

Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 406 OCTOBER 2019

What's On

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inside:

thelist

Your 16-page week
by week listings guide

DALISO CHAPONDA

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LIFE IS NO LAUGHING MATTER

at Arena Theatre

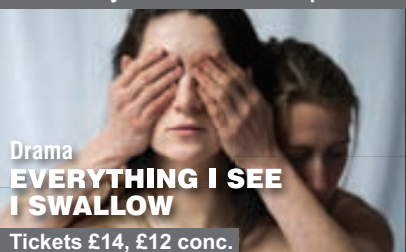


GHOULISH FUN...

at Dudley's Black Country
Living Museum



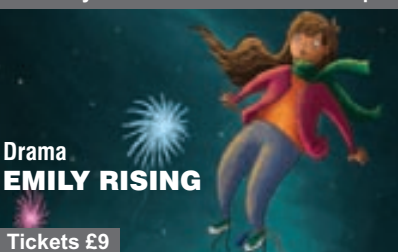
Wednesday 9th October at 7.30pm



Drama
**EVERYTHING I SEE
I SWALLOW**

Tickets £14, £12 conc.

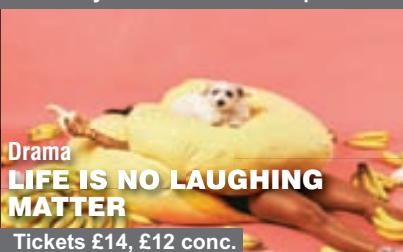
Saturday 12th October at 11am and 2pm



Drama
EMILY RISING

Tickets £9

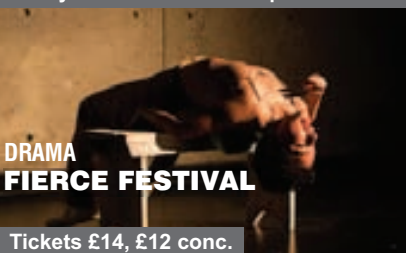
Thursday 24th October at 7.30pm



Drama
**LIFE IS NO LAUGHING
MATTER**

Tickets £14, £12 conc.

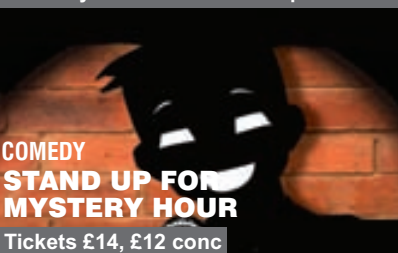
Friday 25th October at 7.30pm



DRAMA
FIERCE FESTIVAL

Tickets £14, £12 conc.

Saturday 26th October at 7.30pm



COMEDY
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MYSTERY HOUR**

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at 7.30pm - Wednesday Matinee at 2.30pm



DRAMA
NO MAN'S LAND
BY HAROLD PINTER

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A Taste Of Honey



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Ed Byrne



the master of observational comedy on tour in the Midlands
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Life is a Cabaret...



join John Partridge at The Kit Kat Klub at Theatre Severn
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Managing Director: **Davina Evans** davina@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281708
Sales & Marketing: **Lei Woodhouse** lei@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281703 **Chris Horton** chris@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281704
Editorial: **Lauren Foster** lauren@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281707 **Brian O'Faolain** brian@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281701
Abi Whitehouse abi@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281716 **Lauren Cole** lauren.cole@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281733
Sue Jones sue@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281705
Subscriptions: **Adrian Parker** adrian.parker@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281714
Contributors: Graham Bostock, James Cameron-Wilson, Katherine Ewing, Jenny Ell, Nanci Davies, Patsy Moss
Publisher and CEO: **Martin Monahan** Accounts Administrator: **Julia Perry** julia@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281717

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Moroccan festive feast at the NEC

Birmingham's NEC is hosting 'the ultimate Christmas party experience' this festive season. Moroccan Fire Nights fuses 'incredible entertainment with a delicious festive feast and a spectacularly themed environment'.

Late-night highlights include an 'epic' stage show, indoor fairground rides, casino tables and fairground stalls. The parties take place from 29 November to 22 December. For more information and to book tickets, visit birmingham-christmasparties.com

Dudmaston Estate to host new monthly 10k trail run

A new monthly 10k trail run is being launched by the National Trust on the Dudmaston Estate near Bridgnorth in Shropshire.

The first Trust10 is a free event which will take place at 9am on Sunday 27 October and then on the fourth Sunday of each month. Commenting on the news, Alexandra Blake-man, Marketing & Events Officer, said: "We're so excited to take on the Trust10 in Comer Woods. It's a great opportunity to set monthly goals and explore this beautiful part of Dudmaston's wider landscape.

"The route is made up of a 4km and a 6km loop. So if you're working up to 10k, or you fancy a shorter run, you're very welcome to come along and finish after the first 4km loop.

"We want as many people as possible to enjoy this new trail run, so as well as hosting the Trust10 each month, the route itself will be open to runners for free all year round."



Trigger Happy creator hits the road with new show

Trigger Happy TV creator Dom Joly will perform in Stourbridge next year as part of his first UK tour for eight years.

The comedian, broadcaster and author brings his new show, *Holiday Snaps - Travel And Comedy In The Danger Zone*, to the Town Hall on Wednesday 8 April. The new show sees him talking about his exploits in some of the world's most dangerous travel spots, including North Korea, the Congo, Syria and Chernobyl.



Janette and Aljaž bring the Oscars to Shropshire

Dance favourites Janette Manrara and Aljaž Škorjanec are returning to the Midlands in the spring with a brand new show. *Remembering The Oscars* follows on from the pair's previous touring production, *Remembering The Movies*, for which they sold over 50,000 tickets.

Commenting on the show, Janette said: "I can tell you right now that *Remembering The Oscars* will be our biggest and most ambitious production to date. We've hand-picked an incredible cast, we have some great material to work with and quite a few surprises. The Oscar-winning movies, songs and actors that have inspired us will take this tour to another level. To say Aljaž and I are excited is a huge

understatement."

Remembering The Oscars visits Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Thursday 9 April and Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Friday 17 April.



Gospel Graceland at the Buttermarket nightclub

The highly rated London African Gospel Choir are heading to Shrewsbury at the start of next month to perform Paul Simon's iconic 1986 album, *Graceland*.

Created not only to promote the gospel but also popularise African interpretations of gospel music, the choir will perform at the town's Buttermarket venue on Friday 1 November.

For more information and to book tickets, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk



Stacey Dooley returns to Strictly...

Strictly Come Dancing Live waltzes back into the region in the new year, with 2018 winner Stacey Dooley hosting the touring version of the hit television show.

The Strictly 2020 tour is kick-started with four nights at Birmingham Arena, from 16 to 19 January.



Enchanted Weston returns

Weston Park's Capability Brown-landscaped Temple Wood will once again play host to an illuminated trail this Christmas.

Towering trees, historic landmarks and festive surprises will all be picked out in a 'wash of light and hues of colour' when the venue's Enchanted Weston attraction returns.

As well as taking a stroll through the ancient illuminated woodland, visitors can also warm up by fire pits, toast marshmallows, sample street food, sip cocktails, enjoy live entertainment and browse a selection of stalls in the festive pop-up market. Enchanted Weston runs from 13 to 21 December. Visit weston-park.com for more details.



Henry VIII's SIX wives to visit the Wolverhampton Grand

Smash-hit West Ender SIX is coming to the Black Country next spring.

Nominated for five 2019 Olivier Awards, the show sees the six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their personal stories, 'remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak into a 75-minute celebra-

tion of 21st century girl power'.

The yet-to-be-announced cast will be backed by the show's all-female band, The Ladies In Waiting.

SIX runs at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March.

Tibetan monks in Shrewsbury

Monks from a 600-year-old monastery in Tibet are making a Halloween stop-off in Shrewsbury as part of Shropshire Music Trust's 2019/20 programme of concerts. Hailing from Drepung Kongpo Khangtsen Monastery, Monks Of Tibet's 31 October performance at Shrewsbury School will feature sacred dances, a haunting melody by 11th-century female mystic Ma-chik Lab-don, a demonstration and explanation of the art of debate, and auspicious songs and prayers for world peace. For more information, visit shropshiremusictrust.co.uk

Steam and scream for Halloween!

All aboard the Statfold Scream Train for plenty of Halloween fun! Tamworth's only steam railway is certainly getting into the 'spirit' of things late this month (26 & 27 October) when it takes families on a train journey round Hangman's Creek, past a spooky pirate ship and onto its destination of Oaktree Junction. Once there, passengers can get involved in all manner of ghoulish and magical activities, from participating in a Mummy wrapping competition to being taught how to use a magic wand by a wizard professor... For more information and to book tickets, visit statfoldbarnrailway.co.uk



First Word

Harold Pinter classic at the New Vic Theatre

London Classic Theatre returns to the New Vic in Newcastle-under-Lyme this month with a new production of Harold Pinter's 1974 play, *No Man's Land*. Originally staged at London's Old Vic, the play interweaves truth, language and memory to create a world of dark comedy and subtle power games... *No Man's Land* runs at the New Vic from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 October. Tickets can be booked at newvictheatre.org.uk



Follow the Yellow Brick Road...

Midlands dance lovers can follow the Yellow Brick Road this autumn by checking out one of the UK's best-loved ballet companies. The Leicestershire-based Ballet Theatre UK are visiting a number of venues in the region with their new full-length production of *The Wizard of Oz*. "The story has never been performed as a professional ballet in the UK before," says Artistic Director Christopher Moore, "and with our new adaptation, we hope to inspire a new generation of dancers and audiences." Visit ballettheatreuk.com to check out the Midlands venues at which the show is stopping off this autumn.



6 whatsonlive.co.uk



Tamworth Arts Centre to reopen after £5million makeover

The iconic Tamworth Assembly Rooms reopens next month following an ambitious £5million makeover.

Originally built to commemorate the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria, the Staffordshire theatre is being relaunched with a ballet version of *The Wizard Of*

Oz. The season also includes a 25-character *Dad's Army* show performed by two actors, *A Black Country Night Out* and, for Christmas, a pantomime version of *Aladdin*...

For more information and to book tickets, visit tamworthassemblyrooms.co.uk



Roll Up! Roll Up! The circus is in town...

Midlands audiences are set to be transported back to the 'golden age' of circus late this month.

Circus 1903 visits the venue from Friday 25 October to Saturday 2 November and will feature a range of new acts from around the globe. Highlights include appearances by two puppet elephants - Queenie and Peanut - aerial act The Flying Fredonis, Cuban hand balancer The Great Rokardy and 'mind-bending' juggler The Great Gaston... To book tickets for the show, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

Saturday morning drama in Lichfield

Lichfield Garrick has launched a new Saturday morning activity group for six to 10-year-olds.

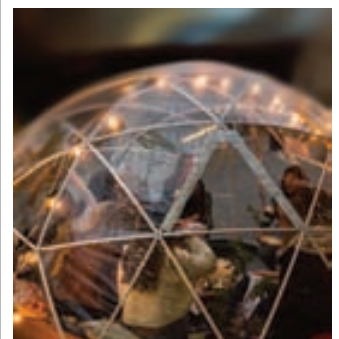
Garrick Juniors offers youngsters the chance to develop their drama skills and gain confidence both on and off the stage.

You can get involved with the group by contacting the Garrick Theatre at education@lichfieldgarrick.com or calling 01543 412 128.

Snow House Bar returns to the Bullring

After enjoying a Christmas cracker of a festive season last year, Snow House Bar is making a welcome return to Birmingham's Bullring this month, complete with its super-popular VIP igloos.

Providing an impressive selection of beers and wines, mulled wine and hot chocolate, the venue will also be serving German sausages and churros from early November onwards. Snow House Bar reopens for the winter season on 19 October and shuts up shop again on 5 January.

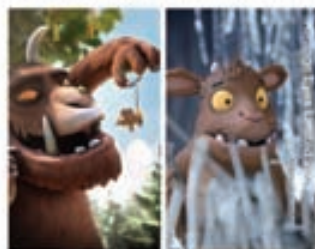




AND IN THE END...
 A CELEBRATION OF ABBEY ROAD AND LET IT BE
 WED 16 OCTOBER, 7:30PM
 SYMPHONY HALL



JOOLS HOLLAND
 AND HIS RHYTHM AND BLUES ORCHESTRA
 FRI 29 – SAT 30 NOVEMBER, 7:30PM
 SYMPHONY HALL



BSL INTERPRETED THE GRUFFALO & THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD
 FILMS WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA
 SUN 27 OCTOBER, 2PM
 SYMPHONY HALL



THE OVERTONES XMAS 2019
 TUE 3 DECEMBER, 7:30PM
 SYMPHONY HALL



ZOG & THE GRUFFALO
 FILMS WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA
 SUN 27 OCTOBER, 5PM
 SYMPHONY HALL



G4 CHRISTMAS
 TUE 10 DECEMBER, 7:30PM
 TOWN HALL



REUBEN JAMES
 SUN 17 NOVEMBER, 8PM
 SYMPHONY HALL STAGE



ROY WOOD'S ROCKMAS
 SAT 14 DECEMBER, 7:45PM
 SYMPHONY HALL



VIR DAS: LOVED
 FRI 22 NOVEMBER, 8PM
 TOWN HALL



CHRISTMAS CRACKER WITH ALED JONES
 SAT 21 DECEMBER, 2:30PM
 SYMPHONY HALL

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**Music and drama,
darkness and humour...**

Playwright Shelagh Delaney's debut work, *A Taste Of Honey*, caused a significant stir when it was published in 1958. Now, a new National Theatre version of the play, starring Jodie Prenger, is visiting the Midlands as part of a UK tour. What's On caught up with Jodie to find out more...

Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste Of Honey* (published in 1958) is a career-defining British classic depicting working-class life in post-industrial Salford. Tackling taboos of the time, including homosexuality, inter-racial relationships and single mothers, the play earned its teenage writer comparisons with *Look Back In Anger* author John Osborne.

Delaney's debut work was part of a new movement in British theatre dubbed 'kitchen sink realism'. The movement saw up-and-coming playwrights striving to create disillusioned working-class characters who reflected real life, rather than the crass and gormless ones which had long inhabited the genteel scripts of West End productions. *A Taste Of Honey*'s association with this new cultural movement, and in particular with Osborne's *Look Back In Anger*, saw Delaney being pigeonholed as a comparatively 'angry young woman' - a lazy characterisation of her that she detested.

Jodie Prenger, who stars in the new National Theatre tour of the play, can absolutely understand why the description would have made the playwright bridle: "Delaney unleashed this strong female voice that was sort of unknown. There were definitely those voices out there, but not necessarily put out on the same scale. I don't think Delaney was an angry young woman. I think I can hear the same woman's voice in *A Taste Of Honey* as I do in women today. It's just that back then it wasn't as acceptable for a woman to be heard, especially when talking about such taboo subjects as this play does."

A Taste Of Honey's matter-of-fact approach to working-class life, its deviance from sexual and social convention, and its sympathetic presentation of both a gay man and a single mother, was bold for its period. But most of all, Delaney was more nuanced than the likes of Osborne; *A Taste Of Honey* evokes a sense of playfulness, warmth and wit that sharply and brilliantly contrasts with the doom and gloom of its subject matter.

"That's the joy of her," says Jodie. "She perfectly balances 'dark, moving and witty'. I think that's why people still want to see it; they want all these truthful representations of actual human life."

The playwright's debut offering was certainly reactionary. Delaney had been sparked into writing it by her intense dislike of Terence

Rattigan's *Variation On A Theme*, a play about a socialite and a young ballet dancer which aimed to be socially bold. However, its genteel style and content meant it only skimmed the surface of its taboo themes. Convinced she could do better and spurred on by her loathing of traditional, decorous drawing-room dramas about the love lives of well-bred people, Delaney penned *A Taste Of Honey* aged just 19.

Set in a dingy Lancashire lodging house, the storyline focuses on schoolgirl Jo, who is soon to have a child by a black sailor - a man who abandons her. The play follows Jo's fractured relationship with her mother, Helen, and with a kind, homosexual art student named Geoff, who helps her during her pregnancy and tries to reunite mother and daughter.

"I absolutely fell in love with the play because it's so honest, real and tender," says Jodie. "It's the mother-daughter relationship that really got me. I know I'll be thinking about my own relationship with my mum when I'm trying to create the love and tension between Helen and Jo. They're so different in some ways, but also so similar in others, so they end up clashing."

A Taste Of Honey was first staged in 1958 by the now-legendary Joan Littlewood Theatre Workshop. Two years later, it hit the Broadway stage and was then promptly made into a film. More recently the play was a great influence on English rock band The Smiths, particularly vocalist Morrissey, whose lyrics borrow from the script. Indeed, the band's song, *This Night Has Opened My Eyes*, is based entirely on *A Taste Of Honey*. Delaney also features in the artwork for the band's single, *Girlfriend In A Coma*.

So 61 years after it was published and eight years after the playwright's death, how relevant is *A Taste Of Honey* to modern times?

While single mothers are nowadays markedly more of a social norm, 21st century single parents - the majority of whom are women - are still most likely to be from a working class or even impoverished background. Adding further insult to injury, wealth continues to be unequally divided across the UK, with the South East, when compared to the North West region in which the play is set, boasting more than twice the amount of household wealth.

Sexuality is also an increasingly hot topic in

2019. People, particularly women and those from the LGBTQ+ community, continue to be shamed for their style of dress and sexual activities. Hate crimes against minorities are on the rise...

With all of this in mind, isn't *A Taste Of Honey* just the play we need? After all, the strength and complexity of the relationships at the centre of the work make it a timeless theatrical classic.

Jodie Prenger agrees: "I remember speaking to my nan about the 1950s' class divide, as she was from Manchester. There was always something to fight for. You rolled your sleeves up and got it done, or you made do. *A Taste Of Honey* is all about fighting and striving - no matter what you face - and is mixed with genuine, warm humour; something you still find in every corner of the UK today."

Jodie is particularly attracted to the play's depiction of feisty women: "Strong female characters with many layers are the main thing I really enjoy getting my teeth into. For me, reading the play was just like hearing my nan's voice. The feistiness and the fight that my nan had, I saw in Helen. It really shocks me that some past reviewers of the play have seen Helen as a monster. I think she's just so real, and the only way you can play a character like Helen is with truth. I just don't see Helen as a monster; I just find her a character of circumstance."

So what makes the National Theatre's new version of *A Taste Of Honey* different?

"I'm known for doing a lot of musicals, but I do a lot of plays now, too. *A Taste Of Honey* promises to be the best of both because we do have a lot of fantastic music as a backdrop to the action. What the team at the National Theatre are trying to do is keep the setting and feeling of the 1950s but mix it with the contemporary to hint at the modern day, meaning that it could be set in almost any time. We even have a live band and the music of artists like Peggy Lee and Amy Winehouse, along with live jazz and folk.

"Music and drama, darkness and humour. This is the Hovis of the theatre world."

.....

**A Taste Of Honey shows at
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from
Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 November.**

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REGENT THEATRE



FRESH FROM THE WEST END
THE EXORCIST

TUE 1 – SAT 5 OCT
REGENT THEATRE



SING-A-LONG-A
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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



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SPECIAL OF
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PINK FLOYD**

WED 27 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



CELEBRATE THE MUSIC OF THE
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THE ELO EXPERIENCE

THU 28 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



AN EVENING WITH
LENNY HENRY

FRI 29 NOV
REGENT THEATRE



SPEND ONE NIGHT AT THE DISCO
WITH
LOST IN MUSIC

SAT 30 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**



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Shropshire cafe launches new menu

A Shropshire cafe has launched a new menu following a renovation. Now open seven days a week for all-day brunches - as well as from 5pm to 9pm every Friday for street food - The Green Wood Café in Coalbrookdale is an independent family-run coffee shop located in the woodlands of the iconic Ironbridge Gorge.

The menus are all veggie/vegan/gluten-free dietary lifestyle inclusive and feature a range of loaded sourdough toast and pancakes (in the daytime) and tapas, loaded nachos and street food (in the evening).

A taste of Africa arrives in Shrewsbury

A new restaurant serving Afro-Caribbean dishes has opened in Shrewsbury.

Located at Chronicle House, just a stone's throw away from Shrewsbury train station, Afrikana promises 'amazing' food, 'breathtaking' art, music & culture and 'the best possible experience'. Dishes on the menu include curry goat, chilli con carne and peri peri chicken.

Fundraising Michelin menu in Barlaston

Two Michelin-starred chefs - John Williams of The Ritz (pictured) and Rob Palmer of Hampton Manor - will this month serve a five-course tasting menu at World of Wedgwood Tea Room in Barlaston, to raise money for the nearby Douglas Macmillan Hospice. Tickets for the Monday 21 October event cost £175 and include a welcome drink, the five-course tasting menu and a wine flight to accompany each course. Tickets can be purchased by visiting dmhospice.org.uk



Popular gastronomic gathering returns to Staffordshire

Staffordshire's biggest gastronomic gathering, the Stone Food & Drink Festival, takes place in the town's Westbridge Park 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-friendly entertainment, live music from local bands & tribute acts, and licensed bars. The event will also include the town's regular Saturday Farmers' Market but with a bigger-than-usual number of stalls.

Marco Pierre White launches new bottomless brunch

Marco Pierre White has launched a new bottomless brunch on Level 25 of The Cube in Birmingham.

Served every Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 4pm, the brunch includes unlimited prosecco, beer or Bloody Marys. Diners can choose from brunch favourites including eggs benedict, royale and Florentine, pancakes, classic French toast and even bacon butties.

A choice of sweet is also available, as is a preserves station and a selection of homemade breads.

The bottomless brunch costs £39 per person. Booking is essential.



SHROPSHIRE OktoberFest



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// GIN DEN // RUM SHACK // COCKTAILS
// SILENT DISCO // STREET FOOD // WINE BAR



4 - 5 OCT '19
SHREWSBURY QUARRY PARK

SHROPSHIREOKTOBERFEST.CO.UK



CHEERS TO THAT!

Shropshire Oktoberfest - the perfect place for a get-together with family and friends...

Returning for a third year, Shropshire Oktoberfest is the brain child of Beth Heath, Director of Fun at the award-winning Shropshire Festivals. The company is responsible for some of the county's most popular events, including Shrewsbury Food Festival, Shropshire Kids Fest and Field To Fork Festival.

Taking place over two days inside a huge beer tent in Shrewsbury's Quarry Park, Oktoberfest provides the perfect environment (believe us, we know!) in which to have fun with family and friends while enjoying a fabulous offer of food, drink and entertainment.

Here's what to expect...

CHEERS! In addition to a plethora of real ales - there are around 150 in total - Oktoberfest boasts a prosecco parlour, gin den and wine bar from Hencote. And to ensure that everyone is catered for on the alcoholic beverage front, there's also a choice of lagers, ciders and perries to explore. What more could you want?...

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD... As might be expected from the team behind the aforemen-

tioned and award-winning Shrewsbury Food Festival, Oktoberfest's gastronomic offering is of real importance to Beth and her team, so expect a vast array of delicious and locally produced street food.

LET'S DANCE... Entertainment comes in the form of comedy and music, presented by talented local artists...

The line-up for the latter includes Microbaby, Weekenders, The Paprika Blues Band, Custard Connection and headliners The Follies on the Friday evening. Saturday performers are Reverie, The List, Asparagus And The Kilburn, Izzy And The Hotheads, The Endings, Vorsprung Dutch Oompah, Dirty Rockin' Scoundrels, Five O'Clock Hero and headliners Bouncing Betty.

Be sure to wear your dancing shoes!

ARE YOU HAVIN' A LAUGH?... Guffaws aplenty are guaranteed when internationally renowned comedian Gordon Southern - he goes down a storm in Australia - takes to the stage in the comedy tent.

Joining Gordon are Stephen Carlin, Keith

Carter, Vince Atta and compere Chris Brooker.

EXTRAS... Returning for 2019 is the popular Volvo Carpool Karaoke Tent; perfect for those wanting to showcase their singing prowess - or not!

NEW FOR 2019 The latest addition to Oktoberfest's line-up of entertainment is a Saturday evening silent disco, which Beth is confident will 'create a memorable, unique experience with plenty of laughs'.

AND ALL WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE...

Also new for 2019 - and in keeping with Shropshire Festivals' commitment to reducing plastic waste - is the introduction of a reusable beer cup scheme.

Drinkers will be able to pick up a pint or half-pint cup with a £1 deposit at the festival. They can then either keep their cup or return it and reclaim their deposit.

Shropshire Oktoberfest returns to Shrewsbury's Quarry Park on Friday 4 & Saturday 5 October.

Fancy it? Bag yourself a ticket at shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk/tickets



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BBC Philharmonic

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 4 October

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke-on-Trent, regularly presenting Potteries concert-goers with works from its impressive repertoire.

This latest concert sees both the conductor and soloist making their Victoria Hall debuts. John Storgårds (pictured) is the

man at the helm for Schumann's third and final symphony, while the internationally acclaimed Kian Soltani is charged with the task of bringing out all the playfulness in Haydn's Cello Concerto. Sibelius's Karelia Suite and Finlandia complete the programme and should ensure the audience heads for home in a suitably upbeat mood...

Ex Cathedra: Rachmaninoff Vespers

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 27 October

Sergei Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil - often translated as simply Vespers - was one of the composer's two favourite works. Indeed, he loved the composition so much that he requested one of its movements (the fifth) be sung at his funeral. His deep feeling for the work, and indeed its brilliance, is all the more remarkable given that it took him less than two weeks to compose.



Brodsky Quartet

St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire, Sat 26 October



This hugely admired quartet have performed more than 3,000 concerts and released in excess of 60 recordings since their formation in 1972. They've also collaborated with celebrated rock & pop artists including Paul McCartney, Elvis Costello and Björk.

The Quartet are particularly associated with the music of Bartók, Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven and Shostakovich, with pieces by the latter two featuring in this Ludlow programme. Works by Bach and Mendelssohn are also included.

Gruffydd Wyn

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 9 October

Classical and operatic crossover artist Gruffydd Wyn came to national attention on last year's Britain's Got Talent, with his first audition being viewed by millions on YouTube and winning him Amanda Holden's Golden Buzzer.

"I started listening to opera when I was young, and I've always loved it," says Gruffydd, who hails from Anglesey in North Wales. "I've always known I wanted to perform. I did a bit of acting in university, and then I worked front-of-house at Pontio Arts & Innovation Centre in Bangor.

"Seeing everybody out on the stage whilst I was working off-stage really inspired me to get back on there, and that's why I did Britain's Got Talent last year."

CBSO: Bruch's Violin Concerto

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 24 October

Rising star Simone Lamsma (pictured) here joins the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to play what's often referred to as the world's best-loved violin concerto.

"Instead of being a violinist, I hope I am a musician," says Simone. "It's different. It's not about playing the violin well, it's about communicating through music. I feel a violinist's sound is a reflection of their soul; it's very personal."

The concert programme also features Wagner's The Mastersingers Of Nuremberg: Overture and Bruckner's Symphony No4.



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Judith Owen featuring Pedro Segundo

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury,
Fri 18 October

According to Mark Beech, author of *All You Need Is Rock*: "Judith reveals the depths that Drake and Ed Sheeran never knew they had, revisits the beauty of Joni Mitchell and does Deep Purple as you have never known before. Extraordinary, frankly: must see, and hear." The pianist's live performances, whether as a headliner or as the handpicked opening act for Bryan Ferry's recent tours of Europe and North America, have been wowing listeners across the globe.



Bloxx

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 7 October

Uxbridge-based female-fronted four-piece Bloxx have been wowing audiences up and down the country with their grungy undertones and classic indie-influenced melodies. Debut offerings *Your Boyfriend* and the Radio One-playlisted *You* were followed up with an Annie Mac-championed second double A-Side, *Coke/Curtains*, and support slots for the likes of Pale Waves, Sundara Karma and The Wombats.



Lichfield Festival Of Folk

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 18 - Sun 20 October

It's fair to say that this annual event, otherwise known as L2F, absolutely lives up to its mission statement - to provide visitors with the opportunity to appreciate the very best in folk music in a friendly and welcoming environment.

The 2019 line-up includes Home Service, Merry Hell, The Lucy Ward Band (pictured), Rachael McShane & The Cartographers, Keith Donnelly, Bella, Polly & The Magpies, Anthony John Clarke and Ranagri. Morris dancers, an arts & heritage procession, a Lichfield Arts songwriting competition and an L2F art competition also feature.

Tankus The Henge

The Robin, Bilston, Tues 8 October

Musically inspired by bands from the 1960s' British invasion and artists such as Tom Waits, Blur, Randy Newman and Queens Of The Stone Age, Tankus The Henge's sound ranges from New Orleans-inspired swing to heavy rock riffs. They describe themselves as being like a 'psychedelic rock'n'roll octopus - only with four more legs'.

Boyzone

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham,
Tues 15 October

After six UK number one singles, five UK number one albums, 25 years together and the success of last year's *Thank You & Goodnight* tour, Keith Duffy, Ronan Keating, Mikey Graham and Shane Lynch visit Birmingham on their Final Five tour. "We really can't put into words just how much you, the fans, have supported us along the way. Without that support, we would never have achieved what we have, and for that we're eternally grateful."

Ferocious Dog

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton,
Fri 4 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Thurs 24 October

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



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ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND 

Dada Masilo: Giselle

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 15 - Wed 16 October

"My reason for revisiting classical ballets is to deal with issues that are relevant today," says internationally renowned South African dancer & choreographer Dada Masilo. "These ballets deal with power struggles, war, greed, domestic violence, rape - these are things which I see every day." Dada visits Birmingham with an updated version of *Giselle*, a surreal ballet premiered in 1841 which tells the story of a girl who kills herself when she finds out that her suitor, Loys, has kept his true identity from her. Loys and another suitor, Hilarion, visit *Giselle's* unconsecrated grave, where they find themselves in all manner of trouble with the Wilis - ghosts, traditionally, of women who have been jilted by their lovers. In Dada's version, however, the Wilis are both female *and* male. "I wanted to alter the concept that only women are victims," she explains. "Men also get heart-broken. I feel that in ballet the man's role is basically to lift and support the woman. I think it's time we found gender equality in dance."



Ockham's Razor: This Time

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 October

Contemplating the various types of strength accessed and displayed by people at different periods of their life, *This Time* features a cast ranging in age from 13 to 60. The show sees highly acclaimed aerial theatre company Ockham's Razor once again combining circus and physical theatre with narrative storytelling and a lively soundtrack. The show visits Coventry having won the company plenty of new fans at the Edinburgh Festival a couple of months back.



Doris Uhlich: Every Body Electric

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 18 October

"Every human being is thrown into the world without asking to be, and has/is a perfect or disabled body," explains Doris Uhlich. "Should one despair or react? The naked bodies in *Every Body Electric* react, each appearing with their own unique individuality, each with their own stories, their own energy, their own experiences and their own memory, digging within a sort of 'futuristic archaeology'." "Not just bodies are dancing but wheelchairs and crutches as well. Every limit is overcome." The show contains full nudity.

Rambert2: Mixed Bill

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 October

Rambert2's current ensemble of talented young dancers (performers are drawn from across the globe on an annual basis) here present their latest creations - works of dance designed not only to showcase the artists' technical virtuosity but also their 'raw energy' and 'fearless spirit'.



A LOVE AFFAIR WITH DANCE

Internationally renowned South African choreographer and dancer Dada Masilo is this month bringing a fearless reimagining of a classical ballet to Birmingham...



Dada Masilo's previous reimaginings of classical ballets have been extremely successful worldwide and often turn racial and gender stereotypes on their head, tackling topics including homosexuality, HIV/AIDS and arranged marriages. This time, she's turned her hand to Giselle, the iconic ballet of love, rejection and vengeful spirits. Setting her version in rural South Africa, Dada promises a mesmerising fusion of contemporary genres, classical ballet and traditional Tswana dance.

"Giselle is fun, dangerous, sad and energetic," says Dada. "It's simply 14 dancers on stage showing their raw passion for their craft and telling a fantastic story. If you want to be taken on an emotional journey, then you definitely shouldn't miss it when it comes to Birmingham.

"I wanted to do Giselle because even though its never been my favourite ballet, I'm always intrigued by the second act, particularly the Wilis. The Wilis are these very vicious, dangerous female spirits who kill. In Giselle you don't always see this side to the ballet; with all the focus on purity and the white costumes, the violence isn't as visible. I really wanted to see how vicious I could make this story - not just for the sake of it, but to really challenge myself and the dancers. I think this dangerous side of Giselle was something I really wanted to tackle, but also a lot of the time with ballets, the action just focuses on the character or characters in the title role. I really wanted to zoom in on the other characters in the ballet too, such as Hilarion and Albrecht, to make it more of a three dimensional story."

The title role is taken by Dada herself. Giselle will be a different character to the one traditionally seen in the ballet: "I think mainly because my version of Giselle is set in rural South Africa, I definitely wanted to tap into those cultures and traditions surrounding women - what's done to women and what 's expected of them. I also wanted to create a character who, in the first act, was innocent, loving, carefree, and then is the complete opposite to the usual Giselle in the second: strong, empowered and definitely not a victim. I think we often view women in ballets as fragile and always in need of a man to take care of them, so I wanted to break that stereotype. I want to let myself and other women know that it's okay to be a strong woman and not conform to what society tells you. For me, at the age of 34, I've reached the point where I want to be assertive. I want to empower myself and also other women. That was really important for me when I was thinking about Giselle."

To account for this change to the title character, there's been an important narrative alteration: "I haven't really changed the narrative other than the ending - my Giselle doesn't forgive Albrecht. I want the audience to see a reinterpretation of Giselle, but certainly not to alienate the audience by completely changing the story they already know. I think contemporary dance sometimes becomes a little too abstract, so I wanted to make sure the audience still understood the story as that of Giselle but just slightly different. I always want my works to make people 'feel', whether that's joy, pain, humour, love. I want people to walk out of the theatre having been taken through so many emotions. With Giselle, I've set myself the challenge of improving my storytelling further."

And what else does Giselle have to say about women in the world?

"I'm tackling issues of culture and tradition from South Africa. For example, there's a scene with Giselle and her mother, where her mother takes off her top and begins to sweep her breasts. This is a cultural ritual that happens to girls when they reach puberty and tries to reverse the process by flattening the breasts, which is quite an abusive act. The fact that it's still happening now is something I find very disturbing. Also, there are many traditional healers in South Africa who can use their power for good or evil. Myrtha, who leads the Wilis, very much uses hers for evil in Giselle. Seeing as the second act of Giselle does focus on spirits, I've tried to incorporate how South African healers will spill bones and use a fly whisk to tell you your fate."

As well as the choreography and themes taking inspiration from its South African setting, Giselle is also accompanied by a score by South African composer Philip Miller.

"Of course, my very conscious decision to set the work in rural South Africa meant that it made complete sense for the music to reflect that. I'd also experienced Philip's music on another project. Giselle is the first time I've worked with a composer, so in the beginning it was very tricky. First, I asked Philip to reference the original score, but at the same time bringing in the African sounds of percussion, voice and rhythm. So he took the different themes from the classical ballet music and fitted it with African sound. Once we had that basis and listened to Adolphe Adam's original score together, we were able to create a dialogue between the two of us."

Giselle has already been seen in Vienna, Paris and New York - to name but three of its stop-offs - and the reception to it has differed in

each country: "When we do Giselle at home, they understand the cultures and traditions featured in the work more. While I always perform my works in South Africa first because my roots are there, it's also very important to try my work out on home soil to get feedback on the narrative. Then I can take it outside knowing that people from other countries, with different cultures and traditions, are going to understand. That's part of making sure that the narrative is clear."

Dada's long love affair with dance has certainly brought her plenty of success, including the Next Generation Prince Claus Laureate award in 2018 for outstanding creative initiative that has a positive impact on young people. Nevertheless, her relationship with dance continues to evolve: "I've been dancing since I was 12. It's my passion. Being able to combine the thing that gives me strength with the aim of empowering others is a great opportunity. Through my career I've learnt a lot about myself as a woman and a dancer. In the beginning, I just wanted to be a powerful dancer, but as I've got older I've found my softness and more visceral parts. I'm now very much about wanting to emote in my dance and finding the subtleties of feeling within the strength. When I was younger, I was constantly pushing myself beyond my own boundaries, trying different techniques. But as you get older, the body changes and you have to do things in a different way. My dance couldn't just be physical anymore, so I had to find other qualities within myself and my dance."

And that relationship could change again in the future...

"I'm currently working on a piece called The Sacrifice, which is inspired by Igor Stravinsky's ballet, The Rite Of Spring, and is still very dance-focused. I didn't think I would be dancing so much at my age, but I think that eventually I will want to go more into performance art. I'll see. It all depends on my body and how much I can do physically. At the moment I'm still loving to dance, but further down the line I'd like to try out something a little different."

Dada Masilo's Giselle shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 15 & Wednesday 16 October.

I started a joke...

Rachel Burns gives a lesson in comedy...



When Birmingham primary school teacher Rachel Burns posted a witty comment during the BBC's Glastonbury coverage back in 2017, she never imagined her tweet about The Bee Gees' Barry Gibb would throw her into a global spotlight. The story of how she went viral is now the subject of Rachel's first one-woman show, I Started A Joke, which debuts at Birmingham Comedy Festival this month.

So what happened back in 2017, Rachel? How did the Twitter-storm unfold?

I was watching Barry Gibb's Glastonbury set on TV. He'd played all the Bee Gees classics, including How Deep Is Your Love and Words. When he started Tragedy, I did something that I do quite a lot: I told a stupid joke on Twitter. I said it was a shame that Barry Gibb didn't have more of his own material - first he covered Take That, then Boyzone, now Steps! I had a few people like it, and a friend said, 'Wonder how many biters you'll get?' Well, before long, the 'biters' arrived, telling me that actually Barry Gibb wrote the songs and other people covered them. One of them was particularly persistent and wouldn't let go. Even after I told her it was a joke, she kept on telling me it wasn't a joke and asked why I would say anything so silly. It then started to gather more momentum as people liked and retweeted the joke. But as the joke spread, more people replied to me, educating me in the life and works of Barry Gibb. Some were very gracious and apologised for misconstruing the tweet once I pointed out it was a joke. One guy in particular was lovely - he went from 'mansplaining' to being utterly charming and telling us a hilarious story that involved a drunken bet with a soap actor.

But it didn't stop there, did it?

Someone mentioned it to David Baddiel and he retweeted it, followed by other comedians like Dom Joly and Dara Ó Briain. That was when it started to get really silly. I'd made a daft joke, people didn't get it, and I was being mentioned by comedy legends! Then the story was covered by media websites. The Guardian, the BBC, The Poke and the NME all ran stories about the Twitter farce that I had created. It also got mentioned on The Last Leg, and David Baddiel and Richard Herring talked about it in Richard's Leicester Square Theatre podcast.

How far did the story spread?

It went global! I had replies from all over the

world, and people sent me links to articles published in the USA, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Some of the Tweets were quite negative - how did you cope with those? Did they concern you?

Yes, some were a bit rude, calling me things like 'fool' and 'idiot'. I just kept my cool and batted them away with some witty ripostes. There's no point getting aggressive with people who are rude to you. They didn't bother me - I didn't feel attacked or threatened. What I experienced was extremely mild compared to some of the bullying and threats I've seen other people suffer on Twitter. It can be a horrible place but fortunately I had a positive experience.

Any idea if Barry picked up on it?

Yes! About a week after Glastonbury he was interviewed on Good Morning Britain and Richard Arnold asked him about the tweet. I'm not going to give away any show spoilers, though!

What do The Bee Gees mean to you?

Big hair, high voices and disco classics! I grew up in the '70s and '80s, so tracks from Saturday Night Fever were staples at school discos and parties. Obviously they've got a much broader range than disco bangers, but that's what I remember most about them when I was growing up.

Which are your favourite Bee Gees songs?

I love Stayin' Alive, Islands In The Stream (the Kenny and Dolly version) and Tragedy. My husband is a big fan of You Win Again, which he got played on Shaun Keaveny's Breakfast Show on BBC 6 Music the day after the whole debacle.

How do you turn a brief Tweet into an hour-long show?

It's all about the replies! The thread has over 1,500 replies from all sorts of people and it attracted a lot of media attention.

You're premiering the show at Birmingham Comedy Festival. Are you nervous?

Of course I'm nervous, but also excited and really chuffed that I've got this opportunity to tell my ridiculous story.

What led you to stand-up comedy?

Peer pressure, I guess! I've always been a bit of a joker but never really thought of taking it to the stage. After the Barry Gibb tweet, lots of people suggested I should do stand-up. My friend Rachel Sambrooks is a pro-comedian and she recommended James Cook's comedy course.

Who are your comedy influences? Who do you admire?

Too many to list! My dad has a very dry sense of humour and I definitely think that's rubbed off on me. As a kid, I loved Monty Python, The Young Ones and The Comic Strip. I enjoyed sketch shows like French & Saunders, Fry & Laurie and later Big Train and The Fast Show. As for stand-ups, I'd say my current top three are Sarah Millican, Joe Lycett and Mr Millican - Gary Delaney. Millican and Lycett are brilliant at working the crowd, and their observations are very relatable. Delaney's delivery and pace are second to none. To be able to punch out one-liners like that is a real talent.

Do you plan to take your show elsewhere after Birmingham?

I'd love to take it elsewhere and bring the story to a wider audience - maybe even take it to Glastonbury, where it all started!

.....

Rachel Burns: I Started A Joke is presented at The Victoria, Birmingham, on Sunday 6 October (at 1.15pm) as part of Birmingham Comedy Festival's first Free Half-Dayer. For more information, see bhamcomfest.co.uk



Impractical Jokers Arena Birmingham, Fri 11 October

High school buddies Joseph Gatto, James Murray, Brian Quinn and Salvatore Vulcano stepped into the world of comedy at the end of the 20th century when they formed live improv troupe The Tenderloins. Over a decade later, the boys became the stars of TV's *Impractical Jokers*, a reality series in which they coerce one another into doing public pranks while being filmed by hidden cameras. With multiple series of

the show having aired since 2015, the fellas have plenty of material around which to develop a successful live offering. But don't expect anything too sophisticated from the quartet when they perform in Birmingham. Pulling pranks live on stage in the confines of a venue really isn't an option, so instead they play clips, tell jokes and revel in a friendship that's seen them grow a loyal and devoted cult following.

Josh Widdicombe

Birmingham Hippodrome, Sun 13 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 14 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 7 November

Peddling a nice line in exasperated, self-deprecating humour when performing live, Devon-raised funnyman Josh Widdicombe pumps out his cleverly crafted gags at a brisk pace, hitting the mark with the vast majority of his observational material. Widdicombe jokes include: "Hotdogs cause bum cancer - that was the original slogan for McDonald's before 'I'm loving it'." Josh visits the Midlands with his new touring show, *Bit Much...*



James Phelan

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 20 October

James Phelan's new show, *Troublemaker*, is being publicised as 'a mind-blowing roller-coaster filled with mystery and hilarity'. And with several million video views under his belt and an ever-growing reputation as one of the most talented magicians of his generation, there's every chance James will absolutely live up to the pre-show hype. The nephew of the late Paul Daniels, Phelan blends magic with humour to excellent effect, as his famous uncle once admitted: "You're funny, you look good, all your tricks work. If you were anyone else, I'd hate you!"

Matt Parker

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 8 October; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 12 October; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 15 October; The REP, Birmingham, 26 October; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 15 November

Matt Parker's unique stand-up shows find him exploring and explaining all things mathematical, from debunking number nonsense and flagrant sudoku abuse to the mysterious patterns in the locations of ancient monuments... and defunct Woolworths stores! Sell-out shows at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the Melbourne Comedy Festival and in London's West End bear testimony to the quality of his numbers-driven comedy. If you love maths, you'll love Matt. If you don't, just ignore the maths and concentrate on the comedy!



Amy Vreeke

Artefact, Birmingham, Fri 11 October

The story of a grim 12-year struggle to be correctly diagnosed with what turned out to be endometriosis lies at the heart of Amy Vreeke's touring show, *The Year My Vagina Tried To Kill Me*.

But the subject matter isn't to everyone's taste: "There are people who are like, 'Nobody cares about your vagina,'" says Amy. "And I'm like, 'Well, you don't care and that's fine. Just go watch another comedian.'"

So who *does* Amy think is most likely to enjoy her show?

"People who like laughing and fannies - they should definitely come and see it."



Russell Kane

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent,
Thurs 24 October

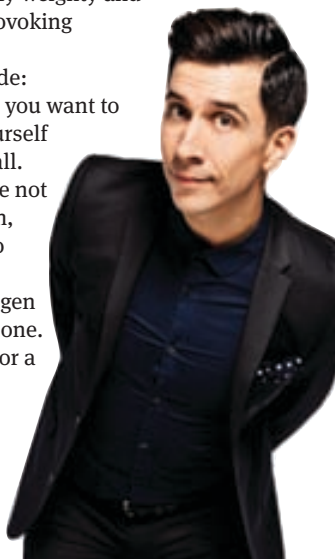
This man's official publicity blurb once read: "Strap in for some super-speed sunderings and inconvenient sociology in an hour of self-soiling merriment that will leave you with rickets."

The message, in short, was that Russell Kane is a very funny man - and it isn't just his publicist who thinks so. Kane's been drawing a crowd since bursting onto the scene back in 2004, serving up liberal doses of humour in an act which features some considerably weighty and thought-provoking material.

Jokes include:

"On a date, you want to present yourself warts and all.

Well, maybe not warts - 'Ooh, you want to put some liquid nitrogen on that big one. Either that or a hat.'"



Jimeoin

Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 17 October;
Dudley Town Hall, Fri 18 October; Malvern
Theatres, Fri 25 October; The Place, Telford,
Tues 29 October

Fancy a straightforward comedy night with a straight-talking - well, actually, a bit of a rambling - comedian? If so, then the sublime Jimeoin is the man for you. A gimmick-free one-man comedy machine, Jimeoin's proved he's got what it takes on all manner of top TV shows, including Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow and Jason Manford's Comedy Rocks. Check him out.



Ed Byrne

Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 9 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 28 October;
Lichfield Garrick, Tues 29 & Wed 30 October

A highly regarded master of observational comedy, Ed Byrne admits to being a little uncomfortable about some of the 'more laddish' material he used in the early days of his standup career.

"My comedy reflected my life at that time - single and enjoying myself. Most of it was fairly harmless, but some of the stuff about an ex-girlfriend I can see was a bit angry, and I wouldn't do it now."

So 20-plus years after first dipping his toes into the decidedly dangerous waters of standup, does Ed still enjoy touring?

"Apart from the travel involved, which no comic likes, I love it. You have people responding to something that you've written alone in your office, and the work comes alive in a roomful of people. I like the TV things I do, but nothing can beat a live comedy audience."

Daliso Chaponda

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 9 October; Warwick
Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 12 October; The
Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Fri 1 November

Malawian Daliso Chaponda has blended the slick North American style of comedy he learned while working in Canada with a real talent for brevity, ensuring that his gags, although not one-liners, nonetheless come thick and fast.

Like all good comedians, he can adapt his act to suit his audience - on a previous trip to the Midlands, he performed a filthy set in Birmingham's Silhouettes Strip Club before heading off to regale family audiences at the Greenbelt Christian Festival!

Jokes include: "I moved to the UK because of the BNP - they said the immigrants were taking all the best jobs and all the best women, and I thought, 'Wow, that sounds like a good deal to me!'"





OH, WHAT A CIRCUS!

Comedian Ed Byrne brings his biggest tour to date to the Midlands...

A household name teetering on the brink of national treasure status, award-winning comedian Ed Byrne enjoys worldwide acclaim for his stand-up. With 25 years under his belt, Ed has parlayed his on-stage success into a variety of notable television appearances. A regular on *Mock The Week* and *The Graham Norton Show*, Ed has recently co-presented *Dara & Ed's Big Adventure* and its follow-up *Dara & Ed's Road To Mandalay*, and managed not to disgrace himself on *Top Gear* or whilst tackling one of *The World's Most Dangerous Roads*. As a semi-professional hill-walker himself and fully paid-up humanist, he also brought a refreshing warmth and honesty to BBC2's recent hit *The Pilgrimage*.

But the Irishman is still best-known and best appreciated for his stand-up performances. A quarter of a century at the comedic coal-face has equipped Ed with a highly evolved storytelling ability and a silky mastery of his craft. Yet his wit, charm and self-deprecatory observational humour is often underpinned by a consistently hilarious vitriol and sense of injustice at a world that seems to be spinning ever more rapidly out of control.

Having recently hit a new peak with shows such as the sublime *Spoiler Alert* and reflective *Outside, Looking In*, which explored the minefield that is modern parenting and a generational sense of entitlement, Ed's new show *If I'm Honest* digs ever deeper into a father's sense of responsibility, what it means to be a man in 2019, and whether he possesses any qualities whatsoever worth passing on to his two sons. Occasionally accused of whimsy, *If I'm Honest* is a show with a seriously steely core.

Gender politics, for example, is something Ed readily engages with – deploying his customary comedic zeal. 'I'll admit that there are things where men get a raw deal,' he says. 'We have higher suicide rates, and we tend not to do well in divorces, but representation in action movies is not something we have an issue with. It was *Mad Max: Fury Road* that kicked it all off, even though nobody complained about Ripley in *Alien* or Sarah Connor in *Terminator 2*. Of course, social media means this stuff gets broadcast far and wide in an instant, which emboldens people.

'The problem with men's rights activists is that it's not about speaking up for men's rights, it's about hating women. If you're a men's rights activist, you're not going to care

about the fact that there's an all-female *Ghostbusters* remake. That's nothing to do with men's rights or female entitlement. That's everything to do with being, well, a whiny baby.'

As ever, Ed manages to provoke without being overly polemical, a balancing act that only someone of his huge experience can really pull off.

'I did stuff about Trump and the Pizzagate right wing conspiracy,' he says, 'and a couple of the reviewers said, "Oh, I would have liked to have watched a whole show of this". And I think, "well you might have, but the average person who comes to see me would not like to see that". I like to make a point or get something off my chest, or perhaps I'm talking about something that's been on my mind, but the majority of stuff is just to get laughs.

'People who come to see me are not political activists necessarily, they're regular folk. If you can make a point to them, in between talking about your struggles with aging, or discussing your hernia operation or whatever it is, you can toss in something that does give people pause as regards to how men should share the household chores.'

He continues, 'It's not that I feel a responsibility, I think it just feels more satisfying when you're doing it, and it feels more satisfying when people hear it. When a joke makes a good point, I think people enjoy it. It's the difference between having a steak and eating a chocolate bar.'

Ed, who broke through in the mid-1990s when the *New Lad* became a genuine cultural phenomenon, doesn't want to submit to any unnecessary revisionism, but admits that if the times have changed, he has changed with them. He reflects a little ruefully on one of his most famous jokes. 'There's an attitude towards Alanis Morissette in the opening of that routine that I'm no longer comfortable with, where I call her a moaning cow and a whiny bint... slagging off the lyrics of the song is fine, but there's a tone in the preamble that I wouldn't write today.'

The new show also takes his natural tendency towards self-deprecation to unexpected extremes. 'I do genuinely annoy myself,' Ed concedes. 'But the thing of your children being a reflection of you, gives you an opportunity to build something out of the best of yourself only for you to then see flashes of the worst of

yourself in them. It's a wake-up call about your own behaviour.'

When I challenge him over the degree of self-loathing he displays, he disagrees. 'Self-aggrandising humour is a lot harder to pull off than self-deprecating humour,' he insists. 'A lot of people get really annoyed when Ricky Gervais is self-congratulatory. I always find it very funny when he accepts awards and does so in the most big-headed way possible. I think it's a trickier type of humour to pull off, talking yourself up in that way.

'So no, I don't think I'm being massively hard on myself. The fact is when you're the bloke who is standing on the stage with the microphone, commanding an audience's attention, you're in a very elevated position anyway.'

That said, *If I'm Honest* brilliantly elucidates the frustration that arrives in middle age – and lives up to its title. 'I'm bored looking for things, I'm bored of trying to find stuff, because I can never find it, and it is entirely my fault,' Ed says. 'Nobody's hiding my stuff from me. Although my wife did actually move my passport on one occasion'.

He insists that, while the show might have mordant and occasionally morbid aspects, it's also not without its quietly triumphant moments. 'I thought I was being quite upbeat talking about the small victories,' he says. 'You know, finding positivity in being able to spot when a cramp was about to happen in your leg and dealing with it before it does. I was very happy with myself about that.'

Age, it seems, has not withered him. Especially now that he's figured out how to head off ailments before they become a problem. 'You see comics who are my age and older but are still retaining a level of "cool" and drawing a young crowd. I can't deny that I'm quite envious of that. But there's also something very satisfying about your audience growing old with you.'

.....

Ed Byrne will be bringing his *If I'm Honest* tour to Redditch Palace 9th October, Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn 28th October (and 17th March), Evesham's Regal 2nd November (and 6th December), Bedworth's Civic 9th November, Birmingham Town Hall 30th January, Telford's Oaken-gates 12th March, WAC 14th March, and Walsall's Forest Arts Centre 24th March



MAN ALIVE!

Comedian Henry Paker brings debut solo tour to Shropshire...

As Henry Paker heads out on his debut solo national tour, the man behind many of your favourite TV shows, is finally getting himself out there in front of audiences nation wide. You will have seen Henry's name whizz by as a writer on the credits of a huge variety of comedy shows, from Michael McIntyre's Big Show, Eight Out Of Ten Cats, and Mock The Week all the way to Comic Relief and Top Gear. Henry is one of comedy's most sought after writers but, in terms of his own stand-up, he has been the industry's best kept secret.... until now.

Henry has been doing stand-up for years, but this is his first show to go national. And, in Man Alive, he is finally able to bring two of his true passions together in one show. Anyone who has caught his previous stand-up will note that Henry (who you may have seen previously on such TV shows as Josh, Russell Howard's Good News, and Seann Walsh World) is not only a talented comedian, he is also rather gifted in the arena of visual art. In Man Alive, you will see him doing a spot of live cartooning alongside the stand-up.

Henry said: "I love animation: The Simpsons, Rick and Morty, Pixar, The Lego Movie and all that stuff. I've done a couple of cartoon books and I love the visual side to comedy, but I've always thought of them as separate from my stand up. So what I've enjoyed about this show is putting them together. There's something about getting the cartoons onto the stage which is really enjoyable for me, and the audience."

As evidenced from the sell-out shows he performed of Man Alive at the Edinburgh Fringe, audiences are certainly lapping it up. Henry is still working out the full logistics for his tour shows, but chances are that as the crowd enters the room, he'll be sat at a laptop with his

live cartoons appearing on a big screen. It would be cruel to give away the jokes, suffice to say that there are excellent one-off visual gags as well as a running story about love and loneliness.

"There's always this threshold moment when you come onto the stage passing from one world into another and it's always a bit tense running up to that moment," says Henry. "So with this show, as people come in, I'm sitting there drawing on the computer and it comes up on the screen. Partly I wanted to do that to relax and blur that stark line between on and off so I'm there before they arrive to slightly take out the drama of that for myself. Being in the room does already take the pressure off a bit, and you can look at the odd person as they come in and give them a smile. Not in a creepy way."

Alongside the live cartooning in Man Alive, Henry delivers stand-up which tackles issues such as encountering other British people on holiday, discussing friends who have suddenly become marathon runners, and why a night out at the theatre is generally a bad thing. Perhaps most risky of all are his observations on his own marriage, and whether he should really be taking such delight in having plenty of time at home alone.

"It's quite awkward talking about your marriage when your wife is in the audience" Henry says "But the fact is she directed the show, and she also helped devise it. Partly the show is about how in stand-up you have to have very black and white opinions on things. But that's not really the truth about how we really feel about stuff."

For anyone who has been at a Henry Paker (pronounced 'Packer', by the way) show, chances are you'll have noticed how different

they all are. He's given us a noirish mystery in Guilty, unlocked a private memory box and decluttered his soul for Unpacked, and went halfway up Kilimanjaro with Cabin Fever. Meanwhile, he's dabbled in sketch comedy on stage with Superclump and The Golden Lizard, as well as on radio with Small Scenes, while his Radio 4 sitcom ReincarNathan has been a hit with audiences and critics alike. All this variety is not a coincidence.

"I think it's partly to keep myself interested; I do like to try new things each time and I also think I'm on some sort of quest to find the authentic show. It's like a constant exploration of the show that I really want to do. Having said that, this show, for me, is the one that feels like it's the most me, in a way. For the next one I do, I'll probably use this as the template."

For now though, Henry is enjoying the prospect of heading out on tour and meeting new audiences across the land. Some critics and fellow comics have suggested that he should probably be a bit more famous than he is right now. He reckons Man Alive might be the turning point.

"That is something people do say about me sometimes, so it's partly what this tour is about. It's about getting myself out there as me. I also do a lot of writing on other comedy TV shows, so I'm often the man at the back, in the shadows. So now I want to emerge into the light, like a beautiful middle-aged butterfly".

.....

Henry Paker will be at The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock on Friday 18th October



The Exorcist

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 1 - Sat 5 October;
Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 15 - Sat 19 October

Adapted for the cinema in 1973 from William Peter Blatty's novel of the same name, *The Exorcist* tells the story of a mother's attempts to rescue her 12-year-old daughter from the clutches of demonic possession. But the priest to whom she turns for help must first fight a battle against a demon of his own - his loss of faith in God...

This first ever stage version of *The Exorcist* debuted in Birmingham before taking the West End by storm, and is now making an eagerly awaited return to the Midlands region.

"I hope audiences will be excited by the production and a little scared by it at times," says the award-winning John Pielmeier, who wrote the stage adaptation. "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."

Eye Of The Storm

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 8 & Wed 9 October

Although *Eye Of The Storm* is a family musical that confronts weighty issues including young carers and the climate emergency, Ed Sheeran's writing partner, Amy Wadge, is hopeful that the music she's written for the show will ensure an uplifting experience for its audience.

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



Prism

The REP, Birmingham,
Thurs 3 - Sat 12 October



Robert Lindsay stars in this well-reviewed *West Ender*, written and directed by the award-winning Terry Johnson.

The play tells the true story of Jack Cardiff, 'a man who made Hollywood's greatest divas beautiful, and who lived a life as colourful as his cinematography'.

Lindsay is joined in the cast by Tara Fitzgerald, who previously appeared at The REP in a highly acclaimed production of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

Cabaret

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Tues 22 - Sat 26 October

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 Hayworth 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.



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JOIN THE PUPPET PARTY



After hitting the big time in Las Vegas, London-born ventriloquist Paul Zerdin returns to the UK with a brand new show. What's On spoke to him to find out more...

What can you tell us about your new show, Paul Zerdin's Puppet Party?

It's a fresh, funny, fast-paced show - and a bit edgy. I describe it as stand-up comedy where I happen to use puppets. There's something about a ventriloquist doing ventriloquism without a puppet - I like the idea of that.

Tell us about the puppets...

There are the three core members of my sponge family - Sam, Albert and Baby - plus some new characters: Roger, my bodyguard, and an urban fox. The idea with Roger is that when I did America's Got Talent they gave me a bodyguard and I can't get rid of him. He's paranoid and thinks everyone's out to get him and me... The urban fox stowed away in my luggage when I was packing and couldn't get out, so he's now involved in the show. I've never had any animal characters, and I've always liked the idea of having one.

How do you go about creating a puppet?

It takes a long, long time to develop new characters - it takes me years. When I was working in Las Vegas, the fox was actually going to be a coyote for American audiences. But by the time I'd thought about the character properly, the Vegas show was over, and I thought, 'I know, why not make it an urban fox?'

Who's your favourite character?

Probably Albert. He's got selective deafness, and he can talk utter bollocks and get away with it. You can do anything with Albert. We all know someone - parents, grandparents - of that sort of age, so he's easy to relate to. My father is 92 and gives me an amazing amount of material for Albert.

Your puppets have got more technically advanced over the years, with robotics and radio control. Who's helped you bring them to life?

Tim Rose - who's worked on Star Wars and

The Muppets - and Dave Houseman do my animatronics. Those guys are geniuses. I don't say 'geniuses' to their faces because they'll put their prices up, but it's such a specialism. If I come up with a crazy idea, they'll find a way of doing it. But I don't rely on the technology, I simply use it to create certain extra moments in the show.

America's Got Talent helped boost your profile in the US. Having won The Big Big Talent Show in the UK in 1996, how did it feel to be winning another TV talent contest two decades later?

It felt funny. I was 24 when I won The Big Big Talent Show, and I was 42 when I did America's Got Talent. So I gained a lot of experience from performing for so many years. I genuinely didn't expect to win, so when I did, I was in shock. I thought they would go for an American, but they didn't!

If you'd won the show earlier in your career, do you think you would've coped with the success and exposure?

No, I don't think so. I watch these talent shows and I see very young people winning - and they're remarkably talented - but it's so useful to have experience. It can particularly help with the pressure of the promotion and the PR side of things. When I won America's Got Talent, the amount of interviews I did over the next few hours, days, weeks - it was relentless. I constantly had to find a new angle to stop myself going mad. That's an art in itself. That comes with experience, and I had a wealth of experience from touring and doing all kinds of gigs for years. Experience makes you a better performer, and it means you can cope in most situations, because ridiculous things happen all the time.'

What kind of ridiculous things?

'I did a gig in someone's back garden a few years ago. I was performing at a very wealthy

family's party in north London and I was heckled by the dog! I was used to people swearing or shouting "get off!" - you get used to those heckles when you're starting out - but when you've got a golden retriever freaking out when you bring out a puppet... I'd never experienced that before!

After touring North America, are you looking forward to spending some time back in the UK?

I've been lucky enough to go to some amazing places, but I've also spent a lot of time at 38,000 feet over the last few years. I live in London, and it's nice to be at home and get to see a lot of the UK. It's a beautiful country and I've toured it a lot, so I'm looking forward to getting around as much as I can and not having to get on a plane!

You're also back in London this Christmas, performing in panto at the Palladium. How do you feel about performing at such a legendary venue?

The Palladium is the most incredible theatre. I did Brucie's last series of Tonight At The London Palladium back in 1999 and then did another TV show there a few years ago. It's just wonderful. This is my fourth year running at the Palladium and my 25th in pantomime.

You must enjoy it, then!

I love it! It's a totally different discipline and something that I've had to learn. But it's also nice to be on stage with other people. With my own show, I'm on stage talking to myself for 90 minutes every night. With panto, I'm in a show with other people. It's so nice to be part of a company that isn't made of sponge.

.....

Paul Zerdin's Puppet Party shows at The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, late next month - on Saturday 26 October.



The Entertainer

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 7 - Sat 12 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 15 - Sat 19 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 18 - Sat 23 November

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 stars Shane Richie - best known as *EastEnders'* Alfie Moon - in the title role.

It'll Be Alt-Right On The Night

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 11 & Sat 12 October

Wound Up Theatre scored a 2015 hit with the tragi-comic *Bismillah!*, a two-hander focusing on the friendship between an imprisoned British soldier and his Islamic State guard.

They here return with a story about two squatters, whose love of punk binds them together before other considerations pull them apart. As one becomes woke and the other gets angry, they find themselves on different sides of an impassable ideological divide, in a world where conservatism is considered to be the new punk rock...

Private Peaceful

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 9 - Sat 12 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 31 October; The Place, Telford, Tues 12 November

Private Peaceful is a short play that packs a real punch. Based on the book by War Horse author Michael Morpurgo and perfectly pitched for the young audience at which it's aimed, the stage production has been hailed for being as moving as the poetry of Wilfred Owen and as painfully memorable as white-hot shrapnel.

First World War soldier Private Tommo Peaceful is awaiting the firing squad at dawn. With his young life about to be cut tragically short, he recalls his joyful past growing up in rural Devon, his schooldays, his father, and the love of his life - a girl named Molly...

A Black Country Night Out

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Fri 4 October; Dudley Town Hall, Tues 15 October; Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, Wed 16 October; Rose Theatre, Kidderminster, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 October; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 27 November

This show is almost as old as the Black Country itself and has matured just as beautifully! Bringing a fresh look to proceedings, the autumn 2019 version features some of the region's most 'brilliantly talented' acts.

The line-up includes host Ollie Spencer, comedy act Dandy, and an original Fizzog - Emma Rollason - who's presenting a tribute to Black Country comedienne Dolly Allen.

Life Is No Laughing Matter

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 24 October

Demi Nandhra here combines live art with stand-up and theatre performance to recount her story of living with severe depression. Advised to eat a banana a day and think happy thoughts, she got herself a dog in a desperate attempt to put the brakes on her downward spiral into mental illness... The show made a big impression at Edinburgh in the summer, and rather curiously was performed by Demi while her partner, Aaron, was sitting at the back of the stage, quietly scrolling his laptop and generally minding his own business.

It will be interesting to see if she's still needing the security of his presence when she visits the Arena Theatre late this month...



Nativity! The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 29 October - Sat 2 November

The Wolverhampton Grand gets into the Christmas spirit a little early with this hugely popular stage musical based on the much-loved film franchise.

The show is written and directed by Midlander Debbie Isitt, who also created the movies. "I always believed that *Nativity!* would make a fantastic stage musical," says Debbie. "It's so full of joy, the children are so sweet and funny. The songs really do change the dynamic. It gives you much more insight into the characters and their backstories. And the emotions are more intense, like with the love story between Mr Maddens and Jennifer - it feels even bigger now because they're singing duets."

Casting for *Nativity! The Musical* includes Scott Garnham, Ashleigh Gray, Jamie Chapman, Scott Paige & Love Island winner Dani Dyer.



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A new RSC co-commission exploring the subjects of nationhood and Arab heritage in Iraq, opens in Stratford-upon-Avon this month. The play's director, Erica Whyman, explains more...

"The play asks why should we care about artefacts and goddesses carved out of stone when people are dying outside the door..."

Erica Whyman, the Deputy Artistic Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), is talking about Hannah Khalil's brand new

play, *A Museum In Baghdad*, which opens at the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon this month.

The play focuses on a real museum which was founded in the Iraqi capital in 1926 by British archeologist Gertrude Bell.

"The play is set in 1926 and 2006 in the museum of Baghdad," explains Erica, who's directing the production. "Gertrude had a very serious involvement in the founding of Iraq after the First World War. She dedicated her life to this museum and protecting the

antiquities of this new country Iraq, as she wanted the country to have a real grasp on its own extraordinary past. We designed Iraq under a British lens in 1926, as the decision to place a king on the throne is very quintessentially British for the time...

"In 2006, times in Baghdad are equally as turbulent, with the allied invasion of the city leaving the museum looted. There are two female archeologists battling about what the future for Iraq and the museum might look like. The challenges in both these times are somewhat similar: there's violence outside the doors, uncertainty for Iraq's future, and also an immense amount of hope that this museum can be an emblem of a confident, unified nation upon which a new future for Iraq can be built."

While Khalil's play presents the character of Gertrude Bell in a sympathetic light, making clear her good intentions, it also acknowledges that the archeologist's perspectives were influenced by Britain's colonial hubris.

"A Museum In Baghdad does honour Gertrude's contribution to Iraq," says Erica. "She spoke fluent Arabic, in many different dialects, and Persian, as we might call it today. She was very influential in the shaping of British thinking about Iraq. I think the play paints a balanced picture of Gertrude. While she had a passionate love affair with the Arab world and its people, she was ultimately a product of her time and participated in a colonial operation to seize control of Baghdad and what we decided was called Iraq. The play questions what were essentially colonial instincts about the need for the British in Iraq. It considers whether the British as a whole actually believed in Arab independence, or whether they were motivated by oil, having a power base between India and Turkey and a profound belief that British civilising forces were good in the world. In our creation of Iraq, we certainly had something in common with the American idealisation of invasion. These are attitudes that we should find very uncomfortable now."

A Museum In Baghdad is a co-commission from the RSC and the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh: "The spark came from Hannah Khalil, the writer. She had been talking to David Clegg at the Lyceum about wanting to write a play about Gertrude. Hannah is Palestinian and Irish in her heritage, and this is evident in her previous work exploring places of conflict or the Arab world through a European lense. David encouraged Hannah to think about how to get the story of Gertrude Bell into that area that really fascinated her, and also to consider what's happened in Iraq

since 1926. This sparked this inventive play that moves between the two time periods and also puts on stage - in Arabic and English - these rather poetic moments called choruses, where the whole company speak about something that's older than both these time periods: the deeper history of Iraq."

A Museum In Baghdad explores how stories told through objects can bring hope...

"It's only by telling stories that humanity can recover from all the terrible things that have happened, moving forwards with a new way of thinking about themselves and their heritage. Through the objects, we can see ourselves, challenging our own assumptions. For example, I think the idea that things will never get better in the Middle East is something that we need to challenge because it has a long history of being a place of great imagination, progress and freedom. I think with A Museum In Baghdad we're really trying to open people's horizons to the deep, wondrous cultural history of the Middle East, such as the discovery of evidence of matriarchies, which goes against all the West's assumptions. We hope audiences leave with an understanding that the people of Iraq have suffered time and again, for which Britain bears much responsibility. This play is exciting, witty and a really tough truth."

And how does A Museum In Baghdad resonate with events in the Middle East since 2006?

"At least one of the characters can feel that in the future things are going to get worse. It draws a dark inspiration from events that happened across the region, including the appalling execution of the Head of Antiquities of the ancient city of Palmyra, Khaled El-Asaad, by ISIS in 2015. I think there's a suggestion in the play that to be the director of the museum in Baghdad is a very risky thing to do, especially as the region is set to become even more divided by sectarian violence. To care about archeological objects is seen as somewhat heretical and not in accordance with an extreme interpretation of Islam. So the play signposts the fact that this is a country and region that is going to face another cycle of terrible violence in the years following 2006."

Erica is responsible for the Swan Theatre's upcoming season: "We're doing Shakespeare's King John in rep with A Museum In Baghdad, and then later adding in The Whip by Juliet Gilkes Romero, which is about the moment we abolished slavery and bailed

out the British slave-owners. I think what all three plays do is ask very searching and emotional questions about power and responsibility. In a way, I think the season is as much about what it is to be British. I didn't want us to be doing lots of Brexit plays, but I think asking what Britain's place is in the world, and where our hands are dirtier than we are prepared to admit, is very important at the moment.

"I certainly didn't grow up understanding that in a relatively recent history - 1926 isn't long ago in the grand scheme of things - we were still claiming countries for our own and growing our empire. Neither was I taught in school that the first recorded civilisation was in Mesopotamia and China, rather than history starting in Greece and leaping forward to the Roman invasion of England. This play challenges the West's version of history as Britain tries to work out what its role is in the world. Thinking we have the power to fix things and create nations because we are some great civilising force was a very dangerous attitude. It's worth thinking about that aspect of our legacy as we embark on a new chapter of British history."

.....

A Museum In Baghdad shows at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Friday 11 October to Saturday 25 January.





My Beautiful Laundrette

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Tues 29 October - Sat 2 November

Hanif Kureishi's original movie version of *My Beautiful Laundrette*, released in 1985, focused on an interracial love story between a young Pakistani man and his old school friend, a white working-class guy who'd lost his way.

A clever, funny and powerful reflection of life in Thatcher's Britain, the film has now been adapted for the stage, with Leicester Curve Artistic Director Nikolai Foster the man at the helm.

"I think this is a play about love, hope and young people moving the world forward," says Nikolai. "It has a really powerful message, and I hope its vibrancy will be celebrated beyond coming to see the production. I very much hope that audiences take the experience forward with them."

RUSH: A Joyous Jamaican Journey

The REP, Birmingham, Thurs 3 October

"One of the key aims behind *RUSH*," says the show's producer, Owen Miller, "is to highlight the positive impact immigration can have on a wider culture. The show brings together musicians and artists from different ethnic backgrounds to celebrate Reggae music. The story revolves around the Windrush Generation, the music they brought with them and how that went on to develop into Reggae."

"Overall our aim is to provide an evening of superb music coupled with facts and information. We want the audience to feel informed and uplifted in a 'shared experience' with the artists."

Season's Greetings

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Tues 8 - Sat 26 October

Alan Ayckbourn's Christmas cracker of a play gets an autumn outing courtesy of the author himself, who's directing this production.

The story revolves around Belinda and Neville Bunker, whose Christmas festivities are marred by petty squabbles, rifled presents, eccentric uncles, a drunken aunt and a shooting... Lust, gluttony, greed and jealousy are all present and correct as yuletide tensions boil over and Christmas turns out to be a far from merry occasion.

The Night Watch

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Mon 21 - Sat 26 October

The lesbian experience across history sits at the heart of much of Tipping The Velvet author Sarah Waters' work, including her bestselling novel, *The Night Watch*. Brilliantly adapted for the stage by the Olivier Award-nominated Hattie Naylor and set in the initially dangerous then stultifyingly drab world of 1940s London, the story focuses on four ordinary people caught up in the aftermath of an extraordinary time.



Priscilla Queen Of The Desert

Malvern Theatres, Mon 14 - Sat 19 October;
Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 13 - Sat 18 April

Based on the movie of the same name, *Priscilla the stage show* has wowed both West End and Broadway audiences, picking up a coveted Olivier and an equally prestigious Tony award along its accolade-strewn

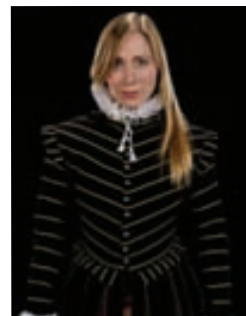
way. At its heartland is an uplifting story of the friendship shared between three pals, who hop aboard a battered old bus and head off in search of love and romance.

The show comes complete with a dazzling array of costumes and a glorious selection of dancefloor favourites, including *It's Raining Men*, *Say A Little Prayer*, *Go West*, *Hot Stuff* and *Always On My Mind*.

Orlando

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,
Thurs 10 October

Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel is the starting point for this latest presentation from the widely admired Dyad Productions - otherwise known as performer Rebecca Vaughan and writer/director Elton Townend Jones. Their previous offerings - *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*, *Dalloway*, *The Time Machine* and *Austen's Women* - all proved to be unqualified triumphs for the talented two-some, and there's every reason to imagine *Orlando* will follow suit. The titular character is an immortal poet whose gender is unspecified, whose spirit cannot be caged - and who knows a thing or two about time-travelling across British history in search of adventure...



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OH, WHAT A CIRCUS!

**International phenomenon
Circus 1903 is this month
visiting Birmingham
for the very first time...
What's On speaks to the show's
Associate Director, Richard
Peakman...**



Birmingham Hippodrome welcomes the big top this month when the circus comes to town.

Taking audiences back to the golden age of the travelling show, international phenomenon Circus 1903 features a host of amazing acts, daredevil feats, highwire stunts and life-size animal puppets.

The extravaganza is coming to Birmingham for the very first time and is a perfect centre-piece for the Hippodrome's 120th birthday celebrations - the theatre was launched as a circus venue back in 1899.

Circus 1903 Associate Director Richard Peakman, who grew up in Kinver and knows the Hippodrome well, is delighted the production will take centre-stage during the theatre's anniversary year: "It would've felt special to bring this show to the Hippodrome last year or next year, but this year is extra-special because of the theatre's birthday.

"It's like we're recreating history with the sights, the sounds and the spectacle that launched the Hippodrome all those years ago. As a local lad, to bring a show which has toured the world back to the Hippodrome at this very special time makes me feel very honoured and very lucky."

Richard became part of the creative team behind Circus 1903 at its very beginning, working with director Neil Dorward, who he'd first met when they were students together at the Italia Conti Academy in London. The two built up successful careers in theatre before collaborating on a circus show in China. Then Neil had the idea for Circus 1903 - and he and the team had a clear vision for the show: "We were really keen to transport audiences back to the golden age of circus when the circus was the biggest attraction of its time," Richard explains. "There was no TV, no cinema, no theatres, no sports games - circus was a combination of all those elements. We wanted to capture that bygone era.

"So we deliberately shied away from anything which would be too futuristic. We wanted to take it back to basics and for our audience to have an appreciation of these amazing circus acts. There are no gimmicks, no special effects, no filter - what you're seeing is the trapeze artist balancing on that highwire or

the juggler spinning those clubs. You're watching a lifetime of dedication packed into an act of a few minutes.

"And we wanted to ensure it was lavish. Money was so tight in the 1900s and yet circus costumes and sets were so extravagant and flamboyant. We really wanted to capture that with exquisite costume design and sumptuous sets."

Recreating the golden age of the big top meant looking for a new way of incorporating animal performers: "We wanted to feature something which was synonymous with turn-of-the-century circus - but obviously these days we wouldn't use real elephants. It was the brainchild of our creative producer, Simon Painter, to incorporate puppetry to bring animals back to the circus. Simon had seen War Horse, which is on everyone's radar because of just how breathtaking the puppets are, and said we should have the best. And so they created two elephants for us - a mother and baby."

When it came to choosing the acts, the team again wanted to ensure a feeling of authenticity: "We did a lot of research. I bought this humongous hardback book which documented circus from its early origins right up to now. We were really keen, where possible, to have acts which were present on the circus circuit at the turn of the century.

"We have a booker who literally trawled the world and came back with a collection of the weird and the wonderful, and then we had lots of films submitted by performers. We went through all of those, looking for the most breathtaking acts."

Some of the acrobats, trapeze and highwire artists, contortionists and jugglers - and a larger-than-life ringmaster - have been with the show since it premiered in 2016, but the team are always on the look-out for new talent: "We're a period piece, but we also need to evolve within those parameters to ensure that we're fresh, exciting, current and have something new to offer audiences."

The show's name pays homage to the age of the historic Barnum & Bailey circus company, which launched the extravaganza known as The Greatest Show On Earth. This is the same PT Barnum who was brought to life by Hugh

Jackman in cinema blockbuster The Greatest Showman. Although Circus 1903 pre-dates Jackman's film, Richard says the movie's popularity has helped re-ignite interest in the golden age of circus: "I absolutely loved the film, and having worked so closely with our production, I was curious to see what they would do with it. I think it's pulled up the curtain on a piece of history, and it's definitely sparked people's imaginations, so now they want to see that kind of show for themselves. I think people have seen the film and thought, 'That looks wonderful and amazing and breathtaking' - and it is!"

Richard's career has seen him performing, choreographing, creating and directing a host of shows across the world, including some in the Midlands. Working for Qdos Pantomimes, he choreographed Cinderella with Julian Clary at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in 2014. He's also been on stage at the Hippodrome in shows such as Fame and Oh! What A Night, but this is the first time he's been in Birmingham as part of a show's creative team.

"I'm so excited to be bringing Circus 1903 to the Hippodrome. It's such a beautiful theatre, and I've always loved having the opportunity to come back home. My career is predominantly in London these days, but my heart is definitely still in the West Midlands.

"My family will all be out in force to see the show, and I'm also excited because I'll have the opportunity to bring my nieces - Evie, who's five, and Sophie, who's two. It will be the first time they'll have seen a circus, and I can't wait to see their faces."

And Richard is confident that his nieces won't be the only ones amazed by what they see: "I hope that people go away with the biggest smiles on their faces, having been thoroughly entertained and mind-boggled by what they've seen. There's something in it for everyone because of the plethora of acts - there's humour but also spectacle. We set out to entertain people - just as circus did back in the day."

.....
Circus 1903 shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Friday 25 October to Saturday 2 November.



FEEL THE BASS

The UK's only Black Arts commissioning festival returns to Birmingham this month. What's On caught up with Bass Festival 2019's curators to find out more...

Organised by award-winning music & arts company Punch Records, the UK's only Black Arts commissioning festival is this year shining a spotlight on the future.

Now in its 13th year, Bass Festival has entrusted two of Birmingham's brightest young creatives - Aliyah Hasinah and RTkal - with the responsibility of curating the event and leaving a new legacy.

"I'm a curator and aspiring historian and filmmaker," explains Aliyah. "I started my career in digital marketing, then ended up as producer by the end of an apprenticeship. I then became freelance and worked on a variety of different projects with an organisation called Apples And Snakes, which was my first actual contracted job. But a lot of my work has been pretty DIY. If I have an idea and it's an exhibition, for example, can we just put it up in a cafe? Can we speak to this artist and get work shown? I've also worked with loads of artists and organisations around the theme of decoloniality and what it means to move the gaze away from the white gaze and not to be apologetic about the way we curate and take up space."

Aliyah's curated projects include Bald Black Girls with artist Ruth Sutoy , The Gallery Is Many Things at Eastside Projects and The Past Is Now at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

Bass Festival's second young curator, RTkal, is a veteran of the Birmingham music scene. "I'm the co-founder of Beats & Barriers Music Academy," he explains. "I also co-own IDST music studios and I run a business called The MBC - Music, Birmingham, Culture - all of which are based in Digbeth."

Inspired both by his generation and his heritage, RTkal has used music to spread positive vibes and unite and entertain audiences across the globe. His CV includes performances at Glastonbury, Bestival, Lovebox and Outlook, to name but a few.

Visitors to Bass Festival can expect six days of live music, workshops, panel discussions, exhibitions and film screenings. There will also be an unveiling ceremony for the event's Future Faces Of Birmingham mural.

Artists involved in this year's get-together include Naomi Cowan, Jevon, Randy Valentine, Sevana, Big Zeeks, Cali P, 808INK, Ana s,

Jamie Rodigan, Italo Skarcha, Layfullstop and Bake Off's Liam Charles.

"The artists I've chosen are part of a wider community who are pushing a culture forward," RTkal explains. "A lot of them are second generation, so their parents are musicians or work within the creative industry, and they're building careers based on a lineage of knowledge and culture. They stand for a bigger thing; it's not just about what's cool or new. It's future music and movements based on solid foundations."

This year's festival theme is 'the future'. Explaining where he plans to take it, RTkal says: "I'm booking artists from different parts of the world and different parts of the country and having them perform alongside Birmingham-based artists. Bass 2019 is going to highlight the calibre of artists that we have to offer as a city. I also want to highlight the skills and high level of entrepreneurship we have in Birmingham. We really do have so much to offer."

Aliyah adds: "I've been thinking a lot about reimagination and what it means to be black and everything that that is. I think the future is blickity-black-black! It's independent and its decolonial. Decolonisation is undoing and unlearning behaviours that we've been taught are correct - like what 'Blackness' is, for example. Decoloniality is unpicking why we do the things that we do, how that's affected us mentally, psychologically, and who we are seeking approval from and why. Decolonisation is constant questioning, and in terms of the future, it's just not a 'yes man' future."

Looking ahead, Aliyah would like Birmingham's creative network to look more like an industry: "I'd like infrastructure. I'd like us not to have to steal resources from other places, and I'd like there to be spaces for people to reap benefits, whether that be artistic development programmes or places to pitch your ideas or create them. And I'd like it to be based on the merit of the idea rather than how many followers you have. I'd like it to be a decentralisation of everything which is stuck in London; a lot of the industry is there but a lot of the talent is here, so we have to connect and build something sustainable."

So what do RTkal and Aliyah feel are their greatest achievements to date?

"Moving back to Birmingham and setting up

the MBC in Digbeth," says RTkal. "Over the years, I've managed to surround myself with people who are talented and passionate about music & arts. I've also learnt a lot from having the opportunity to perform across the world and learn from the music industry internationally. But what it brought to my attention is how overlooked the talent in Birmingham is, and how little we have in terms of a creative industry infrastructure. The MBC and IDST studios are a contribution to the infrastructure. There's a lot of work to be done, but we aim to give Birmingham-based artists the support they need to promote their artistry, and a place to facilitate the creation of new art. We want to keep Birmingham's creative industry health and thriving. We're working on a sustainable, creative future."

"For me," says Aliyah, "the greatest achievement has been the realisation that I don't need to work with institutions for my work to matter. At one point in my career, everyone was telling me, You need to work with this person or you need to work with this. Then I started to see the value of being DIY and independent."

"And also, although it's not an 'achievement', I would say the incredible people I've met along the way. I really admire and respect the people around me."

What do the pair want festival-goers to take away from this year's Bass?

"We want the city to feel inspired," says RTkal. "We want people to feel confident about the future locally and in comparison to the rest of the nation. Birmingham is rich in talent, no doubt about that, so let's highlight it and nurture it."

"I want people to see the multiplicity of possibility," says Aliyah. "Anything is possible. There are so many different ways to think about things, different artists and different versions of what the future could look like. All we have to do is start making steps towards them. I'd like people to leave the festival thinking, Shit, something amazing is happening in Birmingham, and Birmingham is the future."

Bass Festival takes place at various venues across Birmingham from 22 to 27 October. Visit punchbass.com for more information.



We're Going On A Bear Hunt

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Fri 4 - Sun 6 October; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 26 October - Sun 3 November; Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 26 December - Sun 12 January

Suitable for children aged two and older, this Little Angel Theatre adaptation of Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury's popular picture book follows the adventures of a family as they head out on an intrepid quest to find a bear.

Catchy songs and enchanting puppets are combined with no shortage of swishy swashy grass and oozy, squelchy mud in a show that seems certain to keep youngsters splendidly entertained.

Peppa Pig's Best Day Ever

The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 October



If you've taken your little ones to any of the previous Peppa Pig stage shows - and enjoyed the experience of watching them having a fantastic time - you'll already know that this latest production is well worth catching.

Peppa Pig is heading out on a road trip with George, Mummy Pig and Daddy Pig, and there are plenty of adventures waiting to be had - including ones that involve dragons, dinosaurs, ice-creams and muddy puddles...

The Pirate Cruncher

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 26 & Sun 27 October

Goat And Monkey are the company bringing to life this bestselling picture book by Jonny Duddle, winner of the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize.

When child inventor extraordinaire Emily finds her tavern being raided by the dastardly Captain Purplebeard, she sends the ne'er-do-well pirate and his motley crew on a wild goose chase that leads them into the far-from-friendly tentacles of the terrifying Pirate Cruncher...

Expect 'thrilling action, daft nonsense, stirring shanties, the weirdest of mechanical contraptions' and music and songs by BBC Radio Two Folk Award winner Jon Boden.

Emily Rising

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 12 October

Little Angel Theatre have garnered plenty of praise for this clever, thoughtful and visually engaging production since it premiered three years ago.

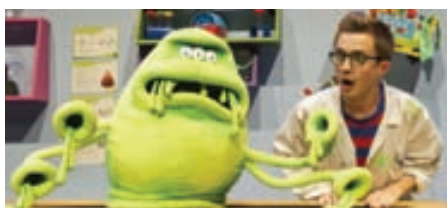
The story unfolds in a flat in Islington where 10-year-old Emily, whose parents are getting a divorce, wakes up one morning to find that her feet no longer touch the ground. What's more, she keeps rising higher and higher, eventually soaring over London and further away from her crumbling family...

Monstersaurus!

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 19 October

Having created a whole world of whacky inventions and incredible monsters, young inventor Monty doesn't know what to do with them all...

The creators of Aliens Love Underpants make a welcome return with this 'monster-ously good show', which comes complete with original music and plenty of audience participation.



Tom Gates Live On Stage!

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 30 October - Sat 2 November

Birmingham Stage Company makes a welcome return to present this new production inspired by author and illustrator Liz Pichon's award-winning Tom Gates stories.

Liz's series of books about the character have been translated into 40-plus languages, selling more than four million copies worldwide. "So far there are 15 books in the series, with the 16th due out this month," says Liz. "But there could be 17 books, or maybe more, if I have loads of other ideas!"

The new show, written especially for the stage, finds young Tom doing his best to stay out of trouble and make sure he doesn't miss the school trip.



I Believe In Unicorns

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 8 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Tues 24 October

Michael Morpurgo's much-loved book is brilliantly brought to life by the Olivier Award-nominated Wizard Presents, who debuted this show at Edinburgh back in 2013.

The story revolves around the outdoors-loving Tomas, a boy whose negative attitude towards books and being dragged to the library by his mother is challenged and changed the day he meets the Unicorn and the Unicorn Lady... Wizard Presents describe their show as being suitable 'for families with children aged six-plus and everyone who loves stories and books'.

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Quite a Rep-utation...

There are exciting times ahead at Birmingham Repertory Theatre, as the venue's new artistic director, the Olivier Award-winning Sean Foley, explains...

Olivier Award-winning actor, director and writer Sean Foley has his nose to the grindstone at the moment. As the new artistic director of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the 54-year-old has got his work cut out adding the finishing touches to his first season of productions at the venue, which gets under way in the new year.

"I was quite merrily going along with a freelance directing career, mainly in commercial theatre in the West End and almost exclusively directing comedies," says Sean, who co-wrote hit Morecambe & Wise tribute show *The Play What I Wrote*. "Somebody rang me up and asked me to apply for the job. The more I looked at The REP as a theatre, and at Birmingham as a city - where I have personal roots on my mum's side of the family and my dad was part of the huge Irish community here - the more I was reminded of how wonderful both are. I was also attracted by the opportunity and financing for producing at The REP. All of those factors combined encouraged me to apply for the role of artistic director - and then I ended up getting it!"

Sean is aiming to tap into the theatre's great potential: "I honestly believe that although The REP has been run tremendously over the last couple of years, it's nonetheless a sleeping giant - the same with Birmingham as a city. There's an enormous amount of unfulfilled potential here - such talent and an incredible sense of humour. But I think the city is also self-deprecating in a way that's not always to its advantage. Here at The REP, we have an 820-seat main house that's one of the most amazing theatres in the country. We also have incredible workshop facilities that not many theatres have anymore. Then, of course, our classic studio theatre, *The Door* - historically one of the national leaders for small theatres presenting new plays - brings that word 'potential' to mind again. The Birmingham Rep is also in this iconic building. It just seemed like a great place to take over and make into a national hub for great theatre. At the moment, it's a city theatre that represents the creativity and talent of the wider region, but I do also feel strongly that it should be brought up to a national and international level."

And how will this be achieved?

"We hope to have a real mix of locally sourced stories created into theatre, and to be a launchpad for bigger shows that can go into the West End or tour nationally and internationally. Personally, my taste is what can be called 'popular theatre'. I like doing comedies, I like doing musicals. Then, in terms of

dramas, there's such a wealth of Midlands and Birmingham stories that can be told.

"One of the best parts about having three theatres in The REP complex is that it allows us to have such different things running at the same time. We could have a massive comedy tour on in the main house and a really hard-hitting drama with contemporary, social themes or local work in *The Door*. Then, *The Studio* theatre, which we share with the Library of Birmingham, is also a fantastically exciting place that we're going to brand as the starting-point for the country's best new plays."

Sean believes that audience satisfaction is the most effective way to catapult Birmingham Rep to national and international acclaim: "Theatre does have a problem, a barrier, where a lot of people don't think it's for them. Ultimately, we have to give them a good night out, which doesn't mean that what we offer can't be smart, sophisticated and offer up issues or themes that are relevant and difficult. People need to make that connection with theatre, just like they do when they tune into dramas on the telly or go to see a film because it's a renowned director's latest blockbuster or features an excellent actor in their most recent role. I want people to always think that everything which comes to the Birmingham Rep is of excellent quality. That's the bottom line."

So what professional experience does Sean bring to his new role?

"Well, there's no other artistic director in Britain who's received an Olivier nomination or award for acting, directing and writing. I think the fact that I have that range of experience in the creative and performance aspects of theatre really helps, as I can always look at a piece from another perspective and through the eyes of my different disciplines. I think the main way my past will impact my work at The REP is in terms of my unconventional route into the profession. I didn't go to drama school and go that traditional route. I created my own theatre company and started writing and co-writing original comedies for that. My whole background is quite untypical of an artistic director, and I feel like that fits well with Birmingham, which is a unique city with a pioneering spirit."

Sean has been joined by two other newcomers at The REP: Deputy Artistic Director Amit Sharma and Executive Director Rachael Thomas.

"Part of the idea when I was appointed was that Amit would join at the same time. Amit's

professional experience is much more in the area of new writing and new plays, so we complement each other in that way with my experience of the commercial theatre of the West End. Amit is also an Asian disabled man. That's a very important understanding to have at a theatre in a city that's very diverse and has a high percentage of BAME [black Asian & minority ethnic] residents. It was a bit of a shotgun marriage, but we both have a good sense of humour and seem to have struck it off. I look forward to us working together."

Sean's first season of shows is impressively eclectic...

"From January we've got some amazing things in the programme. We're starting with *Asking For It* in our main house, which is a contemporary play on the subject of consent. It's a fantastic award-winning show from the Abbey Theatre - Ireland's national theatre. I hope we'll present lots of international work at The REP - particularly Irish work, as it's on a complete high at the moment. This will be the show's UK premiere and we're incredibly proud to be doing that.

"Then we'll be doing a fantastic comedy written originally by Molière - a French playwright. About 18 months ago, the RSC did a version of *Tartuffe* but set within a Muslim community in Sparkhill, Birmingham. We're going to do a new production of that show, bringing it back to its roots.

"We also have an amazing new version of *Doctor Faustus* coming up, in collaboration with the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Headlong Theatre Company, in which *Faustus* is reimagined as a woman.

"There's also the incredible *Ramps On The Moon* project, which strives for the inclusion of deaf and disabled individuals in theatre. They'll be bringing a fantastic version of *Oliver Twist* to us.

"There are just so many great things coming up in 2020 that it's impossible to mention them all - everything's a highlight in our programme. Then, beyond that, I'm really looking forward to celebrating 50 years of the building in 2021 and then seeing how we're going to get involved with the 2022 Commonwealth Games. There's so much to look forward to at The REP."

.....

To find out more about what's coming up at Birmingham Repertory Theatre, visit birmingham-rep.co.uk

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SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT

SHOUT Festival of Queer Arts and Culture returns to Birmingham next month (5 - 17 November). Check out our selection of highlights below and then head to shoutfestival.co.uk for the full festival line-up.

Shout Opening Party: Hedwig And The Angry Inch The Nightingale Club - Tues 5 November

Hosted by Birmingham's very own Ysheel Black, the launch party features the unveiling of two murals commissioned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Nightingale Club. The event also includes performances from a stellar line-up of queer cabaret acts, including Juno Birch, and a screening of one of the greatest queer films of all time, Hedwig And The Angry Inch.



John Waters | This Filthy World Birmingham Hippodrome - Wed 13 November

Queer icon, living legend and 'master of filth' John Waters - once referred to as 'the pope of trash' - visits Birmingham for the very first time. His one-man show is a vaudeville act celebrating both his film career and his obsessional tastes. Focusing on John's early negative artistic influences and his fascination with true crime, exploitation films, fashion lunacy and the extremes of the contemporary art world, this joyously devious monologue - a homage to all that's trashy in life - is a call-to-arms to 'filth followers' everywhere.



Hit The Ode | Shout Takeover Birmingham Hippodrome - Fri 8 November

This unique performance-poetry night boasts a knock-out line-up of queer spoken-word artists, including Jay Hulme, Keith Jarrett, Dean Atta and Jackie Hagan.

Fab! The Fabulous Kids Party

MAC Birmingham -
Sun 17 November

This year's SHOUT OUT includes a daytime children's party featuring music, DIY costume-making, a variety of fun games, a disco and a host of glittery and colourful friends. The event is suitable for children aged three-plus, so bring along your little ones and get set to boogie!



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Quagmire, detail from Ja Natuurlijk exhibition © Jim Holyoak and Matt Shane

A Hybridist's Dream (2018) © Jenna Naylor



macbirmingham.co.uk/thebigdraw



Tim Mara: Not Pop?

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 29 March

Although frequently associated with the Pop Art movement, Irish printmaker and one-time Wolverhampton Polytechnic student Tim Mara - who died in 1997 at the age of 48 - found his inspiration elsewhere. "I knew that the Pop thing was going on," he said. "Screen printing was there, photography was there, the everyday objects were there - but I was much more interested pictorially in

Velázquez and Vermeer. Those prints had much more to do with painting." Mara's work saw him blending traditional processes with digital printing techniques, but his main consideration was always the subject matter: "In the hierarchy of fine art, printmaking is usually associated with craft skills - with technique. And that gets in the way. My work was always about the ideas more than the medium."

The Mughals: Power And Beauty At The Indian Court

The Barber Institute, Birmingham, Fri 11 October - Sun 2 February

Drawings, prints, coins and manuscripts are here brought together to explore aspects of life in the Indian subcontinent during 300-plus years of Mughal rule, from the 16th century to the 19th. The featured objects - some of which come from the Barber's own rarely exhibited collection - reveal how patrons and artists developed a distinctive Mughal style that reflected both their power and their ideals of beauty.

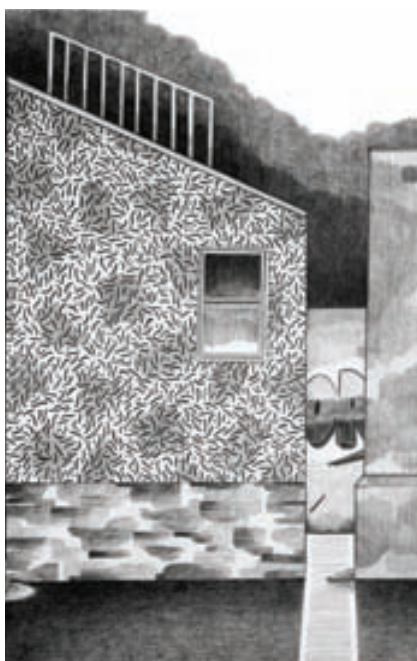


Coventry Biennial: The Twin

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, Sat 5 October - Sun 26 January

The theme for this year's citywide Biennial - 'the twin' - reflects the fact that Coventry is twinned with no fewer than 26 other cities around the world. These include Russia's Volgograd, with which it's celebrating 75 years of friendship in 2019. The works on display in the Herbert exhibition explore themes of collaboration and togetherness while also pondering the difficulties presented by globalisation, political inequality and conflict.

"Coventry has been an international, welcoming and activist city for decades," says Ryan Hughes, Artistic Director of Coventry Biennial. "We are thrilled to be working with artists, our twin cities and a wide variety of partners to explore what it means to be together in 2019."



British Ceramics Biennial

Various venues in Stoke-on-Trent, until Sun 13 October

An expanded programme of exhibitions, installations and events featuring more than 300 contemporary artists is ensuring that the 10th anniversary of this hugely popular free festival is being 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.

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BY ARRANGEMENT WITH
PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

Joker CERT tbc (122 mins)

Starring **Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro, Zazie Beetz, Frances Conroy, Brett Cullen, Douglas Hodge**
Directed by **Todd Phillips (USA)**

It's no laughing matter: Arthur Fleck was desperate to make people laugh, but after a public humiliation he turned on society and adopted the moniker of The Joker... This is the first time that a villain from DC Comics has been given his own stand-alone movie, much as the case with the wicked godmother from Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*, who was turned into Maleficent. Here, the producers Todd Phillips and Bradley Cooper have opted for a character study of failure and madness, and Joaquin Phoenix would seem to be a savvy choice for the title role. The Joker has been previously played on film by Jack Nicholson, Heath Ledger and Jared Leto, but Phoenix's interpretation promises to be something else - to prepare for the role, the actor lost 52 pounds.

Released Fri 4 October



EDITOR'S CHOICE

A Shaun The Sheep Movie: Farmageddon CERT U (86 mins)

With the voice of **Justin Fletcher, John Sparkes, Kate Harbour** Directed by **Will Becher and Richard Phelan (UK)**

A spin-off of Aardman Animations' *Shaun The Sheep Movie* (2015), this stop-motion cartoon sees Shaun and his flock encounter a beguiling extraterrestrial down at the farm. It puts the ET into bleat.

**Released
Fri 18 October**



Maleficent: Mistress Of Evil

CERT tbc (118 mins)

Starring **Angelina Jolie, Elle Fanning, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Sam Riley, Ed Skrein, Imelda Staunton, Michelle Pfeiffer**
Directed by **Joachim Rønning (USA)**

After a four-year absence from the screen, Angelina Jolie returns as the wicked fairy godmother she first depicted in *Maleficent* (2014). The latter was a live-action spin-off of Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and showed why the fairy turned her powers to the greater bad. Here, she's riled again when Princess Aurora (Fanning) is embraced by the family of the charming Prince Phillip (Harris Dickinson). In 3D.

Released Fri 18 October



Zombieland: Double Tap

CERT tbc

Starring **Woody Harrelson, Jesse Eisenberg, Abigail Breslin, Emma Stone, Rosario Dawson, Zoey Deutch, Luke Wilson**
Directed by **Ruben Fleischer (USA)**

Ten years after the zombie spoof *Zombieland* (2009) proved a surprising success for the genre, the original stars have returned for more bloody sarcasm. This time, the ill-matched quartet head for the American heartland to encounter more evolved versions of the undead.

Released Fri 18 October

Official Secrets CERT 15 (112 mins)

Starring **Keira Knightley, Matt Smith, Matthew Goode, Rhys Ifans, Adam Bakri, Ralph Fiennes**
Directed by **Gavin Hood (USA/UK)**

The invasion of Iraq will not go away. This real-life thriller centres on Katharine Gun (Keira Knightley), the British translator who leaked top-secret information on America's illegal attempts to push for war in Iraq.

Released Fri 18 October



Film highlights released in October...

Judy CERT 12a (118 mins)

Starring **Renée Zellweger, Jessie Buckley, Finn Wittrock, Rufus Sewell, Michael Gambon**
Directed by **Rupert Goold (UK)**

Adapted from Peter Quilter's 2005 play *End Of The Rainbow*, this musical drama focuses on Judy Garland's sold-out appearance at the Talk Of The Town in London in 1968. She died in the summer of the following year.

Released Fri 4 October

Abominable CERT PG (92 mins)

With the voices of **Chloe Bennet, Albert Tsai, Tenzing Norgay Trainor, Eddie Izzard, Sarah Palson, Tsai Chin** Directed by **Jill Culton and Todd Wilderman (China/USA)**

We've had *Smallfoot* and *The Missing Link*, and now we've got the story of a Yeti who finds himself lost in Shanghai, as they do. But he has the help of the teenage Yi and her two scampish friends to aid his journey home to the Himalayas. The cartoon is a collaboration between DreamWorks Animation and Chinese production company Pearl Studio.

Released Fri 11 October

A promotional poster for the Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live UK Tour 2020. The central image shows a large monster truck with a skull on its front and 'Hot Wheels' branding on its side, performing a stunt in a large arena. The truck is tilted, with its front wheel on the ground and its rear wheel high in the air. The arena is filled with a large crowd of spectators, and the ceiling is high with many spotlights illuminating the scene. The Hot Wheels logo is prominently displayed at the top, with 'MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE' in large, bold letters below it.

Hot Wheels MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE

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Film highlights released in October...

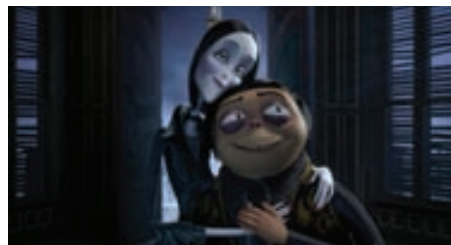
The Addams Family

CERT PG (105 mins)

With the voices of **Oscar Isaac**, **Charlize Theron**, **Chloë Grace Moretz**, **Finn Wolfhard**, **Nick Kroll**, **Bette Midler**, **Allison Janney**
Directed by **Conrad Vernon** and **Greg Tiernan** (USA)

Charles Addams' ghoulish clan has been around since 1938 when they first appeared in a comic strip in *The New Yorker* magazine. Since then, they were immortalised in the 1964-66 TV series and then three films. This version, in which the Addamses move to New Jersey and confront the 21st century, is the first computer-animated edition. In 3D.

Released Fri 25 October



Black And Blue

CERT 15 (101 mins)

Starring **Naomie Harris**, **Tyrese Gibson**, **Mike Colter**, **Reid Scott**, **Beau Knapp**, **Frank Grillo**
Directed by **Deon Taylor** (USA)

Alicia West (Naomie Harris) is a black woman in a blue uniform. But, being a rookie, she is also green, so that when she films the murder of a drug dealer by her partner, she tries to do the right thing in a world that is anything but black and white....

Released Fri 25 October

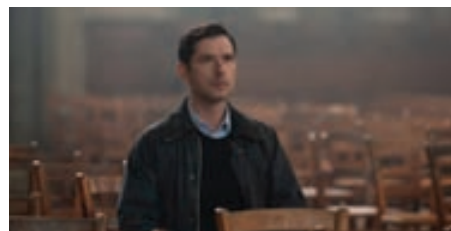
By The Grace Of God

CERT 15 (138 mins)

Starring **Melvil Poupaud**, **Denis Ménochet**, **Swann Arlaud**, **Éric Caravaca**, **Bernard Verley**
Directed by **François Ozon** (France/Belgium)

Three men link up to try to expose the priest who abused them as children. Based on true events, the French film won the Silver Bear at this year's Berlin film festival.

Released Fri 25 October



CRITIC'S CHOICE

The Peanut Butter Falcon

CERT tbc (117 mins)

Starring **Shia LaBeouf**, **Dakota Johnson**, **Zack Gottsagen**, **John Hawkes**, **Bruce Dern**, **Thomas Haden Church** Directed by **Tyler Nilson** and **Michael Schwartz** (USA)

Films featuring Down's syndrome characters are few and far between, particularly in American cinema. Yet Zack Gottsagen is such a forceful presence that the scriptwriters Tyler Nilson and Michael Schwartz built an entire film around his talents. He plays Zack, a deserted 20-year-old who is housed at a North Carolina retirement home because nobody knows what to do with him. He's a bit of a troublemaker, whose practical jokes are lapped up by the home's aged residents, but his dreams of becoming a

wrestling star seem impractical. However, he escapes the home and sets off to find his wrestling hero, the Salt Water Redneck. Wearing nothing but a pair of Y-fronts, he hides out in the boat of a local fisherman, Tyler (LaBeouf), an anti-social loner with issues of his own... The title is unlikely to attract a huge following, nor the central character of a pot-bellied lad with Down's syndrome, but it's a strikingly original tale which has the good sense not to push its agenda down the viewer's throat. Displaying a novelistic feel, with overtones of Mark Twain, the film is an entertaining adventure that manages to be both wildly off-beat and deeply affecting.

Released Fri 18 October

The Last Black Man In San Francisco

CERT tbc (121 mins)

Starring **Jimmie Falls**, **Jonathan Majors**, **Danny Glover**, **Tichina Arnold**, **Rob Morgan**, **Mike Epps**, **Finn Wittrock**
Directed by **Joe Talbot** (USA)

Playing a character partly based on himself, Jimmie Falls is a man who is trying to reclaim the home in which he grew up... The film marks the directorial debut of Jimmie's childhood friend Joe Talbot and its development budget was raised through Kickstarter.

Released Fri 25 October



Doctor Sleep

CERT tbc

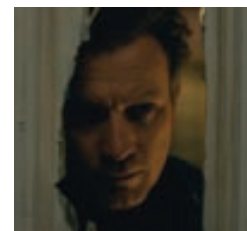
Starring **Ewan McGregor**, **Rebecca Ferguson**, **Kyliegh Curran**, **Cliff Curtis**, **Carl Lumbly**, **Bruce Greenwood**, **Jacob Tremblay**
Directed by **Mike Flanagan** (USA)

It had to happen.

Thirty-nine years after the chilling events that unfolded in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, this sequel sees poor Danny Torrance

now a grown man, played by Ewan McGregor. With his psychic powers still intact, Danny is struggling with alcoholism when he meets a teenage girl (Curran) with her own extrasensory gift, known as the 'shine'.

Released Thurs 31 October



A festive poster for 'THE FESTIVE GIFT FAIR' held from 14-17 November 2019 at the NEC Birmingham. The background is dark blue with white bokeh lights and snowflakes. On the left, there are white silhouettes of a reindeer, a rabbit, and a tree with a lantern. On the right, a circular arrangement of various Christmas-themed icons (deer, reindeer, train, cat, gift, etc.) surrounds the event title. Below the title, the dates and location are listed. A large orange gift tag with a purple bow is in the bottom right corner, displaying the ticket price. Social media icons and the website URL are at the bottom left.

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An advertisement for the LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Birmingham. The background shows a man and a young boy smiling and building with LEGO bricks. The text is arranged in a collage-like fashion with various colors and fonts. The main headline 'BUILD & PLAY' is in large green letters. Other text includes 'LEGOLAND DISCOVERY CENTRE BIRMINGHAM', 'BRICK OR TREAT', and the event dates. A small LEGO robot is in the bottom right corner. The website URL is at the bottom.

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Horse Of The Year Show

NEC, Birmingham, Wed 2 - Sun 6 October

The biggest event of the year for equestrian entertainment makes a welcome return and promises to offer something for all the family to enjoy. The five-day show includes a range of national

and international showjumping classes and also hosts the finals of the Pony Club Mounted Games Prince Philip Cup.

Equestrian acrobat Laurent Serre is set to thrill audiences with his daredevil stunts, while French performer M  lie Philippot brings light comedy to the show with her 'dancing duo'.

Grand Designs Live

NEC, Birmingham, Wed 9 - Sun 13 October

Based on the popular Channel Four series and packed with inspirational ideas, Grand Designs Live features new product launches, the latest eco-innovations and over 400 specialist companies across six project zones.

With the 2019 edition of the show marking the TV series' 20th anniversary, the live event is bringing back designers from across the years to talk about their projects and offer plenty of useful hints and tips.

The TV show's presenter, Kevin McCloud, will be on stage across the weekend, taking part in educational seminars and debates with a host of industry experts.



Rocket-fuelled Half Term

British Motor Museum, Gaydon,
Sat 26 October - Sun 3 November

The British Motor Museum is hosting a rocket-fuelled selection of fun family activities this autumn half-term holiday - so prepare for take-off! Recycled rocket making and rocket-powered family tours are among the attractions. There's also the chance to design and build your own Rocket K'nex Car and see how far it travels from its pneumatic rocket launch.

On Halloween, Professor Pickle & Doctor Pumpkin are back with their not-to-be-missed science show, a 25-minute presentation of fascinating interactive demonstrations and rocket-inspired science.

The Museum's Halloween Black Cat Trail is available every day throughout half-term week too.

Destination Star Trek

NEC, Birmingham,
Fri 25 - Sun 27 October

Boldly go where lots of people have gone before by attending Europe's official Star Trek convention.

As well as featuring interactive exhibits with genuine props and costumes from Star Trek's 50-plus years, the event provides fans with the chance to come face to face with cast and crew members from the much-loved franchise.



Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show

Staffordshire County Showground,
Sat 19 & Sun 20 October

Celebrating the growing popularity of emerging classics from the 1970s, '80s and '90s, this annual event now attracts more than 30,000 enthusiasts and features over 900 traders, dealers and autojumble stands.

This year's guests of honour are 10-time world side car champion Steve Webster MBE and Classic Motorcycle Mechanics contributor Allen Millyard.



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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.

ADVANCE TICKETS £10

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Museum Of The Moon

Enginuity, Ironbridge, Mon 21 October - Sun 10 November

To celebrate 50 years since man first walked on the moon, Enginuity is offering visitors the chance to enjoy an immersive lunar experience.

Luke Jerram's seven-metre moon sculpture is an awe-inspiring work of art created using detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. Internally lit to provide an up-close and surreal experience, the sculpture features lunar imagery, moonlight and a surround-sound composition by BAFTA and Ivor Novello award winner Dan Jones.

BRICKLIVE

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 31 October - Sunday 3 November

Children can play, create, discover and get hands-on at this ever-popular event, which features no fewer than 10 million Lego bricks! Interactive experiences, free build activities, live stage challenges and a fully immersive educational brick experience are among the highlights of the show.

Old favourites the Mosaic Builder, Race Ramps, Map Builder, Minecraft, Duplo Lego soft bricks and City Builder all make a welcome return.

New for 2019 is the Sci-Fi Zone, a space in which visitors can build their very own intergalactic spaceship.



CHANGE Festival 2019

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 18 - Sun 20 October

This new event gathers performers and speakers from the West Midlands and beyond in world-class shows, talks, comedy and workshops - with the aim to inspire visitors to imagine a more positive future for all. Highlights include 'The World We Made', a play set in 2050 and based on environmentalist Jonathon Porritt's book of the same name, a comedy evening asking 'What Will We Tell Our Grandkids?', a panel of transformational women sharing their stories for 'MetamorphSISTER' and plenty of enlivening talks and discussions.

Supreme Cat Show

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 26 October

Now here's a purr-fect opportunity to get 'up close and purr-sonal' with marvellous moggies aplenty! With more than 800 cats expected to feature, this 43rd such show promises an enjoyable day out for cat lovers and owners alike.

The family-friendly event includes grooming demonstrations, hot tips from cat experts and a 'meet the cats' section, with an abundance of owners, breeders and exhibitors in attendance.

So if you love your common-or-garden moggy and are 'feline' in the mood for what should be a great day out, then this is very definitely the show for you!



Miniatura

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 5 & Sun 6 October

Now in its 36th year, the ever-popular Miniatura brings some of the world's most talented craftspeople to Birmingham.

The show provides the perfect opportunity to pick up a new skill, with professional and expert tutors running workshops across the weekend.

The exhibitors will be busy making works of miniature art right up until the start of the event, meaning that visitors will be able to check out the very latest items in their collections.



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Tamworth
Castle

LET'S GET SPOOKY!

Haunted Castle

Saturday 26 October - Friday 1 November
10.30am - 3.00pm

A week full of ghostly goings on at Tamworth Castle's haunted half-term spooktacular.

Encounter a series of creepy characters and activities as you tour the Castle. See if you can meet the cackling hags, then look out for Master Slaughter as he may try and steal some body parts! Only the courageous will manage to finish their tour without being spooked.

Recommended age 6-11 yrs, below that age admission is at parental discretion.

**Admission: Adults (16yrs+) £7.50,
OAP (65yrs+) £6.50,
Child (5-15yrs) £5.50,
Child (2-4yrs) £3.50,
Under 2 yrs free.**



Ghost Search

Thursday 31 October, 8.00pm - Midnight (doors open 7.30pm)

Join us for a night with a difference on our ghost walk around the Medieval Castle, with vigils conducted in reputedly haunted rooms. Cameras or camcorders can be used, and we advise warm clothing and rugs or cushions for use during the vigils as rooms can be chilly! Soft drinks are available for purchase on arrival. Complimentary tea /coffee and a slice of cake are served during the break.

Adults £29.00, no concessions. Over 18s only.

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Scarefest

Alton Towers, Staffordshire, Sat 5 & Sun 6, Sat 12 & Sun 13, Fri 18 October - Sun 3 November

Alton Towers' popular Halloween season of events returns for another year, complete with 'spooks, frights and thrills for everyone'. The extended opening hours allow visitors to enjoy their favourite rides in the dark, while the popular visitor attraction is also hosting a

selection of extra entertainment. Younger visitors can enjoy the colourful Halloween Playland, join in with the Alton Towers ancestors' flashmob, or dance and play games at the CBeebies Monster Ball. For older thrill-seekers, the park's award-winning scare mazes have been 're-scarified' for 2019, with a brand new maze added to the spine-tingling line-up of attractions.

More Treat Than Trick

Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire, Sat 19 - Thurs 31 October

Drayton Manor is inviting families to dust off their broomsticks and treat themselves to some ghoulish Halloween fun this month. Attractions include The Haunting, which sees visitors being challenged to make their way through a long-abandoned vicarage in which ghostly apparitions and supernatural events are very much par for the course.



A-Scarium

National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham, Sat 12 October - Sun 3 November

Discover the spooky creatures that lurk beneath the waves and explore the ocean depths when you visit the National Sea Life Centre this Halloween. Meet the mer-witch in her lair and help her cast a spell by finding the missing ingredients around the aquarium so that you can claim your reward.

Visitors can also take part in a creepy creature twister game or watch a spooky pumpkin show.

Halloween Spook-tacular

National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent, Sat 19 - Sun 20 & Fri 25 October - Fri 1 November

Expect some spooky fun down on the farm this Halloween.

Activities include broomstick training, pumpkin picking and a mummy maze hunt. There's a haunted house to visit too, and a new-for-2019 wizard academy.

Haunted Castle

Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire, Sat 26 October - Fri 1 November

Tamworth Castle is hosting a week of ghostly goings-on this Halloween. Expect to meet some seriously creepy characters as you tour the castle - including the cackling hags - but cross your fingers you don't bump into Master Slaughter, who's always on the lookout for body parts to steal! For visitors fancying a late-night thrill, there's the opportunity to take part in candlelit vigils in some of the castle's most haunted rooms.

Spooky Science Night

Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Thurs 31 October

Calling all mad scientists, witches and wizards - Thinktank is set to host a seriously spooky party this Halloween!

Pop along to the event in your best fancy dress, watch the 'spectacular' Trick Or Treat show and dance the night away at the silent zombie disco.

Visitors can also get hands-on by experimenting in the slime lab or making their very own family light photos.



Halloween Half Term

26 October – 3 November 2019

- Making Rockets
- Black Cat Trail
- Family Tour

See website for full details

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26 Oct – 3 Nov
10am – 5pm



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10 REASONS TO VISIT COMPTON VERNEY ART GALLERY & PARK

Located in the South Warwickshire countryside, Compton Verney is a great place to revel in nature, broaden your cultural horizons, unleash your creativity, or simply treat yourself to a relaxing day out.

Although only a stone's throw from Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, and an easy drive from Birmingham and Coventry, the venue feels a world away from hordes of tourists and the bustle of city life.

The art and exhibitions on show are among the best in the country, while there's also plenty to keep the kids entertained for hours on end - and at reasonable prices too! Find out below why Compton Verney should be the next place you visit...

Magnum Manifesto

Possibly one of the most important exhibitions you'll see this year (Compton Verney is its only UK tour venue), this showcase of work by the world's greatest photographers captures the most significant events of the last 70 years, from the Second World War to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Whether you're into history, photography or are just fascinated by people and humanity, the images on show will move, educate, inspire and empower you.

Compton Verney is also giving you the chance to have your photography featured in its galleries as part of a related display, allowing everybody to contribute a snapshot of the world. Opens 11 October.



Leonard Freed, Martin Luther King, Baltimore, Maryland, USA 1964 © Leonard Freed /Magnum Photos

Ancient Chinese bronzes and portraits of royalty

Among Compton Verney's many attractions are Chinese bronzes that are thousands of years old, the largest collection of British folk art in the UK, portraits of Tudor royals and masterpieces by Canaletto and other artists from the 'golden age' of Neapolitan art.

A free tour by a tremendously knowledgeable 'gallery interpreter' will bring the impressive collections to life.



Make a mud pie

For younger visitors, the Forest School (Thursdays during term time, 12.30pm - 2.30pm) is usually the highlight of their visit. It's a chance to play, to get muddy, to make and build things and to make new friends. The Forest School is hugely

popular, particularly in the holidays when it's open to older kids too.

There's also a great adventure playground, a pond-dipping platform, a bird hide and sandpits to play in, meaning you can spend the whole day there without getting bored.

The Women's Library

If you're looking for your next good read, get some ideas from this beautiful library.

Inspired by a fascinating history, the library's bookshelves change every year when guest curators are invited to choose a selection of books that are special to them.



Learn a new skill

If you've ever fancied having a go at botanical illustration, turning your hand to whittling or learning about native flora

and fauna, keep an eye on Compton Verney's fantastic programme of workshops, talks and events, all of which change seasonally.

ARTfernoon tea

While you can pop into the café for fantastic cakes and delicious hot meals, it's well worth booking in advance for

afternoon tea. Served in a beautiful room with views across the gardens, it really turns a visit into a special occasion.



Shopping with purpose

Start - and finish! - your Christmas shopping here! Compton Verney's got a great selection of products to purchase, from quirky gifts and beautiful cards to coffee-table books and unique homewares and handbags.

And you can shop with a clear conscience too, knowing that all the money you spend goes straight back to charity to support emerging artists, the site's restoration and arts education for local children. Check out the Textiles Fair (16 & 17 November) for handmade products direct from the artists who created them.

Brand new art and half-term fun

Well known for supporting artists and commissioning new creations, Compton Verney is this autumn shining a spotlight

on the work of Israeli artist Ariel Schlesinger. Ariel has designed a special half-term programme featuring games and activities designed to challenge your creativity and imagination.



Autumn delights!

With autumn upon us, the landscape at Compton Verney is transforming before our very eyes.

With a range of walks available, from short strolls on paved pathways to longer jaunts through meadows, the huge site boasts some

incredible views (after all, it's what the original landscape designer, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, was famous for!). Walking through the grounds feels like taking a trip around the world, with Redwood Sequoias as big as you'd find in California and Cedars of Lebanon dating back to the 18th century.



Great value for money

Compton Verney's Annual Pass is exceptionally good value for money. A £33 Family Annual Pass gives unlimited entry for two adults and four children to everything except exhibitions for a whole year.



Visit comptonverney.org.uk to find out more about upcoming exhibitions, events and activities, and to plan your visit.

But hurry, the venue closes for winter on 15 December, and does so with a bang - a fabulous firework finale to say goodbye to 2019!



The Haunted Castle

Warwick Castle, Sat 19 October - Sun 3 November

Warwick Castle certainly doesn't do anything by halves when it comes to Halloween.

The ever-popular visitor attraction is offering a whole host of suitably spooky scenarios for visitors to enjoy in the second half of the month, including a couple of new-for-2019 attractions.

Highlights include the Dead Of Knight scare-maze, in which the army of the dead rise up, and The Haunted Hollows, a Halloween trail where participants can expect to meet 'creepy characters at every turn'.

The 'wondrous witches' are back with a new show too, while a trip into the castle dungeon is probably best avoided if you happen to be of a sensitive disposition!



Halloween Nights

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Fri 25 - Sat 26 & Wed 30 - Thurs 31 October

Visitors to the Black Country Living Museum will find themselves trick or treating down the venue's gaslit cobbled streets this Halloween, on what should be a frightfully good evening of spininggling entertainment.

There are creepy characters to meet, a prize to be won for 'best-dressed ghoul', the chance to use your detective skills to become a historic hero and an opportunity to check out the Fiendish Felons trail.

Circus performers, fire jugglers and magicians ensure there's no shortage of good old-fashioned street entertainment to enjoy too.

Tudor World Halloween

Tudor World, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 25 October - Sun 3 November

Stratford-upon-Avon gets splendidly spooky this Halloween, when one of its most haunted buildings hosts an array of creepy events for all the family to enjoy. Daytime visitors can take part in a 'witch's quiz', complete with a chance to win a ghoulish prize. A fortune teller and storyteller will be on hand on selected days too. Nighttime entertainment comes in the form of family-friendly ghost tours and, later still, adults-only ghost tours and ghost hunts. New for 2019 are special Jack the Ripper 'interactive evenings'. Taking place on Friday 25 October and Friday 1 November, the events offer visitors the chance to study crime scenes and immerse themselves in the dark and murky backstreets of Victorian-era Whitechapel.



Halloween Torch-lit Pumpkin Walk

Bodenham Arboretum, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 October

Apple bobbing, marshmallow toasting and spooky storytelling keep the kids active and amused at this special Halloween event. The main attraction, though - as ably evidenced by the event's title - is the torch-lit pumpkin walk, a fun undertaking that sees families making their way around the big pool in search of pumpkins with letters carved into them, from which can be made a special hidden word.

Visitors are invited to bring along their very own carved pumpkin too - there's a prize for the best one...

PHIL MCINTYRE LIVE
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*Your week-
by-week
listings guide*
October 2019

the list

James Arthur at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent - Sun 6 October

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

What's On

Tues 1 to Sun 6 October



Russian State Ballet: Swan Lake
at The Place, Telford

Wed 2 October

Mon 7 to Sun 13 October



Kris Drever at
The Hive, Shrewsbury

Sun 13 October

Mon 14 to Sun 20 October



The Rocky Horror Show at
Wolverhampton Grand

Mon 14 - Sat 19 October

Mon 21 to Thurs 31 October



Marty MacDonald's Toy
Machine at the Brewhouse

Wed 30 October

THROUGHOUT OCTOBER

Visual Arts

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

BIRMINGHAM IN THE 1980S: FILMS BY YUGESH AND SUNANDAN WALIA Films which explored specific cultural moments and experiences for black and Asian communities in Birmingham: Sweet Chariot 1981, until 13 Oct; African Oasis, 1982, 14 Oct - 18 Nov

THOUGHTS ON PORTRAITURE Featuring works by Picasso, Pacheco, Auerbach and Bomberg, the exhibition explores how artists have used a wide range of styles and imagery to interpret complex human emotions and experiences, until Mon 18 Nov

New Art Gallery - Walsall

NEW THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON MA (FINE ART) DEGREE SHOW Exhibition showcasing the work of 17 artists as part of their final MA (Fine Art and Art & Design by Research) exhibitions, Wed 2 Oct - Sun 3 Nov

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

NEW DUDLEY SOCIETY OF ARTISTS EXHIBITION Sat 5 Oct - Fri 20 Dec

Light House Media Centre Wolverhampton

NEW WHERE WERE YOU Exhibition showcasing music memorabilia, art and photography, Fri 4 - Tues 29 Oct

Museum of Cannock Chase

NEW MATT SAYERS 'COMMUNITY' EXHIBITION Exhibition of Matt's paintings which offers an insight into the local community as it used to be, Mon 7 - Fri 11 Oct

Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

CAPTURING THE PAST Take a trip down memory lane through the eyes of local artists and photographers, until Sun 3 Nov

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

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

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 Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

FRAGMENTS Exhibition by Jemma Gunning and Mark Lippett exploring themes of dereliction, abandonment and the loss of industry, until Sat 26 Oct

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

NEW ART & CRAFT 2019 Including works by Nefelibata Photography - four photographic artists based in Anglesey - Shropshire Guild of Contemporary Craft and Borderland Visual Arts, Sat 26 Oct - Sat 11 Jan

Weston Park

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

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

REFRAMING THE WILD: HUMANS, ANIMALS AND ART 1750-1950 Exhibition exploring the relationships between humans, animals and artworks from 1750 to 1950, until Sun 5 Jan

TIM MARA: NOT POP? Exhibition bringing together a selection of works by the late Irish printmaker, Tim Mara, until Sun 29 Mar

Other VISUAL ARTS

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

A SENSE OF PLACE British artist's roots and significant places, until Sat 26 Oct, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Ludlow

VAN AT 20 Exhibition celebrating 20 years of the Visual Arts Network, until Sat 23 Nov, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Gigs

HOUSE OF PHARAOHS

Tues 1 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ALCATRAZZ FEATURING GRAHAM BONNET

Tues 1 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

ENERGY BIRMINGHAM

Tues 1 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LULU Tues 1 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

PRESS TO MECO + CHAPTER AND VERSE Wed 2 Oct, The Sugar Mill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SONGS OF NICK DRAKE

Wed 2 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE BEATLES UN-PLUGGED

Wed 2 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

SEBADOH Wed 2 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

MARTIN HARLEY Wed 2 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

BOWIE EXPERIENCE Thurs 3 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DAVE SHARP Thurs 3 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ROMDERFUL Thurs 3 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BLACKMORE'S BLOOD Thurs 3 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

IST IST Thurs 3 Oct, The Flapper, B'ham

CHASE ATLANTIC Thurs 3 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PHOBOPHOBES Thurs 3 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM - THE MUSIC OF DOLLY PARTON Thurs 3 Oct, The Place, Telford

NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE Thurs 3 Oct, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

MAN & ECHO Thurs 3 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE QUIREBOYS + THE REBECCA DOWNES BAND Thurs 3 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

JAY 1 Thurs 3 Oct, O2

Institute, Birmingham

OASISH Fri 4 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

I'M STILL STANDING: A TRIBUTE TO ELTON Fri 4 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

ANYTHING FOR LOVE: THE MEAT LOAF STORY Fri 4 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

STATIC-X Fri 4 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Fri 4 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DURAN Fri 4 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

WILL YOUNG Fri 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

FEROCIOUS DOG Fri 4 Oct, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

OUR FOLD AND JOEL GARDNER Fri 4 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BEE GEES FEVER Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

THE DRIFTERS Sat 5 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE ELVIS PRESLEY SONGBOOK Sat 5 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PP ARNOLD FEATURING STEVE CRADDOCK Sat 5 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE MAGIC OF THE BEATLES Sat 5 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

UNREALBLOOD Sat 5 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BISCUITHEAD AND THE BISCUIT BADGERS Sat 5 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

THE PAGANS Sat 5 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE MARLEY REVIVAL + THE UB40 TRIBUTE SET Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LITTLE VICTOR AND HIS COMBO Sat 5 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

ABBA MANIA Sat 5 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

STILLMARILLION Sat 5 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

THE JAM'D Sat 5 Oct,

Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

PIERCE BROTHERS Sat 5 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JON BELLION Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS Sat 5 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ARCADE FEAT. HEIDI TALBOT & ADAM HOLMES Sat 5 Oct, The Hive Shrewsbury

BACK 2 MIAMI Sat 5 Oct, The Place, Telford

THE LAFONTAINES Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham



BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY Sat 5 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

KANO Sat 5 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

NOUGHTY NINETIES Sat 5 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

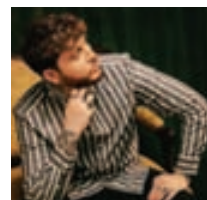
ROXY MAGIC Sat 5 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

COCO AND THE BUTTERFIELDS Sun 6 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CATHY BEECH Sun 6 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

LULU Sun 6 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

JAMES ARTHUR Sun 6 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



BLACK PEAKS Sun 6 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BELINDA CARLISLE Sun 6 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KITTY MACFARLANE Sun 6 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

Classical

CBSO: ALISON BALSOM PLAYS MUSGRAVE Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Alison Balsom (trumpet) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Gipps, Thea Musgrave & Walton, Wed 2 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE HERMES EXPERIMENT Quartet made up of harp, clarinet, voice & double bass, Fri 4 Oct, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: MOZART IN CUBA Featuring David Gordon (piano), Fri 4 Oct, The Market Theatre, Ledbury

BBC PHILHARMONIC Featuring Kian Soltani (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, Sibelius & Schumann, Fri 4 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MARTYN RAWLES ORGAN CONCERT Fri 4 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

AN AUDIENCE WITH LESLEY GARRETT Fri 4 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE STRINGS ORCHESTRA Featuring Dmitri Sitkovetsky. Programme includes works by Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky & Brahms, Fri 4 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy

DAVE GORMAN Tues 1 Oct, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

FRISKY & MANNISH Wed 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BASILE & CHRIS MARKO K Wed 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FREDDY QUINNE, STEPH LAING, DAN SMITH & COMIC TBC Thurs 3 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

ROGER MONKHOUSE, MARTIN MOR, JACOB HAWLEY & JAMES COOK Thurs 3 Oct, The George Hotel, Lichfield

JOANNE MCNALLY, DAVID TRENT & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 3 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

JAMES ACASTER Fri 4 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL BREAKING TALENT AWARD 2019 Fri 4 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FERN BRADY Fri 4 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVID TRENT, ALFIE BROWN, EDDY BRIMSON & COMIC TBC Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONATHAN PIE Sat 5 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GAVIN WEBSTER, MIKE COX, STEVE BUGEJA & BARRY DODDS Sat 5 Oct, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

FERN BRADY Sat 5 Oct, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

Theatre

KING JOHN Shakespeare's rarely performed tale of a nation in turmoil, until Sat 21 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

REBEL MUSIC Robin French's new play celebrating the diverse music legacy of the Midlands, until Sat 5 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

GASLIGHT Martin Shaw stars in Patrick Hamilton's psychological thriller, Mon 30 Sept - Sat 5 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's iconic musical, Mon 30 Sept - Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

TRADE The story of three very different women with one thing in common... Tues 1 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

KOKO BROWN: WHITE Solo show about identity, being a mixed-race black woman and always feeling like an outsider, Tues 1 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

AN INSPECTOR CALLS The National Theatre's landmark production of JB Priestley's classic thriller, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE WIZARD OF OZ Amateur staging presented by West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS), Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE EXORCIST Stage version of the spine-tingling horror story, featuring the voice of Ian McKellen as the Demon, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

NO MAN'S LAND A chance meeting between two elderly writers leads to an alcohol-fuelled night of verbal sparring, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

MARSHALL STREET Paul Magson's new play, set in the Smethwick area of Birmingham in 1965, Wed 2 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE LADY IN THE VAN Tower Players present an amateur staging of Alan Bennett's comedy, Wed 2 - Fri 4 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

SHREWSBURY'S FINEST HOUR New play about the town's legendary success at the international finals of It's A Knockout. A true story - mostly! Wed 2 - Sat 5 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RUSH FEATURING THE JA REGGAE BAND The story of reggae music, from the arrival of the Windrush Generation through to the 1960s & '70s, when reggae took the world by storm, Thurs 3 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

VIC LLEWELLYN: A LITTLE DEATH One-man show about mass hysteria, featuring original songs from Kid Carpet, very tiny objects, torches, and an invisible gorilla, Thurs 3 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham



Soonchild - Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

NO BOND SO STRONG Life-affirming show about motherhood and holding your family together, even when you find yourself unravelling, Thurs 3 - Fri 4 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

CRIMES ON THE COAST New Old Friends present a comedy thriller inspired by the works of Agatha Christie, Noel Coward & PG Wodehouse, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

PRISM Robert Lindsay takes the lead in Terry Johnson's poignant play about Oscar-winning cinematographer Jack Cardiff - 'the man who made women look beautiful', Thurs 3 - Sat 12 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE THING (BEDLAM FESTIVAL) Les Enfants Terribles delve into the crisis of identity, depression & anxiety, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

AWKWARD CONVERSATIONS WITH ANIMALS I'VE F*CKED Critically acclaimed production about love, acceptance and boundaries, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

DOWN IN THE DUMPS Interactive theatrical performance exploring mental health with children and their families. Suitable for children aged seven-plus, Sat 5 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

Kids Shows

SOONCHILD Dig out your snowshoes for an Arctic adventure featuring live music, 3D and shadow puppets, creative captioning and a cosmic Northern Lights show, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT Michael Rosen's book is brought to life with beautiful puppets and original music, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY Take a trip down the proverbial rabbit hole with Brother Wolf's 21st anniversary production, Sun 6 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

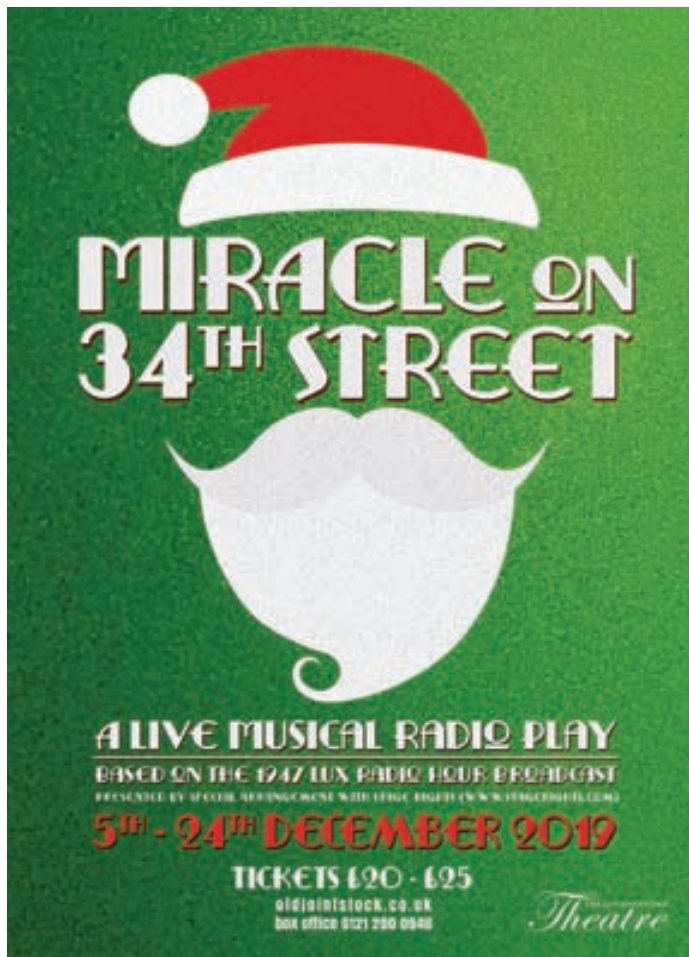
THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR Featuring Four of Eric Carle's much-loved children's stories, Sun 6 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Dance

SWAN LAKE Presented by Russian State Ballet, Wed 2 Oct, The Place, Telford, Shropshire



No Man's Land - New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



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<p>music</p>  <p>ROCK FOR HEROES Thurs 7 Nov @ 7.30pm</p>	<p>music</p>  <p>THE UPBEAT BEATLES Fri 8 Nov @ 7.30pm</p>	<p>music</p>  <p>LUTHER Sat 9 Nov @ 7.30pm</p>
<p>drama</p>  <p>PRIVATE PEACEFUL Tues 12 Nov @ 1.30pm & 7.30pm</p>	<p>music</p>  <p>THE RAT PACK CHRISTMAS SHOW Wed 13 Nov @ 7.30pm</p>	<p>sport</p>  <p>AN EVENING WITH JIMMY WHITE Mon 18 Nov @ 7.30pm</p>

STUART WATERS: ROCKBOTTOM 'Visceral, provocative and uplifting' solo dance theatre work about the strength of the human spirit, Wed 2 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

SKIN REIMAGINED Double bill exploring what it is to be human, Fri 4 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Talks / Spoken Word

P.A.S.T.A.! (POETS AND STORY TELLERS ASSEMBLE!) Open-mic night, Tues 1 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ARMISTEAD MAUPIN An evening with the bestselling *Tales Of The City* author and LGBT activist, Wed 2 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE P WORD Poetry with Lydia Towsley & Ruth Stacey, Wed 2 Oct, The Warehouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

AN EVENING WITH CAROL ANN DUFFY & FRIENDS Part of Birmingham Literature Festival, Thurs 3 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

AN EVENING WITH HARRY REDKNAPP Stories from the *I'm A Celebrity* winner and former football manager, Sun 6 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

PAM AYRES: UP IN THE ATTIC Join Pam as she performs poems from her new book alongside classics from her long career, Sun 6 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

MARJORIE BLACKMAN IN CONVERSATION Join the legendary author as she introduces her new novel, *Crossfire*, Sun 6 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

TRUTH TO POWER WITH JESS PHILLIPS The Labour MP speaks out against injustices. Part of Birmingham Literature Festival, Sun 6 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Cabaret

TO THE MOON & BACK Variety show, Sat 5 Oct, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15) Biography/Music. Starring Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 1 Oct

JAWS (12a) Drama/Thriller. Starring Roy Scheider, Robert Shaw. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 1 Oct

STAN AND OLLIE (PG) Biography/Com-

edy. Starring Steve Coogan, John C. Reilly. The Place, Telford, Tues 1 Oct

US + THEM (15) Documentary/Music. Starring Roger Waters. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Wed 2 Oct

CALAMITY JANE (U) Comedy/Musical. Starring Doris Day, Howard Keel. Dementia friendly screening. Lichfield Garrick, Wed 2 Oct

KIND HEARTS & CORONETS (PG) Comedy/Crime. Starring Dennis Price, Alec Guinness. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 4 Oct

ARMY OF SHADOWS (12) Drama/War. Starring Lino Ventura, Paul Meurisse. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 4 Oct

WILD ROSE (15) Drama/Music. Starring Jessie Buckley, Matt Costello. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 4 - Sat 6 Oct

ONCE UPON A TIME ...IN HOLLYWOOD (18) Comedy/Drama. Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 4 & Mon 7 Oct

APOCALYPSE NOW (15) Drama/War. Starring Martin Sheen, Marlon Brando. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sat 5 Oct

PLAYMOBIL: THE MOVIE (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Anya Taylor-Joy, Daniel Radcliffe. Lichfield Garrick, Sat 5 Oct

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 4 Oct, showing at selected cinemas

JOKER (tbc)

JUDY (12a)

Events

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



STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - LIVE IN CONCERT Composer John Williams' score performed live to the film, Tues 1 Oct, Arena Birmingham

BEDLAM FESTIVAL Celebration of the arts, mental health & wellbeing, Tues 1 - Sat 12 Oct, Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham and Birmingham Repertory Theatre

STORE STORIES: A BEHIND THE SCENES



Russian State Ballet: *Swan Lake* - The Place, Telford

TOUR See the hidden treasures in the collection stores and meet the team carrying out some of the conservation work, Wed 2 Oct, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

GUIDED TOUR: HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF THE BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS Learn more about how the Gardens were designed and the history of the Victorian glasshouses, Wed 2 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW The biggest week of the year for equestrian entertainment, Wed 2 - Sun 6 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS Enjoy a tour of the Back to Backs in an atmospheric glow, Thurs 3 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

AUTUMN DIESEL GALA Chance to check out the railway's home-based locomotives, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BIRMINGHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL Featuring a wide selection of writers, artists and commentators, Thurs 3 - Sun 13 Oct, various locations throughout Birmingham

DEATH CAFE: BEDLAM FESTIVAL Group-directed discussion on death aimed at helping people 'make the most of their finite lives', Fri 4 Oct, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST Shropshire's biggest beer festival, featuring over 150 real ales, a lager bar, prosecco parlour, gin den, rum shack & cider area, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

BENNETTS BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP Featuring two races on the full Grand Prix circuit as the championship draws towards its climax, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, Donington Park, Castle Donington

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL Annual citywide 'mirth-filled extravaganza' that mixes big comedy names with emerging talent, Fri 4 - Sun 13 Oct, Various venues across Birmingham

TUNNEL TEDS Bring along your furry friend for a 'ted-tastic day of bear-

themed fun' on and around the canal, Sat 5 Oct, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

RIDE TO THE WALL Special ride in honour of the 16,000 people named on the Armed Forces Memorial, Sat 5 Oct, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs

JEWELLERY QUARTER HERITAGE WALK Lively guided walk looking at the people, places and themes that have helped to shape the district, Sat 5 Oct, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

CREATESPACE - ARTS FOR WELLBEING Chance to learn new skills in a friendly and supportive atmosphere, Sat 5 Oct, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

BE WELL AT BMAG - ARTS FOR WELLBEING Drop in and take part in activities inspired by the museum's collections, Sat 5 Oct, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

SCAREFEST Alton Towers stays open late for thrill-seekers looking to enjoy spooky rides in the dark, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

FLIGHT SIM 2019 Experience the best that virtual flight has to offer, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, RAF Cosford, Shifnal

FALCONRY WEEKEND Meet some birds and learn about their use on the Mynd, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills, Church Stretton, South Shropshire

SHREWSBURY HALF MARATHON 2019 The marathon returns with a new autumn date, Sun 6 Oct, West Midland Showground, Shrewsbury

APPLE DAY Find out about the history of the apple and take part in the Apple Trail, Sun 6 Oct, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

Food & Drink

STONE FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL Staffordshire's original foodie gathering marks its 15th year, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, Westbridge Park, Stone

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THE THREE DEGREES

Thursday 17 October
7.30pm • £25

INSPECTOR DRAKE AND THE BLACK WIDOW

Friday 18 October
7.30pm • £18

RAYMOND FROGGATT

Wednesday 23 October
7.30pm • £19

WIZARD OF OZ

Thursday 24 October
7.30pm • £18 • Conc £16
Under 16 £10

BEBOP A LULA

Friday 25 October
7.30pm • £24

THE STYLISTICS

Sunday 27 October
7.30pm • £35

THE SONGS THAT WON THE WAR

Tuesday 29 October
2.30pm • £20

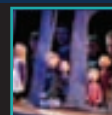


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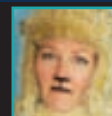
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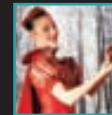
4-6 October, 11am & 1.30pm
We're Going On A Bear Hunt
Tickets: £10



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



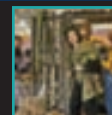
23 October, 7.30pm
Once Upon A Wednesday: Matt Black & Maria Whetton
Tickets: £7.50



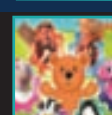
25 October, 7pm
Vienna Festival Ballet - Snow White
Tickets: £18.50 / £16.50 conc.



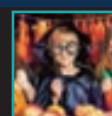
27 October, 12.30pm
The Big Draw
Tickets: FREE event



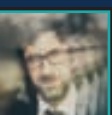
27 October, 3pm
Curly Tales: Jackie & The Beanstalk
Tickets: £6



30 October, 1.30pm
Marty Macdonald's Toy Machine
Tickets: £8.50/£7.50



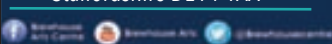
31 October, 10am - 3.30pm
Halloween Funday
Tickets: £20



2 November, 8pm
Mark Watson: The Infinite Show
Tickets: £19

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Gigs

BLOXX + ON VIDEO + GAURANGA + THE INTERVENTION Mon 7 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DISTRICT 97 + MASCHINE Mon 7 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

MIDGE URE: VIENNA & VISAGE Mon 7 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JONNY & THE BAPTISTS Tues 8 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TANKUS THE HENGE Tues 8 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

LULU - STILL ON FIRE Tues 8 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE MOCKING JAYS Tues 9 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE ROCKET MAN Wed 9 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ESTHER TURNER, WILLIAM JOHN & CJ ALLEN Wed 9 Oct, Albert Shed, Shrewsbury

JP COOPER Wed 9 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

WALTER TROUT Wed 9 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

GRUFFYDD WYN Wed 9 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FOO FIGHTERZ Thurs 10 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

RICHARD HAWLEY Thurs 10 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL: CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF WHITNEY HOUSTON Thurs 10 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AL STEWART Thurs 10 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS Thurs 10 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE ULTIMATE EAGLES Thurs 10 Oct, The Place, Telford

THE ELVIS YEARS Fri 11 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE DRIFTERS Fri 11 Oct, The Place, Telford

CHRIS BISCOE/ALLISON

NEALE QUINTET Fri 11 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

ALESUND Fri 11 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE ABSOLUTE STONE ROSES Fri 11 Oct, Eleven, Sandycroft, Stoke-on-Trent

THE BAREBACKS AND BEKKI CAMERON Fri 11 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HARDLINE Fri 11 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

ALICE COOPER Fri 11 Oct, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE SONGS OF BARRY WHITE Fri 11 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE DIVINE COMEDY Fri 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MOZES ROSENBERG Fri 11 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ULTIMATE COLDPLAY Fri 11 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE CLONE ROSES + KAZABIAN Fri 11 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

REVEREND AND THE MAKERS Fri 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALADDINSANE - SOUND & VISION OF DAVID BOWIE Fri 11 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

THE SENSATIONAL 60'S EXPERIENCE Fri 11 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THEM HEAVY PEOPLE - KATE BUSH TRIBUTE Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

GAZ BROOKFIELD Sat 12 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

GEORGE MICHAEL - RAN-DALL BUTLER Sat 12

Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

STRING BAND BOOGIE - THE HONKABILLIES & IAN CAL FORD & THE BRAKEMEN Sat 12 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

DARKSIDE THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Sat 12 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ULTIMATE EAGLES Sat 12 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

DEFINITELY MIGHTBE Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ROACHFORD Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LOTUS MOTION Sat 12 Oct, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

VICIOUS NATURE Sat 12 Oct, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

CALL OF THE KRACKEN Sat 12 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

JAMES ARTHUR Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ELO ENCOUNTER Sat 12 Oct, Eleven, Sandycroft, Stoke-on-Trent

CALIFORNIA DREAMERS Sat 12 Oct, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

POP DIVAS LIVE! Sun 13 Oct, The Place, Telford

ANDY LOWE Sun 13 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

FOCUS FEAT THIJS VAN LEER Sun 13 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

KRIS DREVER Sun 13 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

JESCA HOOP Sun 13 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham



Kris Drever - The Hive, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

CHINEKE! ENSEMBLE Programme includes works by Coleridge-Taylor & Schubert, Tues 8 Oct, The Bradshaw, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: TALES OF THE CITY Featuring Rebecca Miller (conductor), Viv McLean (piano), Hugh Davies (trumpet) & Louise Braithwaite (cor anglais). Programme includes works by Rossini, Gershwin, Copland, Mozart & new work by Catherine Mole, Wed 9 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

GRUFFYDD WYN Classical crossover artist & Britain's Got Talent finalist 2018, Wed 9 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JAMES LANCELOT ORGAN RECITAL Fri 11 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

ALED JONES & RUSSELL WATSON IN HARMONY Fri 11 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ORGAN PROM Sat 12 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ORGAN RECITAL WITH ROGER JUDD Programme includes work by J.S. Bach, Sat 12 Oct, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

LUDOVICO EINAUDI THE 7 DAYS WALKING TOUR Also featuring Redi Hasa (cello) & Frederico Mecozzi (violin), Sat 12 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

DAS RHEINGOLD Featuring Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra and Michael Lloyd (conductor), Julian Close (Wotan) & John Graham Hall (Loge), Sun 13 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

JETHRO Wed 9 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

EVERYTHING IS TERRIBLE LIVE Wed 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BOOTHBY GRAFFOE Wed 9 Oct, Station Pub, Sutton Coldfield

REGINALD D HUNTER Thurs 10 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

TOM WARD, MICKY P KERR & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

IMPRACITCAL JOKERS Fri 11 Oct, Arena Birmingham

FERN BRADY Fri 11 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

BRING YOUR OWN BABY COMEDY Fri 11 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

TOM WARD, MICKY P KERR, JOSH PUGH & JAY LAFFERTY Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct,

The Glee Club, Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JOSH HOWIE, LAURA DAVIS, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN & FREDDY QUINNE Sat 12 Oct, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 12 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HENNING WEHN Sun 13 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Sun 13 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

BRUM CRAIC Sun 13 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BACK TO THE OLD SKOOL Sun 13 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

SWITCHED ON Geese Theatre Company present 'a beautiful coming together of different people finding a common ground', Mon 7 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE MYSTERIOUS TALE OF GEORGE ELIOT One-woman show about the famous female author behind the man's name, Mon 7 Oct, Ludlow Library, Ludlow, South Shropshire

RIGHT PLACE, WRONG TIME 'Uplifting' comedy starring Crissie Rock, Paul Dunn, Billy Pearce, Tommy Cannon & Leah Bell, Mon 7 Oct, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

HORMONAL HOUSEWIVES Join Suzanne Shaw & crew as they blast their way through a catalogue of women's bits... Mon 7 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse

THE ENTERTAINER Shane Richie, Diana Vickers & Sara Crowe star in a brand new staging of John Osborne's iconic play, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

REVOLVING DOOR Drama exploring the suicide of a 19-year-old gay man. Part of The Rep's Bedlam Festival 2019, Tues 8 Oct, The REP, B'ham

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT Surreal and confronting new work combining dance and new writing, participation and performance, children and adults... Tues 8 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

SEASON'S GREETINGS New staging of Alan Ayckbourn's Christmas comedy, Tues 8 - Sat 26 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

MISTRESS TO THE MIDNIGHT Spoof of the classic British horror film, live on stage, Wed 9 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

EVERYTHING I SEE I SWALLOW An 'exploration of epic things in an intimate setting', Wed 9 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

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 TUE 1 OCT ALCATRAZZ FEATURING GRAHAM BONNET	 SAT 12 OCT ULTIMATE EAGLES THE WORLD'S FINEST EAGLES SHOW	 MON 21 OCT LOST ANGELS GOOD TO THE LAST DROP UK TOUR FALL 2019
 WED 2 OCT THE SONGS OF NICK DRAKE A SET OF TIMELESS SONGS BY BRILLIANT SONGWRITERS	 SUN 13 OCT FOCUS FT THIJS VAN LEER FROM HOLLAND PROG LEGENDS	 TUE 22 OCT PHILIP SOLOMON AN EVENING OF CLAIRVOYANCE WITH FAMOUS PSYCHIC MEDIUM
 THU 3 OCT BLACKMORE'S BLOOD AN AUTHENTIC TRIBUTE TO RITCHIE BLACKMORE	 MON 14 OCT CROW BLACK CHICKEN FROM IRELAND DIRTY SOUTHERN BLUES	 WED 23 OCT INGLORIOUS "THE FUTURE OF BRITISH ROCK"
 FRI 4 OCT I'M STILL STANDING A TRIBUTE TO ELTON JOHN	 TUE 15 OCT KRIS BARRAS BAND THE UK'S MOST EXCITING BLUES/ROCK GUITARIST	 THU 24 OCT CLOUDBUSTING THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH
 SAT 5 OCT PP ARNOLD FT STEVE CRADOCK	 WED 16 OCT SOFT MACHINE 17 EX-10FTS MEMBERS JOHN ETHERIDGE KEV MARRINGTON, JOHN RASHALL + THEE TRAVIS	 FRI 25 OCT NEVILLE STAPLE WITH HIS BAND + SPECIAL GUESTS THE AC30'S
 MON 7 OCT DISTRICT 97 + MASCHINE DOUBLE PROG SPECIAL!	 THU 17 OCT THE DIRTY ROCKIN' SCOUNDRELS + THE SURFIN' LLAMAS PARTY DOUBLE HEADER	 SAT 26 OCT THE REAL THING BRITAIN'S LONGEST-ESTABLISHED AND BEST-LOVED GROUP
 TUE 8 OCT TANKUS THE HENGE CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF MUSIC ACTIVITY	 FRI 18 OCT FLEETWOOD BAC THE WORLD'S FIRST AND BEST FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE BAND	 SUN 27 OCT A FOREIGNER'S JOURNEY THE MUSIC OF FOREIGNER AND JOURNEY
 WED 9 OCT THE MOCKING JAYS + THE RUPEES + KID AMELIA THE TRIANGLE TOUR	 SAT 19 OCT LES MCKEOWN'S BAY CITY ROLLERS THE ORIGINAL VOICE ON ALL THE ORIGINAL HITS!	 MON 28 OCT ALBERT LEE ONE OF THE FINEST GUITARISTS THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN!
 THU 10 OCT FOO FIGHTERZ UK'S PREMIERE TRIBUTE TO FOO FIGHTERS	 SUN 20 OCT RECORD & CD FAIR 11.00AM - 3.00PM £1 ENTRY	 WED 30 OCT THE CHRIS SLADE TIMELINE LEGENDARY AC/DC DRUMMER
 FRI 11 OCT HARDLINE ONLY SHOW IN THE UK THIS YEAR!	 SUN 20 OCT HAWKLORDS FT SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY NIK TURNER	 THU 31 OCT STIFF BIZKIT + KORN AGAIN + HYBRID THEORY HALLOWEEN INU METAL THROW DOWN!



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place for mothers. Part of The Rep's Bedlam Festival 2019, Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK Presented by Ambient Night Productions, Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

PRIVATE PEACEFUL National Production Company's staging of Michael Morpurgo's wartime tale, Wed 9 - Sat 12 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

ORLANDO Rebecca Vaughan's one-woman show based on Virginia Woolf's satirical novel of the same name, Thurs 10 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

BIRTHDAYS PAST, BIRTHDAYS PRESENT Brand new play from Alan Ayckbourn, Thurs 10 - Sat 26 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

INSPECTOR DRAKE AND THE BLACK WIDOW Gill 'Doreen Tipton' Jordan stars in a 'comedy whodunnit like you've never seen before', Fri 11 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

GARY POUNDLAND: COUNT EVIL & ANDREW MCBURNEY Wolverhampton's very own internet sensation shares his unique perspective on life... Fri 11 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

DICK WHITTINGTON 'Grown-ups only' panto, Fri 11 Oct, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

STRICTLY SHERLOCK Theatre group Don't Go Into The Cellar bring three startling cases to life: The Sussex Vampire, The Creeping Man and The Devil's Foot, Fri 11 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE THREE MUSKETEERS: A COMEDY Four actors play over 30 characters in a 'chaotic adventure for all the family', Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

IT'LL BE ALT-RIGHT ON THE NIGHT What happens when two best friends find themselves on different sides of a seemingly impassable ideological divide? Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SHOWSTOPPER! THE IMPROVISED MUSICAL Brand new musical comedy created from scratch at each performance, Sat 12 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE GREATEST SHOWENCH Hollywood has The Greatest Showman, The Black Country has The Greatest Showench! Fizzog return with their latest production... Sat 12 Oct, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

THE IMPROLECTUALS Some of the Midlands' finest improvisers create completely new comedy sketches on the spot, Sat 12 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

RIGHT PLACE, WRONG TIME 'Uplifting' comedy starring Crissie Rock, Paul Dunn, Billy Pearce, Tommy Cannon & Leah Bell, Sun 13 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

ORANGES & INK Restoration play following the trials & tribulations of two female libertines in an age of intolerance and social upheaval, Sun 13 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Kids Shows

I BELIEVE IN UNICORNS Intimate show set in a library full of books that hold more than stories within their pages... Tues 8 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

EYE OF THE STORM Award-winning musical about chasing storms and changing the world. Suitable for children and young people, Tues 8 - Wed 9 Oct, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE A 'hilarious' adventure filled with music and puppetry, Thurs 10 Oct, SpArC, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

EMILY RISING Little Angel Theatre use puppetry to present a unique and heart-warming story, Sat 12 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

CAPTAIN FLINN & THE PIRATE DINOSAURS 2: THE MAGIC CUTLASS Real-life pirate adventure for children aged three-plus, Sun 13 Oct, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Cabaret

TONY STOCKWELL Evening of mediocrity, Tues 8 Oct, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE PARANORMALIST RETURNS An evening with Clinton Baptist, the hapless clairvoyant, medium and psychic from Peter Kay's Phoenix Nights, Tues 8 Oct, The Place, Telford

LA VOIX Cabaret show from one of the UK's leading variety performers, Thurs 10 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Talks / Spoken Word

MARK EVANS - CROSSING THE EMPTY QUARTER Shropshire-born British explorer Mark describes his 49-day 1,300km journey across the world's biggest sand desert... Mon 7 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SIMON ARMITAGE: IN CONVERSATION WITH STUART MACONIE Special evening of poetry and conversation. Birmingham Poet Laureate Richard O'Brien & Birmingham Young Poet Laureate Aliyah Begum also feature. Part of Birmingham Literature Festival, Tues 8 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH AGGERS Join Test Match Special's Jonathan Agnew for an evening of cricket-related anecdotes, Wed 9 Oct, The Place, Telford

ONLY FOOLS AND BOYCIE An evening with actor John Challis, best known for starring as Boycie in BBC TV's long-running sitcom, Only Fools and Horses, Fri 11 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

REAL LIFE PARENTING: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE FUNNY Join the panel for an in-depth discussion about writing and what being a parent in 2019 is really like. Featuring Liz Berry, Matthew Coyne and Kathryn Wallace, Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH AGGERS AND TUFFERS No-holds-barred evening of crickering chat with Test Match Special's Jonathan Agnew and former England bowler Phil Tufnell, Sun 13 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SWANN & BLOFELD: DANCING DOWN THE WICKET Test Match Special's Henry Blofeld and ex-England bowler Graeme Swann talk about cricket, Graeme's time on Strictly Come Dancing and Henry's life since leaving the TMS commentary box, Sun 13 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

Events

GRAND DESIGNS LIVE BIRMINGHAM Based on the Channel Four series, presented by Kevin McCloud and featuring new product launches, the latest eco-innovations and over 400 specialist companies across six project zones, Wed 9 - Sun 13 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS Enjoy a tour of the Back to Backs in an atmospheric glow, Thurs 10 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

BAVARIAN EVENING Enjoy a 'fun-filled evening' complete with a lively, inter-

active Bavarian Oompah band, Sat 12 Oct, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley

CREATESPACE - ARTS FOR WELLBEING Opportunity to learn new skills in a friendly and supportive atmosphere, Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

CYANOTYPE WORKSHOP (VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE) Explore and experiment with the Victorian photographic technique of cyanotype, Sat 12 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

ART ATTACK Free arts activities for all the family, Sat 12 Oct, Tamworth Town Hall

THE WIGHTWICK MANOR MYSTERY A prized possession of Theodore Mander's has gone missing and the family need your help to solve the mystery, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

SCAREFEST Alton Towers stays open late for thrill-seekers looking to enjoy spooky rides in the dark, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

SPOOKLEY PUMPKIN FESTIVAL Ride the Pumpkin Express, hear the Spookley story, select your own pumpkin from the pumpkin patch, take it back to the carving caverns and make a lantern, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, Apley Farm Shop, Norton

AUTUMN HORSE TRIALS Featuring the National Junior Championships and National Under-21 Championships CC1* and CC11* classes, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, Weston Park, Nr Shifnal

BRICK OR TREAT Featuring Halloween activities, rides and 4D films, Sat 12 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

A-SCARIUM Discover the spooky creatures that lurk beneath the waves and explore the ocean depths, Sat 12 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham



ARTISAN MARKET AT THE WORLD OF WEDGWOOD Featuring 50-plus stalls of fine foods from local producers and hand-crafted products, Sun 13 Oct, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

BACK TO BACK MURDERS: THE MURDER OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN AND THE LAUREL AND HARDY MURDER CASE Spend an evening in the Back to Backs' courtyard with some true comedy heroes, Sun 13 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

Gigs

DANIEL CAESAR Mon 14 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CROW BLACK CHICKEN Mon 14 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

OCTOBER DRIFT Mon 14 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SONGS OF STEVIE WONDER Mon 14 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CHARLIE LANDSBOROUGH Tues 15 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KRIS BARRAS BAND Tues 15 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

BOYZONE Tues 15 Oct, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY Wed 16 Oct, The Place, Telford

SOFT MACHINE Wed 16 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

HELLO AGAIN - THE STORY OF NEIL DIAMOND Wed 16 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE MUSIC OF CREAM Wed 16 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHRIS BOWDEN QUARTET Wed 16 Oct, The Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH Wed 16 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TESSA VIOLET Wed 16 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE PITMENS POETS Wed 16 Oct, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

AND IN THE END: A CELEBRATION OF ABBEY ROAD AND LET IT BE Wed 16 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE THREE DEGREES Thurs 17 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK 2019 Thurs 17 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

KOVIC Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE DIRTY ROCKIN SCOUNDRELS Thurs 17

Oct, The Robin, Bilston

ANGIE STONE Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THUNDER Thurs 17 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

ROY ORBISON & BUDDY HOLLY Thurs 17 Oct, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE THREE DEGREES Thurs 17 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE CULT - A SONIC TEMPLE Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

RAK-SU Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE CARPENTERS - VOICE OF THE HEART KAREN CARPENTER Thurs 17 Oct, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE PITMAN POETS Thurs 17 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

KEVIN BLOODY WILSON Thurs 17 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

T.REXTASY Fri 18 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THURSTON MOORE GROUP + RATTLE Fri 18 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SING-ALONG POWER ROCK Fri 18 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE PHONICS Fri 18 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FLEETWOOD BAC Fri 18 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE SMITHS LTD Fri 18 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

WISHBONE ASH Fri 18 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CAPTAIN ACCIDENT & THE DISASTERS Fri 18 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HOT CHIP Fri 18 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

K.FLAY Fri 18 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAD DOG MCREA Fri 18 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FUNKIE AND THE TWO

TON BABY Fri 18 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

MUSED Fri 18 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

JOHN TAMS & JOHN KIRKPATRICK Fri 18 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

LLOYD COLE Fri 18 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

FAUSTUS Sat 19 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS Sat 19 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SEA GIRLS + THE MYSTERLINES Sat 19 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

TALON Sat 19 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GARY NUMAN Sat 19 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LES MCKEOWN'S BAY CITY ROLLERS Sat 19 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

CALIFORNIA DREAMERS Sat 19 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

RAINBOW RISING Sat 19 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

ABBAMANIA Sat 19 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

VERTIGO BAND Sat 19 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

OH! WHAT A FEELING Sun 20 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JOE BROWN - 60TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Sun 20 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SAM LYON Sun 20 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN Sun 20 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LIVE ON MARS: A TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE Sun 20 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

HAWKLORDS FEATURING SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY NIK TURNER Sun 20 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

LIONEL Sun 20 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, J.S. Bach & Wammes, Mon 14 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

FLAUGUISSIMO DUO Featuring Yu-Wei Hu (flute) & Johan Löfving (theorbo), Mon 14 Oct, The Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury

MOSCOW PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: SHOSTAKOVICH'S NO.10 Featuring Yuri Simonov (conductor) and Alexandra Dariescu (piano). Programme includes works by Maria Antal, Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich, Tues 15 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: THE THRILL OF THE NEW Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) and Paul Rissmann (presenter). Programme includes works by John Adams, Knussen, Jörg Widmann, Steve Reich and Thomas Adès, Thurs 17 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BLAKE Fri 18 Oct, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

LAUREN ZHANG PLAYS RAVEL Also featuring Marie-Christine Zupancic (flute), Rachael Pankhurst (oboe), Joanna Patton (clarinet) & Margaret Cookhorn (bassoon). Programme includes works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel & Schmitt, Fri 18 Oct, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: MUSIC FROM THE MOVIES Featuring Anthony Inglis (conductor). Programme includes scores from Pirates of the Caribbean, Star Wars and Lord of the Rings, Fri 18 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ANDREA BOCELLI Sat 19 Oct, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

ULRICH HEINEN (CELLO) & JOHN HUMPHREYS (PIANO) Programme includes works by Bach, Beethoven, Dvorak & Debussy, Sat 19 Oct, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

CBSO: SAINT-SAËNS ORGAN SYMPHONY Featuring Andrew Litton (conductor) and Thomas Trotter (organ). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Ravel, Widor, Dukas and Saint-Saëns, Sun 20 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ORGAN RECITAL WITH ROBERT WOLFE Sun 20 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Comedy

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Mon 14 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MILTON JONES Mon 14 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

SPONTANEOUS POTTER Tues 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE HARRY & CHRIS SHOW Wed 16 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

SCOTT BENNETT Wed 16 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GRIFF RHYS JONES Thurs 17 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RHYS NICHOLSON, DAMIAN CLARK & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINS Thurs 17 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HENRY PAKER Fri 18 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

JIMEOIN Fri 18 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

RHYS JAMES Fri 18 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LOL COMEDY CLUB Fri 18 Oct, Bilston Town Hall

RHYS NICHOLSON, DAMIAN CLARK, DAVE LONGLEY & JOHN FOTHERGILL Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

JAMES ACASTER Sat 19 Oct, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

MITCH BENN Sat 19 Oct, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

DANA ALEXANDER, JACK GLEADOW, MIKE NEWALL & HAYLEY ELLIS Sat 19 Oct, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

JONNY AWSUM, TONY COWARDS, SEAN PERCIVAL & DAMION LARKIN Sat 19 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE GILDED MERKIN: BURLESQUE & CABARET Sun 20 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW Hook up your fishnets, tighten your corsets and prepare to 'do The Time Warp again'. Joanne Clifton & Stephen Webb star, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET Amateur staging of the award-winning sci-fi musical, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

IN MANY HANDS Brussels-based Kate McIntosh dives into the tactile and the multi-sensory, inviting the audience to test, touch, listen, search and sniff. Part of Fierce Festival, Tues 15 - Thurs 17 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE EXORCIST Stage version of the spine-tingling horror story, featuring the voice of Ian McKellen as the Demon, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

OLIVER! Amateur staging presented by Musical Theatre Stafford, Tues 15 -

Sat 19 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* (*SORT OF) 'An adaptation like no other' as men, money and microphones are fought over in an all-female presentation of Jane Austen's literary classic, Tues 15 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The REP, B'ham

THE GIRL FROM TIGER BAY Rags-to-riches story of Shirley Bassey's rise to stardom, Wed 16 Oct, The Place, Telford

MURDER ON THE NILE Mad Cow Productions present an amateur staging of Agatha Christie's famous play, Wed 16 - Sat 19 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE CULT OF K*NZO Paula Varjack presents a multimedia performance about a frustrated relationship with high fashion, and how it relates to entitlement, exclusion and territory, Thurs 17 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

FAMILIAR Collaborative performance exploring 'significant otherness'. Part of Fierce Festival, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

INSPECTOR DRAKE AND THE BLACK WIDOW Gill 'Doreen Tipton' Jordan stars in a 'comedy whodunnit like you've never seen before', Fri 18 Oct, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

FUNNY FACES Two one-handers focusing on Carry On stars Sid James and Joan Sims, Fri 18 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE GREATEST SHOWENCH Hollywood has The Greatest Showman, The Black Country has The Greatest Showench! Fizzog return with their latest production... Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Netherton Arts Centre, Dudley

GULP! The Bone Ensemble presents an interactive adventure about water, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE TRUE HISTORIE OF MR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE Brand new satirical farce that takes aim at 'culture's greatest prize and those who yearn after it', Fri 18 - Sun 20 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

JULIA BARDSLEY: AN APIAN PARADOX Two female 'bee-ings' remix symbolist poet Maurice Maeterlinck's classic natural history text, The Life Of The Bee, to a soundtrack of Earth's drone music, Sun 20 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

ALEXANDRA BACHZETIS, PRIVATE: WEAR A MASK WHEN YOU TALK TO ME Unsolicited report on how gender and sexual desire 'are fabricated through the ritualisation repetition of bodily gestures within the neoliberal regime', Sun 20 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

OLIVER! Amateur staging presented by Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society, Sun 20 - Sat 26 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

Kids Shows

THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA Family show based on Judith Kerr's best-selling book, Tues 15 - Wed 16 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

DISNEY ON ICE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF MAGIC Grab your Mickey ears and get your skates on! Wed 16 - Sun 20 Oct, Arena Birmingham



ONCE UPON A TIME: THE MISADVENTURES OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM Comedy adventure featuring physical comedy, absurd jokes and magical illusion, Sat 19 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

Dance

DADA MASILO: GISELLE South Africa's internationally renowned choreographer, Dada Masilo, presents her 'fearless' reimagining of the classic ballet, Tues 15 - Wed 16 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

SOFTPLAMP: AUTONOMIES Choreographed performance celebrating a future without authorities and constraints, Thurs 17 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

DORIS UHLICH: EVERY BODY ELECTRIC Innovative production exploring potential through dance. Please note that this production contains full nudity, Fri 18 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

SOME LIKE IT HIP HOP Choreographed story of love, mistaken identity and revolution in a city where books are banned and women are kept subservient to men, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

MARIANA VALENCIA: ALBUM Solo performance 'fusing text, song and dance inside of the content of an album', Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

RIP IT UP: THE 70S Join Olympic champion Louis Smith, Rachel Stevens (S Club 7), Melody Thornton (Pussycat Dolls) and Lee Ryan (Blue) for 'a groovy evening of singing and dancing', Sat 19 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

IFEEL2 Marco Berrettini's choreographed performance asks the question, 'Why are we here, on this earth?', Sun 20 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Cabaret

CRAIG MORRIS Evening of mediumship, Tues 15 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

A BLACK COUNTRY AFTERNOON OUT Variety show featuring comedy act Dandy, a tribute to Black Country comedienne Dolly Allen by Emma Rollason (from The Fizzogs) and music from ukulele maestro Joe Thomas, Tues 15 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

A BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT Variety show featuring comedy act Dandy, a tribute to Black Country comedienne Dolly Allen from Emma Rollason (from The Fizzogs) and music from ukulele maestro Joe Thomas, Wed 16 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

TINA T'URNER TEA LADY'S STEAMY BINGO Laugh, dance & play to win as Tina spins her cage of balls to a high-energy '80s soundtrack, Thurs 17 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

DEREK ACORAH - THE ETERNAL LIFE TOUR Fri 18 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

TOM BRACE: BRACE OF SPADES Brand new magic show for the whole family, Sat 19 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Talks / Spoken Word

NADIYA HUSSAIN: FINDING MY VOICE

The TV presenter, cook and best-selling author considers her roles as mother, Muslim, working woman and celebrity, Tues 15 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL PALIN: NORTH KOREA Monty Python stalwart and intrepid globetrotter Michael Palin offers a glimpse of life inside the notoriously secretive Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Wed 16 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

OUT OF THE ASHES: AN EVENING WITH BOYCOTT & AGGERS Brand new show featuring two of cricket's finest - Test Match Special's Jonathan Agnew and recently knighted former England batsman Geoffrey Boycott, Sun 20 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Events

THE MOTORHOME AND CARAVAN SHOW Be one of the first people to see the new and exclusive leisure vehicle launches from major manufacturers, Tues 15 - Sun 20 Oct, NEC, B'ham

ATTINGHAM WOOLLEN WOODS 2019 See Hall-wool-een in a different light this year as crafted creatures take over a

section of the Mile Walk, Fri 18 Oct, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

CANDLELIT TOURS OF THE BACK TO BACKS Enjoy a tour of the Back to Backs in an atmospheric glow, Fri 18 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

SCAREFEST Alton Towers stays open late for thrill-seekers looking to enjoy spooky rides in the dark, Fri 18 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING 'Extravaganza of high-flying action featuring all your favourite heroes and villains of the ring', Sat 19 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE WIGHTWICK MANOR MYSTERY A prized possession of Theodore Mander's has gone missing and the family need your help to solve the mystery, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

HALLOWEEN SPOOK-TACULAR All the fun of the farm plus a day packed with spooky Halloween fun, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent

SPOOKLEY PUMPKIN FESTIVAL Ride the Pumpkin Express, hear the Spookley story, select your own pumpkin from the pumpkin patch, take it back to the carving caverns and make a lantern, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Apley Farm Shop, Norton, Nr Shifnal



THE 26TH CAROLE NASH CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS SHOW Featuring more than 900 traders, dealers and autojumble stands offering parts and spares for every project, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Staffordshire County Showground

WELLINGTON FESTIVAL Week-long series of events, all free to attend, Sat 19 - Sat 26 Oct, Various venues across Wellington

MORE TREAT THAN TRICK Featuring 'frightfully fun' family Halloween activities, Sat 19 - Thurs 31 Oct, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

FREDDO'S HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR Pop along dressed up and join in the fun as Freddo creates his very own Halloween monster out of a little bit of string and plenty of green & gooey slime, Sat 19 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Cadbury World, Bournville

SPOOKY SPECTACULAR Featuring Halloween decorations with illuminated, themed scarecrows and hundreds of pumpkins, Sat 19 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster



Jackie &
The Beanstalk
27th October



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FROM 15:00-20:00

PRE-BOOKING ONLY!

£12.50 for Adults
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(4-14 years)
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Carers, 3 and
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Climb aboard our
SCREAM TRAIN from
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CREEK** where you will ride
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At our **OAKTREE JUNCTION**
there is lots of fun & entertainment.

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- Mummy wrap competition
- Face painting
(fee applicable)
- Fun fair rides
- Wand classes from our
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mascot
- Catering available
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Gigs

KIEFER SUTHERLAND Mon 21 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LOST ANGELS Mon 21 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE SKINTS & BEDOUIN Mon 21 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KOFI STONE Mon 21 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PENGSHUI Mon 21 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CHRIS DE BURGH Mon 21 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Tues 22 - Wed 23 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE FALLEN STATE Tues 22 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

IKE WILLIS & ZAPPATIKA Wed 23 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

CONOR MAYNARD Wed 23 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

A2 Wed 23 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

RAYMOND FROGGATT Wed 23 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

INGLORIOUS Wed 23 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

BEN PHILLIPS Wed 23 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE DUNWELLS + LISSY TAYLOR + JAY JOHNSON Wed 23 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SQUEEZE PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS HEAVEN 17 Wed 23 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SONS OF PITCHES: AROUND THE WORLD Wed 23 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Thurs 24 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

FEROCIOUS DOG Thurs 24 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CC SMUGGLERS Thurs 24 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

CHARLES ESTEN Thurs 24 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS + CROWS + PSYENCE Thurs 24 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

LES CARTER Thurs 24 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

LAMB Thurs 24 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

CLOUDBUSTING: THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH Thurs 24 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

CASSIA Thurs 24 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

AIRWAYS + WARGASM + DIVENIRE + CAMULUS Fri 25 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BLACKBEAR Fri 25 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

NEVILLE STAPLE WITH HIS BAND + AC30'S Fri 25 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

WHITESNAKES JOURNEY Fri 25 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

CHASING AUGUST AND BLIX Fri 25 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

LIFE OF AGONY Fri 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

STRAIGHT FOR THE SUN Fri 25 Oct, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

BE BOP A LULA Fri 25 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THUNDER HAMMER - MONSTER OF ROCK HALLOWEEN BALL Fri 25 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

THE SKA45'S Fri 25 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BACK TO THE 80'S - HALLOWEEN PARTY Fri 25 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CLARE TEAL & HER BIG MINI BAND Fri 25 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

JAZZ JAMAICA ALL STARS: A TROJON STORY Fri 25 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ELO EXPERIENCE Sat 26 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

DEXTER Sat 26 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CROONERS Sat 26 Oct,

Lichfield Garrick

LIVE ON MARS - A TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE Sat 26 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

AWOL & PANDEMONIUM PRESENTS THE HALLOWEEN SPECIAL Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHER Sat 26 Oct, Arena Birmingham

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED? Sat 26 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shrops

MONEY FOR NOTHING Sat 26 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE SELECTER Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DIIO + TWISTED SYSTEM Sat 26 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE REAL THING Sat 26 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

ASHEN CROWN Sat 26 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN PARTY WITH SMOKING PILCHARDS Sat 26 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

REFUSED + THRICE Sat 26 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

EGO FRIENDLY Sat 26 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

WSTRN Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ZOUCH BAND: COAL & CANALS Sat 26 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE STYLISTICS Sun 27 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

MATT SAYERS Sun 27 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HEELS OF HELL Sun 27 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BIZARRO 30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Sun 27 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ROYAL REPUBLIC Sun 27 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HARRIET Sun 27 Oct, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

LITTLE FIX Sun 27 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

SKENGDO X AM Sun 27 Oct, O2 Institute, Birm-



Harriet - Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

ingham

THE RAILS Sun 27 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

A FOREIGNER'S JOURNEY Sun 27 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

OSCAR JEROME Sun 27 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HIPKISS WITH PATSY GAMBLE Sun 27 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall



THE UNTHANKS Mon 28 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

OF MONSTERS AND MEN Mon 28 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CHARLI CX Mon 28 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ALBERT LEE Mon 28 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

VISTAS + SWIMMING GIRLS + GAURAGA Mon 28 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

WORKING MEN'S CLUB Mon 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GOODBYE JUNE Mon 28 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BILLY JOEL SONGBOOK Tues 29 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NSG Tues 29 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS + SPECIAL GUESTS Tues 29 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

MARRY WATSON & EMILY BARKER Tues 29 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LISA STANSFIELD Tues 29 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CATTLE DECAPITATION, OSIAH - OVER 50 SOLD! Tues 29 Oct, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

LIVE ON MARS - A TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE Wed 30 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MARK LOCKHEART - DAYS ON EARTH Wed 30 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE PITMEN POETS Wed 30 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE CHRIS SLADE TIME-LINE Wed 30 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE CAPITAL Wed 30 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

EVERYONE YOU KNOW Wed 30 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BIG BIG TRAIN IN CONCERT Wed 30 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BEARDYMAN Wed 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VIOLET Wed 30 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN Thurs 31 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

PICTURE THIS Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LITTLE COMETS Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

80'S INVASION TOUR 2019 Thurs 31 Oct, Arena Birmingham

MOSTACK Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

HENGE Thurs 31 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

SOFT MACHINE Thurs 31 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE ORCHESTRA OF CHAOS Thurs 31 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

KEYWEST Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

BANDAOKE Thurs 31 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CHRIS SLADE AC/DC DRUMMERS TIMELINE Thurs 31 Oct, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

LOCKED AND LOADED Thurs 31 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 31 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

STIFF BIZKIT, KORN AGAIN + HYBRID THEORY Thurs 31 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

BRIX AND THE EXTRICATED + HIGH VIZ JACKIT THEORY + THE OTHER THINGS Thurs 31 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

Classical

RESURRECTION CHOIR FROM ST PETERS-BURG Mon 21 Oct, St Mary Magdalene's Church, Leintwardine, South Shropshire

ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT Programme includes various works by J.S. Bach, Wed 23 Oct, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA: THE FRUIT OF SILENCE Programme includes works by Peteris Vasks, Arvo Part & Dobrinka Tabakova, Wed 23 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

CBSO: BRUCH'S VIOLIN CONCERTO Featuring Fabien Gabel (conductor) & Simone Lamsma (violin). Programme includes works by Wagner, Bruch & Bruckner, Thurs 24 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MUSIC AND SONG: CITY OF LICHFIELD CONCERT BAND & LICHFIELD GOSPEL CHOIR Sat 26 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

BRODSKY QUARTET Sat 26 Oct, St Lawrence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

EX CATHEDRA: RACHMANINOFF'S VES-PERS Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor), Martha McLorinan (mezzo soprano) and Jeremy Budd (tenor), Sun 27 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH WAYNE MARSHALL Programme includes works by Wayne Marshall, George C Baker and Franz Schmidt, Mon 28 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

CBSO: DVORAK'S SEVENTH Featuring Anja Bihlmaier (conductor) & Renaud Capuçon (violin). Programme includes works by Bizet, Chausson, Ravel & Dvorak, Wed 30 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC FROM GAME OF THRONES... Special orchestral concert, Thurs 31 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN SILENT MOVIE SPECIAL: THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME Featuring Nigel Ogden on organ, Thurs 31 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

PETER DONOHUE PIANO RECITAL Thurs 31 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Comedy

BEN ELTON Tues 22 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BEN PHILLIPS Wed 23 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NICK HELM Thurs 24 Oct, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ADAM BLOOM, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 24 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JIM DAVIDSON Fri 25 Oct, Dudley

Town Hall

ADAM BLOOM, JASON PATTERSON, TOM TOAL & COMIC TBC Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HAL CRUTTENDEN Sat 26 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MATT PARKER Sat 26 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THOMAS GREEN, HAYLEY ELLIS, CRAIG MURRAY & IAN SMITH Sat 26 Oct, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

CARL DONELLY, MATT ROSS Sat 26 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

STAND UP FOR MYSTERY HOUR Sat 26 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

KAT B, LUKE CRAIG, SMASH & KANE BROWN Sat 26 Oct, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

GARY DELANEY Sun 27 Oct, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

JAMES ACASTER Sun 27 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ROUGH WORKS: NEW MATERIAL NIGHT Sun 27 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

BARBARA NICE'S COMEDY PLAYGROUND Sun 27 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

SINDHU VEE Mon 28 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDREW O'NEILL Mon 28 Oct, The Giffard Arms, Wolverhampton

JIMEOIN Tues 29 Oct, The Place, Telford

ANDY PARSONS Wed 30 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

EMILY ATTACK Wed 30 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ANDY PARSONS Thurs 31 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DAVE GORMAN Thurs 31 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

CRAIG MURRAY, TOM TAYLOR & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 31 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOHN KEARNS Thurs 31 Oct, The Giffard Arms, Wolverhampton

Theatre

IT KIND OF LOOKS LIKE A DOUGHNUT A no-holds-barred girl's-eye view of the realities and responsibilities of having one more hole than a man has, Tues 22 Oct, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Musical theatre concert featuring past principal performers from Les Misérables, Tues 22 - Wed 23 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

CABARET John Partridge takes on the role of Emcee in Kander & Ebb's landmark musical. Anita Harris & Kara Lily Hayworth also star, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

OKLAHOMA! Amateur staging presented by Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Oct, Stoke

Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

DORIAN Contemporary retelling of Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, Wed 23 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

PRIME TIME Three monologues by three different playwrights exploring the wide-ranging experiences of women of retirement age. Janice Connolly stars, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE SOUND OF MUSIC TADLOP present an amateur staging of the Rodgers & Hammerstein classic, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Oct, The Place, Telford

KING LEAR Oddbodies Theatre Company present an 'inventive, irreverent and highly accessible' version of Shakespeare's famous tragedy, Thurs 24 Oct, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch

LIFE IS NO LAUGHING MATTER An autobiographical live art/standup/theatre performance about mental illness, suicide and radical cure attempts, Thurs 24 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

AUSTENTATIUS Improvised comedy in which a cast of the country's quickest performers conjure up a brand new 'lost' Jane Austen novel based on nothing more than a title suggested by the audience, Thurs 24 - Fri 25 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

PLAY ON Market Drayton Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society present Rick Abbot's comedy, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 Oct, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

JACK THE RIPPER: THE VICTIMS An all-female cast focus on the stories of Jack the Ripper's victims, Thurs 24 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

INSPECTOR DRAKE AND THE BLACK WIDOW Gill 'Doreen Tipton' Jordan stars in a 'comedy whodunnit like you've never seen before', Fri 25 Oct, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

KING LEAR Oddbodies Theatre Company present an 'inventive, irreverent and highly accessible' version of Shakespeare's famous tragedy, Fri 25 Oct, Harley Village Hall, Nr Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

ALBUM Solo performance that unites text, song and dance inside the content of an album... Fri 25 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE GREATEST SHOWENCH Hollywood has The Greatest Showman, The Black Country has The Greatest Showench! Fizzog return with their latest production... Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

CIRCUS 1903 Unique show featuring life-sized elephants created by puppeteers from War Horse and 'jaw-dropping' acts from across the globe, Fri 25 - Wed 30 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

PAUL ZERDIN'S PUPPET PARTY Brand

new UK tour featuring the acclaimed ventriloquist and his ever-dysfunctional puppet family, Sat 26 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE BARN ULTIMATUM Brand new comedy from Tom Allsopp, Sun 27 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE BEATLES: HORNSEY ROAD WITH MARK LEWISOHN Fast-moving illustrated history of the Fab Four, Mon 28 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

LES MUSICALS Concert production featuring classics from Les Misérables, Phantom, Blood Brothers & more... Jonathan Ansell & Jai McDowall star, Tues 29 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

DEAD MEN'S EYES Two 'chilling and thrilling' tales from MR James - the master of the English ghost story, Tues 29 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NO MAN'S LAND London Classic Theatre present Harold Pinter's beguiling and atmospheric play, Tues 29 - Wed 30 Oct, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

BLACK MEN WALKING The first story from Revolution Mix - an Eclipse movement spearheading the largest ever national delivery of new Black British stories, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

NATIVITY! THE MUSICAL Debbie Isitt's feelgood musical, based on the much-loved film of the same name, Tues 29 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HYSTERICAL HISTORIES Kate Pritchard's high-octane musical version of history, Wed 30 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR BITA Musical Theatre present an amateur staging of Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice's classic rock musical, Wed 30 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL, AND MR HYDE Award-winning one-man show bringing Robert Louis Stevenson's Gothic tale to life, Thurs 31 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LAUREL & HARDY Talking from the Afterlife, Stan & Ollie tell the story of their lives and the people they knew and worked with. Performed by Adam Halcro & Jacob Harvey, Thurs 31 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Kids Shows

DEAR ZOO LIVE! Rod Campbell's children classic, live on stage, Mon 21 - Tues 22 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MATHILDAMATHILDA Soap Soup Theatre present a story of connection & separation, Tues 22 Oct, Stafford

Gatehouse Theatre

UP UP AND AWAY Highly Sprung fuse theatre, aerial dance & innovative design to tell a story about individuality, uniqueness and diversity, Wed 23 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

PEPPA PIG'S BEST DAY EVER Featuring 'songs, games and laughter' - a must for Peppa Pig fans everywhere, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Oct, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

COMEDY FOR KIDS. HOW DOES THIS POLITICS THING WORK THEN? 'Fun and informative' show for young audiences, Sat 26 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

PEDLAR'S TALES The Fetch Theatre fuse puppetry & music in a performance of bite-size tales, Sat 26 Oct, Welshampton Parish Hall, Ellesmere, Shropshire

THE PIRATE CRUNCHER Swashbuckling tale of greed punished and ingenuity rewarded, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT Michael Rosen's beloved book is brought to life with beautiful puppets and original music, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

ZOG & THE GRUFFALO - FILM WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA World premiere concert performance of two of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved works. Terry Davies conducts René Aubry's inspired scores, Sun 27 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JACKIE & THE BEANSTALK An original story 'full of adventure, laughter and growing up'. Suitable for three to eight-year-olds and their grown-ups, Sun 27 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

JUDY NEEDS A HOUSE! The Little Rebels Theatre presents an interactive puppet show inspired by the Punch & Judy classic, Mon 28 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

H2GLO: A UV PUPPET ADVENTURE Dive into a 'magical' under-the-sea UV experience, as Finn & Twinkle take you on a journey through the ocean in search of hidden treasure, Mon 28 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HIGH JINX - MAGIC, ILLUSION & CIRCUS SHOW Tues 29 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

MARTY MACDONALD'S TOY MACHINE Join Marty, Sally the Scarecrow, Pongo the Pig, Molly-Moo the Cow and Sheena the Sheep in an interactive musical adventure... Wed 30 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF Trip-trapping musical adventure for younger audiences, Wed 30 Oct, The Place, Telford

TOM GATES LIVE ON STAGE! Brand new show featuring Liz Pichon's popular character. From the producers of Hor-

rible Histories and Gangsta Granny, Wed 30 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

EMANUEL GAT YOOO!!! New hip-hop-inspired piece for all ages, Tues 22 - Thurs 24 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE WIZARD OF OZ Ballet Theatre UK present L Frank Baum's classic tale, Thurs 24 Oct, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

SNOW WHITE Vienna Festival Ballet present the famous Brothers Grimm story, Fri 25 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

SWAN LAKE Presented by Russian State Ballet, Sun 27 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RAMBERT2 - MIXED BILL New creations combining technical virtuosity with raw energy, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Talks / Spoken Word

ONCE UPON A WEDNESDAY Storytelling nights for grown-ups on the theme of man's best friend, with Matt Black & Maria Whatton, Wed 23 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

GREG MINNAAR: SIZE MATTERS Join the world champion mountain bike rider as he recounts the story of his incredible racing career, Fri 25 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SWANN & BLOFELD: DANCING DOWN THE WICKET Test Match Special's Henry Blofeld and ex-England bowler Graeme Swann talk about cricket, Graeme's time on Strictly Come Dancing and Henry's life since leaving the TMS commentary box, Mon 28 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARGARET ATWOOD Join the bestselling author as she discusses her career and new novel, The Testaments - the sequel to The Handmaid's Tale, Mon 28 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



DAVID STARKEY- SIX WIVES: THE QUEENS OF HENRY VIII Talk tracing the radically shifting marriage customs of the British monarchy, Wed 30 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



Marty MacDonald's Toy Machine - Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

Cabaret

THE DREAMBOYS The UK's most famous male strip show, Wed 23 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

A BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT Variety show featuring comedy act Dandy, a tribute to Black Country comedienne Dolly Allen from Emma Rollason (from The Fizzogs) and music from ukulele maestro Joe Thomas, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

AFTERNOON VARIETY SHOW Featuring comedian Doug Parker & vocalist Chris King, Thurs 24 Oct, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Rock'n'roll variety show, Thurs 24 - Fri 25 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TRÈS TRÈS CABARET Evening of 'cheeky decadence' presented by Stafford's first and only burlesque and variety show, Sat 26 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE LADYBOYS OF BANGKOK Thurs 31 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SCREAMY BINGO WITH TINA TURNER TEA LADY Spooky Halloween special with the award-winning domestic diva, Thurs 31 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring James Purefoy, Meadow Nobrega. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, North Shropshire, Mon 21 Oct

DISOBEDIENCE (15) Drama/Romance. Starring Rachel Weisz, Rachel McAdams. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 22 Oct

20 FEET FROM STARDOM (U) Documentary/Biography. Starring Darlene Love, Merry Clayton. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Tues 22 Oct

WESTERN (U) Drama. Starring Mein-

hard Neumann, Reinhardt Wetrek. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 25 Oct

ROCKETMAN (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell. Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 21 Oct; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct

AD ASTRA (12a) Adventure/Drama. Starring Brad Pitt, Liv Tyler. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 25 & Mon 28 Oct

TOY STORY 4 (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Tom Hanks, Tim Allen. Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, South Shropshire, Mon 28 Oct

THE WHITE CROW (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Oleg Ivenko, Ralph Fiennes. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 28 Oct

SHAUN OF THE DEAD (18) Comedy/Horror. Starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost. Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 28 Oct

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (15) Drama. Starring Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 29 Oct

BORDER (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Eva Melander, Eero Milonoff. Foreign language, subtitled. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 29 Oct

THE FAVOURITE (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Olivia Colman, Emma Stone. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 29 Oct

WONDER PARK (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Sofia Mali, Jennifer Garner. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 29 Oct

MISSING LINK (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Hugh Jackman, David Walliams. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Wed 30 Oct

DUMBO (PG) Adventure/Family. Starring Colin Farrell, Michael Keaton. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 30 Oct; Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Thurs 31 Oct

Events

WILDERLAND WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL

Unique film festival bringing stories from the natural world to the big screen, Tues 22 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NO AMPS, NO CHAT, NO CHARGE

Monthly acoustic evening featuring some of the Midlands' finest songwriters, Wed 23 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

IRONBRIDGE BY MOONLIGHT DINNER To mark 50 years since the first Moon landing, guests dine in the shadow of the Museum Of The Moon exhibition, a touring artwork by Luke Jerram, Thurs 24 Oct, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

GHOSTLY VICTORIAN TALES AT THE BACK TO BACKS

Spend an evening listening to some of the spookiest stories Birmingham has to offer, Thurs 24 - Fri 25 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

HALLOWEEN TILE DECORATING Create your own Halloween or Luna-themed designs at family drop-in workshops on weekdays during the half-term break, Fri 25 Oct, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

FRIGHT NIGHTS: ASTON ALIVE! Spend the scariest time of year at one of Britain's most haunted buildings! Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, Aston Hall, B'ham

HALLOWEEN NIGHTS Trick or treat along the Black Country Living Museum's gas-lit cobbled streets, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



JEWELLERY QUARTER GHOST WALK A tour of all things grim and macabre around Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

GHOST TOURS AT STOKESAY CASTLE

Featuring tales of ghosts, supernatural sightings and horrors from history, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, Stokesay Castle, Nr Craven Arms, South Shropshire

DESTINATION STAR TREK BIRMINGHAM

Boldly go where no one has gone before at Europe's Official Star Trek convention, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

THE VAPER EXPO UK: THE RETURN Sample the latest flavours, witness new

trends and try out new hardware, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

SPOOKLEY PUMPKIN FESTIVAL Ride the Pumpkin Express, hear the Spookley story, select your own pumpkin from the pumpkin patch, take it back to the carving caverns and make a lantern, Fri 25 - Thurs 31 Oct, Apley Farm Shop, Norton, Nr Shifnal

HALLOWEEN SPOOK-TACULAR All the fun of the farm plus a day packed with spooky Halloween fun, Fri 25 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton Upon Trent

GCCF SUPREME CAT SHOW The UK's premier cat show, Sat 26 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

CAGE WARRIORS 109 The leading and longest-running mixed martial arts promotion in Europe, Sat 26 Oct, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS Organisers promise an 'even bigger and better' event this year, Sat 26 Oct, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

GHOST TRAINS Arrive early at Kidderminster Station for face-painting and a spooky disco, then make your way along the dark platform to find your seat on the Ghost Train, Sat 26 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THE ROCKY HORROR MONSTER BALL 'Characters, costumes and outrageousness to perfectly replicate the original show', Sat 26 Oct, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

DIVE 2019 The UK's biggest event for scuba divers and snorkellers, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

PUMPKIN CARVING 2019 Try your hand at making this traditional Halloween decoration, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

SPELLBOUND Wear your best Halloween costume and climb aboard the batty boats as you're taken into the creepy caverns for some spooky and spellbinding fun, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

HAUNTED CASTLE A week of ghostly goings-on in Tamworth Castle's haunted spooktacular, Sat 26 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Tamworth Castle

FIEDISH FELONS - HALF TERM Discover the dastardly deeds of criminals of the past and the putrid punishments they faced, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

HAWKSTONE TRAIL AND TERRIBLE TALES Enjoy the stunning autumnal landscape whilst following the Halloween Trail to find hidden storytellers throughout the Follies, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Hawkstone Park & Follies, Shrewsbury

SPOOKY STOKESAY CASTLE A 'feast of

frightening fun', including 'wicked crafts and a spooktacular Halloween quest' around the castle, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Stokesay Castle, Nr Craven Arms, South Shropshire

THE WIZARD EXPRESS The Wizard Express returns to take young witches and wizards on 'a magical journey to Wizard School', Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

ATTINGHAM WOOLLEN WOODS 2019 See Hall-wool-eeen in a different light this year as crafted creatures take over a section of the Mile Walk, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 24 Nov, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

ASTON HALL LATE: GHOSTLY ENCOUNTERS Theatrical ghost tour of one of Britain's most haunted buildings, Sun 27 Oct, Aston Hall, Birmingham

DANCE, CREATE, CAPTURE Create your own Polaroid photograph in a workshop inviting you to create and capture your own ideas through movement and dance, Sun 27 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE BIG DRAW Join the world's biggest celebration of drawing and take part in a day of 'painting and drawing madness', Sun 27 Oct, The Brew-house Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

CHILDREN'S HALLOWEEN PARTY Annual Halloween party makes a welcome return and features children's entertainer, Dippy, Mon 28 - Thurs 31 Oct, Dudley Zoological Gardens

HALLOWEEN TILE DECORATING Create your own Halloween or Luna-themed designs at family drop-in workshops on weekdays over the half-term break, Mon 28 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shrops

HARTLEBURY HALLOWEEN Featuring family craft activities including making spooky clay boggarts and firework art, Tues 29 Oct, Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster

KIDZ CLUB Immerse yourself in 'a world of fun' as you discover 'amazing' rides and endangered animals, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

LITTLE SKIPPERS - HALLOWEEN FUN Boat trip through the themed caverns followed by things to make and do, Tues 29 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

SMETHWICK ENGINE STEAMING DAY Check out the Smethwick Engine now that it's undergone an extensive restoration, Wed 30 Oct, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

GHOSTLY TALES: FAMILY FRIENDLY GHOST TOUR Daytime tour of one of Birmingham's most haunted buildings, Wed 30 Oct, Aston Hall, B'ham

PUMPKIN CARVING WITH DASTARDLY DAN Carve a spooky face or scary scene, Wed 30 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

GUIDED TOUR: HERITAGE AND HISTORY

OF THE BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS Learn more about how the Gardens were designed and have evolved over time, Wed 30 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

THE GHOST WALK Take a tour of the ghostly avenues and alleyways of ancient Bridgnorth, where lurking in the shadows are 10 ghosts ready to tell you how they met their grisly ends, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

HUBBLE BUBBLE - TRICK OR TREAT Explore the halls to track down the bats - but best beware of creepy things! Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Soho House, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN NIGHTS Trick or treat along the Black Country Living Museum's gas-lit cobbled streets, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

GHOST TRAINS Arrive early at Kidderminster Station for face-painting and a spooky disco, then make your way along the dark platform to find your seat on the Ghost Train, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BABY DISCO HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR Dance along to all your favourite tunes in a 'spooktacular' disco, Thurs 31 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

MEET THE WITCHFINDER: HALLOWEEN FAMILY TOUR Take a trip round the hall, but stay alert for vampires, trolls, fairies, goblins and ghosts, Thurs 31 Oct, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

SPOOKY SCIENCE NIGHT Spooky party for all mad scientists, witches and wizards to come together and have some fun, Thurs 31 Oct, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN FUNDAY Get trick-or-treat-ready by creating costumes, pumpkins and spooky paraphernalia, Thurs 31 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

HALLOWEEN CHILDREN'S SPOOKTACULAR Scary beings are located throughout the park - enter if you dare! Thurs 31 Oct, The British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

GHOST SEARCH Ghost walk around the castle, with vigils conducted in reputedly haunted rooms, Thurs 31 Oct, Tamworth Castle

BRICKLIVE Play, create and discover together in an event aimed at under-12s, Thurs 31 - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS - THE CRAFTY CHRISTMAS SHOW 'Extravaganza' of exclusive ranges, including glass, jewellery, art, candles, ceramics and clothing, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW Wide-ranging show for knitters, stitchers, hobbyists and crafters, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham



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