA LOLA LASAGNE DRAG WITH NO NAME DIVINA DE CAMPO
TWIGGY MISS THUNDERPUSSY TANYA HYDE MARTHA D'ARTHUR
KY KELLY POPPY COCK HEARTS & SOULS

THE FUTURE STAGE WITH SPINDLE MAG

LEIKELI47 KAIIT QUAY DASH PAIGEY CAKEY MOHO
OJERIME LACEY LOU'S FEMME PALACE
LADY SANITY M-A.D UNPRONOUNCEABLE MIYAGI

LIP SYNC STAGE WOMEN'S ARENA
COMMUNITY STALLS
STREET FOOD PRIDE PARADE

SUNDAY 26TH MAY 2019

VIRGIN TRAINS MAIN STAGE

THE HUMAN LEAGUE

FAITHLESS DJ SET MARC ALMOND NAO
AJA ROGUE SYMPHONY
THE BIG GAY TIME PARTY FT.
5IVE & GLITTERSH*T

MIXMAG ARENA

HANNAH WANTS
MONKI
JAGUAR FLEUR SHORE LISA SHARRED
JORDANNA JADE MARIE
SOPHIA ESSÉL LAUREN GOULDER

THE LOS ANGELES CABARET STAGE

VICKY JACKSON AS PINK THE VIVIENNE MISS MARTY SANDRA
MARSHA MELLOW KELLY WILDE AMY LA QUEEFA
DAVE LYNN KARA VAN-PARK SHANIA PAIN
TOPSIE REDFERN SUM TING WONG GLITTER LIPS

THE FUTURE STAGE WITH SPINDLE MAG

RICO NASTY ASHNIKKO NAKHANE CALL ME LOOP
EMILY BURNS ABISHA ANDREA DI GIOVANNI
LUCY WHITTAKER UNPRONOUNCEABLE
THE CLAUSE SOPHIELOU DRAG PUNK

LIP SYNC STAGE WOMEN'S ARENA
STREET FOOD COMMUNITY STALLS

LOVE OUT LOUD

THE UK'S LARGEST 2-DAY LGBTQ+ FESTIVAL
TICKETS/INFO: BIRMINGHAMPRIDE.COM

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