

Shropshire

ISSUE 405 SEPTEMBER 2019

What's On

FILM | COMEDY | THEATRE | GIGS | VISUAL ARTS | EVENTS | FOOD shropshirewhatson.co.uk



The National Theatre's
Landmark Production Returns

J B PRIESTLEY'S
CLASSIC THRILLER

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

DIRECTED BY
STEPHEN DALDRY

DESIGNER IAN MACNEIL / LIGHTING DESIGNER RICK FISHER / MUSIC BY STEPHEN WARBECK / ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR JULIAN WEBBER

theatresevern SHREWSBURY

TUE 1 - SAT 5 OCT

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inside:

thelist

Your 16-page week
by week listings guide

STICK MAN

children's classic live on
stage at The Place in Telford



THE ELECTRO SWING CIRCUS

sassy six-piece at Albert's Shed



DELICIOUS DELIGHTS

the award-winning Ludlow Food
Festival celebrates 25 years



CURATED BY STEVEN KNIGHT, CREATOR AND WRITER OF PEAKY BLINDERS

TICKETS
ON SALE NOW



THE LEGITIMATE PEAKY BLINDERS FESTIVAL



2 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF LIVE MUSIC, IMMERSIVE SITE-WIDE THEATRE AND EXPERIENCES, A BESPOKE BALLET RAMBERT PERFORMANCE, POETRY, FASHION, STREET FOOD, POP UPS AND BARS. EXPECT 1919 TO COME CRASHING INTO 2019 AND, BE ASSURED, EVERYTHING IS OFFICIALLY BY ORDER OF THE PEAKY BLINDERS

SAT 14TH SEPTEMBER

12-11PM

SUN 15TH SEPTEMBER

PRIMAL SCREAM

HEADLINER TO BE ANNOUNCED

VERY SPECIAL SECRET SET

SLAVES

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PLUS MANY MORE ARTISTS, GUESTS AND SURPRISES TO BE ANNOUNCED

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Wunderbar! A taste of Germany at Shropshire's Oktoberfest

Shropshire Oktoberfest returns to Shrewsbury's Quarry Park early next month (Friday 4 & Saturday 5 October). Presented by the award-winning Shropshire Festivals team, the popular event features around 150 real ales, numerous bars serving lager, cider and perry, a prosecco parlour, gin den, wine bar, street food, live music, karaoke and comedy.

Commenting on the event, Shropshire Festival's founder, Beth Heath, said, "We're very excited to be bringing back Oktoberfest for a third year. We've been thrilled with the support for the event over the last two years, with people flocking to the Quarry for fun with friends, networking with a difference and group outings.

"This year's festival will be better than ever, and for the first time we will be holding a silent disco, which we hope will create a memorable, unique experience with plenty of laughs."

Fancy a beer or two...?

Summer is flying, autumn is here, head for the Guildhall and sample some beer! This year's Lichfield Arts Autumn Beer Festival, taking place on Friday 20 & Saturday 21 September, features 25-plus real ales - many of which have been sourced from local and regional breweries - plus a range of traditional ciders/perrys and specialist bottled beers... For full details and to check out which ales will be available at the Guildhall, visit lichfieldarts.org.uk



A double dose of cinema at RAF Museum Cosford

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is providing 'the ultimate outdoor cinema screening experience' this month when it presents two hit movies on a giant inflatable screen - and set against a backdrop of the venue's military aircraft!

The highest-grossing Star Wars film, *The Force Awakens*, will be screened on Friday 20 September, with iconic aviation movie *Top Gun* being shown the following night.

"Both movies are fitting for us as a venue," said Cosford's Public Events Manager, Abi

Betteridge. "Where else can you watch movies about flight surrounded by real military aircraft and get the chance to climb inside an aircraft to buy your popcorn?"

Arts Council funding for Creative Black Country

An award of £1,403,154 from Arts Council England's Creative People & Places programme will allow local initiative Creative Black Country (CBC) to expand its current activity into Dudley.

Creative Black Country aims to make the most of local talent by working with people 'to discover, explore and grow an exciting and meaningful programme of arts activity' in Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Commenting on the news, Parminder Dosanjh, Creative Director of CBC, said: "We are over the moon. Expanding to Dudley feels like a natural step; the prospect of working as a regional programme in the Black Country is hugely exciting, and we look forward to local residents benefitting from the investment."

Fall in love with Stoke

Two Staffordshire theatre makers are staging a new show that will ask its audience 'to fall in love with Stoke-on-Trent'.

Showing at Longton Central Methodist Hall from Wednesday 18 to Saturday 28 September, *Stoke: A Love Story* has been inspired by the city's history, 'from potbanks to mines, and from Northern Soul to '90s rave culture'.

The show is written and directed by Kat Hughes and Kat Boon, the latter of whom said: "We want to invite audiences to see the city they're used to in a different light, to rediscover it through this unusual, thrilling story. It's about the city's past but also about what the future might look like. It's a show for everyone and, told with a live band, it will be a fantastic and fun night out."

First look at Dudley's new £9.5million music institute

The first artist's impressions of the Black Country's new £9.5million music institute, Resonance, have been released.

Former office building Cable Plaza on The Waterfront at Brierley Hill is being given a complete facelift by Overbury, 'the UK's leading fit-out and refurbishment specialist'.

A one-of-a-kind institute for popular music in the Black Country, Resonance will offer degrees for students seeking careers in the music industry. The venue's co-director, David Barnard, said: "We will be providing first-class teaching to students who enrol at Resonance, and we need the building they study in to reflect that."



Julie Walters in Save Acorns Hospice appeal...

Smethwick-born Mamma Mia! favourite Dame Julie Walters DBE has joined fellow Midlands celebrities Jasper Carrott, Glynn Purnell and Tony Iommi in backing the Save Acorns Black Country Hospice Appeal, which aims to raise £2million.

Dame Julie has urged people across the Midlands to play their part in helping to save the Walsall hospice from closure. She said: "Children's hospices are incredible places that help families going through the toughest times. It's clear just how much Acorns in the Black Country means to all the families who depend on its services, and to the amazing staff and volunteers for whom it's not just a place of work but more like an extended family."



Having a laugh at Enginuity

Ironbridge Gorge's Enginuity visitor attraction plays host to a Comedy & Curry Night on Friday 6 September.

With curry, rice and naan available both before the show and during the first interval, the evening of entertainment features sets from Ian Stone - a regular guest on BBC Radio 5Live's Fighting Talk - musical comedian Kate Lucas, and Jonathan Elston, who combines sharp joke-telling with quirky observational humour.

Tickets for the event must be purchased in advance online at ironbridge.org.uk



Corrie star Ryan searching for streets paved with gold...

Former Coronation Street favourite Ryan Thomas will this Christmas star as Dick Whittington in Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's pantomime production.

Ryan, who played Jason Grimshaw in the long-running TV soap, joins Hi-De-Hi stars Su Pollard and Jeffrey Holland in a cast that also includes Grand Theatre panto favourites Ian Adams and Julie Paton.

"I am thrilled that Ryan is joining the Grand's

125th anniversary pantomime," said Adrian Jackson, the theatre's chief executive & artistic director. "He completes what is already an iconic line-up and what will be a truly magical production."

Dick Whittington runs at the Grand from Saturday 7 December to Sunday 12 January. Tickets can now be booked by calling 01902 42 92 12 or online at grandtheatre.co.uk

Film festival back in Telford

Telford's Film Festival is returning to screens around the borough this autumn.

A collaboration between Telford & Wrekin Council and Flatpack Projects, the event is part of Film Hub Midlands' mission to develop film culture across the region.

This year's festival features a wide selection of movies, including Bohemian Rhapsody, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Top Gun, Breakfast At Tiffany's, Greatest Showman Sing-Along and Mary Poppins Returns.

For dates and venues, visit ticketstelford.com

Midlands mental health festival returns to celebrate the arts and wellbeing

The fourth edition of Birmingham's Bedlam Arts & Mental Health Festival takes place next month (Tuesday 1 - Saturday 12 October).

Created with the aim of using the arts to increase awareness of mental health & wellbeing issues, the event showcases a selection of new and creative works performed across the city.

Included in the line-up are new commissions, a world premiere, works in progress, a half-day Symposium, and events featuring spoken word, dance, theatre, film, visual art and hip-hop... Further information and tickets are available at macbirmingham.co.uk and birmingham-rep.co.uk



First Word

A Knockout of a Shrewsbury show

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 this month.

Shrewsbury's *Finest Hour* is the work of Chris Eldon Lee, who's 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 from Wednesday 2 to Saturday 5 October.

Arts initiative awarded grant

A local consortium has been awarded a grant of £1,750,000 by Arts Council England's Creative People & Places programme.

The money will be used by the Appetite arts project to expand its work into Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Creative People & Places is about more people taking the lead in choosing, creating and taking part in arts experiences in the places where they live. Since 2013, Appetite has been getting more people in Stoke-on-Trent to experience and be inspired by the arts.

The new funding will enable the programme to expand its work into Newcastle-under-Lyme over a four-year period, beginning next month.

Wizard Express

There'll be ghostly goings-on and wizarding workshops at the Severn Valley Railway this October half term, when the railway welcomes back two hugely popular services - its Ghost Trains and Wizard Express.

For more information, visit svr.co.uk



Artwork created by artist Jamila Walker - jamilawalkerwebbeten.co.uk

Shrewsbury weekend of Fab Four fun

Beatlemania is set to sweep through Shrewsbury this month when the Shropshire town hosts three days of live music, guest speakers and film screenings dedicated to the Fab Four.

The Shrewsbury Beatles Weekend takes place from

Friday 20 to Sunday 22 September, with a Lunchtime Live at 'The Cavern' at the town's Buttermarket and a Beatles In Comics event with comic book curator, Tim Quinn, amongst the highlights.

For more information, visit shrewsburybeatles.com

A party in the park at Dudley venue

Dubs Collective, a facebook group for all types of VW vehicles and VW groups, is returning to Dudley's Himley Hall with its Party In The Park festival this month.

Taking place from Friday 20 to Sunday 22 September, the event features show'n'shine competitions, family entertainment, a host of traders and an '80s-themed music line-up.

Among the performers contributing this year are Jaki Graham, Toyah, The Christians, Neville Staple Band, Altered Images, Hazell Dean and Curiosity Killed The Cat. For more information, visit dubscollective.com



Ironbridge festival promising a feast for the Imagination

The story of Ironbridge Gorge - the West Midlands' only UNESCO World Heritage Site - will be told and celebrated in a two-week festival this autumn.

Taking place from Saturday 14 to Sunday 29 September and expected to attract up to 12,000 people, the Festival Of Imagination will feature a 'fantastic fiesta' of arts, crafts, culture, virtual reality, music, film, poetry, family-friendly events and food & drink.

Talking about the event, Telford & Wrekin Council's Carolyn Healy said: "It was imagination and bravery that built the Iron Bridge, saw the birth of industry and is responsible for a lot of the technological advances we see today.

"We want to show how that very same thinking and attitude in the Gorge is also changing the present and the future."

Canal competition

A photography competition has been launched to mark the 250th birthday of Birmingham's canals. Canal River Trust is inviting amateur photographers to capture the unique beauty of the Birmingham Canal Navigations in both the city and the Black Country.

The photos can show anything that's linked to the area's canals, such as colourful boats, historic canal architecture or people enjoying spending time on the waterways.

The competition is open to all ages and closes on 3 October.

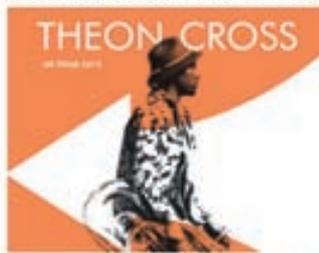
For more information, visit canalrivertrust.org.uk

Crafty country fair

The 2019 edition of the long-established Whittington Craft & Country Fair takes place on Saturday 7 September.

Attractions at this year's show include a selection of artisan arts & crafts stalls, a home-grown fruit & vegetable produce show, flower arranging and cake baking competitions, the always-popular dog show, displays of classic cars and a range of children's activities and entertainments.

For more information, visit the event's Facebook page.



THEON CROSS
 FRI 20 SEPTEMBER
 7PM
HARE & HOUNDS



**REAL LIFE PARENTING:
 THE GOOD, THE BAD
 AND THE FUNNY**
 SAT 12 OCTOBER
 2PM
TOWN HALL



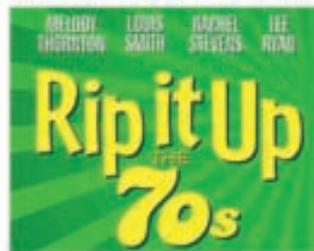
**BRADLEY WIGGINS:
 AN EVENING WITH**
 FRI 20 SEPTEMBER
 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**NADIYA HUSSAIN:
 FINDING MY VOICE**
 TUE 15 OCTOBER
 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



PENGUIN CAFE
 SAT 28 SEPTEMBER
 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



RIP IT UP: THE 70S
 SAT 19 OCTOBER
 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL



**HAPPY MUM, HAPPY
 BABY: LIVE**
 SUN 29 SEPTEMBER
 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



**OUT OF THE
 ASHES: A BRAND
 NEW EVENING
 WITH BOYCOTT &
 AGGERS**
 SUN 20 OCTOBER
 8PM
SYMPHONY HALL



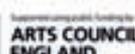
LULU - ON FIRE
 TUE 1 OCTOBER
 7:30PM
TOWN HALL



**REUBEN JAMES
 TRIO**
 SUN 17 NOVEMBER
 8PM
SYMPHONY HALL STAGE

BOOK ONLINE thsh.co.uk

Funded by



Town Hall renovation also funded by



BALLETBOYZ

All-male troupe bring innovative
double-bill to Theatre Severn



Award-winning dance ensemble BalletBoyz bring their production, Them/Us, to the Midlands this month. What's On caught up with long-serving dancer Harry Price to talk about the show and the company's approach to classical dance...

Co-founded by ex-Royal Ballet dancers Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, BalletBoyz burst onto the UK dance scene in the year 2000. The male-only group has since played an important role in revolutionising classical dance by focusing much more on its fusion with the contemporary.

Their contribution hasn't gone unnoticed either, with numerous coveted awards coming their way, including the National Dance Award for Best Independent Company in 2013.

"I'd dreamed of being in BalletBoyz ever since I was in training," says Harry Price, a dancer approaching his fifth season of working with the ensemble. "It's a company I always aspired to be a part of, so I was thrilled when I got the job. Since then, BalletBoyz has continued to captivate me because we're constantly evolving and changing. We create a lot of original work, collaborate with different musicians and artists, and work with new choreographers. We have such a wide span across the arts industry, meaning that as dancers we're given amazing opportunities. This year we even performed at Glastonbury! Plus, we've done the West End and Edinburgh Fringe."

Harry believes it's the ability of BalletBoyz to evolve that's the key to the company's success: "We're constantly pushing the boundaries and aiming to take a fresh approach to contemporary ballet. BalletBoyz is always committed to doing something new and is constantly adapting to do so. In that way, I think we're keeping ballet very relevant. Regular audience members say that they always know our show will be great, but they never know quite what to expect. It's a good thing that we're consistently surprising audiences and expanding our horizons."

BalletBoyz's latest production is a double-bill entitled Them/Us.

"The first half, Them, was actually created by us, the dancers - we worked together to come up with the piece. We've got a real sense of ownership of it, which is really lovely. It's a really fun piece, and because we've created it,

it seems to have all of our different personalities shining through in there. Charlotte Harding, who created our accompanying score, was actually in the studio with us while we were choreographing, so it was a really collaborative process. And I think that's very evident in terms of how well the movement of the dance and the music marry. We're also wearing lovely shiny '90s tracksuits, which is fun to see!

"The second half, Us, is by Chris Wheeldon. He's predominantly known as a classical ballet choreographer, so there's a real contrast in style. Our half is a lot more contemporary and Chris's is a lot more traditional, with more classical elements, but obviously still with that contemporary edge BalletBoyz is known for. The Us piece concludes with a duet that was choreographed for us by Chris back in 2017. So for this production, we extended the duet into a full-group piece. It's been really nice to return to and revitalise something we'd already done."

Them/Us is about relationships forming and breaking on stage, particularly between groups and the individual.

"Like with all our shows, the story is very much open to audience interpretation. The show is just as much for them as it is for us. A BalletBoyz production is really about what each individual takes away from it. I guess the title of Them/Us alludes to the contrast of the two pieces, and the fact that they're choreographed by different creatives. A lot of people have said that, in Us in particular, there's this idea of the outsider character, and of exploring what it means to be part of a group or to be excluded from it. That's definitely a theme that runs through both pieces."

Harry believes Artistic Directors Michael Nunn and William Trevitt have had an in-company piece in their sights for a number of years: "I think it was just a case of waiting for the right timing and the right group of dancers. They obviously thought it was a great time to go for it. They've seen that when we do work with choreographers we take a

very creative stance. It's always a risk, though, because in-company creations have a history of not working so well. But I think this one's worked out!"

BalletBoyz prides itself on its mix of dancers: "We're all so different, with such different personalities and backgrounds. Some of us are trained in classical dance, others more in contemporary, and some didn't start dancing until much later in life than you might expect of a professional dancer. It's for those reasons that we all have such different visions, making the company so successful and the creation of Them sometimes a little problematic. But we're all very close and incredibly proud of how the piece turned out."

Even when working with renowned choreographers such as Christopher Wheeldon, Javier de Frutos and Craig Revel Horwood, the BalletBoyz dancers are able to get creative: "Working with Christopher was like a dream come true. I was trained classically so was very aware of his work. That's another thing I love about BalletBoyz - our approach to working with big-name choreographers is very collaborative. I've never worked with a choreographer at BalletBoyz who's had no room for movement; it's always a conversation, with free rein to put ourselves into the piece."

Harry hopes that contemporary ballet companies such as BalletBoyz are able to encourage more people to attend ballet performances: "BalletBoyz prides itself on being very accessible. We've had people who've never seen ballet before give very positive feedback after our shows - even those who were sure they wouldn't like it. One of the company's main goals is to create dance that's for everyone, so we definitely banish those misconceptions of ballet being stuffy. So I would encourage anyone who's worried about not liking traditional ballet to push that from their minds and come to see BalletBoyz!"



Them/Us shows at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Saturday 14 September

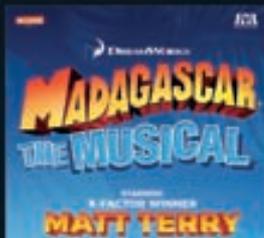
WORLD CLASS ENTERTAINMENT



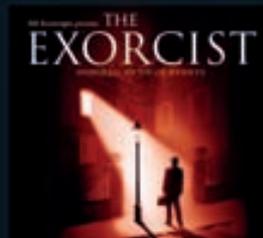
SU POLLARD STARS IN
HOT FLUSH
TUE 17 SEP
REGENT THEATRE



DIRECT FROM LAS VEGAS
FRANKLY SINATRA
THU 19 SEP
REGENT THEATRE



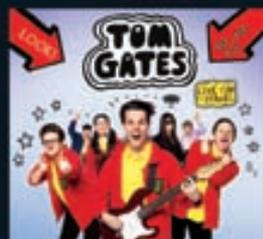
BASED ON THE SMASH HIT
DREAMWORKS FILM
**MADAGASCAR
THE MUSICAL**
WED 25 - SUN 29 SEP
REGENT THEATRE



FRESH FROM THE WEST END
THE EXORCIST
TUE 1 - SAT 5 OCT
REGENT THEATRE



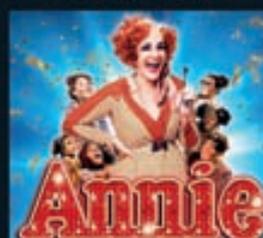
SING-A-LONG-A
**THE GREATEST
SHOWMAN**
SUN 20 OCT
REGENT THEATRE



BASED ON THE BESTSELLING
BOOKS BY LIZ PICHON
**TOM GATES
LIVE ON STAGE**
WED 30 OCT - SAT 2 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



FOLLOWING 30 YEARS
IN THE WEST END
THE WOMAN IN BLACK
TUE 5 - SAT 9 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



LESLEY JOSEPH AS
MISS HANNIGAN IN
ANNIE
MON 18 - SAT 23 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY
SPECIAL OF
**THE AUSTRALIAN
PINK FLOYD**
WED 27 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



CELEBRATE THE MUSIC OF THE
ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA IN
THE ELO EXPERIENCE
THU 28 NOV
REGENT THEATRE

HELLO AGAIN... THE STORY OF
NEIL DIAMOND
FRI 27 SEP **VH**

ABBA MANIA
SAT 5 OCT **VH**

AN EVENING WITH HARRY REDKNAPP
SUN 6 OCT **VH**

ALED JONES & RUSSELL WATSON
FRI 11 OCT **VH**

THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA
TUE 15 & WED 16 OCT **VH**

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK -
THE ROD STEWART STORY
THU 17 OCT **VH**

T.REXTASY
FRI 18 OCT **VH**

RUSSELL KANE - THE FAST AND THE CURIOUS
THU 24 OCT **VH**

RV REGENT THEATRE
VICTORIA HALL
STOKE-ON-TRENT

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REVIEW: The Lewisham An above-par dining experience at Black Country golf course

Dartmouth Golf Course - and more specifically for our purposes, its stylish 60-cover bar & restaurant, The Lewisham - is located, perhaps rather unusually, at the back of a housing estate near the town centre in West Bromwich.

The golf course - boasting the longest opening hole in Europe and the longest par-five hole in the UK - was named after the man who opened it in 1903, Lord Lewisham. Its restaurant was previously a members-only club, but in recent months the building has been tastefully renovated to create a stunning public eatery which not only overlooks the golf course but also affords panoramic views of Sandwell Valley.

The décor is warm, welcoming and contemporary while at the same time in keeping with the golf course. It has the ability to

draw the outside in, and in doing so creates a bright and beautiful space where you would be happy to enjoy a relaxing meal with friends and family or a few drinks and a light bite after a round of golf.

My husband and I visited on a Friday lunchtime, and although it wasn't bustling, there were several groups of people already enjoying the food when we arrived. It took a little time for a staff member to be located on our arrival, but once we'd been shown to our table, our server was nothing short of a delight - attentive, informative and friendly.

The seasonal and gastro-style British menu has been conceived by Head Chef Steve Edrop, who sources the produce locally, with some ingredients even being grown on-site. The reasonably priced à la carte menu is fairly

concise but has plenty of variety. There's also an extensive drinks menu, including delicious cocktails such as the one I opted for, Rhubarb Sour.

For starters, I chose the goat's cheese bon bons while my partner had the spicy BBQ chicken wings. The bon bons, packed to the brim with cheese and deep-fried with a light smattering of breadcrumbs, were served with a sweet cranberry & red onion marmalade. Close your eyes to savour the first mouthful and you instantly know that you're onto a winner!

Whilst the chicken wings were incredibly tasty, boasting a real depth of flavour, there was very little of the promised heat. A small bowl of water or a lemon wipe would also have been good, in anticipation of the sticky mess that eating wings brings with it! I opted for the cornfed chicken

supreme for my main course; my partner chose the lamb shank. The presentation of both dishes made us want to dig in straight away, although this did mean me destroying a piece of art!

My chicken dish was very nice, but I felt the smoked Applewood cheese and white wine sauce was fairly bland and needed more seasoning. The fondant potato was perfectly cooked and the carrot puree as smooth as you like. It was a little on the thin side and a tad watery due to the wilted spinach plated up next to it, but overall it was extremely well executed.

My partner found no fault whatsoever with his lamb shank, the meat falling off the bone and being beautifully complemented by a stunning lamb mint jus.

Of course, we managed to save a little room for dessert, so I had the 'panna cotta of the day', which was mango, and my partner chose the chocolate brownie.

My dessert was to die for - rich, creamy and accompanied by fresh raspberries and blackberries. The chocolate brownie was dense yet slightly gooey and served with vanilla ice cream - what's not to like?!

With just a couple of tiny tweaks, The Lewisham could be the ultimate foodie destination in the area. Although not massively local to us, we certainly wouldn't hesitate to return - especially once they start serving, as promised, breakfasts and afternoon teas as well!

Jenny Ell

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
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Cannock's beer festival back for a sixth year

The sixth Cannock Chase CAMRA Beer Festival takes place from Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 September at the town's Prince of Wales Theatre.

The popular event this year features 63 ales, 20 ciders, bottled beers from around the world and the Gin Bar, boasting 25 different varieties.

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

Sausage & cider fest coming to Shrewsbury

The Sausage And Cider Festival is bringing its UK tour to The Buttermarket in Shrewsbury on Saturday 28 September.

Featuring live bands, DJs, craft beers, a gin bar, a prosecco bar, eating games and, of course, plenty of sausage and cider, the event's admission prices start at £10, with tickets available at sausageandciderfest.co.uk/shrewsbury

Popular gastronomic gathering returns

Staffordshire's biggest gastronomic gathering, the Stone Food & Drink Festival, is this year taking place from 4 to 6 October.

The 2019 edition of the event features the finest artisan produce, live cookery demonstrations, numerous talks, tastings & masterclasses, a variety of street food, plenty of family fun, live music from local bands & tribute acts, and licensed bars.



Ludlow's food festival celebrates its 25th anniversary

Returning to the stunning grounds of the town's castle, Ludlow Food Festival is this year celebrating its 25th anniversary. Taking place from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 September, the much-loved annual event boasts 180-plus local food & drink producers & suppliers and three main stages hosting more than 40 hours of chef demonstrations.

The 2019 line-up of experts includes superstar chef and meat fanatic Gareth Ward - from Michelin-starred and 5-AA Rosette-winning Ynyshir Restaurant & Rooms - baking expert and TV cook & food stylist Juliet Sear, and 2012's GBBO winner, John Whaite, who will be sharing inspiration from his latest cookery book, *A Flash In The Pan*.

Tamworth family-friendly food festival back for a fifth year

Tamworth's popular Food Gusto Festival returns with a weekend's-worth of fine food, delicious drink and family-friendly fun on Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 September. Tasty treats on offer at the event include pies, sausages, organic meat, handmade cheeses, pickles, patés, olives, chocolates and honey. There are cooking demonstrations to enjoy too, as well as live music, fairground rides and craft activities. Entry to the festival arena is £2 per adult. Kids under 10 years of age get free admission.





BRADLEY WIGGINS

The five-time Olympic gold medal winner cycles into Brum...

The most decorated Olympic athlete in British sporting history and the first Brit ever to win the Tour de France, Sir Bradley Wiggins is heading out on an altogether different kind of tour this month. Neill Barston caught up with the five-time Olympic gold medal winner ahead of his visit to Birmingham, where he'll be talking about his life and career in his show, **Bradley Wiggins: An Evening With...**

Covering this year's Tour de France as a commentator proved to be a highly memorable experience for five-time Olympic gold medal winner Sir Bradley Wiggins.

"Covering the tour made me realise just how much I love it," says Sir Bradley. "When you're competing, there's a lot of emotion taken up actually dealing with the event and getting over the line. It's hard to get excited at the end of a race, so watching it as a fan, without all the pressure, was great.

"Going back to the tour and seeing some of those climbs brought back memories of just how hard it is. While people can make it look easy, it really isn't - especially when you see guys getting taken out of the peloton and some of the crashes you witness. It can be brutal.

"But it was a brilliant event. Cycling is all that I've ever known, right back to my school days when I was focusing on my riding rather than all the lessons."

Despite Sir Bradley's love of the sport, quitting three years ago to fully focus on the challenges of raising a young family with his wife at their home in Lancashire was not a difficult decision to make.

While the celebrity status following his unprecedented back-to-back victories at the Tour de France and London Olympics in 2012 may not have sat entirely comfortably with him, the wider effect of 'Wiggo's win' was clearly tangible. Cycling in the UK enjoyed a significant resurgence that's shown no sign of subsiding.

The achievement led to his knighthood in 2013. Three years later, at the Rio Olympics, he won a final gold as part of the winning British team pursuit squad.

Sir Bradley is currently focusing on a number of projects, including sports broadcasting and his nationwide touring show, *Bradley Wiggins: An Evening With*. The show, which visits the Midlands this month, sees him reflecting on his lengthy career and discussing some of the personal heroes who feature in his latest book, *Icons*.

"I've been enjoying doing these shows, as I like to break down perceptions. I feel you never really know someone until you've heard their story properly.

"It gives me the chance to meet people, and I can particularly remember speaking to one guy in Nottingham. He said his wife would really have loved the show, but she hadn't made it as she'd just died of cancer. So I just told him that she was right there with him. So with this kind of show, people get to see your emotions, and I'm certainly looking forward to getting out there again."

Something else which Sir Bradley is focusing on is providing support for the next generation of potential cycling stars: "Cycling is a great and necessary force in my life and something I've been institutionalised in as well as passionate about. If there's a legacy from what I've done it's in terms of helping young people develop an interest in cycling and getting out there on their bikes.

"For many kids there's a lot that keeps them indoors on their iPads, so one of the great things about cycling is that it's something outdoors you can do as a family - you can't go out and play rugby as a family."

Sir Bradley was born in Ghent, Belgium, but his mother moved them to London after his father, who was also a cyclist, parted from the family. He had no involvement in his son's up-

bringing.

"In a weird way, my father is still my hero. I've kept two of his riding jerseys, even though I detested the man as he left us when I was just a baby. But my mum still glorified him, so if it hadn't been for her, I wouldn't have had my career."

As a 12-year-old, Sir Bradley took up cycling on the same south London circuit his dad had once ridden. But cycling was never going to help him fit in with the tough neighbourhood kids. He even resorted to wearing tracksuits over his riding gear for fear that he'd receive a barrage of homophobic abuse because of his clothing.

He earned his spurs in the early part of his career as a track specialist before turning to road racing: "I never found the process of going to road racing hard at all. I'm someone who can be coached, so it came easily to me. If it was a question of having to lose weight for the tour, then it was just something I did."

After coming fourth in the 2009 Tour de France, Sir Bradley started to be taken seriously as a road-based rider. But it wasn't until joining Team Sky in 2010 (recently re-named Ineos under new sponsors) that he embarked on his most impressive era of success.

"I know it means a lot to other people that I won the tour and Olympics in 2012, but I wouldn't be a very good person if those were the things that were the most important to me in my life."

.....
Bradley Wiggins: An Evening With is presented at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Friday 20 September.

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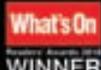
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Proms & Prosecco In The Park

Chetwynd Deer Park, Newport, Shropshire, Sat 14 September

Proms, prosecco and picnics - what's not to like about this relaxed annual get-together? This year's event features West End favourite Jon Moses, who'll be performing a repertoire of pop songs and musical theatre favourites before leading the audience in a flag-waving and unashamedly patriotic Last Night of the Proms-style finale.

Also contributing to six hours of musical entertainment are Brit Award nominees and stars of The Voice, Classical Reflection - consisting of identical 'mirror' twins Naomi and Hannah Moxon (pictured). Talented quartet Grazia Strings and Shropshire's very own 'swingtastic foursome', The Ronnies, also feature in this sure-to-be-lively farewell to summer.

A Child Of Our Time

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 26 September

CBSO Music Director Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (pictured below) kickstarts the orchestra's new season with a 20th century classic.

A strikingly original secular oratorio communicating a strong pacifist message, Michael Tippett's A Child Of Our Time was composed during the first two years of the Second World War.

The composer found his inspiration for the work in Kristallnacht - the Nazi government's pogrom against its Jewish population in 1938.

The CBSO concert also features Benjamin Britten's Sinfonia da Requiem.



The Sixteen: The Choral Pilgrimage

St Philips Cathedral, Birmingham, Thurs 19 September



The Sixteen were formed by conductor Harry Christophers 40 years ago with the aim of providing a fresh insight into Baroque, early classical and more contemporary music.

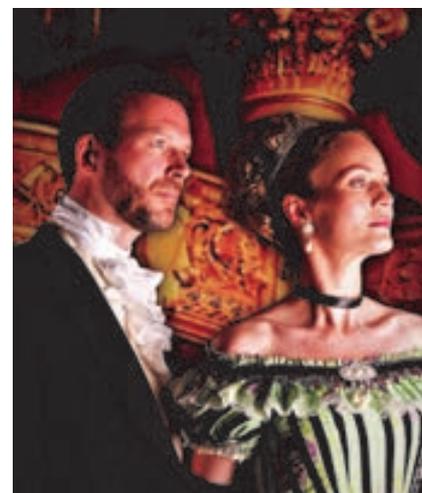
Recognised as one of the world's greatest ensembles, with over 100 recordings under their belt and numerous accolades to their name, they return to the Midlands this month to perform a concert featuring Sir James MacMillan's O virgo prudentissima. The piece is presented alongside music by Wylkynson, Sheppard, Tavener and Eric Whitacre.

A Celebration Of Opera

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 11 September

Featuring distinguished singers from the Royal Opera, English National Opera and Glyndebourne, London Festival Opera here present a show of 'passion, drama and humour'.

The production also features music by a number of world famous composers, including Mozart, Verdi, Bizet, Puccini, Offenbach and Gilbert & Sullivan.



Opera Boys

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 14 September

Crossover artists have been big business for much of the 21st century, so it's little wonder that Opera Boys continue to enjoy such a successful career. They're significantly assisted along the way, of course, by their truly remarkable talent - their classically trained voices combine in a powerhouse of vocal harmony to deliver a winning blend of opera, pop and everything in between.

Expect Nessun Dorma and Time To Say Goodbye, along with showstoppers from Les Miserables, Phantom Of The Opera, Jersey Boys and more.



50 years of Ex Cathedra

The 50th anniversary celebrations of the moon landing and the Stonewall Riots have both received plenty of publicity this year, but there's another half-century being celebrated in 2019 too... Birmingham's Ex Cathedra is 50 glorious years old and still going strong - as What's On found out when we caught up with the ensemble's founder, conductor and artistic director, Jeffrey Skidmore...

Leading UK choir and Early Music ensemble Ex Cathedra celebrates its 50th anniversary this season with a jam-packed programme of great classical works. Its founder, Jeffrey Skidmore - awarded an OBE in the 2015 New Years honours list for his service to choral music - is both the artistic director and conductor of this extraordinary organisation.

"There are so many reasons why Ex Cathedra is different from other choral and orchestral groups," says Jeffrey. "The first thing is that the amount of time we've been going and continued to be popular is quite extraordinary. We also have a very interesting approach to the classical repertoire. We perform the great, iconic works alongside ones that are very old and have been somewhat lost, while also regularly commissioning new works. I think our programmes are always quite refreshing in that way. We have the most fantastic amateur and professional singers in Ex Cathedra, which is also supplemented by top-quality students, and we've just launched a graduate scholarship scheme. So that blend of professional, amateur and student is probably unique in the country in terms of choirs.

"We've always had an education part of Ex Cathedra. We work in schools, with communities, in hospitals and other healthcare facilities, so we're committed to making classical music and singing accessible to all. Singing is such an important part of people's lives and is fantastic for their physical and mental health. It brings joy to lives. There's so much scientific evidence to support the positive impact it has. Pop music is focused around singing rather than instrumental; at football matches, stadiums full of people sing their hearts out in support of their team. Singing is a basic human need, I think, along with nourishment and socialisation.

"Research is also an important part of what we do. We work with post-graduate students at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire to

research repertoire, including our particular speciality in French Baroque music. So putting all those things together, you get this special organisation that we have at Ex Cathedra."

The ensemble started as a small gathering of Jeffrey's friends: "Back when I was a sixth-former - just before I founded Ex Cathedra - I was singing in Birmingham Cathedral Choir. My great mentor, Roy Massey, didn't do much Renaissance music with the choir. I was a counter-tenor - a male alto - at the time and I loved Renaissance music, so initially I got a group of people together just to do that 16th century repertoire. Ex Cathedra grew out of that: just a few friends from Bournville, where I sang as a chorister and went to school, and a few older people from Birmingham Cathedral. When I went to Oxford for university, singers I met there came to Birmingham to join us. So, from there, it's expanded into the incredible resource we see today. Wanting to do Renaissance music was the initial spark, really."

Ex Cathedra will be celebrating its 50 years with a programme of old favourites and new commissions: "I've chosen five pieces that are amongst the greatest that exist in the choral repertoire and which have been particularly important in the 50 years of Ex Cathedra. We open our season with Rachmaninoff's Vespers, which we recently performed to a packed audience at Three Choirs Festival. Secondly, we have Bach Mass in B Minor, which is important to us as it launched our period instrument orchestra in 1983 - the first one of its kind outside London and which is still going strong.

"Next, we'll have Missa Solemnis, which is probably Beethoven's greatest piece but perhaps not that popular because it's a challenging work for both players and audiences. However, it's certainly his greatest piece as far as I'm concerned. We also did Missa Solemnis as part of our 25th anniversary

programme, so it's a piece we have a long history with and like to return to.

"Then comes Bach's St John Passion on Good Friday at Symphony Hall, which was the first of Bach's Passions we performed. Nowadays we do it with period instruments and a community choir, our Academy takes part in the liturgical reconstruction, and it's proved very popular. We're always trying to make this great music accessible to everybody, either by taking part in it in some way or by hosting discovery workshops to help people get into it.

"Our fifth and final concert isn't in our brochure yet because we're still in the planning and funding stages, but it looks as though it's going to happen in July. It's a classical Indian weekend of music, which is a genre we've been doing for a while. Alec Roth, who's been our composer-in-residence for the last 12 years, has written us some great pieces. One, called The Traveller, uses translated sacred Indian texts and is performed by an orchestra, children's and community choir. We have the orchestra Britten Sinfonia coming from Cambridge to play for us, and Mark Padmore, who's a big name in the singing world, is going to be the tenor, so that will be our contribution to the Indian Classical Weekend."

Jeffrey is confident that Ex Cathedra's programme for this season has something for everyone, from the classical music connoisseur to those who don't know their Bach from their Beethoven: "I think our 50th anniversary season is brilliant. We're focusing on such important works, both to us and to our audiences. But mainly Cathedra's ability to understand a piece and communicate to our audience, to get across the meaning and feeling of the piece to those listening, is a really special skill.

"I think if you're a regular concert-goer you will love what Ex Cathedra have to offer. But

equally, if you're someone who's never been to any concerts, then Ex Cathedra is just as great. We get such positive feedback from people who've never been to a classical concert before but who end up finding our concerts really engaging and then go on to become big fans of classical. Ex Cathedra really is the place to start for newcomers willing to give classical music the chance it deserves."

Jeffrey is also the artistic director of the Early Music programme at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, a role which he continually links back to Ex Cathedra: "The Conservatoire is really going from strength to strength, particularly in the area that I work in with early music and period instruments, as Julian Lloyd Webber is very keen to develop this area. We have an extraordinary, distinguished team of musicologists at Birmingham Conservatoire, and next year we've attracted the Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music, which previously had been held in Salzburg and Paris and now is coming to Birmingham. The bid we had was so strong because of the interest and expertise in Baroque music based in Birmingham - Birmingham Baroque seems to have a lovely ring to it! My role, then, is to link what Ex Cathedra are and have been doing to what's going on at the Conservatoire. For example, we have four Student Scholars from the Conservatoire who sing with Ex Cathedra."

It's Jeffrey's strong desire to engage as many people as possible with classical music - particularly the younger generation - that really drives him on: "Getting great classical music across to younger audiences is my mission, really. If people, especially young people, don't have the opportunity of experiencing this music, then it will be lost forever. Creating an appetite for high-quality music is always on the agenda."

The poor state of music education in schools is a major concern for Jeffrey: "Funding is one of the biggest challenges for the classical music scene. Music education is really in a terrible fix in state schools, while in private, independent schools it's blossoming. But music is for everyone, and that sector of education needs some special attention and funding, so that those in state schools don't miss out."

“If people, especially young people, don't have the opportunity of experiencing this music, then it will be lost forever. Creating an appetite for high-quality music is always on the agenda”



.....

For more information on the programme for Ex Cathedra's 50th anniversary season, visit excathedra.co.uk

DUDLEY TOWN HALL



SIMON WESTON CBE

An Evening With
Thu 12 Sept



A NIGHT AT THE DARTS

Feat. Phil 'The Power' Taylor
Thu 19 Sept



JOE BROWN

60th Anniversary Tour
Fri 27 Sept



GARY POWNDLAND & FRIENDS

The Black Country Comedy Phenomenon
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THE BUTTERMARKE
SHREWSBURY

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Khalid

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham,
Sat 21 September

Having collaborated with the likes of Calvin Harris, Shawn Mendes, Benny Blanco and Halsey, 21-year-old multi-platinum-selling singer-songwriter Khalid brings his current world touring show to Birmingham in support of third album *Free Spirit*, which peaked at number two in the UK charts.



Muse

Arena Birmingham, Tues 17 September

Comprising Matt Bellamy, Dominic Howard and Chris Wolstenholme, rock band Muse released their eighth studio album, *Simulation Theory*, last year. Its predecessors include *Black Holes & Revelations*, *The 2nd Law*, *Absolution*, *The Resistance* and *Drones*, all of which made it to the number-one spot in the official UK charts.

Widely recognised as one of the best live bands in the world, Muse have won a clutch of coveted music awards, including two Grammys, two Brits and an impressive 10 NMEs.



Electric Swing Circus

Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury, Fri 27 September

Drawing inspiration from 1920s jazz, this talented six-piece fuse saucy swing and stomping electro beats. Their unique sound is a

powerful combination of electric double bass, vintage samples, gypsy-jazz guitar, keys, live drums and dirty synths. Formed in 2011 and fronted by a sassy female double-act, the band are supported in Shrewsbury by DJ Chris Tofu.

The Snuts

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,
Sat 21 September

Support from BBC 6 Music, Radio One and Clash has seen West Lothian-based indie four-piece The Snuts going from strength to strength in 2019.

Their debut single, *All Your Friends*, has enjoyed massive critical acclaim, not least for possessing what's been described as 'an irresistibly catchy, raw edge and a massive chorus'.

The band visit Stoke this month ahead of their special-guest slot on Lewis Capaldi's November tour.

Dan Whitehouse and Boo Hewerdine

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton,
Sat 21 September

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Dan Whitehouse's classic-sounding songs have been described as 'Black Country soul'.

Dan is joined for this gig by the Ivor Novello Award-nominated Boo Hewerdine.

As well as collaborating, the pair will also perform separate sets, both of which will include material from across the years.

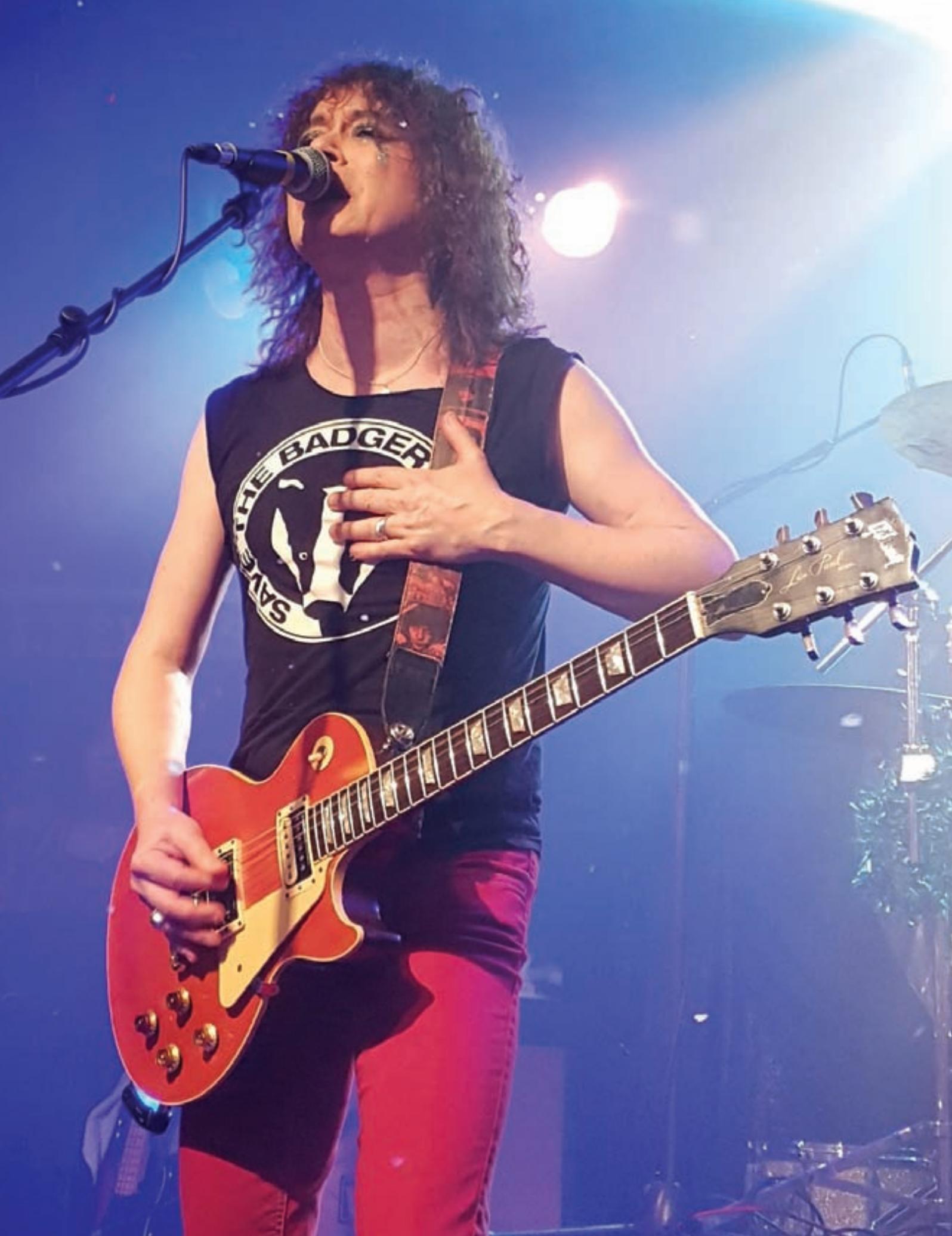
The Urban Voodoo Machine

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 13 September

"We're not Americana and we're definitely not retro," says Urban Voodoo Machine lead Paul-Ronney Angel. "I write songs about living in London right now. Although having a shit time, no money, heartbreak, mental illness, addiction and suppression from the big guy is kinda universal and timeless, I guess..."

If you like your gypsy blues & rock to be gin soaked and full blooded, The Urban Voodoo Machine is definitely a band to catch. Expect blasting guitars, bass & drums, shrieking saxophone, washboard shenanigans and a pure, unadulterated sense of fun...





CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

T.Rextasy's lead vocalist and lead guitarist Danielz chats ahead of their Shrewsbury gig...

Why did you form T.Rextasy?

In 1992 I was an original musician who was promised recording deals from various companies but always let down at the last hurdle. I decided to form T.Rextasy and go out playing the music of Marc Bolan - an artist who I'd always loved while growing up. As Marc died in 1977, I wanted people to experience the energy, excitement, the wonderful songs and performance he gave - always 100%. It was this that drove me to push the band as far as I could.

Did you ever see Marc and T.Rex Live?

Yes, I saw them four times; twice in Germany, in 1972 and '73 - my dad was in the Forces, so my family was based there for a few years - and then twice in England, in 1976 and '77. Marc's concerts were crazy - fans screaming and dancing, singing and shouting. They most certainly were *not* a serene affair! I try and recreate at least an atmosphere of those times - although at some venues times have changed and acting in that way is frowned upon! However, I do try to encourage fans to get involved with the gig as much as possible. It *is* a rock'n'roll gig, after all! My costumes are based on Marc's originals, and as I own some of his original clothing, I've been able to get some things made very close to them. We play, as Marc did, 100% live, raw and raunchy - just how T.Rex would've been back in the day. This is what makes the experience exciting. A few years ago, we even had an original member, Dino Dines (Marc's keyboardist) join the band, until his demise. I think having original members join a tribute band says a lot for our credibility and for us as a live unit, not to mention the fact we've received endorsements from Marc's own family and his record company.

What's your favourite T.Rex track?

This differs, as it's not the same as playing a favourite track live. My fave track of all time is a song called Metal Guru, but in terms of playing live, it could be one of many. Let's say for now that it's Get It On, as we do an eight-minute version that encapsulates the single and also how Marc played it live, with ex-

tended soloing and performance.

Tell us about your band members...

Well, there's me, Danielz - I take on lead vocals and lead guitar - Neil Cross - who plays rhythm guitar and does backing vocals - Rob Butterfield - who plays bass guitar and does backing vocals - and John Skelton, who plays drums and percussion. I'm very fortunate with my musicians, as they're skilful, loyal and love playing the music.

How do you prepare for a gig?

I try to get to each venue in good time, as I have a sequence of activities that I go through. On arrival, I go into my dressing room, unpack my clothing and make-up, and set it all out in order. I then go out to eat. It takes our roadie about 90 minutes to unload and set up all the equipment, then another 30 minutes for the engineer to mic up, so it gives us time to chill before sound-check. In the band, we all have our specific sounds that we require in each stage monitor. After that, we sort out the out-front sound. With our regular sound engineer, this normally takes only about 30 minutes, which is great. After sound-check, it's backstage to sort out my band merchandise, and then I normally play music on my I-Pod, which relaxes me while I'm putting on my make-up and changing into my stage clothing. Then I go to the side of the stage to check the tuning of all my guitars, and then, believe it or not, it's showtime!

What can an audience expect from one of your concerts?

Excitement, enjoyment and the chance to sing along, boogie, clap and shout. I don't mind if fans call out for a song - I usually oblige them by singing a couple of verses to them if it's a track that's not in the actual set. A bit of heckling doesn't go amiss either, as one-to-one contact with the crowd gives the evening an extra-special kick!

What do you enjoy most about the performances?

I absolutely love playing the songs of T.Rex. It's the actual buzz one gets from going on

stage and giving the audience a live experience. Fans are coming to have a good time, and when I see people smiling and doing just that, it makes it really worthwhile. I also love plugging my Gibson Les Paul into that amp and giving it some. There's nothing like it!

What have been the highlights of your career so far?

Playing Wembley Arena. We've done that three times over the years - and as it was Marc's biggest gig in the UK, it was a double-whammy for me to play there too. Another highlight was obtaining a major record deal with Columbia Records and releasing a couple of albums in Japan, which, in turn, enabled us to tour out there twice, on the second tour meeting up and chatting with David Bowie. Obtaining a publishing deal to write my autobiography was another highlight. I think I was the first guy in a tribute band to be approached by a publishing company to write about my life, which I was nicely pleased about. The book is called *The Spirit Of Marc Bolan* (Wymer Publishing). Then there was being called up by Marc Almond and recording a single with him called *Death Of A Dandy*, and then having it produced and mixed by legendary Bolan/Bowie producer Tony Visconti. I think as well just gaining credibility with major original artists, meaning that they've appeared as our guests on stage, or we've been on the bill with them. So these include Slade, Roy Wood of Wizzard, Alvin Stardust, Shakin' Stevens, Steve Harley, Glen Matlock of the Sex Pistols, Boy George, Holly Johnson from Frankie Goes To Hollywood and The Sweet. There are plenty of other highlights too, but that could well be a book in itself...

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T.Rextasy perform at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Saturday 7 September; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 18 October; Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Sat 19 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 28 November; The Robin, Bilston, Tues 31 December

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Traditional folk & low-fi acoustic sets blend seamlessly with dreamy electropop, psychedelia and indie favourites against a magical backdrop of bright hippie colours, lush foliage and a beautiful lake.

New for 2019 is a rich programme of arts & crafts, comedy & cabaret, poetry & literature and talks & debates.

Line-up includes: Don McClean, Jake Bugg, Public Service Broadcasting (pictured), The Zutons, Richard Thompson, Lucy Rose, Edwyn Collins, Daoiri Farrell, Peggy Seeger.



Onboard The Craft

Stoke Prior Country Club, Bromsgrove,
Thurs 5 - Sat 7 September

Organised by Sonic Rock Solstice Events and set in the beautiful Worcestershire countryside, Onboard The Craft returns for an eighth year to present a programme of space rock, prog & blues.

Four days camping is included in the price of a weekend ticket, while children under 14 can attend free of charge when accompanied by an adult ticket purchaser.

Line-up includes: Evil Blizzard (pictured), Here & Now, Mr Strange, Under Groundhogs, Capt. Roswell & The Lost Alien Tribe, Dr Hasbeen, Joshua Burnell Band, Orange Clocks, Sonic Trip Project, Civilian Zen, Strip Search Tramp, Sister Sandwich, Second Sunset, Firegarden, Wood Demons, Spiral Navigators.



Stratford-on-Avon Music Festival

Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Fri 13 - Sat 21 September



The Stratford-on-Avon Music Festival presents a week of high-quality chamber music aimed at the local community, with a particular focus on young artists.

Strong local partnerships with established arts organisations are in place for 2019, not only to reinforce quality community participation but also to emphasise the festival's importance to the town's annual cultural offer.

Line-up includes: Roderick Williams and Christopher Glynn (pictured), Raphael Wallfisch Cello Recital, Aquinas Piano Trio and Rebecca Low, Midlands Youth Jazz Orchestra, Thibaut Garcia Guitar Recital, Gildas Quartet and Jack McNeill.

Bromyard Folk Festival

Bromyard, Worcestershire,
Thurs 5 - Sun 8 September

Taking place for the 52nd time, Bromyard's much-loved celebration of folk music is now a well-established tradition in and of itself. This year's event promises more than 170 hours of entertainment, with some of the finest national and international folk musicians headlining a programme that also includes workshops, sing-arounds, ceilidhs, dance displays, children's entertainment and a traditional craft market.

Line-up includes: Kathryn Tickell and The Darkening, Flook, Melrose Quartet, The Daoiri Farrell Trio, Jackie Oates and John Spiers, Les Poules à Colin, Edgelarks, Granny's Attic, Will Pound and Eddy Jay, Kelly Oliver (pictured), The Tweed Project.





Mawaan Rizwan Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 12 September

In the first year that stand-up comedian and actor Mawaan Rizwan made videos for YouTube, he accumulated one million views. In the second year, that number skyrocketed to more than six million...

The cause of the stark difference between those two totals was his mother, Shahnaz... Mawaan made a video with her in which the pair bantered back and forth, and it proved such a hit that they decided to make more. And then Bollywood came calling - for Mawaan's mum!

Shahnaz went on to become one of the most recognised faces in Asia after starring in a TV series called Yeh Hai Mohabbatein (This Is Love).

More recently, Mawaan's brother, Nabhaan, bagged the starring role in the highly acclaimed BBC television series *Informer* - and even Mawaan's dad has found his way onto the radio!

To his credit, Mawaan has taken it all in his stride and makes light of the way in which the rest of his family have seemingly accelerated beyond him on the rocky road to showbiz stardom.

Not that he's exactly doing too badly himself, mind, having not so long ago starred in the emotionally disturbing BBC drama, *Murdered By My Father*.

He visits Birmingham this month with his well-reviewed touring show, *Juice*.

Rob Rouse

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Fri 13 September

Boasting a plethora of TV credits, Rob Rouse peddles a hyperactive brand of humour that's much in demand.

"I'm hugely lucky not to have a real job," says Rob. "Something that essentially used to get me told off at school now earns me a living. There's stuff that I wasn't meant to say at school, or things that I wasn't meant to say at work, that I can now say on stage. I can arse about and say exactly what I want, regardless of how offensive people may or may not think it is. Without being churlish about it, it feels like a very healthy way for me to live my life."



Gary Meikle

The Place, Telford, Fri 20 September

Rising star Gary Meikle has had a real rags-to-riches life experience.

By the age of 16, he'd been kicked out of four schools, involved with gangs, packed off to a children's home by his mother and was drinking heavily.

A one-night-stand led to the birth of his daughter, Ainsley, who now has a daughter of her own - Gracie. The three of them currently live together in Glasgow.

In recent times Gary has become enormously popular both on the comedy circuit - where he's even joked about his daughter's first period - and social media, where his rants about eyebrows, hair extensions and 'dick pics' have gone viral.

He's visiting the Midlands this month with his latest show, *The iBrow Guy*.

Rob Delaney

The REP, Birmingham, Mon 16 September



American comic Rob Delaney is best known on this side of the Atlantic for co-starring with Sharon Horgan in four series of hit Channel Four comedy *Catastrophe*.

He was also once voted the funniest person on Twitter. Rob bagged the accolade from Comedy Central for his clever line in gleefully juvenile and sometimes overtly sexual offerings.

At this point, we *could* reproduce his rude'n'crude Twitter musing on whether the contents of Catwoman's litter tray acts like an aphrodisiac on Batman - but we won't. Somewhat more palatable Twitter fare includes, "As far as I'm concerned, the scariest thing to come out of the Muslim world is algebra", and "WiFi at my uncle's funeral is a ****ing joke..."

Rob's movie credits include *Deadpool 2*, in which he played fan favourite 'Peter W.'. The newest member of the X-Force team of superheroes, he had no powers but "just responded to the ad".

Tape Face

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 19 September

Otherwise known as The Boy With Tape On His Face, hailed as a modern-day Buster Keaton and described as 'a mad scientist of vaudevillian pranks', there's no doubt that Canadian comedian Sam Wills brings something to the table which is just that little bit different. Mime with noise, stand-up with no talking, and drama with no acting are among the novelty numbers he peddles in his shows, which have also been known to include magic, puppetry and Motown. Oh, and references to the films of Patrick Swayze... Jonny Awsum supports.



Luke Kempner

The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Sat 28 September; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 3 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 12 October



Puppeteer, dancer, singer, pianist, actor, impressionist and stand-up comedian Luke Kempner began his showbusiness career in musical theatre, playing Marius in the UK touring version of *Les Misérables*. Comedy-wise he's since made a name for himself on screen in shows including *Murder In Successville* and as resident funnyman on *Celebrity Big Brother's Bit On The Side*.

Luke is currently touring *House Of Faces*, a show about television that has plenty to recommend it but which hasn't met with universal approval. Critics have felt it contains so many references to TV programmes that all but the most ardent of telly watchers will struggle to keep up.

Romesh Ranganathan

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 26 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Saturday 16 November

With his support slots having included one for Ricky Gervais, it's fair to say former maths teacher Romesh Ranganathan has made a significant impact since bursting onto the comedy circuit in 2010.

It's all a far cry from his previous career in a Crawley classroom. "In the early days, I would be performing to eight people in a pub and my sixth formers would turn up," Romesh recalls in an interview with *Crawley News*. "I couldn't help but think, 'Oh God, this isn't going to end well'. It undermined my authority to tell the students off the next day, because it must've been hilarious for them to see me die on stage and think, 'I'm just going to heckle him now!'"

Romesh's latest show, *The Cynic's Mixtape*, is a carefully curated selection of all the things he's found unacceptable since his last tour. These include why trying to save the environment is a scam, why nobody is truly free, and his suspicion that his wife is using gluten intolerance to avoid sleeping with him.



Live At The RSC

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 12 - Sat 21 September

Proving that comedy at the RSC isn't confined to William Shakespeare's cobwebbed collection of 16th century witticisms, this two-weekend festival features some of the circuit's most well-respected comics. Among the better-known names contributing to proceedings are Bridget Christie & Milton Jones (pictured), Matt Forde, Suzi Ruffell, Zoe Lyons and Rory Bremner, while lovers of Edinburgh Fringe phenomenon *Showstopper!* can enjoy watching a brand new musical comedy being created from scratch.

Rounding off the festival is Adam Kay, about whose act a watching Stephen Fry once declared, "This made me very, very happy." Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is here presenting his latest touring show, *This Is Going To Hurt: Secret Diaries Of A Junior Doctor*. Expect splendidly silly spoof songs and some seriously shocking stories from the NHS frontline...





LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU

Shane Richie brings Archie Rice to life in updated version of iconic play

John Osborne’s *The Entertainer*, widely considered to be among the greatest plays of the 20th century, is this autumn touring for the first time ever. West End and EastEnders star Shane Richie talks to What’s On about playing the character of Archie Rice, one of the most iconic roles in British theatre...

Written by John Osborne in the 1950s, *The Entertainer* tells the story of washed-up music hall star Archie Rice. A performer long past his expiry date, Archie is struggling to negotiate the changing sociopolitical landscape of the mid-20th century...

Heading out on tour for the first time ever, *The Entertainer* has been updated somewhat - to the 1980s - and unfolds against the backdrop of the Falklands War and Margaret Thatcher. The production is directed by Sean O’Connor and stars Shane Richie - best known as EastEnders’ Alfie Moon - in the title role.

“The *Entertainer* really is like nothing you’ve ever seen before,” says Shane. “If you don’t have a sense of humour or you’re easily offended, you might not enjoy it! It’s a real tough piece - a real slice of social realism - and deals with sexism, racism, homophobia... all the things that are still around today to some degree. Most of all, though, it’s a thrill to watch because it’ll really get your back up and show you how much society has or hasn’t changed socially and politically over the last 30-odd years. If I wasn’t in it, I’d want to see it!”

Archie Rice is a role that’s been earmarked for Shane for over a decade: “I was approached by the director, Sean O’Connor, about 12 years ago. He spoke to me about it when we met while I was working on *EastEnders*. I was too young at the time, so he told me he’d wait until I was in my mid-50s because he was sure I’d make a great Archie Rice. So I guess I’ve been clock-watching since then!

“The characters I’ve played in the past have been likeable, whether that be Alfie Moon or on *Benidorm*. To play Archie Rice, who’s so out of step and such a total opposite, goes against everything I’ve ever learnt as a performer. Obviously, when you go out on stage as a stand-up comic, you want people to like you. Archie Rice doesn’t care whether you like him or not, and he goes against all my principles. I like stretching and challenging myself, pushing how far I can take the character, so that’s also why I wanted to play Archie. I’ll also be following in the footsteps of the likes of Laurence Olivier, Robert Lindsay, Michael Gambon, Kenneth Branagh - it’s a

real thrill and an honour.”

Shane has no worries about the update from the ’50s to the ’80s: “If you’ve never seen the original, it won’t matter. This is almost like an entirely new piece all on its own in terms of the setting. Whereas the original is set against the backdrop of the Suez Crisis, this version deals with the Falklands. A lot of people who were around in the 1980s will remember that the face of comedy was really changing then. We had new, upcoming sitcoms like *The Young Ones* and *Spitting Image*, and comics like Archie Rice just became dinosaurs overnight. So *The Entertainer* is basically about how Archie can’t seem to cope with that and just loses his s*** really!”

Shane thinks the play really resonates in 2019: “It seems that every 30 or so years there’s great social and political change. I think we’re in that place now, just like we were back in the ’80s with Margaret Thatcher’s government, the Trades Union disputes and the Falklands. I feel like *The Entertainer* allows us to question and explore how much we’ve actually moved forward. It will be interesting to see if those who come and see it think we’ve progressed that much or not - so in that way, it’s really exciting.

“Back in the day, *The Entertainer* came out as a real state-of-the-nation play, off the back of John Osborne’s other major work, *Look Back In Anger*. Osborne was a real maverick. He was part of a group of playwrights who made theatre for and about the actual working class. He turned that on its head, though, and made stark social commentary by putting a mirror up to the audience. So the play was really relevant back then, and I think we can still see a bit of ourselves in it now.”

Given the wide-ranging nature of his show-business career, it’s fair to say that Shane himself is something of an ‘entertainer’. His CV includes stand-up comedy, straight acting, and performing in the West End as a drag queen...

“I’ve just finished playing Hugo - also known as drag queen Loco Channel - in *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie*. Hugo is a character at the complete opposite end of the spectrum from Archie Rice. *Everybody’s Talking About*

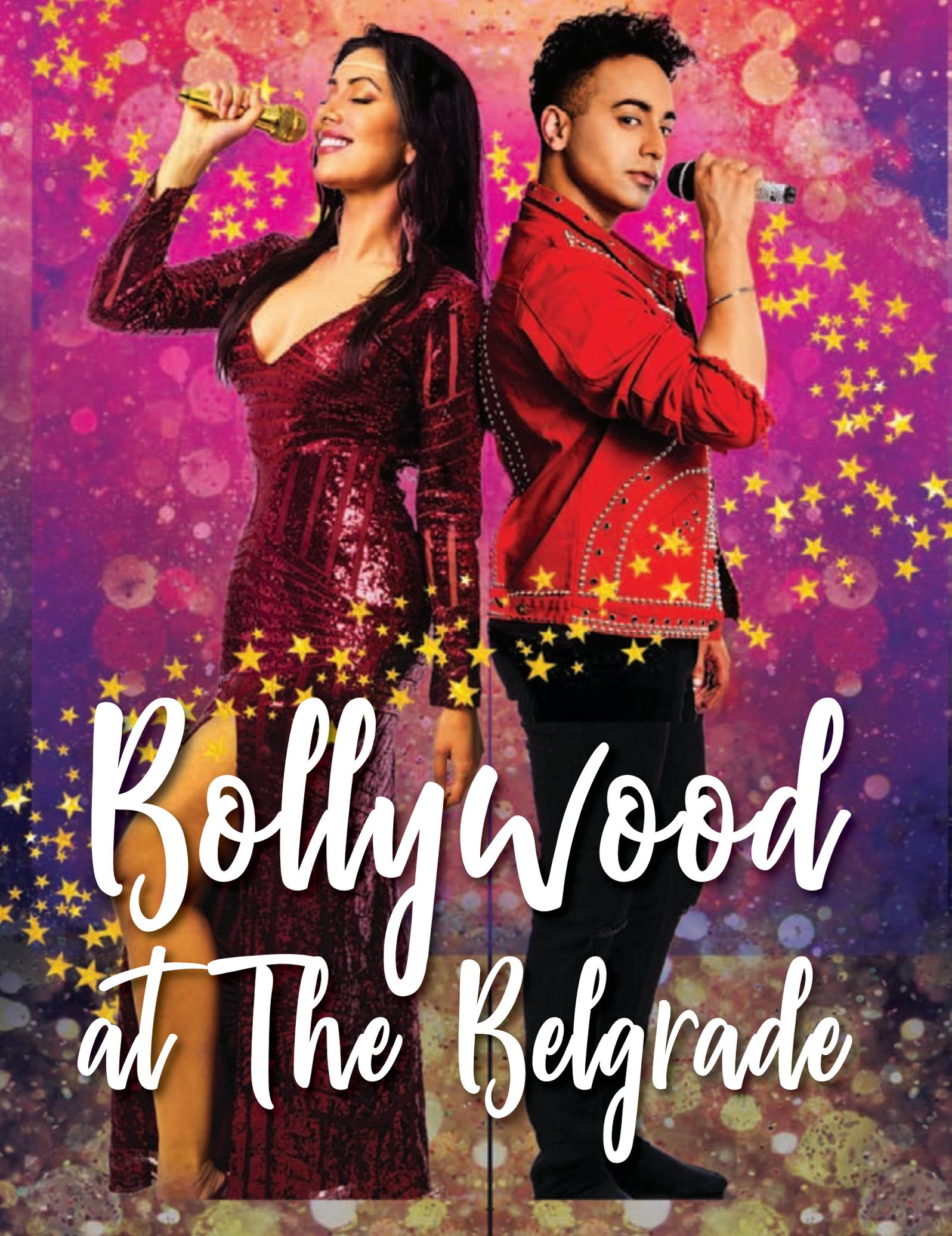
Jamie is all about diversity and embracing everyone, regardless of differences. Archie is the polar opposite. He’s racist, homophobic, sexist - so far removed from the subject matter of *Jamie*. I’ve loved having the opportunity to play both characters this year, as it’s really exciting for me to do such different projects.”

Playing Archie Rice seems to have brought Shane’s career full-circle: “I started off as a jobbing actor at the age of 15 or 16. I did a couple of seasons in holiday parks, where in between acting jobs I had a stand-up act. So coming towards my 20s, I was performing in pubs, clubs and anywhere I could, just to keep my head above water. So that’s where it started for me. Playing a character like Archie Rice now is really interesting because I’ve seen him; as I was starting off my career, the careers of people like Archie were coming to an end.”

Shane has every intention of going one better than Archie by remaining in-demand: “When this tour is over, I’ll be doing panto - another completely different role. Then next year I’ll be going on tour with *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie*, and then I’ll hopefully get to have a holiday. I know that *Tootsies* has just opened on Broadway, and I’d love to be in it if it came over here to the UK. I’d also love to play Sweeney Todd.”

For now, though, Shane is concentrating on *The Entertainer* - and firmly believes that audiences should grab the opportunity to see the production with both hands: “This show has never toured the UK before, and there’s a reason for that - it really is asking the audience who we are as a society. In the show, I’m doing some very different stand-up to what I’ve ever been used to, so it’ll be interesting both for me and the audience. *The Entertainer* really isn’t to be passed up!”

.....
The Entertainer shows at Malvern Theatres from Monday 9 to Saturday 14 September; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 7 to Saturday 12 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 15 to Saturday 19 October; and Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Monday 18 to Saturday 23 November.



*Bollywood
at The Belgrade*

South Asian performing arts company Phizzical are premiering their LGBTQ Bollywood musical thriller, Stardust, in the Midlands this month... What's On spoke to director Samir Bhamra about the ground-breaking production and the importance of representing same-sex Asian relationships on stage...

South Asian performing arts company Phizzical is 15 years old in 2019 - and to celebrate, it's launching a 'thriller musical' entitled Stardust. The show is a first for the British stage, as it's the only South Asian theatre production to feature same-sex marriage.

Stardust was sparked by the marriage of director Samir Bhamra's brother - and by listening to the music of singer-songwriter Robby Khela.

"About 20 years ago, I adopted a young man as a younger brother," explains Samir. "After gay marriage was legalised in the UK, he and his partner wanted to marry. Unfortunately his parents didn't know that he was gay. I played a small part in supporting him and his parents, and it was a magical wedding; a meeting of two cultures. Literally a few weeks later, singer-songwriter Robby Khela shared a song with me. It reminded me of every emotion that I'd witnessed during my brother's wedding, and I immediately felt that we needed to make a musical about acceptance and love."

The influence of Bollywood is hugely evident in Stardust - and was also a factor in Samir's arrival in the world: "My mother was a big Indian cinema fan. When she was pregnant with me, her waters broke at the cinema while she was watching a Bollywood film. She named me after the character who was the hero of the film!"

As well as writing the songs, Robby Khela also takes the lead role in the show, playing the character of Amar. But Samir and Robby weren't the only creatives involved in the project: "Stardust has been in the making for almost a decade. Robby has written and produced a wealth of songs independently since 2008. We officially began working on this in 2013, collaborating with an incredible writer. Unfortunately the world was not ready for that story, so we made it into a short musical film, which we released earlier this year. It's been winning several awards at film festivals globally.

"Then, two years ago, we decided to take a different approach. We'd just finished our previous show, Bring On The Bollywood, and every venue wanted something similar, so we set about changing the story and introduced a Bollywood angle with emerging writer Shahid Iqbal Khan. Set designer Rich Evans

came on board in 2017, which we felt was important because Stardust relies heavily on design."

Stardust follows British-Asian singer Amar's struggle to make his mark as a mainstream performer. Amar discovers a long-lost star of the 1980s' Bollywood music industry, a woman called Amor. His journey takes a chilling turn when he discovers that Amor was silenced for uncovering an explosive secret involving Cyrus, her music producer and husband...

"We want audiences to immerse themselves in a pop, R&B and Bollywood thriller. Stardust is set in the music industry and features a mix of love, reincarnation and revenge."

A musical thriller is an interesting angle to take on a Bollywood-inspired production. Samir explains the choice: "When someone says the word Bollywood, you automatically assume kitsch dances, melodramatic scenes and colourful costumes. Unfortunately this is a terrible stereotype for a film industry that produces musical films in every genre. The kind of cinema and music produced changes with each decade. The films and songs reflect global politics. So we've pretty much set our minds to change the outdated perception of Bollywood in the UK."

Stardust also pays tribute to Bollywood's reincarnation genre...

"The reincarnation story has been told several times in some of the best Bollywood films. The first reincarnation thriller, Mahal (which translates as 'Palace'), was made by legendary director Kamal Amrohi in 1949. Then came possibly the best reincarnation romances - Madhumati, Neel Kamal, Kudrat, Karz, Karan Arjun, Om Shanti Om etc. Whilst we wanted to pay a tribute, our approach to the genre had to be very different, so we set about watching these films intensely to work out how we could be different. One of the things we found was that the films presented the notion that the soul has a gender. So the male characters are reborn as male and female characters as female. A lot of mystics and ancient South Asian poets contradict this notion and believe the spirit has no gender and is equal."

Samir has high hopes for Stardust when it premieres this month: "Aside from being the

director and co-writer, I originally commissioned this idea because I felt that we needed progressive stories on the British stage to reflect the Asian identity and the Bollywood experience. There have been some incredible plays reflecting Asian same-sex relationships, such as Hijra by Ash Kotak and My Beautiful Laundrette by Hanif Qureshi. However, we want to take our stories to the widest audiences in the deepest parts of the country - to inspire people, to move them and to thrill them until they leave hand in hand and happy."

So why the Belgrade for the premiere?

"The Belgrade and Coventry has been our second home since we brought a Bollywood version of William Shakespeare's Cymbeline to the city and theatre in 2013. And after the incredible success of Bring On The Bollywood in 2016, we literally moved in. With the eyes of the world on Coventry as the City of Culture 2021, and with the Belgrade this autumn presenting a season of productions about love and belonging, I couldn't imagine opening the show anywhere else."

Stardust reflects some of the issues facing the British-Asian community right now.

"Let's just look at what's happening in Birmingham, or search for the hidden stories of marriages of convenience, of gay men marrying women hoping for a cure, or worse, murdering them when the secret is discovered. And that's just skimming the surface."

Samir believes it's vitally important for South Asian theatre companies to represent the LGBTQ+ community: "It should be compulsory. I have always worked with the widest and most diverse creatives and actors, and have directed work that touches on the LGBTQI+ community - be it Pulitzer Prize-nominated play A Perfect Ganesh by Terrence McNally, The Maids by Jean Genet or Omar Khan's adaptation of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, titled What You Fancy. It's about representation and inclusion."

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Stardust shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Saturday 14 to Saturday 21 September.



Cabaret

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 3 - Sat 7 September;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 22 - Sat 26 October;
Malvern Theatres, Tues 19 - Sat 23 November

When a show visits the region which, between its stage and screen versions, boasts multiple Oscars, BAFTAs and Tony Awards, it makes sense to get along and check it out. Cabaret is one such show. John Partridge here takes on the role of Emcee, with Kara Lily Hay-

worth stepping into the lead part of the legendary Sally Bowles, a nightly performer at the infamous Kit Kat Klub in early-1930s Berlin. Featuring 'show-stopping choreography, dazzling costumes and some of the most iconic songs in musical theatre' - including, of course, the famous title number - Cabaret is helmed by National Theatre Artistic Director Rufus Norris and choreographed by the Olivier Award-winning Javier de Frutos. Veteran song & dance star Anita Harris also features.

Blood Brothers

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Mon 30 September - Sat 12 October

Although it's effectively a class-driven 'scouse melodrama', to describe Blood Brothers as such is to greatly underestimate the emotional response it produces within its audience. The show features adult actors playing children, a narrator who wanders through the scenes with warnings of impending doom, a good helping of sharp social awareness to counteract the sticky sentimentality and a raft of much-loved musical numbers, including Bright New Day, Marilyn Monroe and the emotionally charged Tell Me It's Not True. It's also one of only three musicals to have been performed more than 10,000 times in the London West End.



Gaslight

The Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham,
Mon 30 September -
Sat 5 October

Bella Manningham's life is a fun-free zone. Losing her mind and feeling trapped in her gloomy home, she sits alone each night dreading the sound of footsteps from locked and empty rooms, waiting for the gaslight to dim.

When a stranger arrives one evening with a terrifying tale to tell, Bella must work out whether her visitor is really there to help, or whether she herself is about to descend into a pit of madness from which she may never return... Martin Shaw stars in this brand new production of Patrick Hamilton's classic play.

The Lovely Bones

The REP, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Sat 21 September

This poignant human drama, based on Alice Sebold's best-selling novel, concerns a murdered girl who watches from heaven as her family attempts to cope with their devastating loss... Featuring adult themes and a soundtrack combining 1970s favourites with original music, the production makes a welcome return to The REP after scoring a major hit first time round.



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Mawaan Rizwan

Juice

Thu 12 Sep

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

AUTUMN MIXED BILL

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Rosie Kay's

Fantasia

Wed 25 & Thu 26 Sep

BILL KENWRIGHT PRESENTS

WILLY RUSSELL'S

BLOOD Brothers

Mon 30 Sep - Sat 12 Oct

Presented by na noo

EYE OF THE STORM

Tue 8 & Wed 9 Oct

DADA MASILO

GISELLE

Tue 15 & Wed 16 Oct

PRESENTED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

SOME LIKE IT HIP HOP

Fri 18 & Sat 19 Oct

AN EVENING WITH

Lenny Henry

Who Am I, Again?

Sun 20 Oct

CIRCUS 1903

Fri 25 Oct - Sat 2 Nov

WNO

Carmen

Elizé

Tue 5 & Fri 8 Nov

What a way to make a living...

Dolly Parton musical heads to Brum



The touring version of Dolly Parton's 9 To 5 The Musical stops off in the Midlands this month. What's On caught up with one of its three leading ladies - Amber Davies - to talk about meeting Dolly, the production itself and her 2017 success on hit reality TV series Love Island...

Inspired by the cult 1980 film starring superstar Tennessee country singer Dolly Parton - who's written the production's score - feel-good comedy musical 9 To 5 is a show which Dolly would surely suggest y'all should go see this month, y'hear...

"Dolly is very much involved in the show," says one of the touring production's lead actors, Amber Davies - best known for winning hit reality TV series Love Island in 2017. "9 To 5 is about three very different women whose boss's awful behaviour towards them brings them together. Although they work in the same place, the women are taking very different paths in life: you've got single mum and recent widow Violet; my character, Judy, who's completely heartbroken and turns up having never had a job before because she's only ever been a housewife; and Doralee, the character that Dolly played, who is judged purely on her appearance despite having a heart of gold. It's very much a musical about female empowerment and is full of surprises and real comic moments."

In the wake of the Me Too movement and the gender pay gap revelation, Amber believes 9 To 5's serious side is just as relevant now as it was when the film was released nearly 40 years ago: "I think to a certain extent we've come a long way, but in other ways we still have a long way to go. There's a bit of an ironic joke in the show where Violet says that the sexism these characters deal with probably won't even be an issue in 10 years' time - and yet here we are staging 9 To 5 in 2019 and it's still relevant today. But I always love the audience's reaction at the end of the night - we send them out of the theatre on a real high because this show really illustrates what women can achieve when they come together. We definitely highlight issues of equality, but in a lighthearted way."

And can we expect a country score in 9 To 5?

"Dolly wrote a new song especially for the West End cast called Hey Boss, which definitely has a country twang to it. But there are all kinds of different styles and genres in the show. I've got a great, heartfelt ballad number, but there are also fun songs in there, like

the title track itself. What's so great about Dolly's score is that each song has such depth to it. For example, Doralee has a number called Backwards Barbie that really expresses her feelings about the way people view her based on her appearance."

Meeting Dolly Parton was a surreal experience for Amber: "If you'd have told me last year that I'd be working with Dolly, I would've laughed at you! Dolly is one of the show's executive producers, so she's had so much more involvement than people would ever imagine. If there was even a tiny change in the script, it would have to go through her. She really wants everyone involved in the show to do well, so the first night when she came to watch, she was just as nervous as the rest of us.

"When I went out to Nashville to meet her, her advice to me was that no one is ever in competition with anyone apart from themselves, which is so true. You should never compare yourself to anyone else because everyone's timeline is so different. Considering how famous and iconic Dolly is, she was just so down-to-earth and lovely. I'll certainly be taking her advice forward with me."

Musical theatre has always been a big part of Amber's life. Her sister, Jade, has appeared in a whole host of famous stage shows, including Les Miserables and Andrew Lloyd Webber's Phantom Of The Opera.

"My sister is a role model for me and set the bar when she got offered her first West End role. She helped me believe that it was possible. Obviously, it's extremely difficult to get to the West End, but you just have to get your one break, so I was always hopeful. I had the most amazing year on Love Island, but I just really, really missed being on stage. Performing brings me so much joy.

"I believe everything happens in life for a reason. I think I was meant to go on Love Island when I did, and now I've gone full-circle to being back doing what I love. It was scary accepting the challenge of being in 9 To 5, but it's just a joy to be a part of."

While Love Island definitely helped boost Amber's profile, she's fought hard to prove

herself in the musical theatre world: "Love Island definitely helped give me a platform, but I've also been really keen to prove to people that I haven't just got where I am in my career because of that. I'm here because I genuinely deserve to be; I've worked incredibly hard to get into professional musical theatre, just like all the other performers have. The reaction I get from the audience is always so positive. I get a lot of tweets congratulating me and saying that they'd definitely judged a book by its cover, so couldn't believe how great I was. It's just so, so lovely to read."

Amber hopes the future will prove to be even more exciting for her than the present: "I think at the moment I'm very grateful and content with where my career is going. I really can't wait to tour. I don't have many commitments - no boyfriend, no children - so it really is the best time for me to do it. I really do want to continue doing musicals, and Broadway is a massive goal for me. I would also like to keep my face on telly, whether that be presenting or acting. TV work is definitely something that I have in my sights. I just need to make my contacts and wait for the right role to come along. I'm really not one to rush into things - I don't take the job if I don't think it's for me."

So which roles in the world of musical theatre would Amber most like to play?

"Just like every other musical theatre student, I'd love to play Elphaba [in Wicked]. It's such a strong role, but I'm maybe a little too young for that at the moment, so it's one for the future. I love any feelgood musical - like Hair-spray, for instance. I'd make a great Amber Von Tussle, which I actually got offered just before I went on Love Island. It would be amazing to go full-circle and actually get to play that role. Rumour has it Mean Girls and Pretty Woman are coming to the West End, too - both musicals I'd be really interested in doing because I know I'd have so much fun!"

9 To 5 The Musical shows at The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, from Friday 6 to Saturday 14 September.



Stardust

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Sat 14 - Sat 21 September

This is British theatre's first ever South Asian theatrical production to feature same-sex marriage. Presented by well-established performing arts company Phizzical, Stardust follows British-Asian singer Amar's struggle to make his mark as a mainstream performer. While on his journey towards what he hopes will be real stardom, he discovers a long-lost star of the 1980s' Bollywood music scene - and finds that events soon take a rather chilling turn...

Speaking about the show and its inclusion of same-sex marriage, Stardust's director, Samir Bhamra, said: "I'm an ally of the LGBTIQ+ community and have actively supported some of their campaigns. When I look at the world around us today, reading the results of surveys and talking to people, I am discovering that sexuality is becoming more and more fluid, and that people are more open and accepting of their identities. We still have a long way to go to remove the impact of several centuries of colonisation, though."

Barber Shop Chronicles

The REP, Birmingham,
Thurs 26 - Sat 28 September

The value and importance of the barber shop in the lives of African men is explored in this critically acclaimed play from Inua Ellams. While the main action takes place in a south London barbers, the story also drops in on haircutting premises in Lagos, Johannesburg, Harare, Accra and Kampala. The play's series of intertwining vignettes cleverly illustrates the way in which the barbershop is so many things to so many people - from a political platform and confession box to a preacher-pulpit and newsroom... The Olivier Award-winning Bijan Sheibani directs.



Jane Eyre

Malvern Theatres, Tues 24 - Sat 28 September

Blackeyed Theatre are the company behind this latest stage version of Charlotte Bronte's classic novel. For those not up to speed with the story, it follows the orphaned Jane as she's sent by her cruel Aunt Reed to the bleak Lowood School. On securing a position as governess at Thornfield Hall, Jane finds herself falling for the charms of enigmatic master Edward Rochester, unaware that the new object of her affection harbours a dark and terrible secret...

The Hound Of The Baskervilles

Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham,
Mon 2 - Sat 14 September

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 monstrous moorland beast, the story continues to be rehashed both for stage and screen. This time out, Dr John Watson is Dr Jane Watson and the two actors presenting the tale are determined to make it as fun and farcical as

possible. And if London Mayor Sadiq Khan's appraisal of the show is anything to go by - he called it the cultural highlight of the year - then the duo have obviously succeeded in their intention. Although they do wonder if maybe the mayor had had a few too many to drink on the occasion he shared his opinion!

The Fizzogs: Back In Our Day

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Mon 9 September

Black Country laughter merchants The Fizzogs make a welcome return with their internet sensations The Dancing Grannies, presenting a production that charts the elderly trio's fabulous friendship, from the 1940s right through to the present day. "Our shows are riotous, poignant and nostalgic," say The Fizzogs, "but most of all, they're hysterically funny. Even the BBC like us and said that if they had the money you'd see us on the telly box."





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Love at the Albany...

Albany Theatre is a relatively new addition to Coventry's burgeoning arts scene. The theatre's main house, however, already had a long history prior to the Albany's opening in 2013.

Earlsdon Place - the magnificent art deco-style building that houses the Albany - was built in 1935 as a technical college on the corner of Albany Street and The Butts. Albany Theatre's main house was the site of the college's main lecture theatre but started to be used for theatre, music and arts performances during World War Two.

The building is now divided up into various businesses, one of which is Albany Theatre. Reopening the space as a dedicated arts centre was made possible by the creation of a charitable trust. The trust remains active and is supported by dedicated volunteers who make the day-to-day running of the theatre possible. This community spirit is also in evidence in the venue's apprenticeship programmes, harking back to its days as an institute of education.

The theatre's auditorium, box office and bar space have been tastefully refurbished and a curved roof added to achieve better acoustics in the main performance space. Albany Theatre also features a new studio space - perfect for more intimate or cabaret-style performances.

There remains work to be done. With no Arts Council funding and only a small amount coming from the city council, the Albany relies solely on its sales profit and the hard graft of its volunteers and staff. They aim to raise enough money to convert the remaining space into more studios, which will hopefully house some of the groups that are springing up on Coventry's fast-emerging dance scene.

Despite the Albany's funding challenges, the theatre continues to grow in reputation, thanks in no small measure to some imaginative programming. The upcoming autumn season provides an excellent example of this...

October half term sees two kids' shows taking place at the venue: *The Very Hungry*

Caterpillar and *I Believe In Unicorns* by Michael Morpurgo. There are other family-friendly productions throughout the season too, including *Dear Zoo Live* and *Ballet Theatre UK's* version of *The Wizard Of Oz*, a show for which the Albany is letting in one child free for every adult ticket purchased. It's hoped that the offer will encourage youngsters to engage with ballet.

For adult audiences, there are theatrical productions ranging from an adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* to risqué adults-only panto *Jack (Off)* And *The Beanstalk*.

Music nights at the venue see some of the country's best tribute acts taking to the stage, including *The Mersey Beatles* and *Waterloo - The Best Of Abba*. There's a blast from the past, too, when *Kiki Dee* hits town, while the theatre's *Studio Sounds* series provides a high-profile showcase for the best in upcoming music talent.

To view the full autumn programme at the venue, visit albanytheatre.co.uk.

Check out these highlights in Albany Theatre's Autumn/Winter season...



BEYOND THERAPY
Mon 16 - Wed 18 Sept

This quick-witted and touching comedy takes a look at modern-day relationships and poses the question: Are we all 'beyond therapy?' The storyline focuses on the characters of Prudence and Bruce, who meet through an online ad with the help of their psychiatrists. But their date doesn't go quite according to plan... Matt Lapinskas and Tracy Shaw star.



COME DANCE WITH ME
Wed 25 Sept

Whenever life gets rough, everyone goes dancing! A darkly funny family drama full of spectacular routines, Come Dance With Me tells the true tale of two girls' hopes and dreams - and their extraordinary battle for survival through the tumultuous post-war years of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The show is choreographed by Richard Marcel - the man who puts Strictly couples through their paces.



GEORGE ELIOT BICENTENARY
various dates in October

Shows celebrating the bicentenary of Coventry resident George Eliot include: Photography Exhibition: Coventry Photographic Society look at the local places that inspired Eliot's famous novels. From George To George: Margaret Eddershaw's compelling verse-drama is based on Eliot's relationship with the love of her life, George Lewes. Silas Marner: Adapted from Eliot's story about a reclusive weaver and his redemptive relationship with a young orphan girl.



VOLGOGRAD/COVENTRY
Sun 27 Oct

A performance of traditional Russian dance, music and song to celebrate 75 years of the world's very first twin cities. Performances include Russian folk and ballet from children's dance company Volzhanochka. They'll be joined by local schools, composer/pianist Derek Nisbet, violinist Albert Zhmaev, pianist/conductor Yuri Ilinov and acclaimed soprano Yana Besyadynskaya.



SNOW QUEEN
Mon 9 - Sat 28 Dec

Ceridwen Theatre Company make a welcome return to the Albany to present their brand new adaptation of this iconic story - an inventive take on a classic tale of bravery, friendship, epic adventure and spellbinding magic. Combining music, thrills and humour, Snow Queen comes complete with a friendly talking Yeti, who'll be helping the audience as they head off on their journey to a land of ice, snow and danger...



THIS IS ME
Thurs 27 Feb

Strictly Come Dancing favourite Giovanni Pernice premieres his fourth year of touring at the Albany. Bringing together his natural Italian charm and infectious good humour with beautiful choreography and a memorable soundtrack, This Is Me pays homage to the music and dances which have inspired Giovanni on his career journey - from being a competition dancer to one of the biggest stars on Strictly.

Calendar Girls: The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 24 - Sat 28 September

Based on a true story, *Calendar Girls* tells the terrific tale of a group of women who spark a global phenomenon when they decide to pose nude for a charity calendar. Tim Firth and Gary Barlow's award-winning stage version of the hit Julie Walters film stars Sarah Jane Buckley, Sue Devaney, Julia Hills, Judy Holt, Ruth Madoc, Lisa Maxwell and Rebecca Storm.



Handbagged

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Fri 6 - Sat 28 September

As you'd expect from an Olivier Award nominee, *Handbagged* made a significant splash when it debuted in the West End. It speculates about the relationship between Her Majesty The Queen and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, two powerful and iconic women who were born in the same year. But what did the pair really talk about behind closed palace doors?

The play was written by Moira Buffini in 2010 and was originally a one-act show. Buffini expanded it in 2013, since which time it's garnered plenty of praise from theatre critics and audiences alike. This new version is directed by the playwright's sister, Fiona.

Dangerous Obsession

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Mon 9 - Wed 11 September

NJ Crisp's classic thriller finds Sally Driscoll being watched by a man through the window - a man who, while not a total stranger to her, is more likely to be remembered by her husband. Before too long, it becomes chillingly evident that the mysterious stranger has something more on his mind than simply making a social call...

The Merchant Of Venice

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Mon 30 September - Sat 5 October

Undoubtedly one of Shakespeare's most difficult, complex and controversial works, *The Merchant Of Venice* follows the fortunes of

the unfortunate Antonio, who bets on a venture that fails to repay and finds himself forced to borrow money from Shylock, a man he detests... This 90-minute production (specially created for children aged seven to 13) is brought to the stage by 22 actors from the RSC's Next Generation Company.



Peeling

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
Sat 28 September

Alfa, Beaty and Coral are fierce, intelligent female performers who, it seems, are always the chorus and never the lead. Why should that be? Perhaps because they're deaf and disabled performers - participants in a theatrical endeavour only because it allows the box of inclusivity to be ticked (even though the dressing rooms are inaccessible!)... Kaite O'Reilly's acclaimed play, first performed in 2002, shines a spotlight on the issue of inclusivity, questioning who are the real beneficiaries of the policy and vigorously challenging societal expectations of deaf and disabled women. Presented by the always-compelling Taking Flight theatre company.

Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Thurs 5 - Sat 7 September

This one-man show debuted to rave reviews at the Edinburgh Festival and depicts the legendary Quentin Crisp in two distinct phases of his extraordinary life: firstly in the late 1960s in his filthy Chelsea flat, where he surveys a lifetime of degradation and rejection; and then in New York in the 1990s, where, finally embraced by society, he regales the audience with his hard-earned philosophy on how to make the most of one's time on earth. "Life will be more difficult if you try to become yourself," he advises. "But avoiding this difficulty renders life meaningless. So discover who you are. And be it. Like mad!"

The production is written and performed by Mark Farrelly, whose next solo show will explore the life of controversial gay filmmaker Derek Jarman.



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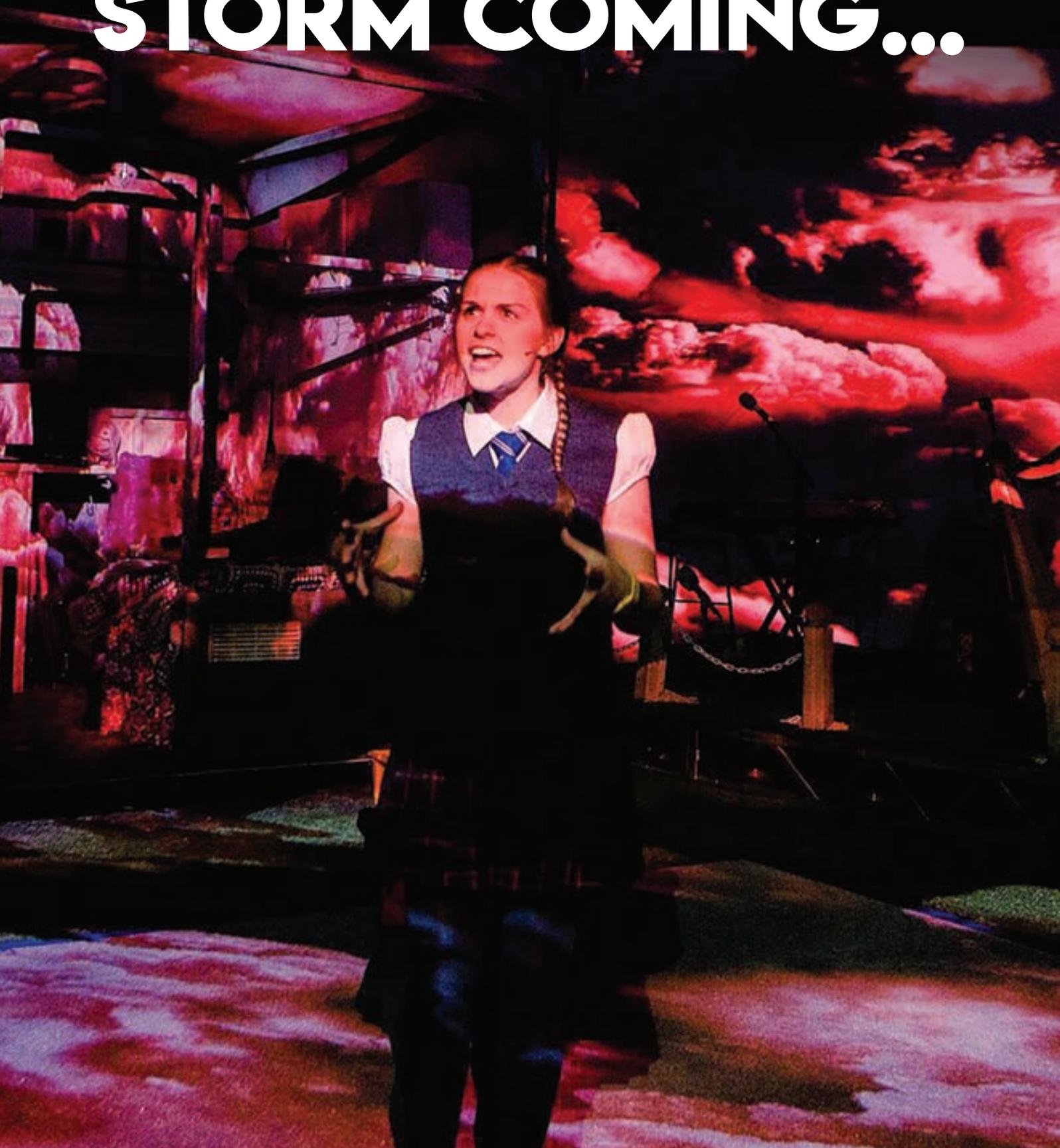


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**THERE'S A
STORM COMING...**



Eye Of The Storm is a ground-breaking climate change musical about the whirlwind world of a young carer who dreams of becoming a stormchaser in America...

The family show is a collaboration between Grammy-winning songwriter Amy Wadge and South Wales theatre company Theatr na nÓg. We spoke to Amy and Theatr na nÓg's director, Geinor Styles, to find out more about the show...

Although Eye Of The Storm is an award-winning family musical that confronts weighty issues including young carers, the climate emergency and the worrying decline in the number of girls studying science, songwriter Amy Wadge is determined to ensure that her music makes the show an uplifting experience for its audiences.

You may not know her name, but you will definitely have heard Amy's music. Her long-running songwriting partnership with Ed Sheeran has yielded numerous worldwide hits - as well as a Grammy award in 2016 for Thinking Out Loud. She has since worked with artists including John Legend, Kylie Minogue, Keith Urban and Camila Cabello.

Amy is excited about creating her first stage musical with South Wales company Theatr na nÓg: "You watch Stormzy at Glastonbury, where people are making a really strong point about something, about certain issues, but with music it's drip-fed in a way that feels exciting. And I think, emotionally, people who're going to the theatre are ready to be open to these things."

Amy and Theatr na nÓg's director, Geinor Styles, have just finished polishing off some new songs for Eye Of The Storm. After a short run in 2017, the show is returning for a UK tour this autumn. Amy is a woman in demand, so what did she find attractive about the idea of working on a project with a small, subsidised theatre company based in Neath?

"I knew of Theatr na nÓg and who Geinor was, but that was it, to be honest," she admits. "Thinking Out Loud had literally just come out, so life hadn't gone completely crazy yet, and I got an email asking if I wanted to provide some country songs for a show Geinor was developing. At that point I wasn't going back and forth to Nashville as much, so any chance I got to write country, I jumped on it. Geinor and I met and connected

straight away on the musicians we love."

The choice of a country-style songbook seems somewhat curious for a musical set mainly in a caravan park in South Wales.

"The main character, Emmie, dreams of being in America, chasing tornadoes," Geinor explains. "Driving those long distances, with that amazing landscape, it only ever seems to be country you hear on the radio there. The songs can be so poignant and yet really clever and ironic. Country tells a story within a song, so you don't have to play tricks with the audience."

Amy agrees about the choice of genre: "Obviously country is usually Texas or Tennessee or wherever, but there's something about Wales that, for me, lends itself to country music more than anywhere else in Europe. It's got a small-town vibe, and our character lives in a trailer park - albeit in Wales. The story talks about coming from nothing, and about hardship - the same stuff country music does."

Initially Geinor and her team developed Eye Of The Storm through drama workshops conducted with young carers in the Valleys and facilitated by Barnardo's: "One of the things they said to me was, 'Why would you do a play about being a young carer? We don't want to be labelled as that - you're not treating us as normal kids'. We then realised we needed to make the show about the aspirations of someone who just happens to be a carer."

The pressing problem of climate change has presented Geinor and Amy with a new creative challenge as they prepare to relaunch Eye Of The Storm two years on from its premiere. It was at that premiere that Louis Michaud, a Canadian scientist acting as the show's consultant, observed the power of the play's message.

Michaud's own invention - the Atmospheric

Vortex Engine, which artificially generates tornadoes - is being developed to create sustainable energies and features prominently in Eye Of The Storm.

"Originally all we wanted was for Emmie to be a girl with big aspirations who invents something to do with extreme weather systems," explains Amy. "It was only when Louis Michaud told us that what we'd done was create a climate change musical that we realised how important that aspect was. Since 2017, those issues have become a huge priority for all of us, and so we've tweaked a lot of the things about that. Emmie realises that what she does could change the world."

So does such heavy subject matter impinge on the process of creating an entertaining family-friendly musical?

"If you're clever about it, then you make something which, firstly, people will like and which isn't too preachy," says Amy. "It's not too highbrow but it says something. People accept messages in musicals much more these days."

Amy's recording studio is adorned with gold discs, numerous awards and framed photographs showing her hanging out with the likes of Stevie Wonder and Elton John. Could she be tempted away from the recording world again to write more musicals?

"I hope musical theatre features in my future. I've had offers, but it's a different challenge. In my usual job, I have to write to a strict brief and a record company will tell me 'this has to be a hit' or whatever, so to be given a script like Geinor's and to be able to do what I want with it...well, it was freeing. It's been a real gift."



Eye Of The Storm shows in Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio next month, on Tuesday 8 & Wednesday 9 October.

THE EXORCIST

iconic horror takes to the stage...



The Oscar-winning 1973 film version of William Peter Blatty's novel, *The Exorcist*, was one of the 20th century's most celebrated and successful movies. Now, a theatrical version that premiered in Birmingham and created a significant stir in the West End is returning to the Midlands as part of a national tour. What's On caught up with the man who wrote the stage show, John Pielmeier...

Inspired by a true story, *The Exorcist* was a successful novel and Oscar-winning film. Now, a new stage production is coming to the Midlands direct from the West End.

The show has been written by the award-winning John Pielmeier, who finds it surprising that no one had considered making *The Exorcist* into a stage production before: "The story is incredibly theatrical. It essentially takes place inside a house, mostly inside one room, with a small number of characters. It's very contained physically, but it's absolutely boundless in an emotional and intellectual way.

"Being in the same room in which it's all happening is a very different, wonderful experience to seeing a movie. Being in front of living people reenacting something right before your eyes in a very present, tense way is an incredible experience."

John has known about the story since the early 1970s, when William Peter Blatty's original novel was published. But it was the second time he delved into the book, decades later, that it had a profound effect on him: "The novel was very interesting, scary and moving, but it didn't affect me as much the first time I read it as it did when I re-read it for this project. I took on the stage adaptation because I found so much of it related to my own inner life. It spoke to me as a person, and it was also something I felt I could comment on.

"Yes, it's a story about a 12-year-old girl who's

supposedly possessed by the devil. But it's really about struggles of faith; the struggles that her mother has with her own lack of faith, and those of the priest who's trying to help her. I think all of us have gone through situations where we've changed our beliefs in some way; times when we've lost faith or gained faith in something."

John is particularly excited by the visual aspects of the production, which help bring the story to life on stage: "It was incredibly exciting seeing it for the first time. Ben Hart, who's the illusions designer on the show, is absolutely brilliant. I'd say, 'Ben, this is what I was thinking' and he'd have an even better idea because he knows so much more about it than I do."

Taking an interest in exploring the supernatural through his work with *The Exorcist* has helped John explore the concept of faith: "I probably don't believe in the devil in the way that he's characterised in the play, but I think symbolically it's a very powerful thing. I've always been fascinated by asking questions about the supernatural and not so much about finding the answers. A lot of these things we can't know the answers to - that's why faith is about taking something without proof."

The demon in *The Exorcist* will be voiced by Sir Ian McKellen.

"What was so exciting about that, for me personally, was to be in the studio when he made

those recordings. I was watching Ian McKellen doing all this amazing stuff. That was terrific."

John is thrilled that *The Exorcist* will be touring the UK: "I think it's so important to take productions on tour around a country, to make these stories accessible to people both financially and in terms of proximity. I think so many stories, and especially *The Exorcist*, have something important to say.

"I hope audiences will be excited by *The Exorcist* and a little scared by it at times. They might get a few of those chilling moments. But I hope they will come away with a feeling that it's not just a horror story; there's so much more to it than that."

Having enjoyed an extensive, successful career writing plays, screenplays and novels - winning numerous awards into the bargain - is there anything John feels he has left to achieve?

"I try not to think of things in terms of achievement. What I want to achieve is to keep working and creating. Having my creations take form in a way that's beyond what I ever could've imagined from the words on my computer is the best I can hope for."

.....

The Exorcist shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 October, and at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, from Tuesday 15 to Saturday 19 October.





Madagascar The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
Wed 25 - Sun 29 September

The smell of the greaspaint 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 The Potteries as Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Melman the Giraffe and Gloria the hip hip Hippo stampedede their way into Stoke-on-Trent at the end of this month.

Imaginative sets and costumes are all present and correct in a show that producers promise will send your kids home positively wild. X Factor-winner Matt Terry stars.

Stick Man

The Place, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 28 & Sun 29 September; The Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 1 - Wed 2 October

"Freckle Productions send shivers down my spine," reveals Julia Donaldson, the co-creator (along with Alex Scheffler) of the hugely popular children's book on which this show is based. "They're so lively and innovative. I love their production of Stick Man, and so do the audiences."

Julia's not wrong - audiences most definitely do love the show, as a smash-hit season in the London West End ably demonstrated. Featuring a trio of talented performers, the production brings together puppetry, songs, live music and 'funky moves' to tell the story of Stick Man's desperate attempts to get back to the family tree... The show is suitable for children aged three and older.



Hey Diddle Diddle

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 29 September; Sparc Arts Centre, Thur 10 October, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

If your youngsters have ever asked you how the cow jumped over the moon or why the dish ran away with the spoon in classic nursery rhyme Hey Diddle Diddle, you can now

point them in the direction of this brand new show to find out the answers.

Presented by Goblin Theatre Company, the production brings together puppetry and music in a 50-minute entertainment created for children aged three and older.



Dear Zoo Live!

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sun 8 - Tues 10 September; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 22 & Mon 23 September; Malvern Theatres, Tues 8 - Wed 9 October; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 21 - Tues 22 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 November

First published in 1982, Rod Campbell's lift-the-flap book has delighted generations of children and accumulated in excess of eight million sales worldwide.

This first-ever stage version of the story features child-friendly puppets, original music and lots of audience participation.

First Stages: What A Wonderful World

The REP, Birmingham, Sat 14 September

The ever-impressive Lyngo Theatre make a welcome return with a show created for

children aged between two and five.

This time round they're taking their audience on an 'amazing romp' through the universe.

Starting with 'putting the stars in the sky', then creating life and discovering fire, they finally arrive at the one-world tree, 'where we celebrate the new home that we made all together'.



Safari Adventure

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 15 September

A blend of action, songs, live music and audience participation should ensure this high-energy production is a real, er, *roaring* success of a show. The McDougalls - otherwise known as award-winning performers Ryan Moir and Ruairidh Forde - are off on safari to find some colourful creatures and critters. And find them they most certainly do, with laughing giraffes and monkeys who go bananas among the many and varied animals adding to the musical magic and mayhem. Young audience members (and older ones, for that matter!) are encouraged to come along dressed as their favourite animal.



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**IMAGINE A TIME
WHEN LOVE IS
FORBIDDEN...**

Sir Matthew Bourne brings a contemporary dance reimagining of Romeo And Juliet to the Midlands this month. What's On talks to him about his dystopian interpretation of Shakespeare's famous tale of forbidden love - the first new production from his New Adventures company in three long years...

There aren't many, if any, more distinguished figures in the dance community than Sir Matthew Bourne, whose choreography has featured in musicals, theatre productions and movies for more than 30 years. His own company, New Adventures, brings a new production of Romeo And Juliet to Birmingham this month. Shakespeare's classic tale of star-crossed lovers appears to be the perfect fit for the passionate and expressive art form of dance.

Combining Bourne's choreographic expertise, an adaptation of Prokofiev's famous score and a story by the world's greatest-ever dramatist, the production promises to be a show-stopping interpretation of one of literature's most famous tragedies.

"I avoided doing Romeo And Juliet for years," explains Matthew. "I think it was something everyone expected me to do, and it had been done in so many different ways in so many different mediums. I thought it would be hard to find a new way into it, which is something I always search for. The thing that really made me want to do it was the opportunity to work with young people. It's a story about them, and about young love. I got even more excited when it was suggested we cast it with young people and work with young creative associates in all the different departments of the show, alongside my usual world-class team. It's all about nurturing young talent and telling the story."

The intense tale of love at first sight, family feuds and death is one that works well as a dance piece: "The medium is very good at extreme emotions, and Romeo And Juliet as a story is certainly full of those. It has passion, love against the odds, and several extremes of murder and violence. It's all those big emotions. Shakespeare captured it very well.

"Young people are very hot-headed and react very quickly to things. One thing I've tried to bring out is that when young people first fall in love and feel that passion, they really go overboard in many ways. I often think about how classical ballet handles this, and how the

young girl gets very excited by a kiss on the cheek. Young people today, if they're into each other, are kissing until their mouths are sore. I have tried to capture that intensity."

Matthew's desire to stage Romeo And Juliet in a new and thought-provoking way led to him setting his production in a dystopian world where love is forbidden...

"It's set a little way into the future, but it's not quite futuristic. It's a time when society is frowning on young people having the excess of feeling and emotion which sends them off on wrong tracks as far as that society is concerned. I got the idea from Arthur Laurents, the co-creator of West Side Story, who was asked why the young people in it are violent and act the way they do. He said that they have too much feeling and need to find a way to release it. I thought that was an interesting way into the story and very true. It made me go in the direction I went in."

Matthew's vision even meant that Prokofiev's magnificent score had to be tweaked for the production: "While it's wonderful and lush for big opera-house productions, I wanted something a bit more earthy and a bit more quirky. We nervously went to the Prokofiev Estate and asked them if we could do a new arrangement. It's very faithful to Prokofiev's and it's only 15 musicians who multi-task and play lots of different instruments. It's quite rare for us to take an orchestra out on tour with us, but it's sounding wonderful and I hope the Prokofiev Estate is happy. It's a very recognisable score and that is really the script that we work with."

This world premiere tour of Romeo And Juliet follows a similar model to Matthew's Lord Of The Flies tour, in which the production was used to support emerging dancers by having them perform alongside New Adventures' professionals. Three of the young men from Lord Of The Flies have been cast in Romeo And Juliet, while others in the new production formed part of Matthew's 2019 Swan Lake company.

At each venue on the Romeo And Juliet tour, six up-and-coming dancers - three male, three female - will work with New Adventures: "They're an integral part of the show, not just token appearances. They're part of the main company. Our success stories from Lord Of The Flies have gone through several programmes that we run to nurture young British-trained dancers. We're very proud of those young guys, and we hope that this time we will bring into the fray some women who we've nurtured. We hope that will mean that even more people who started in Lord Of The Flies or Romeo And Juliet will come back into the company."

New Adventures have certainly had a stellar year so far, putting on four major productions, including company favourite Swan Lake. And Matthew himself has also enjoyed major success, being recognised at the Olivier Awards for his services to dance.

"It's been amazing. Swan Lake coming back is always a thrill because it introduces so many more people to dance and to our company. It always has an incredible effect on audiences around the country, and our casts are so devoted to it. Then, getting the Olivier Special Award right in the middle of creating a new show was rather good because the award can feel a bit like it's the end of your career and people are saying, 'Thank you, please stop'. So it felt great to be in the middle of a new creation like Romeo And Juliet. This year has been about the past and the future at the same time."

Despite his early misgivings about staging Romeo And Juliet, Matthew is very positive about his vision for the production: "What started out as quite a scary project involving so much untested talent and so many unknown young people has ended up being rather an exciting new show."

.....
Romeo And Juliet shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 September.

Dance previews from around the region



Birmingham Royal Ballet

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 September
& Wed 25 - Sat 28 September

Hippodrome-going dance lovers get not one but two chances to enjoy productions by the ever- exceptional Birmingham Royal Ballet this month.

BRB first take to the stage with a triple bill showcasing their collaboration with award-winning ensemble Ballet Black, a company dedicated to increasing diversity in the genre.

The bill opens with the fourth Ballet Now commission, *A Brief Nostalgia*, choreographed by young Queensland Ballet dancer Jack Lister and composed by Tom Harrold.

The evening also features performances of Cathy Marston's *The Suit* (pictured left) - an award-winning work about a broken marriage - and Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs*...

BRB then return four days later with David Bintley and Galina Samsova's highly acclaimed production of *Giselle*, a ballet which, along with *Coppélia* and *Swan Lake*, is one of the most celebrated of the 19th century.



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James Wilton Dance: The Storm

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 25 September

The award-winning James Wilton's choreography is always distinctive, his productions powered by an energy the audience can almost reach out and touch.

Wilton's in-demand company previously scored a massive hit with Leviathan - a retelling of Herman Melville's Moby-Dick which was widely considered to be the ensemble's best and most finely tuned work to date.

Wilton here makes a welcome return with The Storm, a show that combines acrobatics, breakdancing and martial arts with a soundtrack of thundering electro-rock.



Rosie Kay's Fantasia

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 25 & Thurs 26 September

Rosie Kay's Midlands-based company here present a work that perfectly illustrates why they are so highly regarded on the UK dance scene. Featuring three female dancers and a soundtrack comprising works by Vivaldi, Purcell, Beethoven and Bach, Fantasia fine-tunes choreography with neurological research to explore the relationship between dance, music and emotion.

Diversity: Born Ready

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, 21 September; The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Sun 3 November



With eight sell-out tours under their belt and more than half a million tickets sold, it's fair to say dance troupe Diversity have made the most of their 2009 success on Britain's Got Talent. The boys are this autumn visiting the region with 10th anniversary tour Born Ready. It's a show which creator and choreographer Ashley Banjo says "will not only look back at some of the iconic Diversity moments of the past 10 years, but will also look forward to the future, at how Diversity continues to evolve and how we plan to pass on what we've created to the next generation."

"Be prepared for dance, illusions, mind-blowing stunts and inspiring stories in a show that will hopefully leave people amazed!"



BalletBoyz: Them/Us

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 14 September

The ever-inventive BalletBoyz this month return to the Midlands with two high-energy and impressively innovative works.

Contemplating the question of where individuals see themselves in relation to the 'other', the all-male company present their own creation, Them, alongside a second work called Us. The latter, choreographed by the award-winning Christopher Wheeldon, has been inspired by the critically acclaimed duet which he created for the company's highly acclaimed 2017 production, Fourteen Days.



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The Goldfinch

CERT 15 (149 mins)

Starring **Ansel Elgort, Oakes Fegley, Aneurin Barnard, Finn Wolfhard, Sarah Paulson, Luke Wilson, Jeffrey Wright, Nicole Kidman**
Directed by **John Crowley (USA)**

Adapted from Donna Tartt's 2013 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, this drama follows the odyssey of a 13-year-old boy, Theo (Oakes Fegley, and later Ansel Elgort), whose mother is killed in a terrorist bombing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Out of the wreckage, Theo finds a painting of the eponymous bird that becomes a source of hope for him through his spiralling feelings of grief and then guilt. Nicole Kidman is already being tipped for an Oscar nomination in the category of best supporting actress. John Crowley's last film as director was the Bafta-winning *Brooklyn* (2015).

Released Fri 27 September



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in September...

It: Chapter Two CERT 15 (169 mins)

Starring **James McAvoy, Jessica Chastain, Bill Hader, Isaiah Mustafa, Bill Skarsgård**
Directed by **Andy Muschietti (USA)**

When the second version of Stephen King's *It* opened two years ago, it became the highest-grossing horror film of all time, eclipsing even *The Sixth Sense* and *The Exorcist*. A sequel, then, was inevitable. The new movie is set 27 years after the first, with the young losers from the original now all grown up and ready to face the evil clown Pennywise all over again... But, be warned, the film is 169 minutes long.

Released Fri 6 September



The Shiny Shrimps

CERT 15 (103 mins)

Starring **Nicolas Gob, Alban Lenoir, Michaël Abiteboul, Geoffrey Couët**
Directed by **Maxime Govare and Cédric Le Gallo (France)**



When an Olympic swimmer makes a homophobic comment on TV, he is disciplined by the national swimming body and forced to coach an up-and-coming and flamboyantly gay water polo team. It sounds loopy enough to be true, but is actually a fictitious comedy and a huge success in its native France.

Released Fri 6 September

Honeyland CERT 12a (87 mins)

Directed by **Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanov (Republic of Macedonia)**

A fly-on-the-wall documentary filmed in Macedonia, *Honeyland* is a unique contemplation of the fragile balance of nature. Its central character is a solitary woman who lives in harmony with her surroundings, harvesting wild honey and caring for the bees which she finds in a symbiotic relationship. Then she is invaded by new neighbours who want in on her act...

Released Fri 13 September



Hustlers CERT tbc (107 mins)

Starring **Constance Wu, Jennifer Lopez, Julia Stiles, Keke Palmer, Lili Reinhart, Cardi B**
Directed by **Lorene Scafaria (USA)**



Based on an article in New York magazine, Hustlers focuses on a group of strippers that struggles to find new ways to support themselves when the sex industry is hit by the financial crisis. But where there's a will...

Released Fri 13 September

Phoenix CERT 15

Starring **Ylva Bjørkaas Thedin, Maria Bonnevie, Sverrir Gudnason, Casper Falck-Løvås**
Directed by **Camilla Strøm Henriksen (Norway)**

At just 13, Jill (newcomer Ylva Bjørkaas Thedin) has taken on the role of sole carer for her close-knit family, including her younger brother and unstable mother. Threading in elements of fantasy, Phoenix has received glowing reviews for its debutante director, the Norwegian actress Camilla Strøm Henriksen.

Released Fri 13 September



Rambo: Last Blood CERT tbc

Starring **Sylvester Stallone, Paz Vega, Sergio Peris-Mencheta, Adriana Barraza, Yvette Monreal**
Directed by **Ric Roman Waugh (USA)**

Now 73, John J Rambo heads to Mexico to save a friend's daughter from the clutches of a local drug trafficking cartel... This is the fifth chapter in the Rambo franchise which kicked off with First Blood in 1982.

Released Thurs 19 September



The Farewell CERT PG (100 mins)

Starring **Awkwafina, Tzi Ma, Diana Lin, Zhao Shuzhen, Lu Hong**
Directed by **Lulu Wang (USA)**

Actress and rapper Awkwafina has been a scene-stealer in such films as Ocean's Eight and Crazy Rich Asians and now has the lead in this comedy-drama filmed in Changchun, China. She plays Billi, a Chinese-American writer who discovers that her beloved grandmother has been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. So she heads home for a planned goodbye celebration, while her grandma is kept in the dark about her imminent demise.

Released Fri 20 September

The Kitchen CERT 15 (89 mins)

Starring **Melissa McCarthy, Tiffany Haddish, Elisabeth Moss, Domhnall Gleeson, James Badge Dale, Margo Martindale**
Directed by **Andrea Berloff (USA)**

With their husbands no longer in the picture, the wives of certain gangsters take the law into their own hands in the Manhattan neighbourhood of Hell's Kitchen. And Hell hath no fury... In spite of the presence of Melissa McCarthy, this is no laughing matter.

Released Fri 20 September



Ad Astra CERT tbc

Starring **Brad Pitt, Tommy Lee Jones, Ruth Negga, Liv Tyler, Donald Sutherland, Kimberly Elise**
Directed by **James Gray (USA)**

When Roy McBride (Brad Pitt) sets off to the outer edges of the solar system to find his father, he inadvertently threatens the

status quo of earth's place in the cosmos. For his sci-fi mystery, the director James Gray went to huge pains to present the most realistic look at space travel yet committed to screen. Incidentally, the title is Latin for 'to the stars.'

Released Wed 18 September

Hotel Mumbai

CERT 15 (123 mins)

Starring **Dev Patel, Armie Hammer, Nazanin Boniadi, Tilda Cobham-Hervey, Jason Isaacs**
Directed by **Anthony Maras**
(USA/India/Australia)

A dramatic reworking of the documentary *Surviving Mumbai* (2009) which covered the 2008 terrorist attack at the Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai. Dev Patel plays a waiter who risks his own life to save the patrons he serves.

Released Fri 27 September



The Last Tree

CERT 15 (98 mins)

Starring **Tai Golding, Gbemisola Ikumelo, Nicholas Pinnock, Denise Black, Sam Adewunmi, Jammal Ibrahim**
Directed by **Shola Amoo** (UK)

Although of Nigerian heritage, young Femi (Golding) suffers major culture shock when he moves from the Lincolnshire countryside to inner-city London to be with his mother. He is now faced with some major life choices.

Released Fri 27 September

Poms

CERT 12a (113 mins)

Starring **Diane Keaton, Jacki Weaver, Pam Grier, Celia Weston, Alisha Boe, Phyllis Somerville**
Directed by **Zara Hayes** (UK/USA)

Aimed squarely at the grey pound, this comedy-drama is about a gaggle of women at a retirement home who form their own cheer-leading squad. The title refers to the brightly coloured pom-poms used by cheerleaders.

Released Fri 27 September



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Downtown Abbey

CERT PG (122 mins)

Starring **Hugh Bonneville, Jim Carter, Michelle Dockery, Elizabeth McGovern, Maggie Smith, Imelda Staunton, Penelope Wilton, Matthew Goode, Tuppence Middleton**
Directed by **Michael Engler** (UK)

Scripted by Julian Fellowes and with most of the original cast returning, this *Upstairs/Downstairs* soap should guarantee a huge audience of devoted followers of the

TV series. Here, the Yorkshire country estate is graced with a visit by HRH King George V (Simon Jones) and Queen Mary (Geraldine James), which will undoubtedly cause much excitement and a crash-course in regal etiquette for all concerned. Imelda Staunton joins the cast as Lady Bagshaw, which will be nice for her husband, Jim Carter, who reprises his role as the head butler, Mr Carson.

Released Fri 13 September

Ready Or Not

CERT 18 (95 mins)

Starring **Samara Weaving, Adam Brody, Mark O'Brien, Henry Czerny, Andie MacDowell**
Directed by **Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett** (USA)



On her wedding night, a young bride discovers that her new in-laws are off their respective trolleys as they involve her in a perilous game of hide-and-seek. Expect some pretty explicit violence.

Released Fri 27 September

Skin

CERT 15 (120 mins)

Starring **Jamie Bell, Danielle Macdonald, Daniel Henshall, Bill Camp, Vera Farmiga**
Directed by **Guy Nattiv** (USA)

In a remarkable transformation, Jamie Bell plays the heavily tattooed skinhead and white supremacist Bryon 'Pitbull' Widner whose path of destruction is stalled when he meets the love of his life. Inspired by the 2011 documentary *Erasing Hate* (2011).

Released Fri 27 September





British Ceramics Biennial in the China Hall of the original Spode Factory site. Photography: Joel Fildes

British Ceramics Biennial

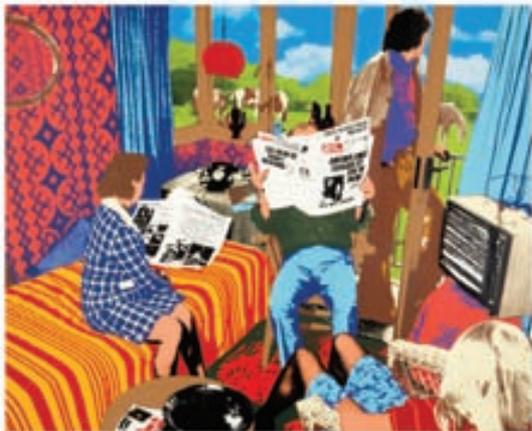
Various venues in Stoke-on-Trent,
Sat 7 September - Sun 13 October

An expanded programme of exhibitions, installations and events featuring more than 300 contemporary artists should ensure that the 10th anniversary of this hugely popular free festival is celebrated in fine style. Taking place across six venues, the event has as its centrepiece the vast China Hall, located in the former Spode Factory. The Hall features 13 exhibitions and hosts not only a number of workshops but also the festival's two flagship shows. The first, entitled Award, features new work by 10 leading ceramic artists, all of whom are vying for prize money of £10,000. The second, Fresh, showcases a selection of pieces by some of the UK's most promising ceramics graduates. Work by celebrated artists from other ceramic biennials around the world is also available to view.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery Tim Mara: Not Pop?

21 September 2019 - 29 March 2020

This exhibition presents work by Irish artist Tim Mara, bringing together items from the Gallery's collection and loans from his family and Advanced Graphics London. Featuring prints, sculptural works and ephemera from across Mara's career, the exhibition highlights his virtuosity as a printmaker and explores his associations with Pop Art.



Tim Mara, The Second Room (detail), 1971-3. ©The artist's estate

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Barry Flanagan

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham,
Wed 18 September - Sun 24 November

Welsh artist Barry Flanagan was best known for his bronze sculptures of animals; in particular, hares, but also cougars, elephants and horses. For many art critics, these iconic creations seem to be at odds with Flanagan's earlier pieces, which saw him using materials including rope, sand, cloth and stone.

This latest exhibition of his work seeks to challenge this popular viewpoint, demonstrating that his later output does not in fact display any sort of marked shift in his approach. Instead, it represents the distillation of what was a decades-long fascination for him - with ontology, with movement and with the physicality of the various materials in which he worked.



Amalia Pica

New Art Gallery, Walsall, Fri 20 September - Sun 19 January

British/Argentinean artist Amalia Pica is best known for producing installations and sculptural works which explore forms of communication and realms of civic participation.

Her latest presentation, a major solo exhibition, aims to explore the material culture of bureaucracy, as exemplified by shredded paper and items of office stationery.

Pica uses her personal experience of obtaining British citizenship - and the wider context surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union - to provide a unifying conceptual framework for her show.

"Every now and then, there is a moment when things fall together and events string into narratives," says Amalia in explaining her art. "In such a moment, things appear to make sense - but, like any moment, it's temporary. It's that sense of time as something lived and fleeting that I try to capture in my work. My art comes together to exist, to make sense of something or of itself, and then to fall apart."

Thoughts On Portraiture

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Mon 18 November

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery's autumn exhibition provides visitors with a rare chance to view an impressive range of expressionistic artworks from the city's collection.

Exuding a palpable psychological intensity, the pieces explore the experiences, beliefs, fears and passions either of the people who created them or

of those who are depicted. Many of the artworks on view are receiving their first public outing, taking up positions alongside a number of favourites not seen for some time.

The exhibition includes artwork by, among others, Pablo Picasso, Ana Maria Pacheco, Frank Auerbach and the Birmingham-born David Bomberg.



Jim Holyoak & Matt Shane: The Hills Are Shadows

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 21 September - Sun 24 November

This is the 20th collaboration between Jim Holyoak and Matt Shane, Canada-based artists best known for presenting large-scale dream-like pieces which expand across entire walls during the course of their exhibitions...

And Jim and Matt are producing just such

an artwork at Midlands Arts Centre this month and next. The pair will be on site for the first five weeks of their show, creating a new drawing that will grow from the other exhibition pieces and weave its way across 12 metres of gallery space.

BIRMINGHAM WEEKENDER IS BACK!

Birmingham Weekender is back - and for the 2019 edition, the festival has set up home in Digbeth, the city's creative quarter. Featuring a FREE programme of dance, music, art and performance - presented by some of Birmingham's leading artists and arts organisations - the three-day event takes place from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 October. Check out a few of this year's highlights below...



Dance

Dance Hub Birmingham presents work from dance artists across a range of disciplines, each responding to the unique Digbeth location.

Dance meets projection in Sonia Sabri Company & Cirque Bijou's *Kindred*, bringing nature and technology together... Join *Altered Skin* for *It's Your Round*, combining dance with a pint and a chat at *The Old Crown*... Experience two b-boys colliding at the *Custard Factory* in a collaboration from *Jamaal*

O'Driscoll and Marius Mates... And get a flavour of some of the best professional dance currently being made in the city by checking out Birmingham Dance Network's *Introducing*. *Jamaal Birkmar*, *Carlos Pons Guerra* and *Birmingham Royal Ballet* also make contributions not to be missed.



Performance

There's a competitive edge to performance at this year's Weekender. Birmingham Hippodrome present DJ Pyskhomantus' *VisionBombing Game Show*, which sees the city's hip-hop artists compete in a number of game formats - think hip-hop meets *A Question Of Sport* with a bit of *The Krypton Factor* thrown in for good measure! Weekender visitors also get to decide the Grand Prize winner of internationally celebrated performance artist *Symoné's Fierce Flow*, which brings New York's '80s voguing culture to Digbeth.





The Glue Collective

For children

Families are warmly welcomed to Birmingham Weekender In Digbeth (see the website for any specified age guidance). Some events are designed specifically with children and young people in mind. Highlights include experimenting and exploring with The Glue Collective in their yurt, which offers a quiet, safe space where children and adults of all ages can make

potions and mud pies. Birmingham Repertory Theatre, meanwhile, invites youngsters to explore the classic story of Peter Pan through an action-packed workshop of games and drama. Other attractions for families to enjoy include Think Tank's Science Garden, which can be visited for free throughout the weekend, and a Digbeth-based workshop hosted by the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Music

Birmingham Weekender In Digbeth features concerts, pop-up performances and musical workshops. Join master drummer Ansoumana 'Vieux' Bakayoko for an African drumming workshop, or check out the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's classical concert, directed by one of the world's most celebrated violinists, Dmitry Stikovetsky. World music pops up too, as Sampad and Eastside Projects join forces to present the

unique South Asian sound of Kefaya, performing alongside percussionist Bernhard Schimpelsberger. And if you fancy a blues adventure, Big Bear Music's Leaving Mississippi Birmingham Bound is the show to catch. Tracing the history of the blues, from the cotton fields of Mississippi, through Memphis, New Orleans and Chicago, to rock, heavy metal and Birmingham's Black Sabbath, the production is presented over the three nights of Weekender.



Big Bear Music

Street Arts

Break Mission present a weekend of hip-hop events featuring dance, music, street sports and art. There's an international dance competition too, DJ and rap battles both indoors and

outside, and an open skate tournament. A street sports showcase includes some crazy BMX stunt riders and Parkour free runners. Throughout the weekend Live Graffiti will add to Digbeth's much-loved graffiti walls.



Break Mission



Eastside Projects

Art

Digbeth is the spiritual home of the city's thriving contemporary art scene. For Birmingham Weekender In Digbeth, galleries are opening their doors to present special exhibitions and performances - so why not dare to try something new at Eastside Projects, Grand Union Gallery

& Studios, Vivid Projects or Centrala. You can also roll up your sleeves and Play With Clay with Sundragon Pottery, add your welcome to Redhawk Logistica's A Million Welcomes, and check out the latest gaming innovations at Birmingham Open Media's Hacked! exhibition.

Discover Digbeth

Digbeth is fast developing a reputation as the coolest place to be. In this post-industrial area - just a short walk from Bullring and Moor Street Station - contemporary art galleries, music venues, artists' studios, street food vendors, cafes, restaurants and even an independent cinema rub shoulders with small industrial businesses, universities and colleges.

Discover Digbeth for yourself by joining professional West Midlands writers BOLDtext on a sometimes giddy, often unhygienic theatrical walking tour aimed at uncovering the area's hidden history. Expect to be guided through childhood memories and ushered past passionate exchanges on a one-hour stroll. Alternatively, drop by on Friday night as Birmingham Weekender joins up with the popular Digbeth First Friday for an evening of late-night openings and free performances.

You can find full listings and programme information at birminghamweekender.com

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Peaky Blinders Festival

Digbeth, Birmingham, Sat 14 & Sun 15 September

The first official Peaky Blinders-themed festival takes place this month, allowing the show's creators, stars and fans to come together in the series' home city and create what promises to be an imaginative immersive event.

Attractions across the weekend include live recreations of Peaky Blinders scenes, fashion shows and five different music stages.

Artists confirmed for the festival include Scottish rock band Primal Scream, Mercury Prize-nominee Anna Calvi, Slaves and Nadine Shah.

There's also a BBC Introducing stage and a host of music performances reflecting one of the sharpest soundtracks on television.

The festival has been co-curated by the show's creator, Steven Knight, and also features a live Q&A with the man himself and some of the series' stars.

HSBC Let's Ride

Coventry city centre, Sun 8 September

Following the success of last year's event, British Cycling and HSBC make a welcome return to Coventry this month, providing thousands of locals with the opportunity to explore their city from the saddle. The event aims to build excitement in the run-up to the UCI World Championships and ties in closely with local cultural attractions.



Midland Game Fair

Weston Park, Staffordshire, Sat 14 & Sun 15 September

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

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

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



British Science Festival

Various venues throughout Coventry, Tues 10 - Fri 13 September

In partnership with the University of Warwick, the British Science Association brings an imaginative programme of science & culture events to various venues around Coventry this month.

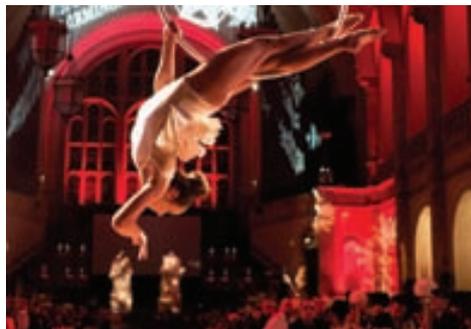
The event is Europe's longest-established science festival, celebrating world-leading research in areas including energy, transport, healthcare and digital innovation.

Highlights include a workshop on the art of Persian dance and numerous talks exploring the politics of scientific issues.



Science Of The Circus

Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Sat 14 September



Roll up, roll up, the circus is coming to Thinktank! Combining the wonder of performance with the underlying science that helps create the magic of the circus, this unique event sees the ever-brilliant CircusMASH taking over Thinktank for the day.

Visitors can learn how science makes tricks easier to master, enjoy CircusMASH's brand new space-themed show, marvel at talented local performers and have a go at circus tricks while busying themselves exploring the museum.

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A Place In The Sun Live

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 20 - Sun 22 September

The official exhibition of Channel Four's popular series, A Place In The Sun Live is the perfect event at which to negotiate the process of finding a property abroad. More than 150 exhibitors will be flying in from

locations including Spain, France, Portugal, Italy and Florida to showcase a wide range of properties and answer potential punters' purchasing questions.

The stars of the TV show will be on hand to share top tips for overseas property hunting, while a panel of experts will take visitors through the ins and outs of buying a home abroad.

The Trampoline & Tumbling Championships

Arena Birmingham, Sat 28 & Sun 29 September

With the Tokyo Olympics less than a year away, the gymnasts participating in this ever-popular event will certainly be looking to impress.

Olympic medal-winning trampolinist Bryony Page takes on stiff competition from Kat Driscoll and Laura Gallagher, while Nathan Bailey and Luke Strong go head-to-head for the men's trampoline crown.

Other attractions include the very best of Britain's DMT gymnasts, who'll be executing plenty of high-flying stunts to take your breath away.



Retro Truck Show

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, Sat 7 & Sun 8 September

This always-popular show is now in its ninth year and features up to 400 of the best trucks produced between 1970 and 2000.

A celebration of top truck manufacturers including Volvo, Scania, DAF and Foden, the event also features an indoor model show, live entertainment, a licensed bar and a Saturday night disco.



The Cycle Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 13 - Sun 15 September

The UK's biggest cycling event, The Cycle Show features the very latest bikes and accessories and gives enthusiasts the opportunity to discover all that's new in the industry.

Main-stage attractions include industry talks, interviews with professionals and the chance to pick up plenty of hints and tips about cycling - from how to get started to safety for families. Visitors to the 2019 edition of the show also have the chance to be among the first to test-ride some of the latest models.

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Imagineers: Bridge

Coventry City Centre,
Thurs 26 - Sat 28 September

Bridge is the latest large-scale project from the team behind the Festival Of Imagineers, Coventry's week-long annual celebration of art and engineering. The festival has collaborated with artists and civil engineers Arup to create the project, which sees its host cities taking part in

a programme of bridge building and artistic activity. Crafted by engineers and turned into an audience-pleasing spectacle by artists and performers, the project features numerous pop-up events throughout its three days. It climaxes on the Saturday evening with a show comprising theatre, comedy, circus acrobatics and live music.



Malvern Autumn Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern,
Sat 28 & Sun 29 September

A weekend of home-grown family fun is in store at the Malvern Autumn Show this month. For green-fingered visitors, there's not only the chance to stock up on plants and bulbs for winter, but also an opportunity to glean some useful know-how from the gardening and floral experts in attendance - including Gardener's World presenters Alys Fowler and Joe Swift.

Other show highlights include the Giant Vegetables Championship, numerous floral displays, family fun & games such as mini-golf and giant Jenga, and a jam-packed dog show. New for 2019 is the Malvern Gin Show, featuring gin producers from across the three counties and beyond.



Step Back In Time

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove,
Sat 28 & Sun 29 September



Travel back in time to 1459 and learn all about the Battle of Bewdley Bridge, as Avoncroft Museum transforms into a medieval village for the weekend. Visitors can enjoy watching skilled re-enactors, talk to knights, ladies and squires, and witness archery competitions and weapon drills. Highlight of the weekend is the jousting tournament, where skilled riders and their highly trained horses take part in one-to-one combat to win favour with the audience.

The weekend also offers plenty of opportunity to explore Avoncroft's 19-acre grounds and enjoy its collection of 30 rescued and restored buildings.

Autumn Steam Gala

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley,
Nr Kidderminster,
Thurs 19 - Sat 22 September

Check out an array of home-fleet and visiting steam locomotives at Severn Valley Railway's ever-popular Autumn Steam Gala.

Attractions include: overnight running on the Friday and Saturday; an early-morning express from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth on the Friday and from Bewdley to Bridgnorth on the Saturday and Sunday; Eardington Halt open visits; and the chance to enjoy Paddock Railway & Coalyard Miniature Railway in steam.



The Glamping Show

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire,
Thurs 19 - Sat 21 September

Glamping - a more luxurious form of camping - has become increasingly popular during the last few years and is now a prominent part of the leisure industry.

This annual show presents a wide selection of pop-up, temporary and pre-pitched accommodation solutions, including yurts, tipis and safari tents.

The show also offers a diverse range of seminars, presented by experts and suited not only to complete beginners but also those who're looking to grow and diversify their business.





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the list

Your week-
by-week
listings guide

September 2019



Ben Elton at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre - Mon 23 September

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

What's On

Sun 1 to Sun 8 September



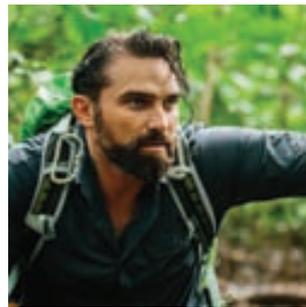
Kapow: The Summer Of Comic Art - Engnivity, Ironbridge
until Sun 1 September

Mon 9 to Sun 15 September



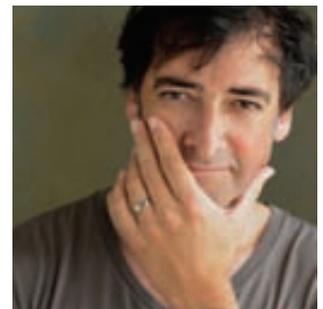
Ludlow Food Festival in South Shropshire
Fri 13 - Sun 15 September

Mon 16 to Sun 22 September



Ant Middleton at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
Wed 18 September

Mon 23 to Mon 30 September



Alistair McGowan at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
Sat 28 September

THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER

Visual Arts

New Art Gallery - Walsall

4 BED DETACHED HOME OF METAL Contemporary art collides with metal culture in this unique exhibition created by artist Alan Kane and commissioned as part of Home Of Metal, until Sun 1 Sept

KATHLEEN RYAN Installations feature a variety of materials, from cast iron and precious stones to found objects, including bowling balls, until Sun 22 Sept

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

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

NEW CAPTURING THE PAST Take a trip down memory lane through the eyes of local artists and photographers, Sat 14 Sept - Sun 3 Nov

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

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, until Sun 1 Sept

APOLLO 50: COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST MANNED LUNAR LANDING Multimedia exhibition featuring models and memorabilia telling the epic story of the Apollo programme, until Sun 3 Nov

NEW ARRIVALS: 2018 Display of flora and fauna never before seen in the county, until Wed 1 Jan

Qube Gallery, Oswestry

QUBE OPEN 2019 Display of shortlisted entries to this year's Open exhibition, the theme of which is 'inclusion', until Mon 30 Sept

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

DRAWN OF THE DEAD Selection of Charlie Adlard's original works from the Walking Dead comic series, presented alongside immersive, set piece installations created by sculptor Andrew Bryden, until Sun 3 Nov

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

AUTUMN OPEN EXHIBITION 2019 Work showcasing different styles across a wide range of disciplines, Sat 31 Aug - Sat 19 Oct

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

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR Annual exhibition, developed & produced by the Natural History Museum, which is visiting Wolverhampton as part of a world-wide tour and for the first time showcasing the full collection of 100 images and 45 digital shots, until Sun 1 Sept

Other VISUAL ARTS

VAN SUMMER EXHIBITION Selected work from members of VAN, until Tues 10 Sept, University Centre, Shrewsbury

BRITISH WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER AWARDS EXHIBITION Featuring the 2018 Awards' winners and commended entries, until Tues 10 Sept, Jackfield Tile Museum, Telford

VICTORIOUS EXHIBITION Exhibition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria, until Thurs 26 Sept, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal

NEW FRAGMENTS Exhibition by Jemma Gunning and Mark Lippett exploring themes of dereliction, abandonment and the loss of industry, Mon 2 Sept - Sat 26 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

NEW BRITISH CERAMICS BIENNIAL Celebrating its 10-year anniversary, the Biennial is the UK's premiere ceramics festival, Sat 7 Sept - Sun 13 Oct, Stoke-on-Trent City Centre

NEW SECRET SEVERN ART TRAIL Talk to artists at work and walk the trail to view the inspiring art that's made in the area, Fri 20 - Sun 29 Sept, Various locations in the Ironbridge Gorge

NEW A SENSE OF PLACE British artist's roots and significant places, Sat 21 Sept - Sat 26 Oct, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Ludlow

NEW THUMP OF THE TALE - RUTH BUCHANAN AND JULIE GROSS Exhibition featuring some of the artists' earlier animal studies, published works and sketchbooks, Sat 28 Sept - Wed 30 Oct, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal



Gin Annie - The Robin, Bilston

Gigs

DENMARK STREET BIG BAND - SINATRA AND ME

Sun 1 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HEIDI BROWNE Sun 1 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

LUTHER: A CELEBRATION OF LUTHER VANDROSS Sun 1 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GRYPHON - REINVENTION Sun 1 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

DANNY JONES Mon 2 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FÖLLAKZOID Mon 2 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LIFE SIGNS Wed 4 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

MARTIN SIMPSON Wed 4 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BYE BYE BABY - CELEBRATING FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Thurs 5 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LUTHER: A CELEBRATION OF LUTHER VANDROSS Thurs 5 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

THE BUTTERS ALIENS + THE MACHINE RAGES ON + DEFTONES UK Thurs 5 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

KOAN SOUND Fri 6 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

UN:KNWN Fri 6 Sept, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

LET'S HANG ON Fri 6 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LOS PACAMINOS FEATURING PAUL YOUNG Fri 6 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

RAMMLIED Fri 6 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

CEILIDH WITH THE REEL HOT CEILIDH PEPPERS Fri 6 Sept, Lichfield Guidhall

LEGEND Fri 6 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

HATS OFF TO LED ZEPPELIN Fri 6 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

SHOOT THE SYMPHONY, CANDID AND BOHMEN Fri 6 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

WHITFIELD CRANE Fri 6 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BLACK CELEBRATION - DEPECHE MODE TRIBUTE Fri 6 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

TALON - BEST OF THE EAGLES Fri 6 - Sat 7 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

K-TRAP Sat 7 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

EFFERVESCENT Sat 7 Sept, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

THE DROP & SONS OF YODA Sat 7 Sept, Ludlow Brewery, South Shropshire

A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY Sat 7 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE S.L.P. Sat 7 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

LABOUR OF LOVE - UB40 TRIBUTE Sat 7 Sept,

The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE INDIGO MACHINE Sat 7 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

T-REXTASY Sat 7 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GIN ANNIE Sat 7 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE BOOTLEG SHADOWS Sat 7 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE PAUL SCHAFFER TRIO Sat 7 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

THE POLECATS & IGNITION Sat 7 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

THE JAM'D Sat 7 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

ANDY HUGHES Sun 8 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY Sun 8 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BERNIE MARSDEN'S SNAKE NIGHT Sun 8 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

BRASS BAND GALA 2019 Sun 8 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ROCK GODDESS + HEAVY PETTIN Sun 8 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

A 60'S NIGHT WITH THE MERSBEATS AND THE SWINGING BLUE JEANS Sun 8 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE STARS FROM THE COMMITMENTS Sun 8 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Comedy

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 5 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GORDON SOUTHERN, SAM AVERY, RICHARD MASSARA & HAYLEY ELLIS Thurs 5 Sept, The George Hotel, Lichfield

EDDY BRIMSON, HANNAH SILVESTER, ROB MULHOLLAND & COMIC TBC Thurs 5 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

COMEDY AND CURRY NIGHT WITH KATE LUCAS, JONATHAN ELSTON & IAN STONE Fri 6 Sept, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

MIKE WILMOT & COMIC TBC Fri 6 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY AWSUM, NIGEL NG & WAYNE BEESE Fri 6 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

MARLON DAVIS, JAKE LAMBERT, STEVE SHANYASKI & FREDDY QUINNE Sat 7 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

Theatre

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

VENICE PRESERVED Fast-paced version of Thomas Otway's Restoration tragedy, until Sat 7 Sept, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

REDCOATS Mikron Theatre delve into holiday huts and bonny baby contests... Sun 1 Sept, The Anchor Inn, High Offley, Nr Woodseaves, Staffordshire

LOOK TO THE WEST END SKY Evening of musical theatre presented by West End performers, Mon 2 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Inventive two-man staging of Arthur Conan Doyle's acclaimed Sherlock Holmes mystery, Mon 2 - Sat 14 Sept, Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

ON YOUR FEET! Smash-hit musical inspired by the true love story of Emilio and Gloria Estefan, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

CABARET John Partridge stars as Emcee in a new staging of the famous musical, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

QUENTIN CRISP: NAKED HOPE Mark Farrelly's acclaimed solo play, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL New production of Dolly Parton's rip-roaring musical comedy, Fri 6 - Sat 14 Sept, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE LOVELY BONES Alice Sebold's coming-of-age tale returns to The

REP following its well-received debut run last year, Fri 6 - Sat 21 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

HANDBAGGED Moira Buffini's critically acclaimed drama explores what might have happened when two of Britain's most iconic women - HRH Queen Elizabeth II & Margaret Thatcher - came face-to-face, Fri 6 - Sat 28 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

ONE NIGHT ONLY South Staffs Musical Theatre Company present a concert compilation of show tunes, drama, dance and comedy, Sun 8 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Talks

AN EVENING WITH SIR RANULPH FIENNES Sir Ranulph talks about his life of adventure, Mon 2 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE P WORD: POETS, PRATTLERS & PANEMONIALISTS Black Country collective comprising Emma Purshouse, Steve Pottinger and Dave Pitt, Wed 4 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

AN EVENING WITH ALICE ROBERTS: DIGGIN INTO BRITAIN'S PAST Thurs 5 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MALORIE BLACKMAN: NOUGHTS & CROSSES Malorie Blackman talks about Crossfire, the latest novel in her bestselling series, Noughts & Crosses, Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

Cabaret

BIANCA DEL RIO Thurs 5 Sept, Arena Birmingham



Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

PAIN AND GLORY (15) Drama. Starring Antonio Banderas, Penelope Cruz. Foreign language, subtitled. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 30 Aug - Thurs 5 Sept

MRS LOWRY & SON (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Vanessa



Kapow: The Summer Of Comic Art - Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

Redgrave, Timothy Spall. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 30 Aug - Thurs 5 Sept; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 30 Aug - Thurs 5 Sept

PLAYMOBIL: THE MOVIE (U) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Dino Andrade, Gabriel Bateman. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 30 Aug - Sun 8 Sept

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Tuppence Middleton, James Purefoy. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 2 Sept

AN INCONVENIENT SEQUEL: TRUTH TO POWER (12a) Documentary. Starring Al Gore, Cory Booker. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Mon 2 Sept

SOMETIMES ALWAYS NEVER (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Bill Nighy, Alice Lowe. Wem Town hall, North Shropshire, Tues 3 & Thurs 5 Sept

AMAZING GRACE (U) Documentary/Music. Starring Aretha Franklin. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 6 - Thurs 7 Sept

BEL CANTO (15) Drama/Music. Starring Julianne Moore, Ken Watanabe. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Sept

BAIT (15) Drama. Starring Edward Rowe, Mary Woodvine. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 - Thurs 12 Sept

ONCE UPON A TIME... IN HOLLYWOOD (18) Comedy/Drama. Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 - Thurs 12 Sept

MISSING LINK (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Hugh Jackman, David Walliams. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sun 8 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 6 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

IT: CHAPTER TWO (tbc)
RAPID RESPONSE (12a)

Events

LEGO CITY Featuring character appearances, new building activities and the chance to explore what a city of the future would look like, until Sun 1 Sept, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

THE BLACK COUNTRY AT PLAY Celebration of games and toys, until Sun 1 Sept, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

FREDDO'S TREASURE TROVE Cadbury's Freddo dons his captain's hat to teach little ones about what it takes to become a pirate, until Sun 1 Sept, Cadbury World, Bournville, B'ham

KAPOW: THE SUMMER OF COMIC ART Take inspiration from the Comic Art exhibition and join in comic-themed workshops, until Sun 1 Sept, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

SUMMER ACTIVITIES AT BLISTS HILL Travel back to the Victorian era and enjoy an action-packed day, until Sun 1 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire

HISTORIC HEROES Uncover inspiring stories and follow in the footsteps of Black Country heroes, until Sun 1 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SUMMER OF FUN Enjoy a whole host of events, shows, activities and meet & greets, until Sun 1 Sept, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

FAMILY FUN - KNIGHTS, DRAGON AND

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Peaky Blinders Night - Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

PRINCESS TRAINING Learn new skills as you follow the dragon's map, until Sun 1 Sept, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

GET HANDS-ON WITH HISTORY Uncover England's myths & legends and take part in hero sword school and junior jousting, until Sun 1 Sept, Stokesay Castle, Nr Craven Arms, South Shropshire

MOON LANDING MAIZE MAZE Find and solve space-themed puzzles to help the lunar crew fix their spacecraft and return home safely, until Mon 2 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent

PIRATES AND MERMAIDS Enjoy 'the ultimate underwater adventure', until Sun 8 Sept, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

RETURN TO THE FAIRY BALL Trail & scavenger hunt in preparation for the Arboretum's annual fairy ball, until Sun 8 Sept, Arley Arboretum, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

KNIGHT SCHOOL AT BLAKESLEY HALL Learn the code of chivalry and the ways of combat with swordfighter Mark Vance, Sun 1 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

SPITFIRE 10K AND SPITFIRE FAMILY RUN COSFORD 2019 Fundraising event, Sun 1 Sept, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

ON THE BUSES Featuring more than 25 beautifully preserved vintage and modern buses, Sun 1 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR Explore Victorian Weston, Sun 1 Sept, Weston Park, Staffordshire

GUIDED TOUR: HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS Learn about how the Gardens were designed and have evolved over time, Wed 4 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: SOHO ROOFTOP TOURS Enjoy panoramic views from the roof of Soho House, Wed 4 - Thurs 19 Sept, Soho House, Birmingham

IN-SITE FESTIVAL Graduates transform

the outdoor space around the cathedral by creating unusual craft interventions, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral Grounds

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Step back in time to the Roaring 20s and discover the murky underground world of the Peaky Blinders, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SUMMER NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL Featuring screenings of Jurassic Park, Bohemian Rhapsody and Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

HIGH VIS STREET CULTURE FESTIVAL Day-long celebration of all things street culture, from street art to street food, graffiti to graphic novels, skateboarding to breakdancing, Sat 7 Sept, Digbeth, Birmingham

SCHOOL OF ROCK - PRESENTED BY COLMORE CINEMA CLUB & BMAG To celebrate the venue's Home Of Metal exhibition, Colmore Cinema Club screens the Jack Black movie, School Of Rock, Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

JEWELLERY QUARTER HERITAGE WALK Guided walk looking at the people, places and themes that have helped to shape the district, Sat 7 Sept, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

THE WIGHTWICK MANOR MYSTERY A prized possession has gone missing - can you help to solve the mystery of its disappearance? Sat 7 - Sun 8 Sept, Wightwick Manor, W'hampton

BRITISH CERAMICS BIENNIAL Taking place across six local venues, Sat 7 Sept - Sun 13 Oct, various locations in and around Stoke-on-Trent City Centre

ARCHIVES OPEN DAY Featuring memorabilia related to the Trust, Sun 8 Sept, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

VICTORIAN GARDENS TOUR AND AFTERNOON TEA Tour of the formal gardens with the head gardener followed by afternoon tea in the Victorian Orangery, Sun 8 Sept, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal, Shropshire

ARTISAN MARKET AT THE WORLD OF WEDGWOOD Featuring 50-plus stalls

showcasing fine foods and hand-crafted products, Sun 8 Sept, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

CLASSIC BUS RUNNING DAY Take a ride on a classic vehicle, Sun 8 Sept, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

ETRURIA STATIONARY VINTAGE ENGINE AND CLASSIC VEHICLE RALLY WITH ENGINE AND MILL 'IN STEAM' Vintage stationary engines are 'in steam' on the Saturday, with classic cars and commercial vehicles on display on the Sunday, Sun 8 Sept, Etruria Industrial Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

ONBOARD THE CRAFT Line-up includes Evil Blizzard, Here & Now, Mr Strange, Under Groundhogs & more... Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Sept, Stoke Prior Country Club, Bromsgrove

BROMYARD FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Kathryn Tickell & The Darkening, Flook, The Daoiri Farrell Trio, Rosier & more... Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Sept, around the town, Bromyard, Herefordshire

Food & Drink

CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL Bridgnorth-station event featuring 60-plus real ales, ciders and perries, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

ALE & CIDER FESTIVAL Spend the day sampling a variety of beers, ales & ciders from a host of Birmingham brewers, Sat 7 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

TAMWORTH FOOD GUSTO FESTIVAL Featuring live music, cooking demonstrations, children's activities & more... Sat 7 - Sun 8 Sept, Tamworth Castle Pleasure Grounds, Staffs

Festivals

MOSELEY FOLK & ARTS FESTIVAL Line-up includes Don McLean, Jake Bugg, Public Service Broadcasting, The Zutons, Richard Thompson, Edwyn Collins & more... Fri 30 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Moseley Park, Birmingham

BACK TO THE 80'S AND 90'S FESTIVAL 2019 Line-up includes Tony Hadley, Nik Kershaw, East 17, S Club Party, Jive Bunny & more... Fri 30 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Cattows Farm, Heather, Leicestershire

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BROTHERS BEYOND
Sunday 29 September
7.30pm • £19

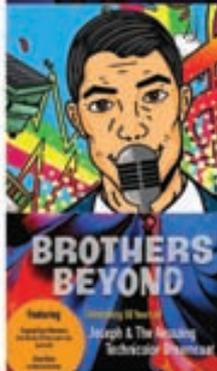
GO NOW!
THE MOODY BLUES



GARY POWNDLAND



BROTHERS BEYOND



OCTOBER

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY
Saturday 5 October
7.30pm • £25

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK
Wednesday 9 & Thursday
10 October • 7.30pm • £13
Schools £11

PITMEN POETS
Wednesday 16 October
7.30pm • £20

THE THREE DEGREES
Thursday 17 October
7.30pm • £25

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY
FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS



THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK



PITMEN POETS



THE THREE DEGREES



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COMING SOON...

2 September - 26 October
Fragments Exhibition
Where nature reclaims its space
Tickets: FREE

4 September, 7.30pm
The P Word: Poets, Prattlers & Panemorialists
Tickets: £7

10 - 14 September, 7.30pm
Sat Mat, 2.30pm
Mellow Dramatics - Here We Go Again
Tickets: £12 / £10

2 October, 7.30pm
The P Word: Lydia Towsley & Ruth Stacey
Tickets: £7

4-6 October, 11am & 1.30pm
We're Going On A Bear Hunt
Tickets: £10

18 October, 7.30pm
Derek Acorah 'The Eternal Life' Tour
Tickets: £21

23 October, 7pm
Once Upon A Wednesday: Matt Black & Maria Whotton
Tickets: £7

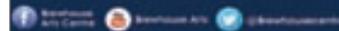
25 October, 7pm
Vienna Festival Ballet - Snow White
Tickets: £18.50 / £16.50 conc.

30 October, 1.30pm
Marty Macdonald's Toy Machine
Tickets: £10

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





The Christians - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Gigs

ALICE CHATER Tues 10 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MAN Tues 10 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SHARON SHANNON & BAND WITH SPECIAL GUEST SECKOU KEITA Wed 11 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SYD LAWRENCE ORCHESTRA - BIG BAND SPECTACULAR Wed 11 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

FROTH Wed 11 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BLUES CARAVAN 2019 STARRING INA FORSMAN, ALLY VENABLE AND KATARINA PEJAK Wed 11 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

TRASH BOAT Thurs 12 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DANBERT NOBACON Thurs 12 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

GIRL POWER: SPICE GIRLS TRIBUTE Thurs 12 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CREEDANCE CLEARWATER Thurs 12 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE BLUEJAYS Thurs 12 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Staffordshire

KING KHAN'S LOUDER THAN DEATH Thurs 12 Sept, Hare & Hounds,

Birmingham

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK Thurs 12 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

JACQUIE MCSHEE WITH KEVIN DEMPSEY Thurs 12 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Walsall

FLEETWOOD BAC Fri 13 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WEST COAST EAGLES Fri 13 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE AC30'S Fri 13 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BIG COUNTRY Fri 13 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SOMEONE LIKE YOU: THE ADELE SONGBOOK Fri 13 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

FIGHT THE BEAR & WITHOUT WARNING Fri 13 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE URBAN VOODOO MACHINE Fri 13 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

MOTLEY CRUDE VS POISON Fri 13 Sept, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke-on-Trent

LOS PACAMINOS FEATURING PAUL YOUNG Fri 13 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE CHRISTIANS Fri 13 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TIM GARLAND Sat 14 Sept, The Hive, Shrewsbury

THE CUREHEADS VS SIOUXSIE AND THE BUDGIEES Sat 14 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

REV HAMMER Sat 14 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's Stourbridge

THE JAM'D Sat 14 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SOUL'D OUT UK Sat 14 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

MONEY FOR NOTHING Sat 14 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shrops

FLASH: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Sat 14 Sept, The Place, Telford

ONE STOP BOOGIE Sat 14 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

HERESY Sat 14 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

WINGWALKERS Sat 14 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

FASTLOVE - GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE Sat 14 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

METAL MILITIA Sat 14 Sept, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke-on-Trent

BROKEN MINDS PRESENTS: LOVE MUSIC, HATE RACISM Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ARIANA GRANDE Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Arena Birmingham

THE WORLD OF WHITFIELD CRANE Sun 15 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JADE DUNCOMBE Sun 15 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CLIFF & THE SHADZ Sun 15 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

HOZIER Sun 15 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES Sun 15 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE JOHN MARTYN PROJECT Sun 15 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

JJ MARSH Sun 15 Sept, Eleven, Sandford, Stoke-on-Trent

Classical Music

A CELEBRATION OF OPERA Celebrate the wonder of opera in the company of Mozart, Verdi, Bizet, Puccini, Offenbach, Gilbert & Sullivan and more, in a feast of some of the greatest music ever composed, Wed 11 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CZECH NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: HARRY POTTER & THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE John Williams' unforgettable score live, Wed 11 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE OPERA BOYS Sat 14 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

JOHN CHALLENGER ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Francois Couperin, Jehan Alain, J.S. Bach, William Lloyd Webber, Harold Darke & César Franck, Sat 14 Sept, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

ORGAN PROM Featuring George Gillow (Clare College Cambridge) & Alex Goldsmith (St. Mary & St. Chad Longton), Sat 14 Sept, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

LAST NIGHT OF THE ROTARY PROMS 2019 Featuring City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Treorchy Male Choir and Anthony Inglis (conductor), Sat 14 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

NATHAN CATON (PICTURED), ROSIE JONES & DAN NIGHTINGALE Wed 11 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



MAWAAN RIZWAN Thurs 12 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

PHIL NICHOL & THANYIA MOORE PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 12 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM HESS, SUNIL PATEL Fri 13 Sept, Cherry Reds Cafe-Bar, Birmingham

MATT STELLINGWERF, MIKE MCCLEAN & TIM CLARK Fri 13 Sept, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

ROB ROUSE Fri 13 Sept, Henry Tudor

House, Shrewsbury

PHIL NICHOL, THANYIA MOORE, CARL HUTCHINSON & ADAM HESS Fri 13 - Sat 14 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

JIMMY CARR Sat 14 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

CHRIS RAMSEY, DALISO CHAPONDA, SCOTT BENNETT & WAYNE BEESE Sat 14 Sept, Cornbow Hall, Halesowen

JARLATH REGAN, MORGAN REES, QUINCY & BARRY CASTAGNOLA Sat 14 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 14 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Theatre

THE FIZZOGS: BACK IN OUR DAY Comedy charting the friendship of three Black Country women who met through their shared love of dance, Mon 9 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DANGEROUS OBSESSION NJ Crisp's compulsive psycho-thriller, Mon 9 - Wed 11 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE HAUNTING The Nonentities present an amateur staging based on original ghost stories by Charles Dickens, Mon 9 - Sat 14 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

HERE WE GO AGAIN Compilation show by The Mellow Dramatics, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

LAST PODCAST ON THE LEFT An evening of all things horror with hosts Ben Kissel, Marcus Parks and Henry Zebrowski, Wed 11 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

JEKYLL & HYDE 'Chilling' adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale of good & evil, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Sept, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK Show celebrating the life and career of Rod Stewart, Thurs 12 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

ABSOLUTE HELL Provocative play plunging audiences into a post-war Soho, Thurs 12 - Sat 21 Sept, Sutton Arts Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

GARY POWNDLAND AND FRIENDS 'Wolverhampton's own internet sensation' presents 'an entertaining slice of suburban absurdity', Fri 13 Sept, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

IN LOYAL COMPANY The true story of missing World War Two soldier and prisoner of war Arthur Robinson, Sat 14 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

NELL GWYNN 'Bawdy, joyful and irreverent account' of the rise to fame of a most unlikely heroine, Sat 14 - Sat 21 Sept, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

RUBY WAX: HOW TO BE HUMAN Ruby is

thelist

joined by Buddhist monk Gelong Thubten & neuroscientist Ash Rappaport in a show 'to help you upgrade your mind as much as you've upgraded your iPhone.' Sun 15 Sept, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

REDCOATS Mikron Theatre delve into holiday huts and bonny baby contests... Sun 15 Sept, St Thomas & St Andrews, Doxey, Staffordshire

Kids Shows

THE FAMILY FOLK SHOW Award-winning folk duo Megson present a concert for younger children, Sat 14 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham



WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD Lyngo Theatre presents a show for children aged between two and six, Sat 14 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

SAFARI ADVENTURE Roaring musical adventure packed with action songs, live music and audience participation, Sun 15 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Dance

MATTHEW BOURNE'S ROMEO & JULIET Contemporary re-imagining of Shakespeare's famous love story, told in classic Matthew Bourne style, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

BALLETBOYZ: THEM/US Innovative double-bill which questions where we see ourselves in relation to 'the other', Sat 14 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Talks

AN EVENING WITH ALICE ROBERTS: DIGGIN INTO BRITAIN'S PAST Wed 11 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AN EVENING WITH BRIAN BLESSED Brian talks about his acting career and life of adventure, Thurs 12 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AN EVENING WITH SIMON WESTON CBE Featuring footage from the Falklands War and a Q&A session, Thurs 12 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

RETURN TO EVEREST Shrewsbury

climber and doctor Adam Booth talks about his attempts to climb the Everest 'triple crown', Sun 15 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (12) Biography/Drama. Starring Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 9 Sept

THE LADYKILLERS (PG) Comedy/Crime. Starring Alec Guinness, Peter Sellers. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 10 Sept

THE CAPTOR (15) Comedy/Crime. Starring Ethan Hawke, Noomi Rapace. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 10 Sept

3 FACES (15) Drama. Starring Behnaz Jafari, Jafar Panahi. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 10 Sept

EDIE (12a) Drama. Starring Sheila Hancock, Kevin Guthrie. Wellington Orbit, Telford, Thurs 12 Sept

THE HUNDRED-YEAR OLD MAN (15) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Robert Gustafsson, Iwar Wiklander. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 13 Sept

PAIN AND GLORY (15) Drama. Starring Antonio Banderas, Penelope Cruz. Foreign language, subtitled. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 13 - Thurs 19 Sept

WONDER PARK (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Sofia Mali, Jennifer Garner. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sun 15 Sept

STYX (12a) Drama. Starring Susanne Wolff, Gedion Oduor Wekesa. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sun 15 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 13 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

DOWNTON ABBEY (PG)

HUSTLERS (tbc)

PHOENIX (15)

HONEYLAND (tbc)



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 SUN 1 SEP GRYPHON REINVENTION	 THU 12 SEP CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW UK THEATRE TRIBUTE SHOW TO CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL	 SUN 22 SEP THE HAYLEY GRIFFITHS BAND FORMER KARNATAKA LEAD VOCALIST
 THU 5 SEP THE MACHINE RAGES ON + DEFTONES UK UK'S TRIBUTES TO RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE + DEFTONES	 FRI 13 SEP BIG COUNTRY	 MON 23 SEP FÉLIX RABIN THE BEST OF ROCK AND BLUES + SUPPORT BEN HEMMING
 FRI 6 SEP LEGEND THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY	 SAT 14 SEP SOUL'D OUT UK THE BEST SOUL, MIDTOWN & NORTHERN SOUL PARTY BAND IN THE MIDLANDS!	 WED 25 SEP JCM FT CLEM CLEMPSON, MARK CLARKE AND RALPH SALMINS
 SAT 7 SEP GIN ANNIE A NIGHT OF HIGH OCTANE HARD ROCK	 SUN 15 SEP CLIFF & THE SHADZ UK TRIBUTE TO CLIFF RICHARD AND THE SHADOWS	 THU 26 SEP MARTIN TURNER EX WISHBONE ASH CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
 SUN 8 SEP ROCK GODDESS + HEAVY PETTIN TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME	 THU 19 SEP THE STRAYS A RAUCOUS GARAGE ROCK N ROLL BAND	 FRI 27 SEP MADONNA VS CHER - LIVE! FT LIVE ON STAGE YOGUE + BELIEVE IN CHER
 TUE 10 SEP MAN LEGENDARY WELSH ROCKERS	 FRI 20 SEP BACK:N:BLACK THE ULTIMATE ALL GIRL TRIBUTE TO AC/DC	 SAT 28 SEP THE COUNTERFEIT STONES "THE BEST FALSBAND STONES HAVE IN THE UK"
 WED 11 SEP BLUES CARAVAN 2019 HOUSE-ROCKING LIVE MUSIC	 SAT 21 SEP KICK UP THE 80'S THE ULTIMATE 80'S PARTY BAND!	 SUN 29 SEP THE REASONING RE-AWAKENING 2019 "LAST HURRAH" + SPECIAL GUESTS DOORS AT 12.00PM
	 MON 30 SEP CROW BLACK CHICKEN BLUES ROCK FROM IRELAND'S DEEP SOUTH	

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Events

WELLINGTON WALKING FESTIVAL Featuring a mixture of events, some old favourites and a few new ventures, Mon 9 - Sun 15 Sept, various locations in and around Wellington, Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK AT CADBURY WORLD Free heritage talks and tours, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: MEET SIR THOMAS HOLTE TOUR The man himself takes visitors on a guided tour! Wed 11 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

OPEN-AIR CINEMA Featuring screenings of *A Star Is Born*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Rocketman*, Wed 11 - Fri 13 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: A SERVANT'S LIFE GUIDED TOUR Special guided tour focusing on the life of the servants at Aston Hall, Thurs 12 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

CORACLE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP Charity event featuring coracle racing on the River Severn, Fri 13 Sept, Pengwern Boat Club, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Take part in free costumed tours, Fri 13 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Step back in time to the Roaring 20s and discover the murky underground world of the Peaky Blinders, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE CYCLE SHOW The UK's biggest event for cycling enthusiasts, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE PAINTING IN ACRYLIC Create an acrylic painting of autumn flowers & foliage found in Mitton Manor's garden at this time of year, Sat 14 Sept, Mitton Manor, Staffordshire

PROMS & PROSECCO IN THE PARK Six hours of pop, classical and musical theatre, with a Last Night of the Proms finale, Sat 14 Sept, Chetwynd Park, Newport

BAT WALK Guided walk with a local bat expert, Sat 14 Sept, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - OLD YARDLEY WALK Join experts from the Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society for a stroll around the village, Sat 14 Sept, Blakesley Hall, B'ham

REGENT THEATRE VENUE TOUR Go behind the scenes at a working theatre, Sat 14 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - GUIDED TOUR Free tour of Weoley Castle, Sat 14 Sept, Weoley Castle Ruins, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: HERITAGE OPEN DAY Free costumed guided tours of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory, Sat 14 Sept, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS 'Dramatic', costumed evening tour, Sat 14 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

HANDS ON HISTORY Meet characters from the past, find out what life was like and have a go at all sorts of 17th century activities, Sat 14 Sept, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

SCIENCE OF THE CIRCUS Learn new skills and see how science can make each trick easier to master, Sat 14 Sept, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

NEW VIC THEATRE OPEN DAY Chance to look behind the scenes and find out how the theatre puts on its shows, Sat 14 Sept, New Vic Theatre, New-castle-under-Lyme

THE FIZZOGS MURDER MYSTERY EVENING - WHO KILLED LITTLE WILLIE? An evening of 'suspense, dastardly deeds, drama and intrigue'..., Sat 14 Sept, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

MIDLAND GAME FAIR 'The premier event of its kind in the country', Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Weston Park, Staffs

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Look inside Middleport's historic bottle oven, see the steam engine, delve into the bathhouse and check out the Victorian offices, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Middleport Pottery, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent

HERITAGE BUS TOUR Vintage bus trip between Oswestry and Llyncllys South Stations, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Cambrian Heritage Railways, Oswestry, North Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: HERITAGE OPEN DAY Free entry and costumed guided tours, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

OSWESTRY SOUTH SIGNAL BOX Chance to view the refurbished, Grade II listed signal box, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Cambrian Heritage Railways, Oswestry, North Shropshire

BRITISH GT & BRITISH F3 CHAMPIONSHIPS Donington Park's full Grand Prix circuit sets the scene for the British GT Championship's 2019 season finale, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Donington Park, Castle Donington

HISTORIC CANAL BOATS VISIT Step on board the museum's retired cargo-carrying narrowboats, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Etruria Industrial Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

BELLRINGING Climb the tower to visit the ringing chamber and examine historic items and records of ringers going back to 1750, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, St Marys Church, Stafford

STEAM POWERED POTTERS' MILL See a Victorian Potters' Mill in steam and operating all weekend, Sat 14 - Sun



Ludlow Food Festival, South Shropshire

15 Sept, Etruria Industrial Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS AT HARTLEBURY CASTLE Meet some of the castle's characters and get hands-on with the museum collections, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster

THE LEGITIMATE PEAKY BLINDERS FESTIVAL Official celebration of the hit TV series, co-curated by its creator, Steven Knight, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Digbeth, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Visit Aston Hall for free as part of Birmingham Heritage Week and Heritage Open Days, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

VICTORIAN LIVING HISTORY Step back in time and join the Victorian governess, housekeeper and servants as they go about their daily tasks, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Tamworth Castle

SHREWSBURY CIVIC SOCIETY TRUST Take advantage of free entry into one of Shrewsbury's oldest buildings, take a walking tour of the medieval heart of Shrewsbury and check out a Charles Darwin exhibition, Sat 14 - Fri 20 Sept, The Bear Steps Gallery, Shrewsbury

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS AT BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME Series of events celebrating the theatre's 120th birthday, Sat 14 - Sat 21 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE FESTIVAL OF IMAGINATION Fiesta of arts, crafts, culture, virtual reality, music, poetry, family-friendly events, food & drink offers & more... Sat 14 - Sun 29 Sept, Ironbridge, Shropshire

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Explore over 500 stalls packed with all kinds of collectable toys, trains and models for sale, Sun 15 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

BIKING TO BOTTLE OVENS Join Potteries Heritage Society and partners for a morning cycle that takes in 28 iconic bottle ovens in the south of Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 15 Sept, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY - THE SPITFIRE Local historian & broadcaster Ray Johnson hosts a free talk, complete with archive film material, Sun 15 Sept, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS AT SAREHOLE MILL Visit the 18th century mill and enjoy a free costumed tour, Sun 15 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAY Explore the Botanical Gardens, bring a picnic and enjoy the beautiful scenery, Sun 15 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

BOOTS AND ROOTS FAMILY FESTIVAL Enjoy messy outdoor play, learn new skills and take in the fresh air, Sun 15 Sept, Hawkstone Park & Follies, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: HERITAGE OPEN DAY Walk in the footsteps of some of Birmingham's greatest industrialists, learn about the Boulton family and life in the 18th century, and find out about the servants who worked at Soho House, Sun 15 Sept, Soho House, Birmingham

FALCONRY DAY The birds of prey fly over the ruins of Weoley Castle, Sun 15 Sept, Weoley Castle Ruins, B'ham

MID AUTUMN FESTIVAL Celebration of Chinese culture featuring traditional dances, face-changing magic & musical performances, Sun 15 Sept, The Birmingham Conference & Events Centre

Food & Drink

BRINDLEYPLACE FOOD FESTIVAL Debut event, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Sept, Brindley The Place, Birmingham

LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring 180-plus exhibitors, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Sept, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

We're Going
On A Bear Hunt
4th - 6th October



Jackie &
The Beanstalk
27th October



Mini Makers
Workshops
From 14th September

FAMILY FUN

at The Brewhouse

THE 2019th
BIG
DRAW
FESTIVAL

The Big Draw
27th October



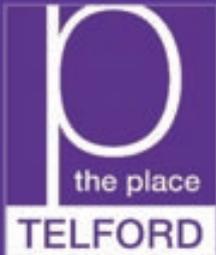
Marty Macdonald's
Toy Machine
30th October

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Shows 2019



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music



STARS OF IRISH COUNTRY
Wed 25 Sept @ 7.30pm

dance



DREAMBOYS
Thurs 26 Sept @ 7.30pm

music



THE QUO EXPERIENCE
Fri 27 Sept @ 7.30pm

music



POP DIVAS LIVE!
Sun 13 Oct @ 3.00pm

music



THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY
Wed 16 Oct @ 7.30pm

sport



**ALL STAR SUPERSLAM
WRESTLING**
Fri 18 Oct @ 7.30pm

music



QUADROPHONIA NIGHT
Sat 19 Oct @ 7.30pm

family



THE SOUND OF MUSIC
Wed 23 - Sat 26 Oct @ 7.30pm
Sat Matinee @ 2.30pm

comedy



JIMEOIN - RAMBLE ON!
Tues 29 Oct @ 7.30pm

Gigs

PIXIES Mon 16 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

FERRIS & SYLVESTER Mon 16 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE BLUEJAYS Mon 16 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE SNUTS Mon 16 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MUSE Tues 17 Sept, Arena Birmingham

RESPECT: THE ARETHA FRANKLIN SONGBOOK Tues 17 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BIG HEATH Tues 17 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

STEPHEN MALKMUS Tues 17 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

AITCH Wed 18 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE DELEGATES Wed 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ARRIVAL - HITS OF ABBA Thurs 19 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

SPEAR OF DESTINY Thurs 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE CHESTERFIELDS Thurs 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS Thurs 19 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JACQUI DANKWORTH Thurs 19 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



THE STRAYS Thurs 19 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SAINT LOE Fri 20 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

NATHAN CARTER Fri 20 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

U2 UK Fri 20 Sept,

Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

ALEXANDER O'NEAL Fri 20 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

U2 VS SIMPLE MINDS Fri 20 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THEON CROSS Fri 20 Sept, Hare & Hounds Birmingham

BACK:N:BLACK Fri 20 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

JIVE TALKIN' - THE BEE GEES Fri 20 Sept, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

SCOTT MATTHEWS Fri 20 Sept, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury



THE UNRECEIVED Fri 20 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

DAN BUDD AS ROBBIE WILLIAMS Fri 20 Sept, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

FIREBALL Sat 21 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE HARA Sat 21 Sept, The Asylum, B'ham

THE ONE LOVE BAND Sat 21 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CUSTARD CONNECTION Sat 21 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

DAN WHITEHOUSE AND BOO HEWERDINE Sat 21 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN - THE SHAKIN STEVENS STORY Sat 21 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

KICK UP THE 80'S Sat 21 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

QUEEN RHAPSODY Sat 21 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LEE MEAD - MY STORY Sat 21 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

BLADE BROWN Sat 21

Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE JONI MITCHELL SONGBOOK Sat 21 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE SNUTS Sat 21 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BOO HEWERDINE Sat 21 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

DEP LEPPARD Sat 21 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

GO NOW! THE MUSIC OF THE MOODY BLUES Sat 21 Sept, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

DARKSIDE Sat 21 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KHALID Sat 21 Sept, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

80'S MANIA Sat 21 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

FETTY WAP Sun 22 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SHREWSBURY BEATLES WEEKEND PRESENTS LUNCHTIME LIVE AT 'THE CAVERN' Sat 22 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MILOS - THE VOICE OF THE GUITAR Sat 22 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SCOTT COWEN Sun 22 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE MERSEY BEATLES Sun 22 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ORIAN HULTEN Sun 22 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

PAUL SIMON'S GRACELAND PERFORMED BY THE LONDON AFRICAN GOSPEL CHOIR Sun 22 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

YOU WIN AGAIN - CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF THE BEE GEES Sun 22 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE HAYLEY GRIFFITHS BAND Sun 22 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BEN PORTSMOUTH IS ELVIS Sun 22 Sept, Arena Birmingham

Classical Music

BRITTEN-SHOSTAKOVICH FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA Featuring Jan Latham-König (conductor) and Pavel Kolesnikov (piano). Programme includes works by Britten, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky, Tues 17 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE SIXTEEN Featuring Harry Christophers (conductor). Programme includes works by Plainsong, Sir John Tavener, John Sheppard, Eric Whitacre, Robert Wylkynson, Robert Fayrfax, Gabriel Jackson & Sir James MacMillan, Thurs 19 Sept, St Philips Cathedral, Birmingham

Comedy

ROB DELANEY Mon 16 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

LIZA TREYGOR Tues 17 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

EDDIE IZZARD Tues 17 - Sat 21 Sept, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

RUSSELL HOWARD Wed 18 Sept, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham



TAPE FACE Thurs 19 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

PAUL MCCAFFREY PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 19 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY MEIKLE Fri 20 Sept, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

MICKY OVERMAN, PAUL MCCAFFREY, PAUL F TAYLOR & MAFF BROWN Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

DAVE JOHNS Sat 21 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, MARK SIMMONS, ROGER MONKHOUSE & DAISY EARL Sat 21 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ADAM ROWE, MIKE COX, BARRY DODDS & DAMIAN LARKIN Sat 21 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ANNA NICHOLSON Sat 21 Sept, St Lawrence's Church, Ludlow, Shropshire

RUSSELL HOWARD Sun 22 Sept, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

VINCE ATTA, DANNY PENSIVE, DAN NIGHTINGALE Sun 22 Sept, Theatre

Severn, Shrewsbury

JUNIOR JESTERS WITH VINCE ATTA, BOOTHBY GRAFFOE, JOHN COOPER Sun 22 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DESI CENTRAL COMEDY SHOW Sun 22 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

IMPROV COMEDY WITH BOX OF FROGS Sun 22 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

Theatre

HOT FLUSH Hit show about 'the friendships, secrets, tears, laughter and ups and downs of four ordinary women - and one man - living extraordinary lives', Mon 16 Sept, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

IN AND OUT OF CHEKHOV'S SHORTS 'Exhilarating, fun and accessible' romp through some of Chekhov's finest short stories, Tues 17 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HOT FLUSH Hit show about 'the friendships, secrets, tears, laughter and ups and downs of four ordinary women - and one man - living extraordinary lives', Tues 17 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

RICHARD III Presented by LADS Theatre Group, Tues 17 - Wed 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHICAGO Intimate version of the acclaimed musical, Tues 17 - Sun 22 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MAD ABOUT THE MUSICALS Wed 18 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic variety show featuring hits from the '50s to the '80s, Wed 18 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

A BUNCH OF AMATEURS Kidderminster Operatic & Dramatic Society present an amateur staging of Ian Hislop & Nick Newman's comedy, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET Presented by Quarry Bank Musical Theatre Youth Society, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

KING JOHN Shakespeare's rarely performed tale of a nation in turmoil, Thurs 19 Sept - Sat 21 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

REBEL MUSIC Robin French's new play, celebrating Midlands' diverse music legacy, Thurs 19 Sept - Sat 5 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

WILDLIFE ROAD TRIP Informative show 'packed with fascinating facts and fun for the whole family', Fri 20 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

CHOICE GRENFELL Tribute to Joyce Grenfell featuring some of her best-known songs and monologues, Fri 20 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BRAVERY TO THE BELL Evening of fam-

Wellington Festival - October



This October's festival will run from October 19th to October 26th

The programme of events starts with Silly Songs and Music Monologues from Three Men in a Bow Te at the Belmont Hall on Saturday evening October 19th.



Bring your own bottle to better enjoy Shrugovira's renowned comedy trio or quartet if, as expected, Freda the female farmer makes her usual guest appearance!

Our popular acoustic pub crew is back and takes place on Sunday 20th in various Wellington locations.

Fast forward to Thursday 24th October when we will have a WW2 theme discussion of 'My Secret Life in Hut Six' by Matt and Gettin Russell Jones at the Walnut restaurant on Ten Back at Agm followed by The Code Breakers Dr Enigma, an illustrated lecture by Dr Mark Baldwin accompanied by an original Enigma machine, at 7.30pm situated at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

On Friday 25th, A.J. Griffiths-Jones will be narrating the story of Jack the Ripper at The White House Hotel.

Saturday 26th will feature our 'Meet the Author' event, 10.00-1.00 in Wellington Library, and finally on Saturday evening, Wellington's very own Brass Band will perform as will the Shrewbury Whens Choir, both at our Parish Church, All Saints.

Other events surrounding the festival are the Schools Poetry Competition and the Stamp and Coin Fair on Sat Oct 12th in the Belmont Hall.

For more updates please follow our social media:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/WellingtonTCShropshire



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THE UNHEARD TALE TO MAKE YOU LOOK AGAIN

Wednesday 18 - Saturday 28 September 2019	Longton Methodist Central Hall, Stoke-On-Trent	Tickets - £8/£10 To book visit www.potboilertheatre.com
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ABBA TRIBUTE BAND

SWEDE DREAMZ

**Friday 18th October
Doors Open 7pm**

Dust off your best 70s bellbottoms and knee-high platform boots for an unforgettable evening with Abba tribute band, Swede Dreamz! Dancing Queens will be encouraged to sing along as the look-alike band perform a long list of classic hits, such as Mamma Mia, Waterloo and Super Trouper.

No need to Take a Chance on the weather - Swede Dreamz will be performing indoors.

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please contact reception**
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ily entertainment while raising funds for Children With Cancer UK charity. Performers include Fleur East, Joe McEldey and Flawless, Sun 22 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Dance

BRB MIXED PROGRAMME Birmingham Royal Ballet collaboration with Ballet Black, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

MIDLAND YOUTH BALLET: TRIPLE BILL Featuring excerpts from The Tales Of Beatrix Potter, Cinderella & La Fille Mal Gardee, Sat 21 Sept, The Brew-house Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

Talks

ANT MIDDLETON - MIND OVER MUSCLE Brand new show in which Ant talks about the mental strength it took to complete his recent SAS series and huge Everest challenge, Wed 18 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



AN AUDIENCE WITH GARETH LEWIS With over 20 years experience of working in the spirit world, Gareth Lewis presents his Our Journey Continues show, Wed 18 Sept, Cornbow Hall, Halesowen

AN EVENING WITH STEVE BULL The Wolves legend in conversation with broadcaster, writer and Wolves supporter Johnny Phillips, Fri 20 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BRADLEY WIGGINS: AN EVENING WITH... Britain's most decorated Olympian tells his story, Fri 20 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DRAPERS HALL PRESERVATION TRUST A talk on the history of the Shrewsbury Drapers Company, Fri 20 Sept, Drapers Hall, Shrewsbury

MY NAME IS WHY: IN CONVERSATION WITH LEMN SISSAY The poet, playwright & broadcaster reads from his new memoir and reflects on his childhood in care, self-expressionism and Britishness... Fri 20 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

THE BEATLES IN COMICS: A TALK BY TIM QUINN Former Marvel Comics comic-book creator Tim takes a look at 100 of the best (and worst!) comic books to feature the Fab Four, Sun 22 Sept, The Hive, Shrewsbury

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS

RED JOAN (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Judi Dench, Sophie Cookson. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 16 Sept

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Margot Robbie. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, North Shropshire, Mon 16 Sept

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Viveik Kalra, Hayley Atwell. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 17 & Thurs 19 Sept

EASY RIDER (18) Adventure/Drama. Starring Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 18 Sept

TOLKIEN (12a) Drama/Biography. Starring Nicholas Hoult, Lily Collins. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept

THE SISTERS BROTHERS (15) Comedy/Crime. Starring John C. Reilly, Joaquin Phoenix. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept

DOWNTON ABBEY (PG) Drama. Starring Hugh Bonneville, Maggie Smith. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 Sept - Thurs 3 Oct

ARE YOU PROUD? (15) Documentary. Starring Michael Cashman, Lisa Power. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sun 22 Sept

Events

WORLD WAR 2 TO PRESENT DAY Learn about Hanley Park's important role during the Second World War, Mon 16 Sept, Hanley Park, Stoke-on-Trent

BEHIND THE SCENES AT SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES Check out the Archive's impressive collections, Tues 17 Sept, Shrewsbury Library

WORLD WAR 2 TO PRESENT DAY Learn about Hanley Park's important role during the Second World War, Wed 18 Sept, Hanley Park, Stoke-on-Trent

BELLRINGING Climb the tower to visit the ringing chamber and examine historic items and records of ringers going back to 1750, Wed 18 Sept, St Marys Church, Stafford

SECOND CITY EXECUTIONS Experience a 'gruesome' evening at the Back to Backs, exploring the dark side of Birmingham's history, Wed 18 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

GUIDED TOUR: HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS Learn more about how the Gardens were designed and have evolved over time, Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

A NIGHT AT THE DARTS Featuring darts legend Phil Taylor, Thurs 19 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

ARCHIVES OPEN DAY Explore memorabilia related to the Trust, Thurs 19 Sept, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

HERITAGE OPEN DAY Free event featuring horrible history sessions, a castle tour and ghost walk, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Sept, Dudley Zoological Gardens

THE GLAMPING SHOW Featuring suppliers from across the glamping industry, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Sept, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth

AUTUMN STEAM GALA Flagship gala featuring all-night running, an array of visiting locomotives and an intensive timetable, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THE MURDER OF MICHAEL O'MALLEY Interrogate the suspects, follow the clues and help the police solve a terrible case of murder, Fri 20 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

OUTDOOR CINEMA SCREENINGS Open-air film screenings, taking place against a backdrop of historic aircrafts, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton

A PLACE IN THE SUN LIVE Official exhibition of the Channel Four TV show, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Sept, NEC, B'ham

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX Brian talks about the origin and evolution of the solar system and universe, Sat 21 Sept, Arena Birmingham

MUSEUM TOUR - PEOPLE POWER Curator-led tour of the galleries, Sat 21 Sept, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

MORNING EXPLORERS The museum opens early for visitors to explore in a quiet and welcoming environment, Sat 21 Sept, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

ANGLO SAXON ARTS AND CRAFT Family craft activity in which young visitors can be inspired by the Staffordshire Hoard's colourful pattern-work and create something to take home, Sat 21 Sept, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

HERITAGE BUS TOUR Vintage bus trip between Oswestry and Llyncllys South Stations, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept, Cambrian Heritage Railways, Oswestry, North Shropshire

OSWESTRY SOUTH SIGNAL BOX The refurbished Grade II listed signal box is open for viewing, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept, Cambrian Heritage Railways, Oswestry, North Shropshire

BELLRINGING Climb the tower to visit the ringing chamber and examine historic items and records of ringers going back to 1750, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept, St Marys Church, Stafford

WIGHTWICK MANOR GARDEN PARTY Featuring music, games and fun for all the family, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept,

Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Look inside Middleport's historic bottle oven, see the steam engine, delve into the bathhouse and check out the Victorian offices, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept, Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent

HERITAGE OPEN DAY GARDEN PARTY Featuring music, games and fun for all the family, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

STORE STORIES: A BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOUR Check out the hidden treasures in the collection stores and meet the team carrying out conservation work, Sun 22 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

'MORRIS GANG' DANCING The Blists Hill Morris Gang entertain the crowds with traditional dances, Sun 22 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

SANSKRITI: A CELEBRATION OF INDIAN CULTURE Charity event presenting 'a glimpse of the rich heritage of India', Sun 22 Sept, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

HARVEST FESTIVAL Featuring demonstrations, music, a family-friendly trail and children's crafts, Sun 22 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Hall Green, B'ham

Festivals

DUBS COLLECTIVE PARTY IN THE PARK Line-up includes works by Toyah, The Lambrettas, The Neville Staple Band, Curiosity Killed The Cat, The Christians & more... Fri 20 - Sun 22 Sept, Himley Hall, Dudley

Food & Drink

CANNOCK CHASE BEER AND CIDER FEST Sample a selection of 60-plus ales and 20 ciders/perries, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

LICHFIELD AUTUMN BEER FESTIVAL Enjoy over 30 real ales & ciders from local & regional breweries plus music from The Clarksville Mountain Band, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall



8TH ANNUAL CHILLI, CHEESE & CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL Featuring a market, live music, cooking demos and a chilli-eating contest, Sun 22 Sept, The Dorothy Clive Garden, Willoughbridge, North Shropshire

New Vic Production

NEW VIC

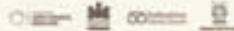
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Gigs

BIG ZUU Mon 23 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

PAUL GILBERT Mon 23 Sept, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

HAYLEY ELLIS & SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD Mon 23 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse

CAMP COPE Mon 23 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ROAM + WITH CONFIDENCE Mon 23 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

ALCATRAZZ + THE JOKERS + EVLYTYDE Mon 23 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

FÉLIX RABIN Mon 23 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

PALE WAVES Tues 24 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KEANE Tues 24 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE HOWL & THE HUM Tues 24 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE DUST CODA Wed 25 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

STARS OF IRISH COUNTRY Wed 25 Sept, The Place, Telford

AVERAGE WHITE BAND Wed 25 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

JCM FEATURING CLEM CLEMPSON, MARK CLARKE AND RALPH SALMINS Wed 25 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

RICHARD STRANGE PERFORMS THE SONGS OF LOU REED Thurs 26 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JAY1 Thurs 26 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE NIGHT CAFE Thurs 26 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KOYO + GUESTS Thurs 26 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LET'S HANG ON Thurs 26 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MARTIN TURNER - EX WISHBONE ASH Thurs 26 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ANDY RICHARDS BAND Thurs 26 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TINY MOVING PARTS Fri 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FOO FIGHTERS GB Fri 27 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN - HOW SWEET IT IS Fri 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BRUNO - A TRIBUTE TO BRUNO MARS Sat 27 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

ETHER E Fri 27 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE QUO EXPERIENCE Fri 27 Sept, The Place, Telford

MADONNA VS CHER Fri 27 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BLACKBALLED Fri 27 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DESPERADO Sat 27 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

ELECTRIC SWING CIRCUS WITH DJ CHRIS TOFU Fri 27 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BALAAAM AND THE ANGEL Sat 28 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JESS MORGAN & NELS ANDREWS Sat 28 Sept, The Hive, Shrewsbury

THE SUBTERRANEANS Sat 28 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

NICKELBACK'D Sat 28 Sept, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Sat 28 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

JOE / BRANDY & DRU HILL Sat 28 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HOUSE JAMMERZ Sat 28 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE LEYLINES Sat 28 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

EARTHGANG Sat 28 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SIMON AND GARFUNKEL STORY Sat 28 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

ADAM ROWE Sat 28 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

NEW RULES Sun 29 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

RESPECT: THE ARETHA FRANKIN SONGBOOK Sun 29 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

JOSH LOBLEY Sun 29 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

NEW HOPE CLUB Sun 29 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SON OF DAVE Sun 29 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

THE REASONING Sun 29 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BELINDA CARLISLE Sun 29 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

VOLBEAT Mon 30 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

ZEBRAHEAD Mon 30 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CROW BLACK CHICKEN Mon 30 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA Mon 30 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical

CENTRE STAGE: PURCELL & TCHAIKOVSKY Featuring Kate Suthers & Charlotte Skinner (violins), Christopher Yates & Amy Thomas (violins), Helen Edgar & Catherine Ardagh-Walter (cellos), Thurs 26 Sept, CBSO Centre, B'ham

ALISTAIR MCGOWAN Join Alistair for a unique mix of classical music & comedy, Sat 28 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



DI XIAO PIANO CONCERT Programme includes works by Cécile Chaminade, Clara Schumann, Cecilia McDowall, Maria Syzmanowska, F. Chopin, Eleanor Alberga & Mélanie Hélène Bonis, Sat 28 Sept, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

CBSO: SHEKU PLAYS ELGAR Featuring Mirga Gražinyte-Tyla (conductor) & Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello). Programme includes works by Purcell (arr. Stucky), Elgar, George Benjamin & Vaughan Williams, Sat 28 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Parry, Hurford, J.S Bach, Howells & Elgar, Mon 30 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

Comedy

BEN ELTON Mon 23 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



HAYLEY ELLIS & SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD Mon 23 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ROB BECKETT Mon 23 Sept, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

ED BYRNE Wed 25 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FERN BRADY Wed 25 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

MARTIN MOR PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 26 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

GEORGE EGG Thurs 26 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

NOEL JAMES, GARETH RICHARDS, MARTIN MOR & SARAH KEYWORTH Fri 27 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PATRICK MONAHAN Fri 27 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

ADAM ROWE Sat 28 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

GUZ KAHN, MICKY P KERR, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 28 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

GEOFF NORCOTT Sun 29 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BOB'S COMEDY FUNHOUSE Mon 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

FIRST AID Midlands playwright Laura Liptrout takes a look at what happens when a group of people are thrown together on a first-aid course, Mon 23 - Wed 25 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

CALENDAR GIRLS THE MUSICAL Tim Firth & Gary Barlow's award-winning production, starring Sarah Jane Buckley, Sue Devaney, Julia Hills, Judy Holt, Ruth Madoc, Lisa Maxwell and Rebecca Storm, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SISTER ACT Amateur production by Sutton Coldfield MTC, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

WIFE AFTER DEATH Amateur production of Eric Chappell's comedy, presented by The Lichfield Players, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE UNIMAGINABLE SISTERS Central Youth Theatre present a 'funny & furious play' set in Dublin, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

BARBER SHOP CHRONICLES New comedy that leaps from a barber shop in Peckham to Johannesburg, Harare, Kampala, Lagos and Accra over the course of a single day, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

STRANGE ENCOUNTERS OF A SOCIAL KIND Comedy drama exploring what happens when a bunch of strangers are brought together and have to deal with a tricky situation, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

THE WEDDING SINGER Amateur staging presented by Backstreet Theatre Company, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

MUSHY - LYRICALLY SPEAKING Rifco Theatre present an uplifting tale inspired by the true story of Musharaf Asghar (from the TV series Educating Yorkshire), Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

HOW SWEET IT IS - THE GREATEST HITS

OF MOTOWN Fri 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KEEP AN EYE ON AMELIE Central Youth Theatre present a high-energy farce... Fri 27 - Sat 28 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

GIFTED 37 Dance, music and spoken word combine in a celebration of Birmingham's creative future, Sat 28 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

ANNA MUDEKA: KURE KURE (FARAWAY) Anna takes audiences on a thought-provoking journey to ancient and modern-day Zimbabwe, Sat 28 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

PEELING Journey backstage into a world of stories and secrets, where fierce, intelligent women are always the chorus and never the lead... Sat 28 Sept, Arena Theatre, W'hampton



THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic variety show featuring hits from the '50s to the '80s, Sun 29 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GASLIGHT New staging of Patrick Hamilton's psychological thriller, Mon 30 Sept - Sat 5 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's award-winning musical makes a welcome return to the region, Mon 30 Sept - Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

Kids Shows

MADAGASCAR THE MUSICAL Join Alex (X-Factor 2016 winner Matt Terry), Marty, Melman and Gloria as they bound out of the zoo and onto the stage in this 'live musical spectacular', Wed 25 - Sun 29 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MADAGASCAR JR Get Your Wigle On present an amateur staging of the Dreamworks classic, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

STICK MAN Stage version of Julia Don-

aldson and Axel Scheffler's award-winning children's story, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

GULP! The Bone Ensemble present a story about water for younger audiences, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE Goblin Theatre Company fuse music and puppetry in an adventure story for younger audiences, Sun 29 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Dance

JAMES WILTON DANCE: THE STORM High-energy show blending acrobatics, breakdancing, martial arts and 'edge-of-the-seat contact work', Wed 25 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

ROSIE KAY'S FANTASIA Three female dancers 'discover love, loss, emotion and joy' to a soundtrack of Vivaldi, Purcell, Beethoven and Bach, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Sept, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: GISELLE David Bintley & Galina Samsova's production of one of the most celebrated ballets of the 19th century, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

Talks

AN EVENING WITH BRIAN BLESSED Brian talks about his acting career and life of adventure, Mon 23 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

RICHARD DAWKINS Join ethologist Richard Dawkins as he attempts to rethink the 'big questions', Mon 23 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

ANT MIDDLETON - MIND OVER MUSCLE Brand new show in which Ant talks about the mental strength it took to complete his recent SAS series and huge Everest challenge, Fri 27 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

IN CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL MORPURGO Actor and comedian Katy Brand interviews Michael in celebration of his 75th birthday, Sat 28 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GIOVANNA FLETCHER: HAPPY MUM, HAPPY BABY The author, podcaster, presenter, YouTuber and mother shares her personal account of motherhood, Sun 29 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

Cabaret

TINA T'URNER TEA LADY'S STEAMY BINGO Laugh, dance and play to win as Tina spins her cage of balls to a



Rachel Green at The Ginger & Spice Festival - Market Drayton, North Shropshire

high-energy '80s soundtrack, Thurs 26 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE DREAMBOYS 'The UK's most famous girls night out', Thurs 26 Sept, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS

VICE (15) Biography/Comedy. Starring Christian Bale, Amy Adams. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 23 Sept

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (12) Biography/Drama. Starring Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 24 Sept

GLORIA BELL (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Julianne Moore, John Turturro. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 27 Sept

CHILD'S POSE (15) Drama. Starring Luminita Gheorghiu, Bogdan Dumitrache. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 27 Sept

ALADDIN (PG) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Will Smith, Mena Massoud. This is a brunch event. Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Sat 28 Sept

GREEN BOOK (12a) Biography/Comedy. Starring Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, North Shropshire, Mon 30 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 27 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

THE GOLDFINCH (15)

HOTEL MUMBAI (15)

THE HUNT (tbc)

POMS (12a)

READY OR NOT (18)

21 BRIDGES (tbc)

THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW (tbc)

Events

THE GINGER AND SPICE FESTIVAL Celebration of Market Drayton's culinary heritage, its links to the ancient spice routes and what is thought to be the oldest gingerbread in the country, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Sept, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Featuring 200-plus wedding specialists, thousands of dresses from leading designers and a show-stopping catwalk, Fri 27 - Sun 29 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

ROCK THE JOINT Celebration of the rocking '50s and '60s, complete with a boat tour and a two-course meal, Sat 28 Sept, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

EDWARDIAN TEAROOMS LATE: DRINK AND DRAW Free social drawing event for anyone who likes to doodle. Pens, pencils and paper provided, Sat 28 Sept, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

THE 2019 TRAMPOLINE, TUMBLING & DMT BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS Gymnasts soar through the air as they bid to become British champion, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, Arena Birmingham

THE WIGHTWICK MANOR MYSTERY A prized possession has gone missing - can you help to solve the mystery of its disappearance? Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, Wightwick Manor, W'hampton

AUTUMN TOUR & TALK Presented by Elizabeth Gooch MBE, with an optional three-course lunch, Sun 29 Sept, Mitton Manor, Staffordshire

Food & Drink

SAUSAGE & CIDER FESTIVAL Featuring cider, beer, live music & array of sausage from around the world, Sat 28 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

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