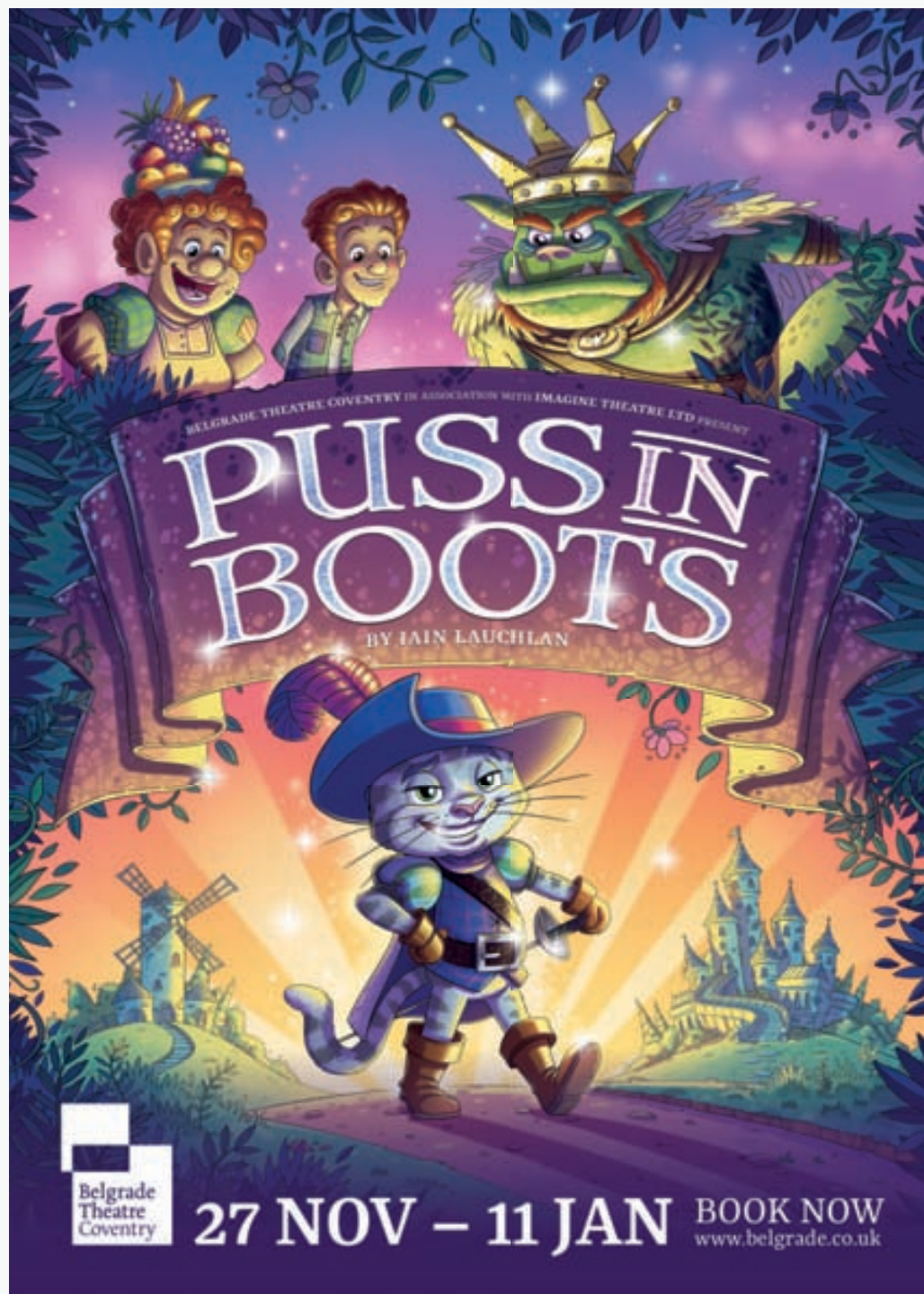


Coventry & Warwickshire

ISSUE 407 NOVEMBER 2019

# What's On

FILM | COMEDY | THEATRE | GIGS | VISUAL ARTS | EVENTS | FOOD [warwickshirewhatson.co.uk](http://warwickshirewhatson.co.uk)



inside:

## thelist

Your 16-page week  
by week listings guide

### FROM THE SOURCE

Carleen Anderson talks  
political protest & human rights



### JACK WHITEHALL

out on tour and Stood Up at  
Arena Birmingham



### MCM COMIC CON

may the Force be with you  
at the NEC





# COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2019 — THE TWIN

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2 Masks (Pollux & Castor), Sculpture, artwork by Larsen Camps 2018, Photo by John Bodkin

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**Festive Feast!** - Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas opens at Warwick Arts Centre page 37

## Carleen Anderson



talks political protest, human rights and innovative jazz...

feature page 8

## Pitch Black



layered soundscapes and skanking keyboards in Coventry

page 17

## David Walliams



talks about The Boy In The Dress ahead of its RSC opening

feature page 24

## the list



Your 16-page week-by-week listings guide

page 53

## inside:

4. First Word

11. Food

17. Gigs

20. Comedy

26. Theatre

43. Visual Arts

45. Events

51. Film



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## RSC announces its 2020 summer season of shows

New productions of *The Winter's Tale*, *The Comedy Of Errors* and *Pericles* will show at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon next year. The shows form part of the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) summer season. The theatre's sister venue, the Swan, will host three productions under the title of *Projekt Europa* - an initiative exploring, celebrating and interrogating the UK's relationship with Europe. Commenting on the news, RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran said: "Our new season celebrates Shakespeare's unique contribution to world culture, whilst at the same time asking us to consider our own place within society, our family and community." For more information, visit [rsc.org.uk](http://rsc.org.uk)

## Arabella Weir brings debut tour to the Midlands



Comedian Arabella Weir has added new dates to her tour schedule, including stop-offs at three Midlands venues. The *Fast Show* star will be bringing her first solo presentation, *Does My Mum Loom Big In This?*, to Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre on 10 March. She will then visit both Worcester's Huntingdon Hall and Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn in April (the 8th and 22nd respectively). Tickets and further information are available at [ArabellaWeir.co.uk](http://ArabellaWeir.co.uk)

## Join the club in Coventry

Coventry's Belgrade Theatre is next month hosting 'an immersive theatrical party like no other'. Club 2B runs at the venue from Wednesday 11 to Tuesday 31 December and sees host and club owner, the enigmatic 'Z', taking audi-

ences on 'an exhilarating trip through time'. The show is being described as 'mixing the feel of a 1930s Berlin cabaret club, a Secret Cinema event and an underground prohibition-era nightclub'. For more information and to book tickets, visit [belgrade.co.uk](http://belgrade.co.uk)



## Michael and Alfie together again in Birmingham

Musical duo Michael Ball and Alfie Boe are heading out on tour together next year, stopping off at Arena Birmingham on Sunday 1 March. The tour announcement follows the success of their first two duet albums, *Together* and *Together Again*. A third album, *Back Together*, is released on the 1st of this month, tracks from which will be featured in their touring show.



## Sausage dog pop-up fun at Revolution Solihull

Owners and lovers of Dachshunds should head for Revolution Solihull on Sunday 3 November to enjoy a sausage-dog-friendly event.

The Dachshund Pop Up Cafe will likely see as many as 150-plus dogs (and their owners) gathering together to enjoy an event that features Dachshund-related trade stands, numerous competitions and 'unlimited free puppuccinos for doggies'!

## Motor Museum to host new model railway show

The British Motor Museum is this month hosting a brand new family-friendly event. The Great British Model Railway Show (Saturday 9 & Sunday 10 November) will feature more than 30 ranging-in-size railway layouts in a variety of scales across the eras. For more information, visit the dedicated Great British Model Railway Show website, [gbmrs.com](http://gbmrs.com)

## Festival Of Lost & Found pitches up at New Place...

A Coventry-based theatre company will next month present 'a charming midwinter theatrical experience for all the family to enjoy' at Shakespeare's New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Festival Of Lost & Found (Wednesday 11 - Sunday 15 December) will see Talking Birds present an immersive production that calls to mind 'the greatest show that never happened' - David Garrick's legendary Shakespeare pageant, which was washed out by heavy rain and floods 250 years ago. For more information, visit [shakespeare.org.uk](http://shakespeare.org.uk)



## The Indians Are Coming to Coventry...

Popular comedy night The Indians Are Coming returns to the Coventry Belgrade Theatre late this month.

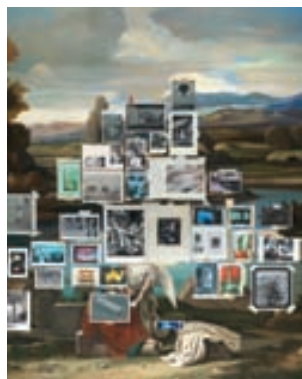
The show's Monday the 25th line-up features Mickey Sharma (pictured), Anuvab Pal, SJ Magic, Sukh Ojla & Omid Singh. The following night sees the latter being replaced by Jay Droch. For more information, visit [belgrade.co.uk](http://belgrade.co.uk).



## The lure of the ruin explored in Worcester

An exhibition at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum which explores 'the lure of the ruin and our fascination with what has passed' will remain available to view until the end of the month (Saturday the 30th).

Living Ruins features contemporary pieces, important artworks from the museum's collection and a series of works on loan from Tate.



## Tony Award winner heading to the Midlands next spring

Tony Award-winning satirical comedy The Book Of Mormon is heading for Birmingham.

Devised by South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone and Avenue Q co-creator Robert Lopez, the show follows a mismatched pair of Mormon boys who are sent on a mission to deliver the news of the Latter Day saints to the people of a Ugandan village - a place where war, famine, poverty and AIDS are far more of a

concern than religion.  
Featuring songs Spooky Mormon Hell Dream, I Am Africa, Baptize Me, All American Prophet and Tomorrow Is A Latter Day, The Book Of Mormon visits Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 4 to Saturday 28 March.  
For more information and to book tickets, visit [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)

## Belshazzar's festive feast...



Popular comedy night A mix of seasonal songs and tunes, classical music, pop, music hall and traditional folk awaits fans of Paul Hutchinson and Paul Sarti - aka Belshazzar's Feast. The duo brings its Two Wise Men tour to Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, on Wednesday the 18th.

## Vamos show Dead Good

Worcester-based full mask theatre company Vamos will premiere its new production, Dead Good, at the city's Swan Theatre in the new year, prior to taking the show on a UK-wide tour.

A collaboration with palliative care patients and staff, Dead Good is a wordless production about living and dying.

The show is being presented at the Swan on 23 & 24 January.

For full details and to book tickets, visit [vamos theatre.co.uk](http://vamos theatre.co.uk)



### Food for thought at Coventry event

An event which looks at the ways in which food benefits physical, mental, social and economic wellbeing will take place at Coventry's Old Grammar School on Saturday 16 November.

Tales From Coventry Tables is a project which 'equips and enables non-performers from diverse backgrounds to bring their own tasty tales to the public'.

The evening features a selection of stories 'from the city and beyond' - all told by Coventry residents - and a vegetarian meal, which is available on a pay-as-you-feel basis.

### Winter literary event welcomes all with a packed programme

Birmingham MP Jess Phillips, broadcaster John Humphreys and author Ben Miller



(pictured) are among the contributors to this month's Stratford Literary Festival Winter Weekend, taking place in the town from Friday 1 to Sunday 3 November.

"We will be transporting audiences from the world's newsrooms to the India of the Raj and even to fair Verona, across three days of events for all ages," says the festival's director, Annie Ashworth. "We'll be discussing fair pay and fair play, building a giant and very hungry caterpillar to celebrate 50 years since he started munching, exploring cheese, and celebrating two veterans of broadcasting. We look forward to having you with us."

For more information, visit [stratlitfest.co.uk](http://stratlitfest.co.uk)

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



### Lifestyle destination aiming to impress

Looking for head-turning fashion, unique interiors inspiration or a quality restaurant for a special celebration?

If so, check out Birmingham's Mailbox, a venue that's confident it's offering the very best in shopping and entertainment this autumn.

Visitors to the popular lifestyle destination can shop for the latest trends at Harvey Nichols, enjoy some head-to-toe pampering at Malmaison Spa, indulge in retail therapy at Emporio Armani and

James Lakeland, and explore luxurious lighting and impressive interiors at Home At Mailbox - the largest selection of home furnishing brands in the Midlands. There are fine dining restaurants, independent eateries and canalside bars to enjoy too, while film buffs can stop off at Everyman Cinema to catch up on the latest releases... For more information about everything the Mailbox has to offer, visit [mailboxlife.com](http://mailboxlife.com).

### Worcester gets four new festivals

Four new festivals showcasing local, national and international creative talent will take place in Worcester next year.

To begin with, the city will be animated by light installations and live performances for Worcester Light Night on 16 January...

Then a festival focusing on the environment and entitled Atmosphere takes place on 25 April...

The third new festival, Disrupting The Norm (6 - 11 July), presents a week-long mix of pop-up events and accidental art...

Finally, the International Story Festival, held across 10 days in October, is dedicated 'to stories both old and new'.

For more information, visit [thearchesworcester.co.uk](http://thearchesworcester.co.uk)

### Showtime with Johnsons Coaches

Henley-in-Arden-based Johnsons Coaches is now taking bookings for a wide range of day excursions and showtime trips, both regionally and further afield.

Day trips include a Dickensian food tour in London and Longleat Festival Of Light - both taking place next month.

Showtime highlights include tickets and travel to Strictly Come Dancing: Live Tour in January and a trip to see the stage production of Mary Poppins in the West End in May.

For full listings and information, visit [johnsonscaches.co.uk](http://johnsonscaches.co.uk)

### Compton Verney hosts textile fair

Popular Warwickshire visitor attraction Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park is hosting a textiles fair this month (Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 November).



The event features work by a number of independent textile artists employing embroidery, printing and other techniques to produce high-quality items, all of which are available to purchase across the weekend.

The event also includes drop-in embroidery workshops and a selection of work by Birmingham City University's fashion students. For more information, visit [comptonverney.org.uk](http://comptonverney.org.uk)





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 2:30PM & 7:30PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



**DEAR SANTA**  
 FRI 6 – SAT 7 DECEMBER  
 TIMES VARY  
**TOWN HALL**



**NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL THE 80S LIVE**  
 SAT 16 NOVEMBER  
 7:30PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



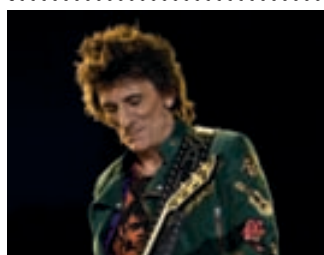
**GEORGE HINCHLIFFE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN**  
 MON 9 DECEMBER  
 8PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



**SIXTIES GOLD 2019**  
 SUN 24 NOVEMBER  
 7:30PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



**ROY WOOD'S ROCKMAS 2019**  
 SAT 14 DECEMBER  
 7:45PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



**RONNIE WOOD**  
 MON 25 NOVEMBER  
 7:30PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



**NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL CHRISTMAS**  
 SUN 22 DECEMBER  
 2:30PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



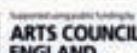
**JOOLS HOLLAND AND HIS RHYTHM AND BLUES ORCHESTRA**  
 FRI 29 – SAT 30 NOVEMBER  
 7:30PM  
**SYMPHONY HALL**



**WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT**  
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# A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

**Mercury-nominated soul singer and goddaughter of the legendary James Brown, Carleen Anderson talks political protest, human rights and innovative jazz ahead of her From The Source Festival appearance in Coventry...**

This month's From The Source Festival at Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre includes a performance by Mercury-nominated soul singer Carleen Anderson. Carleen will appear as part of a sextet fusing soul, jazz and rap. Their gig, A Change Is Gonna Come: Music For Human Rights, explores a selection of political protest songs - from the mid-20th century American civil rights movement right through to the present day.

As an African-American woman born in the 1950s, Carleen's life experience has been firmly rooted in the fight for racial equality.

"I didn't find out about my own family's connections to the civil rights movement until very recent years," she explains. "Involvement was always kept quiet because it's still considered quite a dangerous thing to have been a part of, so the family were protecting

each other. But even though I only found out relatively recently, being an American and growing up during that time made revolutionary art such an important thing to me. It makes sense that it became part of what inspires me and the work I create as an artist."

Carleen is a firm believer in the power of music: "Music itself has such an immediate



effect. It can calm people, make them jump for joy and sometimes make them cry. If you can add to that lyrics which might mean something to them, then they feel a real connection to the song itself. From there, it can generate an effect on others. That person is also then inspired and passes that inspiration on to someone else. Two people might disagree on everything else possible, but they both might like that one song. There's evidence throughout time that music has always had that impact - it brings people from entirely different backgrounds together."

And A Change Is Gonna Come's set list certainly reflects Carleen's beliefs: "This was a collaboration between myself, one of the Sound UK directors, Polly Eldridge, and the co-music director, Nikki Yeoh. The focus is on where equality was back then, where we are now, how they're still similar in some ways, and how we all need to change moving forward. Of course, it would then make sense for the art to change with time too, whether that be a new interpretation of a song or a new version of an old tune, as well as new tunes that have been inspired by those times - all with a 21st century vibe to them because that's where we are now. The younger generations aren't interested in singing Kumbaya anymore, and at one time that was the song that brought everyone together."

The gig also brings in the perspectives of the five musicians performing alongside Carleen.

"Nikki Yeoh, who worked alongside me in creating, will be performing with us too. She's an award-winning jazz pianist who's part Chinese. Her son's father is Afro-Caribbean. So she's definitely been in those situations herself and with her son, where people will judge you by your culture, background, features and so forth. Nikki is also younger than me - she's in her 40s - so her experiences will differ somewhat there too, because times had already progressed in some ways between my date of birth and hers. But in many ways she also relates to my own experience. We'll be alongside Camilla George, a newly emerged jazz saxophonist who grew up in Nigeria. She's still in her 20s so will have a new perspective to bring - as will Lady Sanity, who's the same age. Lady Sanity is a rapper from Birmingham. She's a very intelligent wordsmith and very astute and aware of the times that we're in. She sees it from the philosophical consideration of why we're still in these

same situations of inequality.

"We four women will be joined by bassist Renell Shaw, who's toured with artists like Rudimental and Skepta. Rod Youngs will be our drummer, and he's played with Gil Scott Heron, among others. There's definitely a common connection which we all have to human rights in general, beyond the specifics of the civil rights movement. A Change Is Gonna Come is bigger than that. It addresses homelessness and all other sorts of human atrocities which have always been there and which we haven't quite yet learnt to fix. I feel very privileged to work with these people because they're all great musicians in their own right, but it's even better to be getting together for this marvellous cause."

Not surprisingly in a sextet of predominantly female musicians from ethnic minorities, a narrative of gender equality will run through A Change Is Gonna Come.

"Gender is certainly part of it because some of the songs refer to that too. It's definitely a given, seeing as the four leads are women. Discussion of gender is definitely implied by the fact that we've been given this front platform, but also that we have these strong men in the group who aren't threatened by women being centre stage. I think that says a lot about how gender unity can happen. It doesn't have to be the end of the world if the women are up front!"

Also appearing at From The Source Festival is emerging jazz vocalist Judi Jackson, who Carleen worked with just this summer: "I worked with her as part of Soul Women Unite, which was curated by Yolanda Brown. It was a really wonderful line-up, with Judi, Yolanda, Terri Walker, Ayanna Whittaker and myself. Everyone always talks about people already in the industry supporting the up-and-coming artists, but I definitely think it's a two-way street. Just as the seasoned artist would support the emerging artist, the same would be said for the reverse. That symbiotic relationship is essential for everyone from different generations to learn from each other. That way, we can continue to push culture and the arts forward, rather than feeling like it's run its course."

It's certainly been a busy few months for Carleen, who featured in the BBC Proms back in September.

"The Proms was the most amazing experi-

ence. I was the choral director for the BBC singers and this group of top vocalists I'd selected in the UK called the UK Vocalists Assembly. Bringing together these two very different choirs - one from a very formal world, the other from a more contemporary one - to sing Duke Ellington's Sacred Music - a work of art of strictly spiritual music blending classical, gospel and jazz - was incredible. It was a lot of work too! But they were great singers, and it's an experience that will stay with me forever. To be in the midst of such amazing musicians and in the Royal Albert Hall was one of the highlights of my career."

And does Carleen have any other stand-out moments?

"I think one that stands out for me was when I unexpectedly appeared on the stage with my godfather, James Brown, at the Royal Albert Hall in the early 2000s. In my mind, no one went on stage with James Brown!"

"Last year was a highlight in terms of my solo career, when my 'tribal opera', Cage Street Memorial, was produced by the Barbican. It just shows that there are so many different aspects to the arts that bring people together."

So how would Carleen advise somebody who was wishing to make a human-rights statement on a small, everyday scale?

"Even if something you do is very minor, it still builds up. Small acts of courtesy matter because then that spins off into how that person then treats the next person they encounter. We can always do things like making sure you vote and write to those representing you in politics, but so much comes from us as individuals. Politicians take the lead from us. A lot depends on how we treat people - strangers, our neighbours, people who are different-looking from us, or who go about their daily life in a different manner but aren't actually hurting anyone. If you can take those little moments to smile at people who are different, then it builds up and politicians will follow the lead of the people. Indiscriminate gestures of kindness are so important."

From The Source Festival runs at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, from Friday 8 to Sunday 10 November, with A Change Is Gonna Come scheduled for Sunday the 10th.



**BOOK NOW 024 7655 3055 [www.belgrade.co.uk](http://www.belgrade.co.uk)**

\*Ticket prices include a £1.50 booking fee. No booking fee applies if booked online.





## REVIEW: The Woodsman

### Refurbished Stratford eatery combines the rustic and the contemporary

The Woodsman is situated on Stratford-upon-Avon's picturesque high street, not far away from Shakespeare's Schoolroom and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

The newly refurbished, Grade II listed former inn comes complete with a plentiful larder of locally sourced game, meat and fresh vegetables - all lovingly prepared to order by the crackle of an open wood stove in a timeless marriage of fire, food and good company.

Stylishly refurbished to a rustic yet contemporary brief, bistro-style tables, ambient lighting fixtures and modern tableware are offset by lovingly restored period features such as traditional oak beams and inglenook fireplaces, creating an atmosphere of warmth, style and abundance matched only by the generosity and expertise of the venue's impeccable waiting staff.

A brief glance over the menu revealed a bounty of seasonal riches, from premium starters like roast wood pigeon salad, duck liver and apricots (£10) and baked Porthilly oysters, apple,

kohlrabi and oxtail (£12), to signature mains celebrating England's wild food roots, such as woodfired Cornish cod served with smoked cod's roe, artichokes, girolles and hazelnuts (£23) and slow-cooked and glazed roe deer shoulder for two, served with dirty mash, celeriac and black pudding (£24.50 per person).

For a taste of traditional English husbandry, The Woodsman also comes equipped with its own on-site butchery, home to premium cuts of 40-day-aged Hereford Beef rump, Gloucestershire fallow deer and dry-aged cotes de porc worthy of any royal banqueting hall. There's even a 'feasting room' for groups of up to 30, complete with, amongst other highlights, an elaborate sharing menu of roast deer, suckling pork and spit-cooked duck, served Elizabethan style fresh from a roaring hot stove for no-holds-barred banqueting with added theatrical flair!

Taking our place at the bar - itself skilfully designed to showcase the restaurant's age-old cooking methods - the skill and

showmanship of The Woodsman's talented chef team was on display for all to see.

At our waiter's recommendation, my choice of starter was the wild hare ragu served with pappardelle (a type of broad flat-ribboned pasta) and 36-month-aged parmesan, with the optional addition of wild truffle at a premium of £5. Like all truly great cooking, this dish was a triumph of composition - and in every way an ode to the flavours of autumn. From the luxuriant, earthy notes of foraged truffle to the rich, nutty accents of the aged parmesan, this was a dish that screamed premium produce executed to perfection. Likewise, my partner's choice of chicken liver parfait, sticky verjus raisins and warm brioche loaf (£9.50) was faultless in every sense. Mousse-like in texture, lighter than light on the tongue and punctuated with fruity notes of port and grape, it set the stage for something very special indeed.

And true to form, it arrived in a main course of new season pave of Gloucestershire fallow pricket, served with mashed potato, smoked bone marrow, rainbow chard and peppercorn sauce (£22.50) - hand-sourced by the restaurant's very own head ranger from their nearby farm in the Cotswolds. Delicately flavoured with an uncharacteristic lightness of texture, the expertly roasted meat found its perfect partner in the silky-smooth mash and delicately sweetened chard, whilst the smoky notes of bone marrow offered a further depth of flavour as timeless as the land itself. This same loving attention was palpable in my partner's choice of 40-day-aged Herefordshire rump (£22). Infused with the sweet-smokiness of oak and alder wood, marbled in texture and robust in flavour, it was among the most full-bodied and complex-in-flavour cuts of meat that I've ever tasted.

For the ultimate indulgence, I urge you not to leave before sampling a side dish of 'dirty mash' - an irresistible marriage of mashed potato, venison jus, lardons, onions and English truffle oil! You can worry about the calories later...believe me, it's worth it!

Bringing our evening to a triumphant close, my choice of black treacle tart dessert served with clotted cream ice-cream (£8.50) was, in every way, the perfect encore. Served on a rich, buttery pastry base, the denseness of the treacle filling contrasted beautifully with the lightness of the ice-cream, a perfect palate-cleanser after so rich a banquet. As was my partner's peach melba soufflé with raspberry sauce (£10) - yet another fine example of fresh, seasonal produce cooked from the heart.

When it comes to British institutions, few towns occupy as proud a place on the world stage as Stratford-upon-Avon. With the weight of history resting firmly on The Woodsman's shoulders, it would take a bold soul to take on so prestigious an address as this one. Thankfully, fortune has indeed favoured the brave in the figure of Executive Chef Mike Robinson, whose passionate celebration of wild food, field-to-fork philosophy and painstaking commitment to showcasing only the best in England's seasonal produce make him a firm contender for Warwickshire's - and indeed the UK's - culinary crown.

*Katherine Ewing*

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Food:          | ■■■■■ |
| Service:       | ■■■■■ |
| Ambience:      | ■■■■■ |
| Overall value  | ■■■■■ |
| <b>OVERALL</b> | ■■■■■ |

**The Woodsman**  
 4 Chapel Street  
 Stratford-upon-Avon  
 CV37 6HA  
 Tel: 01789 331535



## Focus on inventive cooking with locally sourced food at Stratford-upon-Avon's new destination cafe, Will's Kitchen

Stratford-upon-Avon's Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has opened a new destination cafe. Featuring a menu focused on locally sourced food developed by head chef Mark Hands, Will's Kitchen serves fresh, seasonal cuisine with a 'creative flair'.

Commenting on his appointment, Mark said: "We'll be taking advantage of the fantastic local produce available to us, working with our trusted suppliers and using organic meat from Mary Arden's Farm as part of our Soil Association Food for Life Gold Standard. I'm looking forward to working with the team, creating delicious, honest food that will offer a fresh perspective to casual dining here in Stratford."

Mark was previously head chef at The Cross in Kenilworth and earned the venue two AA Rosettes.



## Mell Square unveils new Taste Collective partner

The operators of Solihull gastropub Tap & Tandoor are to work with the town's Mell Square Shopping Centre to develop a brand new immersive eating experience. Taste Collective will provide a range of experience-led offerings, four pop-up-style street-food kiosks and a covered outdoor pergola-style seating area.

Commenting on the project, Ajay Kenth, director of Tap & Tandoor, said: "It's a fantastic opportunity to broaden the offering in the town centre and bring our own individual style to Taste Collective, developing a new destination & eating experience which I know visitors to Solihull will embrace."

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

## Worcester Grade II listed former pub to re-open as Thai bar

The grade II listed premises of former pub The Maltster in Worcester will be refurbished and re-opened as a Thai bar prior to Christmas.

The Buddha Bar@Thai Gallery is the latest addition to the Thai Gallery portfolio, which already includes restaurants in Worcester and Hereford.

## Bromsgrove eatery wins coveted award

Independent family-run tapas restaurant Casa Med Bromsgrove has won the award for Best Mediterranean Restaurant of The Year 2019 at the Restaurant Awards - Midlands Edition. Commenting on the venue's success, its co-founder, Catherine Houghton, said: "I've struggled to find the words to express how happy I am that we've won. It's a huge honour and helps put Bromsgrove on the map. I'm extremely proud of my team, and they totally deserve both the award and the recognition."

## Former Solihull bank could re-open as brasserie restaurant

The former Royal Bank of Scotland building on Solihull High Street is due to be transformed into a French-style brasserie restaurant, pending Council approval.

Cote Restaurants has submitted an application to Solihull Council to take over the Tudor-style premises, which is best known for its distinctive clock feature. The application will be considered by the town's planning department over the next few months.







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## The Halle Orchestra

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 28 November

One of the UK's top symphonic ensembles, the Manchester-based Halle are admired around the world for their extensive orchestral repertoire.

This Coventry concert sees them performing under the direction of dynamic young British conductor Courtney Lewis (pictured), a man with an ever-growing reputation both here in the UK and across the pond in the US. The programme of work includes Ravel's Mother Goose suite and

Elgar's Cello Concerto - as performed by the Hallé's own Principal Cello, Nicholas Trygstad.

The orchestra round off the evening with Sibelius' Fifth Symphony - a piece about which the composer wrote in his diary: "It is as if God Almighty had thrown down pieces of a mosaic for heaven's floor and asked me to find out what was the original pattern."

## Talich String Quartet

Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa, Fri 29 November

The long-established Talich Quartet are here contributing to the annual Leamington Music series for the first time in 11 years. The Prague-based quartet was founded in 1964 by the father of the ensemble's first violinist, Jan Talich, and named in honour of his uncle, Václav Talich, who was chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. For this Pump Rooms concert, they've selected a programme featuring works by Kalivoda, Dvorak and Beethoven.



## Southbank Sinfonia: The Dream Of Gerontius

Coventry Cathedral, Sat 9 November



Widely regarded as Worcestershire-born composer Edwin Elgar's finest choral masterpiece, The Dream Of Gerontius was premiered at Birmingham Town Hall in 1900 and has since become one of the most famous and oft-performed works in the British classical music canon.

The piece is here presented by Southbank Sinfonia, 'an orchestra like no other' which every year invites 33 of the world's most promising graduate musicians to embark on its highly praised fellowship.

## Worcester Choral Festival Society

Worcester Cathedral, Sat 16 November

Just two years short of celebrating its 160th anniversary, Worcester Choral Festival Society (WCFS) returns to the city's cathedral to perform one of the most famous choral works in the classical music repertoire - Mozart's Requiem. With a membership of around 150 accomplished amateur choral singers, the WCFS performs three concerts every year and is widely considered to be one of the region's leading choral societies.



## The Mozartists: Così Fan Tutte

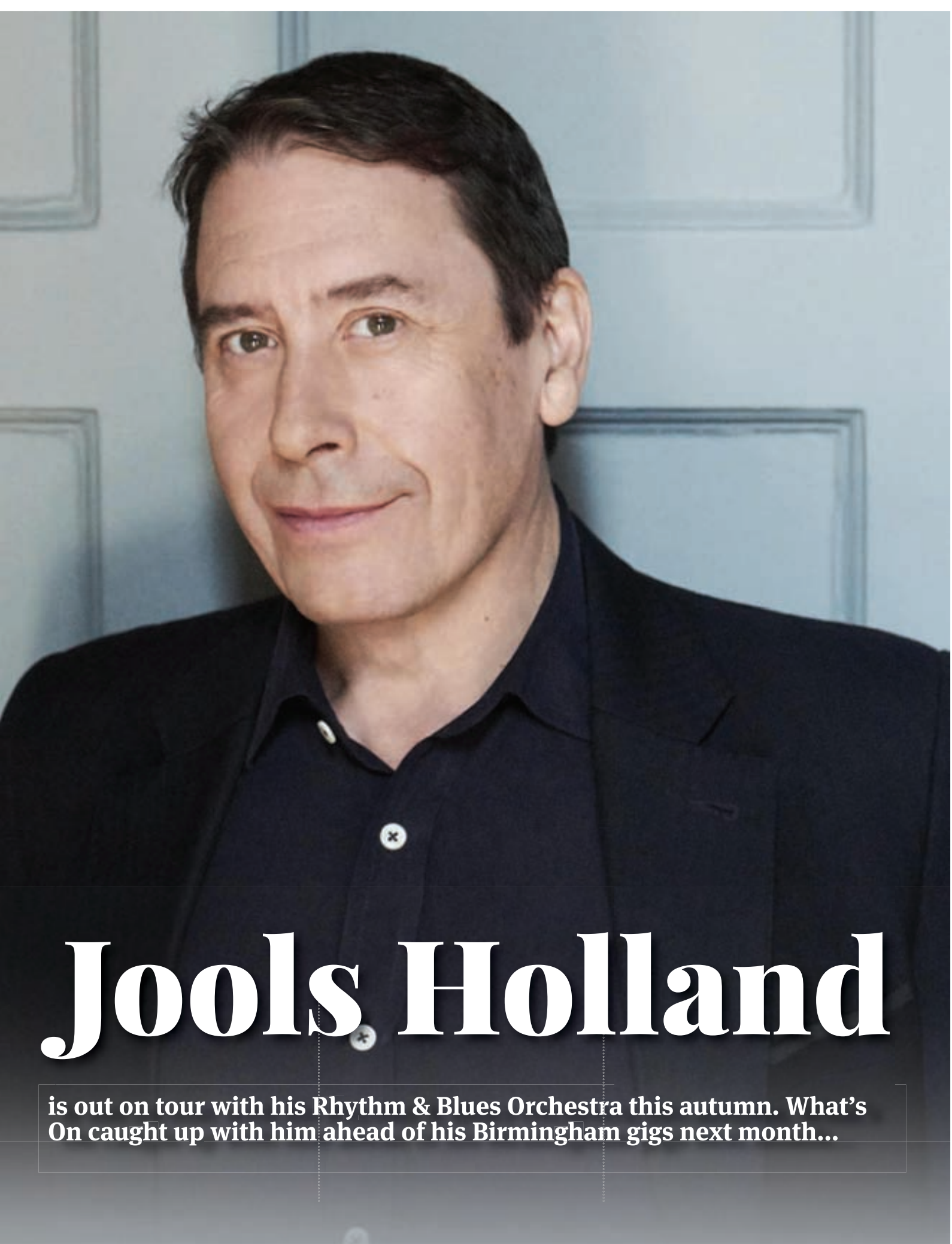
Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 8 November

Specialising in historically informed performances of music by Mozart, The Mozartists here turn their attention to the composer's Così Fan Tutte, an insightful comedy widely considered to be one of the truly great works of art.

Like two of Mozart's other compositions, The Marriage Of Figaro and Don Giovanni, the opera is a mirror into which audiences are invited to look and see themselves.

Conducted by Ian Page, the production is sung in Italian with English surtitles.





# Jools Holland

is out on tour with his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra this autumn. What's On caught up with him ahead of his Birmingham gigs next month...



**Being on the road with a band you've known for a long time must make it quite a social thing, mustn't it?**

There are a lot of us, so you're never alone. There used to be that advert for a cigarette called Strand, and the advert was, 'You're never alone with a Strand'. And it was such a disaster because everybody thought, 'Well, I don't want to be alone'. So they went out of business. But it's a bit like, 'You're never alone with a big band because wherever you are, there's always...'. When I arrive in a town, I see Bammi - because, like me, he studies the horses - going into a bookmaker's on the high street. There'll be somebody else coming out. It's like we're alien spores who've been dropped into whatever town it is, and I recognise us as I'm coming into the town. In the hotel afterwards, there'll be a couple of people having a drink. We often - at the show, because it's easy - have a big curry for all of us; that's quite jolly. One of the things that's great is that everybody in the band's got a great sense of humour - they're funny as well as being good players. So that's a good part of it. Also, in the daytime, I'm a keen tourist. I like looking at stuff, so I look at gardens, I look at old buildings or whatever. There's always something to look at, always something new to discover, so I think the world of touring isn't bad. If you have to do endless hours of flying a day, then it can wear you out a bit, but that's a small price to pay.

**For people who come to see you often, there's always a new element because of your special guests...**

This year, we're having somebody who's worked with us before, but they bring out this great element of us, which is Selecter. Specifically, it's Pauline Black, the singer, and 'Gaps' Hendrickson, who works with Pauline. They're perfect for us because they represent the British take on ska music, the 2 Tone thing. Although I wasn't part of the 2 Tone thing, I was part of British ska music. That's part of my heritage and part of the thing my orchestra have been doing for the past 25 years, so we've always been playing that music. So it's perfect for us, and the effect they have on the audience, it's like everybody

jumps up straight away, as soon as they hear them doing Train To Skaville. It's just such great music, and they do it so fantastically and with a particular British take on it, which is great. It's really electric to hear them doing it. They're the originators of that British take on ska music, like Eric Clapton and The Rolling Stones were the originators of British blues. So it's great having them there, and they like being with the orchestra because being with a whole big band magnifies it, makes it even bigger and has a fantastic jump-up effect.

**How do you go about adapting your guests' big hits for a big band?**

I wouldn't want to force things into a big-band style, so sometimes you have to play things in a different way. Most things you can take back to the piano because a lot of songs were written on the piano or the keyboard or a guitar - one instrument - so they're not written with a big arrangement. So if you strip it back to that and then build it up again, you can normally make something work. If there's something that sounds like it's not naturally going to go with a big band, you bring it down to just the piano and the big band can creep in.

**Your nan's piano was crucial to your musical upbringing, wasn't it?**

Yes, my nan's piano was really an essential thing. It was a gift to her from her mother in 1937, and I would hear them at Christmas, when I was very small, all singing songs. Everybody had their own song that they'd sing at the piano. It was also a pianola, so you would pedal the pedals and Fats Waller playing Red Sails In The Sunset would come out of it, which was great. So I got to learn those songs early on. But also it was great because my uncle, who was a teenager when I was small, would play boogie-woogie piano on it, and that really got me fired up and made me learn by ear what he was doing.

**Did you have records in the house at home?**

We couldn't afford a piano but we had a record player and a radio, and my parents liked classical music and jazz music. So I

would hear a lot of that, and I think it opened my mind to a lot of that, so I still like it very much. Then at my grandmother's house there was a record player as well, so I would get records and play them to death. The first record player I had was a 78 record player with a great big wind-up needle, which is the worst thing ever to play 78s on. Eventually my dad got me an Alba record player, and we could have a good listen to whatever records were out at the time. I think I had a Glenn Miller one, which got worn out, but the first proper LP I had was For Once In My Life by Stevie Wonder. I liked that, and I think I had Lady Madonna by The Beatles.

**You're not one for looking back, but do you ever stop to think about the life you've led in music?**

I do think sometimes that it's time to look in the rear-view mirror and take stock, because there are some fantastic moments. I've been very lucky. I can't believe it sometimes, all this stuff that's happened. Then sometimes when we play on Later or on the Hootenanny and people play with us, you get some amazing thing happen and the atmosphere is just great. If you get a great live performance and somebody's filmed it, maybe millions of people will watch that on YouTube. Then sometimes it's just about being in the dressing room doing a warm-up with somebody at the piano. I remember being in the dressing room with Amy Winehouse and her just singing something at the piano. And you're thinking, 'Wow, that's amazing'. So it doesn't really matter whether it's live on the television, on a record, in a dressing room, at home or at a gig, you're plugging into the same thing and it's an amazing thing. I'm so fortunate to have plugged into it and been very moved by it. The more you listen to stuff and the more you play, the more you can play and listen to stuff, yet the more mysterious it all becomes. That's the great thing about it - you can never figure it out.

.....

**Jools Holland And His Rhythm & Blues Orchestra return to Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on 29 & 30 November.**

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## Carols by Candlelight

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**Director:** CHRISTOPHER MONKS  
**Organist:** ADRIAN LUCAS  
**Narrator:** JULIAN GLOVER

**18th December, 7:30pm**  
 The Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick  
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## Messiah

ARMONICO CONSORT & BAROQUE ORCHESTRA  
**Director:** CHRISTOPHER MONKS

**5th December, 7:30 pm**  
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**21st December, 7:30 pm,**  
 Malvern Theatres 01684 892277



## J.S. Bach Mass in B Minor

ARMONICO CONSORT & BAROQUE ORCHESTRA  
**Director:** CHRISTOPHER MONKS  
**Soprano:** ELIN MANAHAN THOMAS

**1st February 2020 7:30pm,**  
 The Collegiate Church of  
 St Mary, Warwick  
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**8th February 2020 7:30pm,**  
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## Lady Maisery

The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon,  
Wed 20 November

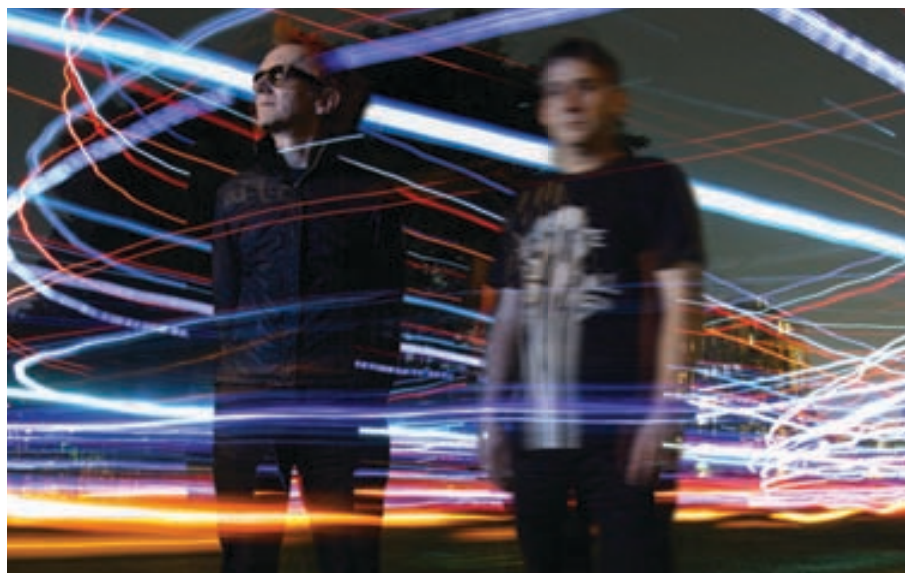
Bringing together Hannah James (Kerfuffle), Hazel Askew (The Askew Sisters and The Artisans) and Rowan Rheingans (Fidola), Lady Maisery present fresh interpretations of songs and ballads that explore vocal harmony to breathtaking effect. With their unique approach to harmony singing and their intelligent and thoughtful arrangements of both traditional repertoire and original compositions, the three-piece have spent the last five years performing sell-out shows across the UK and Europe, releasing a trio of critically acclaimed albums along the way.



## Poor Nameless Boy

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 8 November

Regina-based indie folk artist Joel Henderson - aka Poor Nameless Boy - leaves a piece of himself on stage every night he performs. Having been described as a lighter version of John Mayer, his thoughtful lyrics are extremely personal, speaking honestly about 'love, life, and our changing hearts in a busy world'. Since the release of Activity Book (2013) and the acclaimed Bravery (2016), Joel has completed several successful tours across Canada and Europe.



## Pitch Black

The Tin Music & Arts, Coventry,  
Fri 15 November

Featuring Michael Hodgson and Paddy Free, Pitch Black combine impressive cutting-edge visuals with a distinctive sound that ranges from organic ambient beginnings

and layered soundscapes to skanking keyboards, cutting acid riffs and thumping rhythmic grooves, with dub being the glue that holds it all together.

Performance locations have included the streets of Las Vegas and the Australian out-back.

## Dreadzone

The Marr's Bar, Worcester, Fri 15 November

Presenting an eclectic fusion of dub, reggae, techno, folk and rock music, Dreadzone formed in 1993, during their early years employing backing vocalists who included Denise van Outen and Alison Goldfrapp. One of the most energetic, exciting and powerful live bands to emerge from the post-rave scene, they're moving forward as a five-piece, after parting ways with their guitarist, and are now focusing more on the electronic and dub elements of their stage show.

## Gentleman's Dub Club

Kasbah, Coventry, Sat 23 November

Founded in Leeds in 2006, Gentleman's Dub Club's new album, Lost In Space, features a new dimension to their sound, which blends influences from genres such as dub, reggae, ska, bass culture and jazz.

Having built a reputation for delivering explosive high-energy live shows, the band have played at plenty of UK festivals, including Glastonbury, Bestival and Boomtown, and also wowed appreciative audiences in India, Morocco, the US and Iceland.

## Bastille

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Fri 29 November

To say indie-pop favourites Bastille had a whirlwind start to their career would be an understatement. Their debut album, Bad Blood, released in 2013, was twice number one, certified double-platinum and named the biggest-selling digital album of the year. The band then went on to be named British Breakthrough Act at the 2014 BRIT Awards. Their 2016 follow-up, Wild World, peaked at number one in the UK, with latest offering Doom Days, released earlier this year, reaching the number-four spot.

The four-piece visit Warwick Arts Centre to play the album in full.









# Jess Reid

**Singer-songwriter Jess Reid appeared on What's On's Launchpad stage at this summer's Shrewsbury Folk Festival. Here, she chats about her inspirations and the Shropshire music scene ahead of supporting Dan Owen on tour...**

## **What's your first musical memory?**

I must have been around four or five. My parents were in a band together and they were playing some gigs in France. I remember picking up a harmonica and getting up on stage with them. I was unable to play, so it was my first experience of miming!

## **So you come from a musical family, then?**

My dad has been a songwriter and performer from a young age. He's been in a number of bands. My mum is musical too and played bass and backing vocals in bands with my dad. They play gigs around Shropshire now and my dad runs an open mic in town. My sister is a singer, and we've always been in bands together. Our first band was called Jia Jinx, and we used to play in Shrewsbury a lot. I've been living in London and Birmingham and she's had a baby, so we play and write together less now. She's a great singer and songwriter, so she's always the one I go to first with song ideas!

## **Who are your inspirations?**

Growing up, I was always inspired most deeply by the musicians around me. I'd go to a lot of open-mic nights and jam sessions in pubs and met some amazing musicians. Having people around you who you can see week to week is great, as it makes everything seem more achievable. Being able to hear a new song that someone you know has put together enables you to see a rawness and vulnerability that you can rarely see from a famous artist on a big stage. I play in a percussive guitar style and I first saw a local musician play in this way. That inspired me profoundly. In terms of inspirations now, I love a Swedish artist called Susanne Sundfør - she has the best voice. I would love to be able to sing in any way similar to the way she does. Ben Howard, Lucy Rose, The Staves and Damien Rice are my favourite artists currently.

## **You're predominantly a solo performer, but who would be your ideal collaborator?**

I've been playing with a cellist recently, which has been amazing! Cello is my favourite instrument, so I'd always like to have cello alongside me. I love vocal harmonies, so some backing singers would be great. I've been exploring different instruments whilst

recording my new EP. The EP features a full drum kit and bass guitar, so it's given it a more radio-friendly sound - live drums and bass would be nice too. It's the cello and backing vocals that touch my heart the most though.

## **What would be your dream performance?**

I usually go to Green Man Festival every year. It's a perfect size of festival and the main stage is at the bottom of a hill, so everyone enjoys the music while lying on the grass. I would love an afternoon slot in the sunshine with a full band and some beers!

## **What's your favourite performance to date and why?**

I played a Sofar Sounds show in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in 2017. It was on a rooftop overlooking all the big sights, like the Christ the Redeemer statue and Copacabana beach. Everyone was ridiculously friendly and kind. That was a great experience. I always love playing in big spaces like cathedrals or churches, as the acoustics are the best. Last year around Christmas time I played at Hull Minster, which is a large church in Hull. It's great to feel the sounds you're creating naturally reverberating around such a large space.

## **Where do you get the inspiration for your songs?**

I find writing quite cathartic. I think the songs come from the subconscious. I'll often write a song without really realising what I'm singing. A couple of days, weeks or months later, I'll think about the lyrics I've written and they often reveal an insight into my thoughts and feelings at the time of writing. It helps me understand my thoughts and emotions, so it's quite therapeutic in some ways - free therapy! In terms of the music, seeing other people play live inspires me the most. I love going to small, intimate shows.

## **You played on our Launchpad stage at Shrewsbury Folk Festival in the summer. How was the experience?**

I loved it! I've been to Shrewsbury Folk Festival loads of times, and this was the most enjoyable experience. I had my sister singing with me, which was great, and it was good to play in front of family and friends and to meet

some new audiences. I really liked being able to play three sets over the course of the weekend, as it enabled more people to come and watch. It's always a great festival and I loved being able to play. The other artists playing on the stage were brilliant, so it was nice to meet them too - lots of talent!

## **You're supporting Dan Owen at St Mary's Church in Shrewsbury. How did that come about and what can audiences expect from your performance?**

I've known Dan for over 10 years. We both used to play at the open-mic nights at The Bridges in Ratlinghope when we were about 15. I supported him in Birmingham last year at his show there. He's doing an acoustic tour at the end of November, so I'm joining him for some of his dates as his support act. We're heading up north to York first, then ending in Shrewsbury. He's an amazing performer and songwriter, so it'll be good to spend more time with him again.

## **What are your views on the live-music scene in Shropshire and the wider West Midlands? Is it in a healthy state?**

As I said, I've met some of the most amazing musicians in Shropshire - most of them undiscovered. There are some brilliant venues, and it's nice because it's not as competitive as places like London, so you can meet people who'll help and support you. Obviously the folk festival is big and ensures Shrewsbury is on the folk-world map.

My EP, which I recorded with help from the Alan Surtees Trust, is currently being mastered, so it will be released in the next couple of months. I'm looking forward to releasing it and finding out what people think, as it's a different sound.

## **What else have you got lined up in the next 12 months?**

I'm off to New York for some shows, and then it's the Dan Owen tour. Then I'll be busy with single launches and an EP launch in 2020. Lots to do!

.....  
**Jess Reid supports Dan Owen at Shrewsbury's St Mary's Church from Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 November.**

# HIGHLIGHTS

## 2019

### MUSIC

FROM THE SOURCE

**Nitin Sawhney**

Fri 8 Nov



### MUSIC

FROM THE SOURCE

**Judi Jackson +  
Debris Stevenson**

Sat 9 Nov



### THEATRE

NOUVEAU RICHE AND OMNIBUS THEATRE

**Queens of Sheba**

Thu 14 - Sat 16 Nov



### COMEDY

**Shazia Mirza**

Sun 17 Nov



### MUSIC

**Calexico and Iron &  
Wine + Lisa O'Neill**

Thu 21 Nov



### DANCE

RICHARD ALSTON  
DANCE COMPANY

**The Final  
Edition**

Thu 21 & Fri 22 Nov



### FAMILY

**The Nutcracker & I**

Sat 23 & Sun 24 Nov



### DANCE

TOM DALE COMPANY

**Step  
Sonic**

Tue 26 &  
Wed 27 Nov



### FAMILY

RAYMOND BRIGGS

**Father Christmas**

Wed 27 Nov - Sun 29 Dec



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## Acosta Danza

Birmingham Hippodrome,  
Mon 11 & Tues 12 November

Just two months before succeeding David Bintley as artistic director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, Carlos Acosta visits BRB's Birmingham Hippodrome home with his critically acclaimed Cuban company.

Included in their programme is *Rooster*, a work choreographed to music from the Rolling Stones and in which Acosta himself makes an appearance.

New works *Paysage*, *Soudain, la nuit* and *Satori* are also included. The bill is completed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's masterpiece, *Faun*, a work set to Debussy's original score and featuring additional music from Nitin Sawhney.



## Sonia Sabri Company: Same Same...But Different

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,  
Fri 15 November

"We've always tried to create something which is groundbreaking and pioneering," says Sonia Sabri. "I feel proud to say that we present work which is very new and very different. We've been at the forefront of creating new ideas, and that's exactly what we intend to continue doing."

Sabri's belief in the need to push the boundaries of dance is reflected in this new family show, mixing Kathak and contemporary dance, live music and physical storytelling. The piece has been produced in collaboration with a number of primary schools in Birmingham and London.

## Anjali Dance Company: Genius

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 7 November;  
Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 19 &  
Wed 20 November

Providing a platform for the creative abilities and artistic potential of people with learning disabilities lies at the heart of Anjali Dance Company's mission statement. Their Coventry show sees them presenting two dramatic explorations of genius: Gary Clarke's *Beethoven* takes 'a touching and darkly humorous look' at the personal life and musical works of Ludwig van Beethoven; Lea Anderson's *Bloodsucker*, meanwhile, is a 'stylised and gently humorous exploration' of the legend of the vampire Nosferatu and his depiction in film.



## Luca Silvestrini's Protein: The Little Prince

DanceXchange, Patrick Studio,  
Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 29 & Sat 30 November

Award-winning dance company Protein brings its trademark physical and verbal wit to Birmingham this month when it presents pioneering aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's classic 1943 story. Leaving behind his tiny asteroid, *The Little Prince* journeys through the universe and finds himself suddenly needing to navigate the baffling world of grown-ups.

"The idea of Protein Dance is to get away from the stereotype of dance being purist and high-brow, and to connect better with audiences," says the company's Artistic Director, Luca Silvestrini. "We combine dance with words, singing, acting and audience participation. I think all this helps better connect with the subject matter - it's more fluid."





# HEALING THE NATION

## Comedian Andy Parsons is back out on tour...

Andy Parsons is on a mission with his new stand-up tour. In one simple nutshell, he's looking to heal this divided nation. The man who for years was a fixture on *Mock The Week*, worked on *Spitting Image*, brought us sell-out tours and unit-shifting DVDs such as *Britain's Got Idiots* and *Gruntled*, and has been in a very successful double act with playwright Henry Naylor, is calling time on the negativity that reverberates around our green and pleasant land.

"On my Twitter feed currently it says, 'Initially upbeat. Often disappointed'," says Andy. "The general thrust of everything I've ever done has an optimistic note to it, and there's always something in the glass rather than there being something missing from it. Life can get extremely frustrating and your optimism can fade, but I retain the faith and I'm looking forward to getting out there and meeting people in some nice theatres."

Happy to be known as a political comedian, Andy has never shirked from putting the opinions he expresses on stage into full practice. He's hosted *People's Votes* rallies, including one in Parliament Square to over 100,000 people, and fronted the Independent Age's most recent *Campaign Against Loneliness*. Plus he created the *Slacktivist Action Group* podcast, in which he chatted to the likes of comics Josh Widdicombe and Angela Barnes, politicians David Lammy and Peter Hain, and commentators Suzanne Moore and Miranda Sawyer.

"I think we're a nation desperate to be healed, in the sense that people would rather come together than diverge. In the current media analysis, everyone is in the centre of their own social-media bubble, and everything is kicking off left, right and centre. So the idea for the tour was that rather than being incredibly one-sided and partisan and throwing

stuff at the opposition, it's nice to see both sides of the argument. I'll be taking on viewpoints that wouldn't normally find a natural home in one of my stand-up sets and trying to genuinely see the other side of that argument."

As he prepares to take his show - which he's called *Healing The Nation* - out on tour, Andy is clear that while the country seems utterly divided, with individuals permanently lodged on their own side of the debate, he believes that there are always more issues that unite us than separate us: "The idea in the show is that everything is proving divisive at the moment, and that no one is talking to each other or seeing issues from both sides. Essentially, people have the same concerns whether it's health or education or jobs, and I want to narrow down the focus of what people actually want and bring them together. The blurb of the show says that, if nothing else, we can be proud of some form of tolerance and freedom of speech throughout our history. It'll be interesting to see where those concepts are going in the next few years."

It was former Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson who was credited with first saying that a week is a long time in politics. In the febrile and often toxic terrain of modern British politics and society, events seem to alter dramatically on an almost hourly basis. While this might be ideal for political correspondents, it can prove something of a challenge for topical comedians who are trying to take a show across the country over the course of several months.

Andy, however, is confident about accepting the challenge of updating his material to suit the prevailing circumstances: "When your show is topical, then inevitably it will be very different when the tour finishes from when it started. This is mainly because of current

events, but also it's good to keep it fresh anyway, not just for the audience but for myself. If you're performing over 100 shows and just doing the same set every single night, it becomes a job rather than a pleasure."

When you watch Andy in full flow, it's clear that you're witnessing a performer who is not only having a great time, but who's enjoying the pleasure he's passing on to others. Partly, this might come down to a realisation that it's a good time to be in the topical-comedy game.

"It goes in cycles, and for a while political comedy was dead. If you suggested to a TV company that you wanted to have some sort of a political comedy vehicle, they'd say, 'Why would you want to do that? No one is interested'. But now, there's a whole slew of them. The reasons for that are various, but the bottom line is that people are more interested in politics now simply because it's affecting more of their lives. And now that more people are talking about it, there are comics you wouldn't associate with politics who will still address it in some way because every aspect of life is somehow influenced by it. That was less true 10 years ago."

Whatever the future holds in terms of politics in Britain, Europe, the US and across the wider global landscape, it's comforting - healing, almost - to know that comedians such as Andy Parsons will be around to poke fun at those who claim to lead or speak for us.

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**Andy Parsons: *Healing The Nation* visits Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Thursday 31 October, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, on Friday 8 November, William Aston Hall, Wrexham, on Saturday 9 November and Birmingham Repertory Theatre on Saturday 23 November.**



## Jack Whitehall

Arena Birmingham, Fri 15 - Sun 17 November

A fella who's had no trouble whatsoever getting his face on the telly, Jack Whitehall's highly animated style of delivery is developing all the time, as is his repertoire of material. Subject matter has included his father's shameless attempts to get quoted

in his show, his comical schooldays and the experience of being caught snorting coke by the News Of The World. Jokes include: "I'm sure wherever my dad is now, he'll be looking down on us. He's not dead, just very condescending."

## Carl Hutchinson

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Sat 30 November

Observational comedian Carl Hutchinson makes a welcome return with a show that covers all manner of common-or-garden topics, from the challenges of buying a house to the experience of having kids. Prior to becoming a full-time standup, Carl spent some time as a maths teacher. "There are certainly comparisons between the two professions," says the popular Geordie comedian, "but the definite advantage with comedy is that if you have a bad gig, you can rest assured that you don't have to see the same audience the next day at 10am!"



## Judi Love Presents Love2Laugh Birmingham

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 30 November

Up-and-coming London comedian Judi Love here headlines more than two hours of entertainment from 'some of the funniest comedians around'. A presenter on BBC Radio London, Judi's appearances on television shows including 8 Out Of 10 Cats and This Morning have brought her to the wider public attention. Boasting a natural charisma, sharp wit and animated communication style, her 'tell it like it is' YouTube videos have won her a dedicated online following.

## Geoff Norcott

The Core, Solihull, Sat 16 November

Geoff Norcott is one of the sharpest tools in the comedy shed, presenting shows which feature observational humour, satire, and even the odd impression or two. Being a former teacher, plenty of Geoff's gags relate to school experiences and the education system. He's also made something of a name for himself in the field of sports-related humour, a niche that's yielded him plenty of work both on television and radio... Geoff's Solihull appearance sees him performing his latest touring show, Taking Liberties.



## Jason Byrne

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 9 November

Watching Jason Byrne on stage has been likened by one reviewer to watching footballer Lionel Messi play for Barcelona: it's not a matter of 'if' the magic will come, but 'when' and 'how often'. Byrne comes to the Midlands with brand new offering Wrecked But Ready, a show which he promises will hotwire his audience's funnybones big time. "Everyone's welcome," says Jason, "unless you're under 14, in which case come back when you're older."





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## Mark Watson

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 24 November; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Thurs 30 January

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

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

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## Stephen K Amos

Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 3 November

Stephen K Amos' popularity both here and abroad are suitable reward for a comedian who sometimes wondered whether his big break would ever come. "I used to do a joke where I said I'd have to wait for Lenny Henry to die before I could get on television," he says, referring to his belief that opportunities for black comedians are few and far between. Whatever the truth, there's little question that Stephen's very much basking in the comedy limelight these days. His success is no surprise, mind, given the quality of his material and his effortless ability to strike all the right chords with his ever-appreciative audience.



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## Count Arthur Strong

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 21 November; William Aston Hall, Wrexham, Fri 22 November; Malvern Theatres, Sat 23 November; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Fri 29 November

Doncaster-born doyen of light entertainment Count Arthur Strong makes a welcome return to the region with a brand new show. "With each live show I've done, I've found out a little bit more about Arthur," explains Steve Delaney in talking about the character he

created. "If I watch footage from the early days, he looks like the bones of something, but he's definitely continued to develop, and that's very important. Simply reproducing what I've done before would neither be as much fun nor as interesting."

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## Lenny Henry

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 17 November; Dudley Town Hall, Fri 22 November; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 27 November; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 29 November

Despite sometimes having risked undermining his own popularity by trying too hard to prove that he's a multi-talented artist, Lenny Henry has never strayed too far from his comedy roots. Early-career success on Midlands kids' show *Tiswas*, where he did wonders for the popularity of condensed milk sandwiches, led on to national stardom, while his key role in setting up Comic Relief proved that his heart was every bit as big as his joke-bag. His UK tour comes in support of his recently published memoir, *Who Am I, Again?*.



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## Shazia Mirza

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 15 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 17 November

Shazia Mirza is one of the UK's most creative female comedians - and she's a Brummie too! Muslim Shazia's not averse to treading a delicate line when it comes to her material. Her post-9/11 joke, "My name's Shazia Mirza - at least, that's what it says on my pilot's licence", marked her out as a comedian happy to balance on the very precipice of acceptable humour. Other examples of her style and content include: "My parents really want me to get married. But Muslim men don't want to marry me because... I speak", and "My dad said if I went out with a black man, he'd burn me. Which would be good, because then I'd be black too".





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# DRESS TO IMPRESS!

**David Walliams talks about having his children's book, *The Boy In The Dress*, transformed into a spectacular stage production by the Royal Shakespeare Company...**

Comedian David Walliams turned his hand to writing children's books over a decade ago, making his debut with *The Boy In The Dress*. The heart-warming tale of friendship and the acceptance of others is this Christmas being presented as a musical by the Royal Shakespeare Company. The RSC's show marks the first time the story has been presented on the stage.

"For me, it's just magical to see a story and characters that I've created brought to life through singing and dancing," says David. "The idea of it being a musical was something I'd never even considered, and it truly transforms the story. Music adds a whole new dimension that I can't really do. I'm not a singer and I can't play a musical instrument, so creating a musical out of *The Boy In The Dress*

had never even crossed my mind." So if this new production wasn't David's idea, whose was it? "I was first approached by Mark Ravenhill, who's the writer-in-residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company. I thought it was brilliant to be approached by a playwright of such calibre. Plus, the RSC has had a lot of success with similar things, like *Matilda*."



At that point, *The Boy In The Dress* wasn't really being talked about as a musical. Suddenly, Mark and the artistic director at the RSC, Gregory Doran, told me about their plan to approach Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers to turn it into a musical! At first I was sceptical and thought it was very unlikely they'd get on board, as they must've been busy with other projects. I wasn't quite cracking out the champagne, but it turns out that they said yes! I came to a workshop and they'd written 18 amazing songs."

It's safe to say that David is thrilled with what the RSC, Ravenhill, Chambers and Williams have created: "Guy and Robbie have captured the story very well, and seeing as they've written so many pop hits, they know how to make a song that people will like. The songs really feel very memorable, which I think is really important for a musical. It's always good when the audience comes out still humming along. Guy and Robbie are so used to writing songs that grab you immediately, so that's exactly what they've done here. Singing adds such an emotional dimension, so the story is richer now than it's ever been. The lyrics don't follow the lines I've written in the book; there are these new, fresh ideas in the musical that even those who've read the book won't have experienced before. It's a very exciting piece that feels new in many ways!"

Just like the original book, *The Boy In The Dress* musical is aimed not only at children but also their families.

"It's ultimately a feelgood family show. It's funny and moving, with kids at the centre of the story. Dennis wants to dress as a girl, and then there's a slightly older girl called Lisa, who's the popular, fashionable kid and who encourages him to dress how he wants and to read *Vogue*. I think a good family show has appeal across the board - so the grown-ups have got something to enjoy too. I get the feeling that parents often bring their kids to things that they themselves don't find that interesting, but then adults still rushed to get tickets for the new *Toy Story* film. I think it's about creating that balance. Even though it's a story with children at its centre and is super-fun for a young audience, it's very grown up in many other ways. I think everyone will feel really uplifted at the end of it!"

So why was this a story that David wanted to tell in the first place?

"It's a story about what it means to be differ-

ent. I thought a boy going to school dressed as a girl would speak to the wider implications of being different, which is something most people probably feel at some point in their lives. When writing stories, you just follow your instincts, so the story wasn't contrived in a way that was trying to say anything in particular at the time. I guess it was a relatively risky subject for a children's book, but I decided to tell it anyway."

David first got the idea for the book from Little Britain fan mail: "A 12-year-old boy sent me a picture of him going to school as Emily Howard, one of the Little Britain characters. It was a really great outfit, with the wig and parasol. I thought he was very cool for doing that and also quite brave because kids sometimes give each other a bit of stick for that kind of stuff. Even though it was a very different set of circumstances - someone doing it for fancy dress is very different to someone doing it purely because they like it - it did make me wonder if there was maybe a story there to be told."

It was David's work in comedy that led him to first discover his passion for storytelling: "I really only started to write because I wanted to perform. I really wanted to be a comedian, and to achieve that ambition I had to create something that was funny. I started writing comedy sketches. Then I started to feel like there was more to write. Comedy sketches are only two or three minutes long, but I felt like there were much longer stories in me that I wanted to tell. It's hard to get into people's emotional life with a short comedy sketch because it's mainly about telling the joke. So I had that yearning to do something different. I knew that I could write a few jokes, some dialogue and create some characters, but I didn't know whether I could do the most important part - sustain a story. The story is always the hardest bit to get right, and they're mostly instinctive; they're something you grasp from your own reading rather than by trying to work to some kind of formula."

David is incredibly passionate about encouraging children to read and thinks the future is bright, despite there still being plenty of work needing to be done: "There's great pleasure in books, and it's a great shame if young people don't get to experience that. I don't think it's a good idea to be snobby about books, especially when it comes to kids because they should read what they want for pleasure or they'll never get into it. Some really reluctant

readers want something palatable - they want to read *Wimpy Kid*, not *Dickens*. I go into schools and talk to kids to find out what they want. I always ask them who hates reading, and there are always some who put up their hands. I feel like I want to inspire them and reach out to them. That's why I created *The World's Worst Children*. It's a little series of short stories that's just meant to be funny and short - kind of like the equivalent of reading *The Beano*. A kid who won't read a book might actually like something that's full of silly jokes and funny illustrations in a short, surreal piece of writing.

"I think that because so many kids have TV, tablets and computer games, a lot of people think books are a dying art for kids, but they're absolutely not. We have a lot to thank JK Rowling for because she made kids queue outside a bookshop from midnight to get their hands on a copy of the latest *Harry Potter*. I'd never, ever heard of that happening before, and I don't think books have ever been anticipated in the way that hers were. The *Harry Potter* books got very long and complicated, so for a writer to engage kids in such a long story, and to be met with such incredible enthusiasm each time a new release was due, is inspired. I don't think things are in a bad place in terms of kids engaging with books. There are obviously still some people who can't access books. I did a book for World Book Day, and primary school kids each got their £1 book token to get it. For many children, that's the first one they'll ever own, so there's still a lot more that needs to be done. I think children's books are taken a lot more seriously now, which is great for everyone."

Although David is always busy writing something new, *The Boy In The Dress* remains very much on his mind: "I don't think I've ever been prouder of anything. Just going into rehearsals and seeing what they're doing in this production is amazing. If my whole career was leading up to this moment and then that was it, I think I'd remain happy for a long time. If you wanted to judge me and my achievements on just one thing, then I'd say come and see this musical because it's really special."

.....

**The Boy In The Dress shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Friday 8 November to Sunday 8 March.**







# Caught in a trap

**Agatha Christie's record-breaking thriller, *The Mousetrap*, is out on tour and visiting Birmingham. Cast member and star of stage and screen Susan Penhaligon explains why she thinks the show continues to be so popular...**

Not surprisingly, having celebrated its 60th birthday - a theatrical Diamond Jubilee - seven years ago, *The Mousetrap* is a record-breaking play. Agatha Christie's much-loved thriller has entertained audiences across the globe, without ever shutting, for as long as HRH Queen Elizabeth II has reigned. The play is out on tour this autumn and heading for Birmingham this very month.

"I never thought I'd be in *The Mousetrap*," says Susan Penhaligon, who takes on the role of Mrs Boyle in the production. "I've been in two of Agatha Christie's other plays - *And Then There Were None* and a little-known one called *Verdict* - but I'd never seen *The Mousetrap* or read it. When the part came up, I read the play and thought, 'Wow'. It's funny, tense, has great characters, a brilliant plot, and what really struck me was that it was based on a real event - chilling, really. Agatha Christie is so clever - there's always truthful emotion in her plays. She's the second most read English writer after Shakespeare, so she must have done something right!"

*The Mousetrap* is the longest-running play in the world - and Susan has her own theory about why audiences keep returning to see it: "I'm definitely an Agatha Christie fan. I've read most of her books and I've read her biography. I think she's fascinating. *The Mousetrap* is a great story. It's a guessing game of whodunnit - and a brilliant one at that. It's a perfect plot; it's vintage, with very recognisable period characters, and it's spooky. It's quality entertainment. I think it's interesting to see an original play of hers on the stage rather than on TV, particularly as it was written for the theatre. It's a different animal. But I think nowadays, because of the many TV Agathas, audiences are familiar with the world they're entering. The pact between actors and audience is made the moment the curtain goes up. I'm sure they think, 'Ah, we

know where we are with this one' and they relax. And the great thing is, no one knows who the murderer is. Unless they've been before, of course!"

Susan even admires her character in *The Mousetrap*: "I like Mrs Boyle because she says it as it is - she doesn't hold back. She's the type of woman who's used to being in control of situations, probably to make herself feel safe. I don't think she feels safe in *The Mousetrap*! She's funny, too."

Being well known TV series such as *Bouquet Of Barbed Wire*, *A Fine Romance* and *Emmerdale*, Susan is in the perfect position to compare the stage and screen strands of her career: "I've done a lot of theatre: touring, West End and fringe. I started in rep in Worthing as an acting assistant stage manager when I was 21. There isn't a better way to understand and learn about the theatre. Also, I was trained for the theatre. In the late '60s at drama school, we all hoped we would go to the RSC or the National Theatre - the Old Vic in those days. That was our aspiration - not TV, certainly not commercials, and films seemed out of our grasp unless we went to Hollywood. But for some reason, all through the '70s and '80s I landed lots of TV and film roles. I just went with the flow. But I always tried to do a play once a year if I could. You have to keep practising to get good at anything."

While perhaps being better known for her television roles, Susan has toured extensively in numerous stage productions, including *Cabaret*, *Rehearsal For Murder* and, most recently, *Handbagged*.

"I don't mind touring, but I also like being at home. I'm quite pragmatic about work. It's a job; it's how I earn my living. Like many actors, I'm sometimes out of work. I don't think I'm special because I've been on TV or

in a film. I find the celebrity culture these days slightly alarming. Fame for fame's sake. Actually, I think being an actor or an entertainer is an important job in society, and there's nothing like live theatre."

.....  
**The *Mousetrap* shows at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, from Monday 11 to Saturday 16 November.**





## Fame

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 19 - Sat 23 November

Any Dream Will Do star Keith Jack and Hollyoaks and Dancing On Ice favourite Jorgie Porter head up the cast in this 30th-anniversary production of the ever-popular musical.

The original mega-hit film and its spin-off TV series are now both so old that their once-nimble dancers might soon be reaching for zimmer

frames. By contrast, Fame The Musical continues to get up a sweat on a regular basis. And as high-octane, choreographed-to-the-rafters stage musicals go, it hits the Midlands this month with a reputation second to none.

Set in New York's legendary High School For The Performing Arts, the show focuses on the highs and lows of the students who're desperately seeking success, and offers a dazzling evening of foot-tapping music and breathtaking dance into the bargain.

## The Mousetrap

The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,  
Mon 11 - Sat 16 November

Not only has everybody *heard* of Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap, everybody's *seen* the show as well - haven't they? Okay, maybe not, but as the production is fast approaching its 70th consecutive year in the West End, it's fair to say its capacity to put bums on seats is absolutely beyond question. Not surprisingly it's the world's longest-running show, and has been performed well in excess of a staggering 25,000 times. Its touring version is here making a welcome return to the Midlands.



## Algorithms

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,  
Sun 10 November



"Sadie Clark's brilliant solo play hit us with big belly laughs and had us reaching for the tissues," is how Algorithms is assessed by SHOUT Festival, of which the show's Old Joint Stock stop-off forms a part. A bisexual Bridget Jones for the online generation, this tragicomic one-woman presentation is ideal for anyone who's wondered why they feel so lonely at a point in time when connecting with others is meant to be easier than ever.

## Shylock

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,  
Tues 12 November

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







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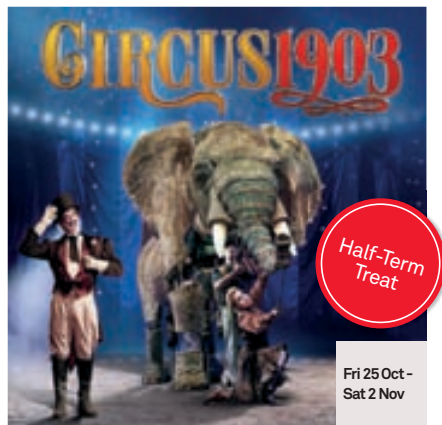


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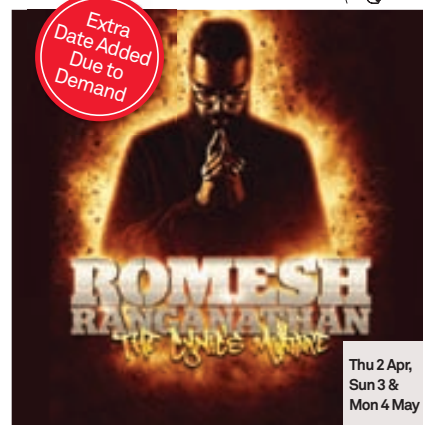
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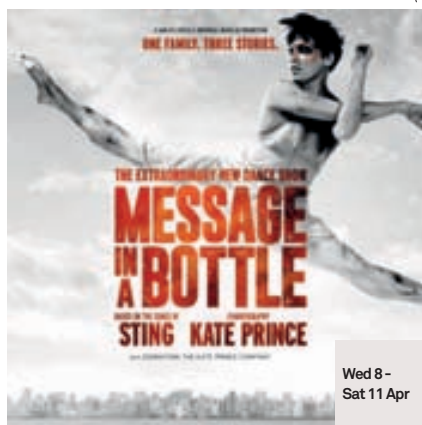
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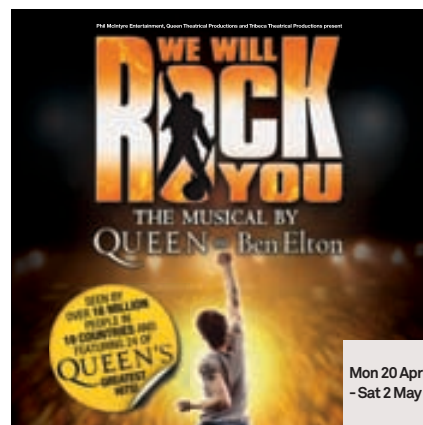
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Mon 20 Apr -  
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**It's Curtains for  
Jason Manford!**



## Stand-up comedian, actor and singer Jason Manford talks about starring in Curtains - legendary songwriting duo Kander & Ebb's lesser-known musical...

When the star of a musical that's tipped to be a Broadway hit is murdered on the show's opening night, detective and musical-theatre fan Frank Cioffi is called in to investigate...

Tony Award-winning mystery-comedy musical Curtains is a John Kander & Fred Ebb show. But unlike the legendary songwriting duo's better-known offerings, Cabaret and Chicago, it has never toured the UK. Until now, that is...

Taking on the lead role of Frank is Jason Manford.

"Curtains is an unashamedly showy Broadway-style musical," says Jason. "It's a comedy whodunnit. Without trying to put it down, it's sort of like Cluedo as a musical. It's a brilliant story, but it's also got these fantastically funny characters from the musical's book and Kander & Ebb behind the music and lyrics. Curtains has never been to the UK before, so I suppose in that way it's like finding an album you didn't know your favourite artist had recorded. Kander & Ebb really are legends in this industry. Every single song is a winner!"

Jason is well aware that performing in a show written by such a highly respected pair brings with it extra pressure: "There's always pressure on performers, regardless. I'm very aware that people have paid good money and given up their valuable time to see something I'm in. We put months and months of time and effort into making sure a show is worth seeing; worth buying tickets for, worth getting a babysitter and maybe even a taxi and a hotel room, too. I would hate for anyone to be disappointed. Sure, there's an added pressure with it being Kander & Ebb, but there have been lots of other instances where I've worked with high-profile people - like Mel Brooks, for instance - or in high-profile shows, such as Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. I try to make sure that the shows I'm in are ones that I would go and see myself. Curtains is definitely that. In fact, it's something that I'd probably go and see a couple of times, especially because of the whodunnit aspect."

Speaking of whodunnits, why does Jason

think the genre is so popular?

"I don't think our love of crime and mystery stories has ever gone away, especially in Britain. We've had the likes of Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle. Then we've had the American imports of Murder She Wrote and Columbo. Now you can't put on the TV without seeing a crime drama. We just love trying to work it out! We feel clever and a little smug when we get it right - and we're really good at creating them, too.

"What's great about Curtains is that it really plays to the cast's strengths. We've taken the Tony Award-winning Broadway show and added British sensibilities to it. Obviously it's still set in 1959 Boston, but it's not going to be something that's from a completely different world as far as the audience is concerned."

Alongside its whodunnit element, Curtains' other great attraction is its humour...

"Frank is a very funny character. I guess the main thing is that he's actually funny without realising it. He doesn't really do any one-liners or gags, but he's funny because he's a bit naive. He definitely says a lot of funny things without wanting to. He's a lot of fun. But it's also a challenge for me as a comedian to play his funny lines down, rather than being like, 'Tah-dah, there's my big joke'.

"There are so many other funny characters and actors in Curtains, too. I just think people will have such a fun time coming to see it. Every day when you pick up the paper or scroll through Twitter, there's misery and disaster to read about, so it's nice to have a show coming to your town that allows you just to switch off and forget about the world."

So when did Jason first realise he had a knack for comedy and performance?

"My family on my mum's side were performers, so I was brought up around people singing and entertaining others. I used to get up on stage and do bits and bobs too. At school I was involved in all the plays, either off or on stage, so that's what I ended up being interested in. English and Drama were

my favourite subjects at school - I struggled to find anything else that I felt the same way about, really. I think part of that was down to the teachers. Having teachers who inspire you is the most valuable thing you can have."

There were also a number of high-profile comedians who had a huge influence on Jason: "I liked a lot of the comedians that my dad liked: Billy Connolly, Jo Brand, Dave Allen. Then, seeing someone like Peter Kay live made me sit up and realise that stand-up was amazing. He's an absolute genius. I think because I then got to know him a little bit, I got to see how hard he'd worked and how much effort he put into everything he did. Being a stand-up comedian works very much the same way as many other aspects of life - you get out of it what you put into it. Peter Kay is an incredibly hard worker, and I definitely learnt a lot from him."

Given that Jason can sing and act as well as be funny, it's not surprising that he's had a varied career: "I really love the mix. It means I never get bored of anything I do. I'm excited about going on tour with Curtains because we're bringing what is essentially a West End-quality show to people's towns and local theatres, which I think is so, so important. If I'd not seen theatre from an early age, I wouldn't be where I am today. So I hope this show inspires people, and that the tour is accessible for all.

"Beyond Curtains, I guess my main aim is to write something that other people will perform. I've done stand-up, meaning I've written shows and performed them myself, and I've been in musical-theatre productions and on TV, performing other people's words, so the next place to go will be to have other people performing my words."

.....

**Curtains shows at The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, from Tuesday 5 - Saturday 9 November; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 3 - Saturday 7 December; and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 31 March - Saturday 4 April.**



## My Beautiful Laundrette

The REP, Birmingham,  
Tues 5 - Sat 9 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."

## Loop

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,  
Fri 29 November

Ali might be alone but that doesn't mean she's lonely; not as long as she fills her time with roleplays and soundscapes summoned from her own memories and voice...

The cycle of loneliness is explored and challenged in this second production from Theatre In Black, a new process-focused ensemble dedicated to the task of providing a platform for new writing and fresh creative talents.

## Trojan Horse

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,  
Tues 19 - Thurs 21 November

This critically acclaimed docu-drama 'uncovers the truth' behind the controversial 2014 UK government inquiry into alleged extremism in Birmingham schools. Drawing on more than 200 hours of interviews conducted with teachers, students, parents and governors, *Trojan Horse* is written by Helen Monks and Matt Woodhead. "When we first started researching the subject," says Helen, "we thought we were going to be writing about an event that had happened in the past. But it soon became clear that the trauma *Trojan Horse* caused has not left the city. So much is still left unresolved for the people it most affected."



## An Inspector Calls

Malvern Theatres, 5 - 9 November; The REP,  
Birmingham, Tues 12 - Sat 16 November



Anybody who's been fortunate enough to catch a production of JB Priestley's classic work will have no trouble understanding why it's been such a worldwide hit.

When Inspector Goole calls unexpectedly on the prosperous Birling family, his startling revelations not only shatter the foundations of their lives but also challenge them to examine their consciences...

## Gym & Tonic

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,  
Tues 5 - Sat 9 November

John Godber's talent for taking pertinent themes and presenting them in an accessible down-to-earth manner has seen him become one of the UK's most successful playwrights. He's at it again in *Gym & Tonic*, a 'laugh out loud' comedy focusing on the highly topical subject of how to find a moment of calm in these challenging times. The action takes

place at a health farm, where Don and Shirley's efforts to fix their failing marriage leave even the therapists' sanity well and truly on the rocks...

## Strangers On A Train Set

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,  
Thurs 14 & Fri 15 November

The well-established Lip Service - aka Maggie Fox and Sue Ryding - return to Shrewsbury to present their latest comic offering.

Maggie and Sue have been working together for more than three decades, producing shows such as *Withering Looks* - 'an authentic insight into the lives and works of those three Bronte sisters' - and *Inspector Norse* - 'a self-assembly Swedish crime thriller'. Their latest show sees them 'going off the rails' when a passenger is found dead as a train emerges from a tunnel...

Audience members who are also crime aficionados or narrow gauge railway enthusiasts should find plenty to stimulate their interest...





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# IT'S A DOG'S LIFE!





## One of children's literature's most popular canine characters takes to the stage this month. What's On caught up with the writer & illustrator of the Kipper series, Mick Inkpen, to find out about a new theatrical production that's bringing together two of his stories...

Slot Machine Theatre's Christmas production, Kipper's Snowy Day - showing at MAC Birmingham from late this month till the end of the year - is based on not one but two of Mick Inkpen's award-winning books about Kipper the dog. The show follows the escapades of Kipper and his friends, whose Arctic adventures take a turn for the worse when their pal, Arnold, goes missing in a storm...

"The production is very faithful to the spirit of the books and the character of Kipper," says writer & illustrator Mick, "but I urged Slot Machine not to be too worried about being absolutely faithful to the storyline. So we agreed that they'd make an amalgam of the two main books: Kipper's Snowy Day and Kipper's Christmas Eve. They've also introduced their own things, like the storm, which doesn't appear in either book. The fact that they had that freedom meant that they could really play with what they were doing, rather than slavishly putting one of my books on stage.

"It's a very multifaceted show. There are graphics, songs, puppets and a wonderful plot - it's visually interesting and completely original. Whether you've read the Kipper books or not, you'll be delighted by the surprises along the way. This little production really deserves lots of exposure because it is truly wonderful."

Kipper the dog first appeared 30 years ago in Mick's book, *The Blue Balloon*.

"That was the book which really put me on the map and made me think of myself as a proper, successful children's author. In it, Kipper wasn't quite the Kipper that we see in the later stories and in this show because he was on all-fours and just a boy's companion. *The Blue Balloon* was a very singular kind of book, so a sequel didn't really seem to have any legs. What the publisher and I wanted was to base a series of books around a character. Developing the character of Kipper from *The Blue Balloon* more than fitted the bill."

Mick fell in love with all things creative at an early age: "My favourite subjects at school were English and Art. My favourite part of English itself was the creative essays and writing. I can't really remember when my passion for storytelling and illustration started exactly, but it was definitely around that time. I cut my teeth in the world of work, and on illustration in particular, by doing greetings

cards for Gordon Fraser. Once I'd developed a style, I thought it would perhaps be possible to go into children's books. It seemed like a very good medium for the kind of drawing I liked doing the most."

The stage version of Kipper's Snowy Day overflows with original music and songs, bespoke puppets and humour.

"Music is a very strong feature. There's lots of fun, comedy and word play in the lyrics of the songs, and they've been written specifically for the production. And it has the same kind of puppetry as in *War Horse*. You've got that marvellous thing where the audience suspends disbelief. They're complicit in ignoring the puppeteers and allowing the story to unfold. That in itself adds a certain level of magic to the production because the audience feels so involved in the story. I've always loved puppet work on stage; I think it's a really powerful medium."

So what else does Mick think makes this show unique?

"The set is a great example of the theatre company thinking creatively about how to really bring a book to life. With the Kipper books, I've always tried to avoid placing him somewhere in particular. While, for example, Postman Pat is in a particular landscape in a particular place, Kipper exists in this white world of the page, which means I can do with him what I like - I can even send him to the moon! Slot Machine wanted to capture that white-world look, even more so with Kipper's Snowy Day being set in a snowscape. So the back of the stage is an entirely open book with blank pages, which allows them to use it as a screen upon which they project things. For example, the violent storm is expressed by just an animated scribble rushing about all over this book backdrop.

"Another part of the white world is that the entire action takes place on Big Hill, which features in the Kipper books. Big Hill is covered in snow, so the set has this white double-page with a big, sloping snowy hill. This allows Slot Machine to play with perspective, so at certain points there are tiny puppets at the top of the hill to make the characters look very distant. It's a very simple set, but one that really allows the action to spring off the stage in the same way that my characters spring off the page. Slot Machine had a very playful approach to making this

piece of theatre, and I was so pleased about that. Playfulness is one of the main things that characterises what I do, and that's something I think both kids and parents will engage with."

It was these similarities in creative vision and style that encouraged Mick to work with Slot Machine in the first place. He had been approached about stage adaptations of Kipper previously, even before the BAFTA-winning animation of the series, but only when Slot Machine came along did he feel he'd found the right match: "I think the team at Slot Machine are really invested in theatre for children and what you might call 'pure theatre', rather than celebrity-based theatre. I was very at home with the way they thought about my books and about their vision for Kipper's Snowy Day. Creatively I found it very easy to work with them and readily trusted them to have a very free hand in terms of what they wanted to do."

MAC Birmingham is holding a special Kipper's Snowy Day drawing competition, which will see one lucky youngster and their family win tickets to see the show. The competition will be judged by Mick himself: "You never know what you're going to get when children are set loose on a page. I'm really looking forward to seeing their efforts and finding a worthy winner."

Getting children interested in the arts is very important as far as Mick is concerned: "The tick-box attitude to learning in schools now is so boring. I think it's hugely important that children are encouraged to use their imaginations and play around with ideas, rather than having such a constrained focus on just getting things right. School should be a place where you can openly discuss and explore things - even get things wrong - without being judged. I don't think society can expand very far beyond what's fairly utilitarian without imagination and without playing with that world which children hold so dear. It's hugely important to support art, reading, theatre and just generally being creative, so that our children can grow and learn."

.....

**Kipper's Snowy Day runs at Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham from Tuesday 26 November to Tuesday 31 December.**



# THE TRUTH WILL OUT...

**The largely unreported story behind the Birmingham schools Trojan Horse scandal is being told in a touring play which last year won the coveted Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Its co-writer, Birmingham-born actor Helen Monks - whose TV credits include playing Susanna Shakespeare, William's daughter, in the hit BBC comedy, Upstart Crow - talks to What's On about the scandal that rocked the city...**

Reports in 2014 of teachers and governors plotting to Islamise Birmingham schools sent shockwaves through the city and the nation, with the local council launching an inquiry into the allegations and central government following up with their own investigation shortly afterwards.

LUNG Theatre's critically acclaimed docu-drama adopts the same title as the inquiry - Trojan Horse - and tells the largely unreported story of how and why those accused were neither convicted nor 'not guilty' in court.

Adapted from the accounts of pupils from the

schools involved and the teachers and governors' testimony in court, Trojan Horse is a ground-breaking account of institutionalised Islamophobia and government prejudice.

"I'm from Birmingham," says Helen Monks, who co-wrote the play with Matt Woodhead,



“so I knew about the news when it broke but didn’t know anymore than the news pieces I read. Matt and I went into this not knowing we were going to make a play about it; we were just interested in what the real story was. It’s taken about four years for this project to come to its conclusion, and the reason for that is that we just couldn’t get our heads around it. Every single person has a different experience of what the Trojan Horse inquiry actually meant, and it’s through that interview process with people who were directly involved that the truth started to unravel. We decided we definitely had to make a play because there’s widespread misunderstanding of what actually happened. It’s very scandalous. It’s particularly interesting because no reporters actually went to hear the defence, or the cross-examination of the prosecution. and it feels like there was a real shift in the reporting on Trojan Horse once evidence exonerated the teachers and governors. The newspapers just stopped reporting on it, so the narrative has been completely set in stone since those initial allegations of institutionalised extremism. Theatre is all about narrative, so if there’s a narrative that needs to be changed, then theatre is the way to do it. We hope this play helps with that.”

So how did Birmingham schools make the national news in the first place?

“The title of Peter Clarke’s report, Trojan Horse, was taken from a letter that was supposedly sent from one Muslim governor in Birmingham to another in Bradford about this operation called Trojan Horse, explaining how to take over Birmingham schools. Trojan Horse, however, appeared much before this was ever a news story, in Michael Gove’s book *Celsius 7/7*. There’s a chapter called Trojan Horse, in which he warns of the Islamic plot. So in our play, people theorise that the title Trojan Horse is not one that was invented by the Muslim communities of Alum Rock in Birmingham, but was actually created by Michael Gove. That Trojan Horse letter between Muslim governors is now widely known to be a forgery. People believe that whoever wrote that letter was appealing to Michael Gove’s bias and the conspiracy theory that he already believed in - that any Muslim person who’s in a position of influence is there because they want to have complete control. The fact that Trojan Horse is this very traditional Ancient Greek historical symbol feels very white Western - so again, in my mind, it’s not very believable that that’s what followers of extreme Islam would’ve entitled this supposed plot.”

Creating Trojan Horse was a long process, but one that Helen and her dedicated team were determined to complete: “We met the teachers, governors, parents and pupils who were

connected to the schools that were a part of the scandal. Over the course of the two years of writing, we did multiple extensive interviews with these individuals, and then they were also able to feed back on drafts of the script later on. We even took a first private reading of the play to Alum Rock for those affected by Trojan Horse and heavily involved in our storytelling, so that they could listen to the final script before the play even went to rehearsals. We also had to wade through a lot of other material, like the recordings of the Parliamentary Select Committees for Trojan Horse, and we read pretty much all the transcripts of the teachers’ trials. Everything in the play has come from something that a real person has told us, so the 200 hours of interviews formed into the narrative of the play. The show is set over two years: from the beginning of the 2014 academic year until when the teachers’ trials collapsed years later. So it started with meeting Tahir Alam - the man accused of being the main orchestrator of Trojan Horse - for the first time and it snowballed from there.”

With so many people’s lives affected by the allegations, how does the play approach the momentous task of sympathetically putting their stories on stage?

“There are five central characters: a teacher accused of Islamising his school, who is put on trial and gets given a lifetime ban from teaching; Tahir Alam himself is a character - the only one not anonymised in the script; there’s the character of a headteacher who feels pushed out by the governors at her school; Farrah is a schoolgirl who experiences everything first hand, from the press at her school gates to the inspectors in her classroom; and then, finally, there’s the character of the councillor, who shows how the scandal was viewed from that angle. So all the anonymised characters are an amalgamation of different people who we met, and all their stories feed into creating this one voice. Because of the way the events unfolded in the Trojan Horse inquiry, we can’t take too much credit for the narrative of the play, as it was already there for us to uncover.”

As a local, Helen is very aware that the impact of Trojan Horse on Birmingham is ongoing: “We want the play to be about opening up a conversation. Being from Birmingham, the main thing that I feel about Trojan Horse is that this isn’t a story that’s now been confined to history. It’s been left unresolved. It’s not about tearing open old wounds, it’s about trying to discuss something that continues to be prevalent in Birmingham. I also think that we would like the play to be reaching all the right people, which is why we have Urdu translation headsets available for those who need it. We’re trying to make sure the theatre is a

space that’s neutral and for everybody. The main thing we’ve been so happy with about this tour is that people from all different walks of life are coming to see the show. We’re very proud that we’ve created this genuinely neutral space for everybody because I think sometimes the theatre can feel like an elite, white space. It’s exciting for these places to be reclaimed by people from such a wide array of backgrounds.”

Trojan Horse also aims to make a much broader statement...

“Alongside the play, we’ve launched a petition calling for the government to define Islamophobia because we don’t yet have a definition in law. Baroness Sayeeda Warsi is supporting the tour, has written the foreword for our play text and is very hot on the fact that there’s a huge amount of Islamophobia in politics, particularly in the Conservative Party. I think the thing about Trojan Horse is that it was a symptom of something much wider. Although we’re really keen that the play is about shining light on the injustice of Trojan Horse, it’s also about questioning how it was even allowed to happen in the first place. We’ll also be taking the play to the Houses of Parliament on the 7th of January, and we’re hoping that as many MPs as possible turn up. In particular, I hope Michael Gove RSVPs to my personal invitation!

“There was a huge amount of incompetence within the government surrounding what happened with Trojan Horse, and they want to just bury it under the carpet. We want to use the play to tell them we haven’t forgotten, and that the people of Birmingham know the truth now. If you look at those who are most complicit in the corruption surrounding Trojan Horse, they’re now in very senior positions in the Cabinet or are advisors to the new prime minister. They’ve completely got away with it, while people in Birmingham have had their lives destroyed by the story. There are people who haven’t recovered from this. Not just in terms of the city still being divided over it, but the personal health of those involved who’ve lost their livelihoods and reputation over fabricated information. It’s absolutely scandalous that people’s lives have been used as political footballs, and that those in positions of power can continue not to be held to account for their part in that.”

.....

**Trojan Horse shows at Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, from Tuesday 19 to Thursday 21 November. All performances will be followed by a Q&A with Professor John Holmwood - expert witness for the defence at the Trojan Horse trials.**



## Annie

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Mon 18 - Sat 23 November

Lesley Joseph is the latest high-profile performer to take on the coveted role of Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, the oft-touring Broadway musical that's once again hitting the road this month.

A heart-warming rags-to-riches story of a little girl who finds herself transported from a New York orphanage to the luxurious world of millionaire Oliver Warbucks, the show features plenty of memorable songs, including *It's A Hard Knock Life*, *I Don't Need Anything But You*, *Easy Street* and, of course, the legendary *Tomorrow*.

## Queens Of Sheba

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Wed 13 - Sat 16 November

*Queens Of Sheba* is one of two productions being presented at Warwick Arts Centre this month which explore identity, power, race, gender, sexuality, society and politics. Focusing on four black women battling everyday misogyny, the play is accompanied by Travis Alabanza's *Burgerz* (15 & 16 November), a 'powerful performance' exploring how trans bodies survive.



## A Museum In Baghdad

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,  
until Sat 25 January

Hannah Khalil's brand new play focuses on a museum which was founded in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad in 1926 by British archaeologist Gertrude Bell.

"The play questions what were essentially colonial instincts about the need for the British in Iraq," explains director Erica Whyman. "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 Taste Of Honey

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,  
Tues 5 - Sat 9 November

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

This new National Theatre touring production stars Jodie Prenger.



## Billionaire Boy

The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,  
Wed 20 - Sat 23 November

The producers of this hit touring show, Birmingham Stage Company, have impressive credentials when it comes to David Walliams' work, having also presented critically acclaimed versions of *Gangsta Granny* and *Awful Auntie*.

For those unfamiliar with the book, it tells the tale of how Mr Spud made and lost his billions, and how his son, Joe, became the richest boy in the world.



## The Gruffalo

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,  
Mon 11 & Tues 12 November

With millions of copies of the book having been sold, it's fair to say that Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's award-winning *Gruffalo* has captured the hearts and minds of children everywhere. Presenting songs, laughs and 'monstrous' fun for children aged three and upwards, this much-loved stage version of the terrific tale follows Mouse as he heads out on a journey through the deep dark wood, scaring away hungry animals with tall stories of the terrifying *Gruffalo*. Imagine his surprise, then, when he suddenly finds himself coming face-to-face with the very creature he's imagined!





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# Sweet dreams are made of this

**Birmingham Royal Ballet's festive favourite returns...**





Continuing to enthrall and delight Midlands audiences 29 years after making its debut, Sir Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* is the most festive of ballets and the perfect way to kick off the Christmas season at Birmingham Hippodrome.

With its exquisite designs, impressive live orchestra and magnificent performances from 60 highly skilled Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) dancers, Sir Peter's version of the story is widely considered to be one of the best in the world.

For those not in the know, the narrative takes place on Christmas Eve and follows the adventures of a young girl named Clara. When given a wooden nutcracker as a gift, she finds herself swept into an enchanting winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, where she meets the most beautiful of beings - the Sugar Plum Fairy.

And her magical journey features plenty more besides - an army of toy soldiers, a kingdom of sweets, battles with fierce human-sized rats and wondrous displays of traditional dances from far-flung places.

A magical Christmas tree that miraculously grows from four to 15 metres and a fireplace that expands to fill most of the stage are just a couple of examples of the production's jaw-dropping set designs, while lighting by David Finn moves from subtle to dramatic as the story unfolds.

The sumptuous 200-plus costumes that contribute to the magic and appeal of *The Nutcracker* are the work of internationally acclaimed set and costume designer John McFarlane. John's original designs remain at the forefront of the production and provide a constant reference point behind the scenes - as we recently found out during a visit to BRB's costume department.

Although some of the work required to produce *The Nutcracker* is outsourced, much of it is dealt with in-house - and as Elaine Garlick, the company's head of costume, pointed out, *The Nutcracker* isn't just for Christmas... it gets all-year-round attention because 'we know it will return every winter'.

"We never put *Nutcracker* 100% away," explains Elaine. "With a production of this scale, there'll always be work that needs doing. Costumes take a hammering due to the physicality of the dancers, and there'll always be rips, tears, deterioration or maybe a Sugar Plum outfit in need of re-beading." The latter really is an intricate process, as witnessed during our visit. It's only close up that you fully appreciate the dexterity involved in bringing the Sugar Plum bodice to life. Everything has to be just as John intended - from the delicate beading through to the subtle

expansion of colour on the tips of the individual petals. An exquisite copy of one of John's paintings, envisaging how the Sugar Plum Fairy should look, takes pride of place on a

studio wall. A work of art in itself, it acts as a constant reminder of the designer's vision.

Sugar Plum aside, the magnitude of this production becomes evident upon entering the costume warehouse. Row upon row of beautifully crafted outfits displayed on rails are sectioned off according to scene - flowing, lyrical dresses for the snowflakes, cadet costumes for the toy soldiers, authentic Victorian attire for the opening scenes, rats' tails as tall as a person and a fully lined King Rat costume which is so heavy that I could barely lift it into the air. Flamenco dresses, Russian culottes, Oriental silks, sweet costumes, shoes, boots, tights - and even Sloggi knickers! - also feature in what is unquestionably the biggest dressing-up box I've ever seen.

My new-found knowledge of *The Nutcracker*'s creative back story has certainly ignited my excitement at the prospect of seeing the show again when it opens late this month. And it will undoubtedly be with the greatest respect and admiration that I will watch King Rat as he plies across the stage to do battle with the *Nutcracker*... while simultaneously swishing a humongously heavy coat & tail and balancing a proportionately weighty headdress!

**Birmingham Royal Ballet's *The Nutcracker* shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on various dates from Friday 22 November until Saturday 14 December**



## Nutcracker facts

**1.** By the end of its 2016 season, Sir Peter's production had been performed a total of 519 times - 454 times at Birmingham Hippodrome. The 500th performance took place on Tuesday 29 November 2016.

**2.** Before the curtain goes up on the first performance, hours of work have been undertaken behind the scenes. The sets, props and lights for the show will travel to the Hippodrome in five articulated trucks from the Birmingham Royal Ballet stores in Dudley. When the sets arrive, work will begin on the get-in and fit-up. This process takes approximately three days. Another

two days are usually required for technical and stage rehearsals.

**3.** The production has a flying goose that transports Clara to a magical land - it travels 20 metres across the stage at every performance. This means that the goose has travelled over 6.4 miles at Birmingham Hippodrome since 1990.

**4.** A crew of around 50 people work backstage on the production.

**5.** 75kg of flame retardant artificial snow is used in the production. It's imported from a

specialist company in New York.

**6.** Since *The Nutcracker*'s first performance back in 1990, dancers playing the role of snowflakes in the show have made their way through over 720 cans of silver-sparkle body paint.

**7.** The wigs department and BRB company members use around 500 hairpins per show - that's a staggering 259,500 hairpins since 1990!

**8.** The *Nutcracker* features over 45 wigs and pieces of facial hair.



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# Festive shows and attractions opening in November

Christmas

There are plenty of opportunities for Midlandsers to get into the festive spirit over the next few weeks. The region is hosting some of the best pantos and Christmas shows in the land, not to mention a wide range of other activities to enjoy - from getting your skates on for some fabulous ice-rink fun to searching for Santa and jumping aboard the Polar Express. You name it, the marvellous Midlands has got it covered...



## Peter Pan

The REP, Birmingham,  
Sat 30 November - Sun 13 January

Fly away to Neverland with the boy who wouldn't grow up, meet a real fairy, marvellous mermaids, wonderful Wendy and the down-on-their-luck lost boys. Oh, and beware the ever-so-wicked Captain Hook and a very hungry crocodile who goes tick-tock (he swallowed a clock!).

This 'thrillingly reimagined' version of the JM Barrie classic (the show is set in the 21st century and located in Birmingham) is helmed by Liam Steel, who last Christmas directed The REP's acclaimed production of The Wizard Of Oz.

## Puss In Boots

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,  
Wed 27 November - Sat 11 January



A show which is being referred to as 'the cat's whiskers' by producers Imagine Theatre, Puss In Boots tells the tale, sorry, tale, of a fabulous feline who outwits both a king and an ogre to make his master the top, er, dog...

Having not been performed at the Belgrade for many a year, this new production of Puss has been left in the capable hands of the ever-magnificent Iain Lauchlan, a man who's been writing and starring in the venue's festive shows for more years than he probably cares to remember. Having written the script, Iain will once again be donning the comedy wig and applying far too much blusher to star as the show's pantomime Dame, a role which he's very much made his own in recent times. Expect an evening of purr-fectly splendid family entertainment.

## Cinderella

Lichfield Garrick,  
Thurs 28 November - Sun 5 January

With its comical Ugly Sisters, matchmaking fairy godmother, drop-dead-gorgeous Prince Charming, super-cute mice and fits-one-foot-only glass slipper, Cinderella can justifiably lay claim to being the most popular of all pantomimes.

This Lichfield Garrick version stars CBeebies' Rebecca Keatley as Cinders' Fairy Godmother and sees the much-loved Sam Rabone making a welcome return to the venue to play comedy sidekick Buttons. And given that he usually rouges-up to star as the pantomime Dame, we're imagining Sam might well be looking forward to a festive season spent slipping into something a little more comfortable than an oversized frock and gargantuan wig!



## The Prince And The Pauper

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,  
Sat 16 November - Sat 25 January

An interesting and imaginative choice for a Christmas show, Mark Twain's famous story is here being produced by the creative team behind the New Vic's adaptations of The Borrowers, Treasure Island and the UK Theatre Award-winning The Snow Queen. Adapted and helmed by the venue's Artistic Director, Theresa Heskins, the production features 'imaginative storytelling, live music, humour, puppetry and plenty of festive magic'.

## Scrooge The Musical

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent,  
Tues 26 - Sat 30 November

The wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner is back, in one of the country's bestselling and most-loved family shows. Leslie Bricusse's Scrooge The Musical broke all box office records when it premiered in Birmingham nearly 30 years ago. The show is based, of course, on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, in which grumpy old misanthrope Ebenezer is finally taught how to love his fellow man - by means of a late-night festive haunting or four...





CHRISTMAS  
COMES BUT  
ONCE  
A YEAR  
STANDARD LIT'S  
BY MURRAY

FRY'S  
CHOCOLATE  
CREAM

CHRISTMAS AT  
BLACK COUNTRY  
LIVING  
MUSEUM

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GEORGE'S



# Festive shows and attractions opening in November

Christmas

## The Snow Queen

The Old Rep, Birmingham,  
Sat 16 November -  
Mon 30 December

The Snow Queen is ruler of all she surveys. When she kidnaps young Kay, it's left to his friend Gerda to save him from a bleak future in the frostbitten wastelands...

This much-loved Hans Christian Andersen story is here presented by the creative team behind The Old Rep's Christmas 2018 production of Pinocchio. The new show comes complete with 'an epic original score, spellbinding storytelling and more than a pinch of Christmas magic'.

## The Nutcracker

Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 22  
November - Sat 14 December

Sir Peter Wright's enchanting version of this firm festive family favourite returns to the Hippodrome courtesy of Birmingham Royal Ballet. Created in 1990, Wright's production is seen by many as the finest interpretation of Tchaikovsky's magnificent and mesmerising score.

In true Christmas spirit, the story follows a young girl named Clara as she's swept up in a fantasy of soldiers, giant rats, snow fairies, magic and mystery, before finally being transformed into a beautiful ballerina.

This is a magical must-see show for little princesses everywhere...



## Father Christmas

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Wed 27 November -  
Sun 29 December

Raymond Briggs is best known for his story about a little boy who makes friends with a snowman - but talented theatre company Pins And Needles are doing plenty to promote one of the author's slightly less-famous tales. Suitable for children aged three and older, Father Christmas features songs, live music, playful puppetry, secret doors, hidden hatches and plenty of trademark Briggs humour. Expect your children to be suitably impressed.



## Kipper's Snowy Day

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,  
Tues 26 November - Tues 31 December

Slot Machine Theatre present a show that's actually an amalgamation of two books by award-winning children's author Mick Inkpen: Kipper's Snowy Day and Kipper's Christmas Eve.

For those not in the know, Kipper is a dog who's been delighting generations of young readers for the past 30 years. This is Slot Machine's first-ever stage adaptation of the much-loved books and sees Kipper and his friends, Tiger and Arnold, going on an adventure in the snow.

## Aladdin

Stourbridge Town Hall,  
Wed 27 November -  
Sun 1 December

Flying carpets at the ready, boys and girls...

A perfect story for an evening of family entertainment finds street youth Aladdin trying against all odds to win the hand of the beautiful princess - and being helped in his endeavours by the mystical genie of the lamp... All profits raised from the performances will be donated to patient care at Mary Stevens Hospice.







# *visit* **Santa** *at the* **Valley**

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 Sandwell  
Metropolitan Borough Council



# Festive attractions opening in November

Christmas



## Ice Skate Birmingham

Centenary Square, Birmingham, Thurs 7 November - Sun 12 January

Ice Skate Birmingham and the Big Wheel make a welcome return to Centenary Square this month.

While the wheel offers the opportunity to enjoy fantastic views across the city, the ice rink accommodates up to 300 people per session and is this year weather-proofed

thanks to the addition of a roof. Younger or inexperienced skating enthusiasts can keep upright by using special penguin skating aids. And when skaters have finished their Torvill & Dean routine, they can warm themselves up with some festive fare in the nearby Ice Lounge.

## Christmas At Coalbrookdale

Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Enuguity, Ironbridge, weekends from Sat 30 November - Sun 22 December

Santa really does get everywhere at Christmastime - including museums of iron! Coalbrookdale's all-new Santa experience offers youngsters the chance to say hello to the man himself in his woodland grotto. And as well as providing an opportunity to meet the jocular St Nick, the event also features a selection of fun family activities. Visitors who work up an appetite can sample some splendid festive fare at Coalbrookdale's brand new Furnace Kitchen.



## Santa's Winter Wonderland

Snowdome, Tamworth, Staffs, Fri 15 November - Tues 31 December



This year's all-new Santa Show sees the white-bearded one preparing for his big festive performance of The Twelve Days Of Christmas - but finding his efforts somewhat hampered by two elves, who have a decidedly different perspective on how to present a yuletide showstopper...

Suitable for all age groups, the show is just one element of the festive fun on offer at Tamworth's snowy indoor attraction. Visitors can also explore Santa's Christmas snow trail, take a walk through an enchanted forest, enjoy a game of snowballs, hitch a ride on a sledge, meet Santa's furry friends and check out the brand new traditional children's carousel.

## Meet Santa at Sea Life

National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham, Sat 23 November - Mon 23 December

The National Sea Life Centre is bringing the North Pole to Birmingham's Brindleyplace this Christmas. Visit the Antarctic Ice Cave, take your little ones to meet Santa (and receive a free gift from him) and check out a family of cheeky Gentoo Penguins in the exclusive setting of the Ice Adventure area. Families can also pay a visit to the 4D cinema to enjoy a screening of classic festive favourite The Polar Express.



## Christmas at Shakespeare's Birthplace

Stratford-upon-Avon, various dates in November and December

Christmas at Shakespeare's Birthplace kicks off with Mary Arden: Town And Country - Preparing For Christmas (Mon 25 & Sat 30 November). Shakespeare's mother was a country girl who, upon her marriage to the bard's dad, John, had to acclimatise to life in the town. But how did preparations for the festive season differ between town and country? House stewards from Shakespeare's Birthplace and Mary Arden's Farm offer an insight into Mary's changing yuletide traditions...

December attractions at the venue, meanwhile, include Flowers Of Winter (Sat 14 December - Sun 5 January) - an exhibition of floral displays inspired by traditional winter blooms - and Come A-Wassailing (Mon 30 December - Wed 1 January) - a chance to participate in the precursor to the modern-day activity of carol singing.





# Ice Skate

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# Festive attractions opening in November

Christmas



## Santa Safari

West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster,  
Sat 16 - Sun 17, Sat 23 - Sun 24, Sat 30 November plus various dates throughout December

Families visiting West Midland Safari Park this festive season can meet an elf, climb on board a sleigh and head for the North Pole. And that's just for starters! Having arrived at their destination, young visitors can then say hello to Santa Claus, tell him what's on their

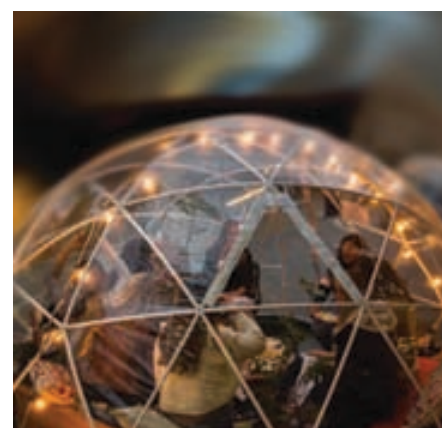
Christmas wish list and pose with the great man while a helpful elf takes a picture. But wait, there's more... After meeting Santa, children can also select their own present in the elves' workshop and sample a special walk-through 'discovery trail'...

## The Snow House Bar

Bullring, Birmingham, until Sun 5 January

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

Providing an impressive selection of beers and wines, mulled wine and hot chocolate, the venue is also serving German sausages and churros from early this month onwards.



## Christmas At The Castle

Warwick Castle, Sat 30 November -  
Tues 31 December

If you're looking for places to take the kids for some seasonal fun this Christmas, Warwick Castle should certainly be on your radar. Attractions include 'magical story-telling experiences' with Mr & Mrs Claus and their merry elves, the chance to enjoy breakfast with Santa and his wife, Christmas feasts and medieval banquets, Santa sleepovers, a special carol-singing session and a brand new ice rink.



## Statfold Santa Express

Statfold Barn Railway, nr Tamworth,  
Sat 30 November - Sun 22 December

All aboard the Statfold Santa Express! Taking place every pre-Christmas weekend from the end of this month onwards, this family-friendly event sees visitors climb aboard Santa's magical steam train and journey to the North Pole. Once arrived, there's plenty for youngsters to see and do, including paying a visit to Santa's reindeer, decorating cookies with Mrs Claus and selecting their very own special gift on a visit to the toy shop.

## The Polar Express Train Ride

Train departs Birmingham Moor Street Station,  
Fri 22 November - Sun 22 December

The Polar Express train rides return to Birmingham this month.

The popular motion picture film is being theatrically recreated so that families can immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of the classic children's story.

Youngsters are invited to join in the fun with the movie's characters, while the event also features carol singing and a visit from Santa.

## Santa Safari

Hawkstone Park, Weston-under-Redcastle,  
North Shropshire, Fri 29 November -  
Mon 23 December

Little ones can enjoy a magical adventure and meet Santa at Hawkstone Park Follies this Christmas.

Jump into one of the park's Land Rovers to enjoy a journey through the illuminated woodland to Santa's spectacular network of caves.

Hawkstone's friendly elves will keep you entertained as you wander around the fairy-lit caverns and tunnels, finally arriving at your ultimate destination - the magical grotto itself, where every child will receive a special gift from Santa.

The chance to meet the big man's trusty reindeer and enjoy an 'illuminated woodland fantasy' also feature.



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## Magnum Manifesto Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 15 December

If you haven't yet checked out Magnum Manifesto, be sure to get along this month or next. Featuring some of the most significant and enduring images from the world-famous Magnum Photos agency, the exhibition focuses on the history of the second half of the 20th century, as seen through the lenses of 75 leading photographers.

"We are the only UK destination for this unmissable exhibition," says Compton Verney Director Julie Finch. "Magnum Manifesto provides a snapshot of society, politics, cultures and changing economies crossing time and continents, a reference point in our turbulent times, a discussion piece and a mirror to the world - all captured through photography."

## Claudia Losi: Being There

**Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until Sun 24 November**

Claudia Losi's latest work, *Poli Antarctic Constitutio*, is an intricately embroidered woollen cloth featuring a depiction of the Antarctic as represented by Athana-

sius Kircher in his 17th-century book, *Mundus Subterraneus*. Kircher's visionary work contains his speculations on the existence of a hidden, subterranean world. Losi's cloth was fabricated over a period of two years by 12 of her female friends and acquaintances, each of whom regularly visited her studio to dedicate a few hours of work to the project.

## Arpita Shah, Maryam Wahid, Nilupa Yasmin Exhibition

**New Art Gallery, Walsall, Fri 15 November - Sun 19 April**

'The complexity and diversity of modern women' is the theme which runs through the work of the three talented female photographers contributing to this exhibition. Arpita Shah, Maryam Wahid and Nilupa Yasmin have all created images about and in collaboration with their families and communities - both in the UK and Pakistan in order to present work focused around portraiture, culture and female identity.

Among the topics explored in their images are women's contribution to the economy and society, the tradition of head covering or veiling, and open femininity and cultural identity.



## Truly Bright And Memorable: Jan De Beer's Renaissance Altarpieces

**Barber Institute, Birmingham, until Sun 19 January**

This latest in the Barber's Masterpiece In Focus series showcases the venue's very own double-sided altarpiece featuring *The Nativity* and the 'apocryphal tale of Joseph and the suitors'. The altarpiece is one of many created by 16th century Flemish artist Jan de Beer, a man whose star shone brightly for centuries after his death but whose relevance has been somewhat downgraded in recent times.

The exhibition also brings together for the first time all of de Beer's paintings and drawings from public and private collections in Britain.

## Radical Drawing: Works From Coventry And The Courtauld

**Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry, until Sun 19 January**

The radical and creative potential of drawn marks and lines is explored in an exhibition featuring not only artwork from the Herbert but also pieces both from The Courtauld Gallery in London and the University of Warwick.

The display offers viewers the opportunity to contemplate work by a number of artists who have pushed the boundaries of what it means to draw.

Also on display are objects linked to the Courtaulds factory in Coventry and a specially produced film about Courtaulds Ltd. The long-established manufacturer of fabric, clothing, artificial fibres and chemicals set up shop in the city in 1905.



Image credit: Study for a demonic spirit (from Henry VI, Part II, Act I, Scene II), George Romney (1734 - 1802) © The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London



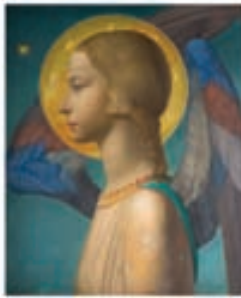
## Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**Wolverhampton Society of Artists Centenary Exhibition**  
Sat 14 Dec 2019 – Sun 16 Feb 2020

Wolverhampton Society of Artists (WSA) has been exhibiting at Wolverhampton Art Gallery since the Society was formed in 1919. Each year, the society presents a careful selection of members' work chosen via an open submission process. This exhibition celebrates the centenary of Wolverhampton Society of Artists and the continuous partnership of both institutions.

The exhibition documents the story of the Society featuring a selection of works by WSA's alumni including paintings, drawings and sculptures, alongside some archival material.

It also showcases contextual works highlighting the history and achievements of the WSA against the wider development of British art in the period 1919–1929. The final section showcases works by current members of the Society.



Mary Gwendolyn Gilson, *Angel*, 1923 – 1929.  
© Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**The Bloomsbury Effect**  
Sat 14 Dec – Sun 16 Feb 2020

Visitors to the Wolverhampton Society of Artists Centenary Exhibition can also enjoy a display of three prestigious early 20th century British paintings on loan from the Courtauld Gallery, London. This is part of an ongoing collaboration which celebrates the links between Wolverhampton and the Courtauld Collection through the Courtauld's textile company.



Augustus Poy, *Self Portrait*, 1928. © Courtauld Trust. The Courtauld Gallery, London

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## Family Fireworks Night

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge,  
Sat 2 November

Blists Hill Victorian Town stays open late on the second of the month for a special fireworks night. Visitors can walk the Victorian streets,

explore the period buildings, watch a dramatic iron-casting demonstration in the foundry and chat to the townsfolk in their cottages, shops and other places of work. The undoubted highlight of the evening, though, is the venue's sky-illuminating fireworks extravaganza, which comes complete with accompanying music.

## Firework Festival

West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley,  
Worcestershire, Sat 9 & Sun 10 November

Even the mighty roars of the resident lions may be drowned out at West Midland Safari Park on the second weekend of the month, as music fills the air and fireworks whistle & explode in the nighttime sky.

Visitors can explore the venue's walk-through areas - including Ice Age and Land of the Living Dinosaurs - enjoy a selection of late-night rides and keep the autumn chill at bay by cosying up to their loved ones around a giant bonfire.



## Bonfire & Fireworks

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sun 3 November

Set within 1,000 acres of Capability Brown-designed parkland, Weston Park plays host to a wide selection of popular events throughout the year, among which is this annual bonfire & fireworks display - one of the largest in the whole of the West Midlands region.

As well as a giant bonfire, attractions on the night include a funfair, food stalls and two 'spectacular' firework displays (at 6pm and 7.30pm).

## Himley Bonfire 2019: To The Moon And Back

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley,  
Sat 2 November

Celebrating 50 years since the Apollo 11 moon landing, this year's Himley bonfire event features a pyrotechnic display set to inspirational music.

Other attractions include a night market, a giant funfair, live entertainment, seasonal refreshments, and a number of large screens to make sure that you don't miss any of the unfolding action.

## Ultimate Fireworks

Alton Towers, Staffordshire,  
Fri 8 - Sun 10 November

Alton Towers' season draws to a close with a great big bang this month.

Visitors to the Ultimate Fireworks event will surely make the most of this final opportunity to experience their favourite rides and attractions before the venue shuts down for winter.

An end-of-the-night fireworks display should ensure that the curtain falls on the 2019 season in suitably spectacular style.

## Edgbaston Fireworks Spectacular

Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham,  
Sat 2 November

One of the biggest events of its kind in Birmingham, Edgbaston Fireworks Spectacular makes a welcome return on the first Saturday of the month and this year takes a superhero theme.

As well as providing youngsters with the chance to say hello to some of the world's greatest cape, cowl and spandex-wearing fictional characters, the event also features plenty of family-friendly entertainment, included among which is a funfair, an LED light show and, as the event's name suggests, a sure-to-be-impressive fireworks display.





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This advertisement for the Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham features a man and a young boy smiling while building with LEGO bricks on a table. The background shows a colorful indoor playground with various LEGO structures. A yellow banner at the top left contains the Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham logo. A large green and white graphic in the center reads 'BUILD CREATE & PLAY'. Below it, a green box says 'At the ultimate indoor LEGO® playground'. To the right, a yellow banner announces 'Christmas Bricktacular' from '23rd Nov – 23rd Dec'. At the bottom, an orange banner says 'BOOK NOW: Birmingham.LEGOLANDDiscoveryCentre.co.uk'. A small circular inset on the right shows a LEGO Santa Claus minifigure. Fine print at the bottom states: 'THE LEGO® MOVIE © & ™ LEGO Group & Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. (s)B. LEGO, the LEGO logo, the Minifigure and the Brick and Knob configuration are trademarks of The LEGO Group. © 2019 The LEGO Group. Used with permission. All rights reserved.'



**Meet Santa**  
23rd Nov - 23rd Dec

National  
**SEA LIFE**  
Birmingham

**visitsealife.com/birmingham**

**The Ultimate Festive Experience**

This advertisement for SEA LIFE Birmingham features a man dressed as Santa Claus sitting on the floor, surrounded by various sea creatures like sharks, dolphins, and colorful fish. A young girl is standing next to him, looking at a gift. The background is a vibrant blue underwater scene. The text 'Meet Santa' is in large red letters, with '23rd Nov - 23rd Dec' below it. The SEA LIFE Birmingham logo is in the top right. At the bottom, the website 'visitsealife.com/birmingham' is written in white. A purple circular badge in the bottom right corner says 'The Ultimate Festive Experience'.





## MCM Comic Con

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 16 & Sun 17 November

Fans of comics, movies, TV shows, cosplay and gaming can rejoice - 'the ultimate pop-culture experience' is back at the NEC!

Check out interactive features, stroll around the Comic Village and meet the people behind your favourite movie and television characters. Celebrities taking part in this month's event include Stranger Things and Lord Of The Rings star Sean Astin.

## Birmingham International Tattoo

Arena Birmingham, Sat 23 & Sun 24 November

Featuring in excess of 1,200 performers, this well-established event is the UK's biggest indoor international tattoo.

The three-hour spectacle is led by the world famous Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, with international marching bands from France, Poland and the Netherlands also participating. Hailing from Texas and taking part in the show for the very first time are the Kilgore College Rangerettes, the world's best-known collegiate drill team.

Other attractions include a range of 'spectacular' displays, performances by talented vocal soloists and the not-to-be-missed Parade of Massed Standards.



## Mind Body Spirit Festival

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 1 - Sun 3 November

The Mind Body Spirit Festival is back in Birmingham with a three-day programme of events and activities that includes contributions by motivational speakers, musicians and performers from across the globe. There's a whole host of free workshops to take part in too, as well as the opportunity to enjoy a silent disco, visit a wellbeing spa and shop for everything from organic food to healing crystals.



## Festive Gift Fair

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 November

Now in its 24th year, the Festive Gift Fair is a cracking place to pick up a Christmas gift or several for your nearest and dearest. And with more than 300 stallholders in attendance, there's certainly no shortage of items to peruse and maybe purchase!

Away from the shopping, the show's programme of attractions includes musical performances, the UK's largest snowman, appearances by Father Christmas himself and an impressive selection of artisan food & drink.

## Underwater Superheroes

National Sealife Centre, B'ham, Sat 9 - Fri 22 November

This brand new event offers visitors the chance to put their strength and intelligence to the test against speedy sharks and stinging starfish (in an entirely safe way, of course!).

Photo opportunities and an activity trail further add to the fun, with all youngsters receiving a special pop-badge as a memento of their visit.





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## BBC Good Food Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 28 November - Sun 1 December

Eat, drink and be merry, as the BBC Good Food Show brings its winter edition to the NEC.

Visitors can see their favourite celebrity chefs in action on the show's Big Kitchen stage, check out brand new festive workshops such as gingerbread decorating and how to make your own Christmas gin, and pick up some tasty festive treats from hundreds of hand-picked producers.

## The Baby To Toddler Show

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 30 November & Sun 1 December

Dubbed 'the ultimate shopping experience for every parent', the Baby To Toddler Show is the sister event of the equally popular Baby Show and features more than 100 brands covering everything from prams and furniture to toys and clothing... The show will also feature a whole host of Black Friday deals - so be sure to get along and grab yourself a bargain or two!



## The Classic Motor Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 8 - Sun 10 November



Celebrating its 35th anniversary, the Classic Motor Show spans seven halls, boasts the world's largest gathering of car and motorcycle clubs, and features a display of more than 3,000 classic and vintage cars & motorcycles.

Motor fanatics can enjoy shopping at the UK's largest indoor autojumble, with specialist traders on hand to help source parts and tools.

Live auctions, talks by a number of motoring celebrities and fascinating restoration demonstrations are just some of the show's other highlights.

## Christmas Light Switch-ons

It's that time of year once again, when cities, towns and villages across the Midlands are lit up in readiness for the festive season. Find your local Christmas light switch-on event(s) below.

### BIRMINGHAM

JEWELLERY QUARTER, BIRMINGHAM  
Fri 15 November

EDGBASTON Fri 22 November

### STAFFORDSHIRE

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME Sat 16 November

STONE Thurs 21 November

LICHFIELD Sun 24 November

TAMWORTH Sun 24 November

### WORCESTERSHIRE

WORCESTER Thurs 21 November

BROMSGROVE Sat 23 November

BEWDLEY Sat 30 November

### WARWICKSHIRE

LEAMINGTON Sun 17 November

COVENTRY Wed 20 November

WARWICK Thurs 28 November

KENILWORTH Sun 1 December

### BLACK COUNTRY

WEDNESBURY Fri 22 November

WOLVERHAMPTON Sat 23 November

BANTOCK HOUSE Sun 24 November

WEDNESFIELD Thurs 28 November

BILSTON Fri 29 November

TIPTON Fri 29 November

TETTENHALL Sat 30 November

### SHROPSHIRE

MARKET DRAYTON Sat 16 November

SHREWSBURY Wed 20 November

OSWESTRY Thurs 21 November

BRIDGNORTH Fri 22 November

LUDLOW Sat 23 November

DONNINGTON Sun 24 November

OAKENGATES Sat 30 November





A large monster truck with a skull on its front and 'Hot Wheels' on its side is shown in mid-air, performing a stunt in a large arena filled with spectators. The arena is lit with bright spotlights. The Hot Wheels logo is at the top, and the event title 'MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE' is in large, bold letters below it.

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## Film highlights released in November...

### The Aeronauts

CERT PG (100 mins)

Starring **Felicity Jones, Eddie Redmayne, Phoebe Fox, Himesh Patel, Vincent Perez, Anne Reid, Tom Courtenay** Directed by **Tom Harper** (UK/USA)

Amelia Wren (Felicity Jones) was a balloonist and something of a daredevil and teams up with the meteorologist and astronomer James Glaisher (Eddie Redmayne) in an attempt to soar higher than anyone else in the history of aviation. Tom Harper previously directed *The Scouting Book For Boys* (2010) and the sublime *Wild Rose* (2018).

**Released Mon 4 November**

### Last Christmas

CERT 12a (102 mins)

Starring **Emilia Clarke, Henry Golding, Michelle Yeoh, Emma Thompson, Rebecca Root, Lydia Leonard** Directed by **Paul Feig** (UK/USA)

A romcom set in London sees Kate (Emilia Clarke) working as a Santa's elf in a department store. Things have got that desperate. Then she keeps on bumping into the same handsome man (Henry Golding, from *Crazy Rich Asians*). Might her luck be about to change?

**Released Fri 15 November**

### Knives Out

CERT 12a (130 mins)

Starring **Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, Ana de Armas, Jamie Lee Curtis, Michael Shannon, Don Johnson, Toni Collette, Christopher Plummer** Directed by **Rian Johnson** (USA)

Agatha Christie meets *Gosford Park* in this starry whodunit featuring Daniel Craig as a detective with an entertaining Southern accent. The critics have loved it, though.

**Released Fri 29 November**

### Charlie's Angels

CERT tbc

Starring **Kristen Stewart, Naomi Scott, Ella Balinska, Elizabeth Banks, Djimon Hounsou, Sam Claflin, Patrick Stewart** Directed by **Elizabeth Banks** (USA)

This is getting confusing. Although it shares a title with the 2000 action-comedy spin-off of the TV series, this is a whole new instalment in which there are multiple teams of Angels plucked from around the globe. The new toothsome trio - two of whom are played by Brits - must use their techno know-how to help save the human race.

**Released Fri 29 November**



EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Frozen II

CERT PG

With the voices of **Idina Menzel, Kristen Bell, Jonathan Groff, Josh Gad, Santino Fontana, Evan Rachel Wood, Alfred Molina, Sterling K Brown, Martha Plimpton** Directed by **Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee** (USA)

They just won't let it go. Here, once again, we have Princess Elsa of Arendelle and her younger sister Anna.

Elsa, of course, is endowed with the ability to create a perfectly white Christmas wherever she goes by turning everything into snow and ice. But being young and curious, she decides to find out where her powers

come from and so with Anna, Anna's handsome squeeze Kristoff and the funny snowman Olaf, she sets off to find a strange and enchanted land.

There's also the slight issue of saving the future of their kingdom...

Until this year's *The Lion King* shattered box-office records, the original *Frozen* (2013) was the highest-grossing animated film in history and Disney has decided to build on that success. It took five writers to pen the new story, so it better be good.

**Released Fri 22 November**

### Harriet

CERT tbc (125 mins)

Starring **Cynthia Erivo, Leslie Odom Jr, Joe Alwyn, Janelle Monáe, Jennifer Nettles, Vanessa Bell Calloway, Clarke Peters** Directed by **Kasi Lemmons** (USA)

One of the great pioneers of American history, Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland and was routinely beaten and whipped as a child. But when she escaped her shackles at the age of 27, she returned to her enslaved family and gradually began to free one relative at a time, before eventually helping hundreds of her fellow sufferers.

When it was proposed that Tubman be pictured on the American 20-dollar bill, Donald Trump vetoed the action, dismissing it as "pure political correctness". However, the Treasury Department is currently investigating the rejection of the plan.

As Harriet, the London-born Cynthia Erivo (*Widows*, *Bad Times At The El Royale*) has long been a shoo-in to nab an Oscar nomination.

**Released Fri 22 November**



CRITIC'S CHOICE



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

# the list



Richard Alston Dance Company: The Final Edition at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry - Thurs 21 - Fri 22 November

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

## What's On

Fri 1 to Sun 10 November



Alexander Armstrong at  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry  
**Sun 3 November**

Mon 11 to Sun 17 November



Festive Gift Fair returns  
to the NEC  
**Thurs 14 - Sun 17 November**

Mon 18 to Sun 24 November



Zoe Schwarz Blue Commotion  
at Huntingdon Hall, Worcester  
**Sat 23 November**

Mon 25 to Sat 30 November



Prism at Malvern Theatres,  
Great Malvern  
**Mon 25 - Sat 30 November**

## THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

### Visual Arts

#### Artrix, Bromsgrove

**NEW KATHLEEN WATSON AND LYNNE SAWYER - INSPIRE BY NATURE** Exhibition exploring the natural world in a celebration of texture and colour, Tues 5 Nov - Sun 5 Jan

#### Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**BIRMINGHAM IN THE 1980S: FILM BY YUGESH AND SUNANDAN WALIA** Films which explored specific cultural moments and experiences for black and Asian communities in Birmingham: African Oasis, 1982, until 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

#### Compton Verney Gallery, Warwick

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

**THIS IS US** Take on the role of the Magnum photographer by taking a photo which reflects an aspect of your present world and relating it to one of the following themes: individuality, community, society, until Sun 15 Dec

#### Forge Mill Needle Museum, Redditch

**REDDITCH MEMORIES** Exhibition by the Redditch Local History Society charting significant change in population, industry and housing, and looking at how Redditch has continually recreated its own identity, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 24 Nov

#### Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

**ARTIST ROOMS: DIANE ARBUS** Diane Arbus (1923-1971) is considered one of the great figures of American photography. The works in this exhibition are drawn from the Artist Rooms collection, jointly owned by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland, until Sun 1 Dec

#### Rugby Art Gallery & Museum

**THE PRINTED LINE** Spanning the 20th century and up to the present day,

the exhibition includes prints by David Hockney, Lucian Freud, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Bridget Riley and Rachel Whiteread, until Sat 9 Nov

**NEW RUGBY OPEN** Sat 23 Nov - Sat 11 Jan, Rugby Art Gallery & Museum

#### The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

**COVENTRY BIENNIAL - THE TWIN** Exhibition contemplating themes such as ideas and processes while also exploring some of the difficulties presented by globalisation, political inequality and conflict, until Sun 26 Jan

**NEW EXPLORING ELIOT'S COVENTRY** Exhibition marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of author George Eliot and celebrating her connections with Coventry, Fri 1 Nov - Sun 26 Apr

#### Worcester City Museum & Art Gallery

**FIFTY OBJECTS; FIFTY STORIES EXHIBITION** Curator Garston Phillips shares the tales, anecdotes and memories that have helped shape the museum for five decades, until Sat 9 Nov

**AUTUMN CRAFT CASES** Featuring handmade ceramics and prints by Barry Lockwood and respoke designs by Mike & Sam Price - jewellery made from recycled bicycle spokes, until Wed 13 Nov

**LIVING RUINS** Artworks from the 18th century to the modern day, until Sat 30 Nov

#### Other VISUAL ARTS

**COVENTRY BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART 2019** Featuring a wide selection of exhibitions, events and experiences, until Sun 24 Nov, Various Venues In Coventry

**THE PLAY'S THE THING** Display of costumes and props from the archives, until Tues 31 Dec, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**FASHIONING PEACE: LIFE AND LIBERTY AFTER THE GREAT WAR EXHIBITION** Exhibition exploring how the changes brought about through the Great War were reflected in clothing and fashion from 1918 through to the Roaring 20s, until Mon 12 Oct 2020, Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster

**NEW RIVERS OF THE WORLD** Exhibition of river-inspired artwork created by young people from Worcestershire and Kenya in collaboration with professional artists, to explore and express what rivers mean to communities today, Mon 4 - Tues 12 Nov, The Hive, Worcester

### Gigs

**OFFICIAL RECEIVERS** Fri 1 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE BLUES BAND: 40 YEARS AND COUNTING** Fri 1 Nov, The Roses, Tewkesbury

**FRIENDLY FIRES** Fri 1 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**YELLOW CAP + BARBD-WIRE** Fri 1 Nov, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

**GAZ BROOKFIELD** Fri 1 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**THE NEW JERSEY BOYS** Fri 1 Nov, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**FEVER 333** Sat 2 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**ULTIMATE LEPPARD** Sat 2 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**THE NIGHTWATCH** Sat 2 Nov, Number 8 Community Arts, Pershore

**A1** Sat 2 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**E3UK LIVE** Sat 2 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**G2 - DEFINITIVE GENESIS** Sat 2 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**FIRE RED EMPRESS** Sat 2 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**KIM & ANDREW LOWINGS** Sat 2 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**NEFFEX** Sat 2 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE TALLEST MAN ON EARTH** Sat 2 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**BARS AND MELODY** Sun 3 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**HAWKLOARDS** Sun 3 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**OYSTER BAND AND JUNE TABOR** Sun 3 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**RAHAT FATEH ALI KHAN** Sun 3 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**CALUM LINTOTT** Sun 3 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**WARMDUSCHER** Sun 3 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE HEAVY** Sun 3 Nov,

O2 Academy, B'ham

**THE SHERLOCKS** Sun 3 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CATFISH AND THE BOTTLEMEN** Mon 4 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**BEAR'S DEN** Mon 4 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**WELSHLY ARMS & THE GLORIOUS SONS** Mon 4 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JAMES MORRISON** Mon 4 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BANKS: THE III TOUR** Tues 5 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TOTALLY TINA** Wed 6 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**DRAGONFORCE** Wed 6 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LAGWAGON** Wed 6 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**MARILLION** Wed 6 Nov, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**THINK FLOYD** Thurs 7 Nov, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY** Thurs 7 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**WILDWOOD KIN** Thurs 7 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SLEEPING WITH SIRENS** Thurs 7 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**HAZEL O'CONNOR** Thurs 7 Nov, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**CHRISTOPHER CROSS** Thurs 7 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**LITTLE MIX** Thurs 7 - Sat 9 Nov, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

**THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN** Fri 8 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**LOST IN MUSIC** Fri 8 Nov, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**INFINITE SAUCE** Fri 8 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ULTIMATE COLDPLAY** Fri 8 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**ABSOLUTE BOWIE - LEGACY TOUR** Fri 8 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**NITIN SAWHNEY** Fri 8 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JUDI JACKSON + DEBRIS STEVENSON** Sat 9 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**RECOVER REVEAL RENEW TOUR** Sat 9 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**LOYAL CARNER** Sat 9 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**AMERICAN SONGBOOK** Sat 9 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE RIFLES** Sat 9 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THE JULIE JULY BAND** Sat 9 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY** Sat 9 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE REGRETTES** Sat 9 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE ICICLE WORKS** Sat 9 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**FLEETWOOD BAC** Sat 9 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

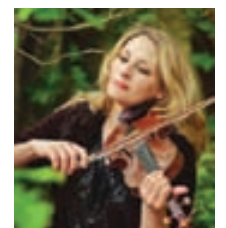
**THE LEYLINES** Sat 9 Nov, Marris Bar, Worcester

**EATS EVERYTHING** Sat 9 Nov, Kasbah, Coventry

**TALON** Sat 9 Nov, The Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD SHOW** Sat 9 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**ALICE ZAWADZKI** Sun 10 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**STEPBACK! 90S VS 00S** Sun 10 Nov, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

**AURORA** Sun 10 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**MARIANAS TRENCH** Sun 10 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CHRONIXX AND KOFFEE** Sun 10 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**BURNA BOY - AFRICAN GIANT TOUR** Sun 10 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham



## Classical

**CBSO: FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSICS** Featuring Andrew Cottee (conductor). Programme includes scores from some of Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musicals, Fri 1 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**LONDON HAYDN QUARTET WITH ERIC HOEPRICH CLARINET** Featuring Catherine Manson & Michael Gurevich (violins), John Crockatt (viola) & Jonathan Manson (cello). Programme includes works by Krommer, Haydn & Weber, Fri 1 Nov, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

**LUDOVICO EINAUDI: SEVEN DAYS WALKING** Also featuring Redi Hasa (cello) & Federico Mecozzi (violin), Fri 1 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**TOM PICKLES (CELLO) & ROMAN KOSYAKOV (PIANO)** Programme includes works by Frank Bridge, Beethoven, James MacMillan & Rachmaninov, Wed 6 Nov, Christ Church, Leamington Spa

**FREDDY KEMPF IN CONCERT** Programme includes a selection of works by Chopin, Wed 6 Nov, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**CBSO: MENDELSSOHN'S ELIJAH** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Keri Fuge (soprano), Karen Cargill (mezzo soprano), Robert Murray (tenor) and Matthew Brook (baritone), Thurs 7 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**HYUNGI LEE IN CONCERT** Fri 8 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: SPECTACULAR CLASSICS** Featuring Anthony Inglis (conductor), Lauren Fagan (soprano) & Timothy Richards (tenor). Programme includes works by Strauss, Rossini, Pachelbel, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Mascagni, Puccini & more... Sat 9 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SOUTHBANK SINFONIA: THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS** Featuring The Parliament Choir, Coventry Cathedral Chorus, Catherine Wyn-Rogers (mezzo soprano), Robert Murray (tenor), Sir Thomas Allen (baritone) & Paul Ledington Wright (conductor), Sat 9 Nov, Coventry Cathedral

**BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL CHOIR: DURUFLE'S REQUIEM** Sat 9 Nov, Birmingham Cathedral

**ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE: EARTHRISSE** Featuring Daniele Rosina

(conductor) & arrangements by Peter May, Emily Abdy & Rob Roberts, Sat 9 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: THE MUSIC OF BOND** Featuring John Rigby (conductor), Sun 10 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET** Featuring Matthew Denton & Michelle Fleming (violins), Eoin Schmidt-Martin (viola) & Emma Denton (cello), Sun 10 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

## Comedy

**JIM DAVIDSON** Fri 1 Nov, Evesham Arts Centre

**REGINALD D HUNTER, SIMON WOZNAK, THOMAS GREEN & SPECIAL GUEST** Fri 1 Nov, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**DESIREE BURCH** Fri 1 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**CRAIG MURRAY, TOM TAYLOR & JAMES SHERWOOD** Sat 2 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOHN ROBINS** Sat 2 Nov, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**JAMES SHERWOOD, TOM TAYLOR, CRAIG MURRAY** Sat 2 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**GLENN MOORE** Sat 2 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**BOBBY MAIR, HAYLEY ELLIS, IGNACIO LOPEZ & GUEST** Sat 2 Nov, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**STEPHEN K AMOS** Sun 3 Nov, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**AURIE STYLA** Sun 3 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROMESH RANGANATHAN** Tues 5 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**GLENN MOORE** Wed 6 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ANDY ROBINSON & MAISIE ADAM** Thurs 7 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOSH WIDDICOMBE** Thurs 7 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**FRANK SKINNER** Fri 8 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**IMPROV COMEDY WITH BOX OF FROGS** Fri 8 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**ANDY PARSONS** Fri 8 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**MAISIE ADAM, JOE BOR, STEVE GRIBBIN**

**& TOM DEACON** Fri 8 - Sat 9 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ED BYRNE** Sat 9 Nov, Bedworth Civic Hall

**JASON BYRNE** Sat 9 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**FREDDY QUINNE, JULIAN DEANE, SIMON LOMAS & SIMON WOZNAK** Sat 9 Nov, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

**DATING AND RELATIONSHIP THERAPY, DIZZLE, AXEL BLAKE, JUDI LOVE, SMASH ENTERTAINZ & MISS MO REAL** Sun 10 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MAISIE ADAM** Sun 10 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

## Opera

**THE INTELLIGENCE PARK** Music Theatre Wales present the Birmingham debut of Gerald Barry's opera, Mon 4 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**WNO - CARMEN** Jo Davies' new production, set in the recent past. Sung in French with English surtitles, Tues 5 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**YEOMAN OF THE GUARD** Presented by Worcester Gilbert & Sullivan Society, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Nov, Nurbury Theatre, Droitwich

**RIGOLETTO** Welsh National Opera present a timely revival of Verdi's dramatic opera. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Wed 6 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN** Welsh National Opera present a colourful production of Janacek's playful tale, Thurs 7 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**WNO - CARMEN** Jo Davies' new production, set in the recent past. Sung in French with English surtitles, Fri 8 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**COSÌ FAN TUTTE** Featuring Ana Maria Labin (Fiordiligi), Emily Edmonds (Dorabella), Rebecca Bottone (Despina), Benjamin Appl (Guiglielmo), Matthew Swensen (Ferrando), Fri 8 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**RIGOLETTO** Welsh National Opera present a timely revival of Verdi's dramatic opera. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Sat 9 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Theatre

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE\* (\*SORT OF)** Men, money and microphones are fought over in a loving and irreverent all-female adaptation of Jane Austen's literary classic, until Sat 2 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**CIRCUS 1903** Unique show featuring life-sized elephants created by pupeteers from War Horse and 'jaw-dropping' acts from across the globe,

until Sat 2 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**JACK THE RIPPER: THE VICTIMS** An all-female cast focus on the stories of the five canonical victims of Jack the Ripper, until Sat 2 Nov, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**NATIVITY! THE MUSICAL** Hit yuletide musical adapted for the stage by the film's creator, Debbie Isitt, until Sat 2 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE** Bold new staging of Hanif Kureishi's iconic screenplay, presented against a 'funky' backdrop of '80s music & culture, until Sat 2 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR BITA** Musical Theatre present an amateur staging of Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice's classic rock musical, until Sat 2 Nov, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

**SIX THE MUSICAL** From Tudor queens to pop princesses, the six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their tales, until Sun 3 Nov, Malvern Theatres



**A MUSEUM IN BAGHDAD** A story of treasured history, desperate choices and the remarkable Gertrude Bell, until Sat 25 Jan, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

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

**IT'S TRUE, IT'S TRUE, IT'S TRUE** Fringe First and Total Theatre Award-winning Breach (Tank, The Beanfield) restage the 1612 trial of Agostino Tassi for the rape of baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi, Thurs 31 Oct - Fri 1 Nov Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**DO YOU THINK THAT'S WISE - THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN LE MESURIER** Moving celebration of one of the most popular comic actors of the late 20th century, Fri 1 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**SNOW QUEEN** New adaptation of the timeless Hans Christian Andersen story, Fri 1 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE RECEIPTS UNCUT** Fri 1 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**GETTING THE THIRD DEGREE** The deeply moving story of Laurie Cunningham, who came to prominence with West Bromwich Albion in the late 1970s, Fri 1 Nov, Midlands Arts Cen-

tre, Birmingham

**THE FOOTBALL RAMBLE** Join the gang as they bring their chart-topping podcast to life in 'a multimedia extravaganza', Fri 1 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**RUTH COCKBURN** Comedy-theatre show fusing spoken word, poetry, songs & storytelling, Fri 1 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE RECEIPTS UNCUT** 'One of the UK's most hilarious podcasts' offers 'refreshing and entertaining perspectives' on being a millennial woman, Fri 1 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre

**SNAKE IN THE GRASS** Amateur staging of Alan Ayckbourn's tale of murder, blackmail and haunting, Fri 1 - Sat 9 Nov, Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**DO YOU THINK THAT'S WISE - THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN LE MESURIER** Moving celebration of one of the most popular comic actors of the late 20th century, Sat 2 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**FROM FLAG FLOORS - THE STORY OF IRISH MUSIC & DANCE** From its origins on cottage floors to the worldwide arenas of today, Sat 2 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ALADDIN JUNIOR** Presented by Stagecoach Redditch, Sun 3 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**SOMEONE WHO'LL WATCH OVER ME** Amateur staging of Frank McGuinness' play about terrorism, kidnapping, cultural bias and conflict, Mon 4 - Sat 9 Nov, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

**THE HERD** Amateur staging of Rory Kinnear's witty & heartfelt look at family life, Mon 4 - Sat 9 Nov, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**WITTY DITTIES WITH GREEN & MATTHEWS** Chris Green & Sophie Matthews present four centuries of chromatic comedy, ranging from 'bawdy Restoration ballads to stinging '60s satire', Tues 5 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**A TASTE OF HONEY** Jodie Prenger stars in Shelagh Delaney's taboo-breaking play, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**CURTAINS** Jason Manford stars in a 'hilarious' whodunnit packed full of 'catchy songs, unforgettable characters and plot twists', Tues 5 - Sat 9 Nov, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

**MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE** Bold new staging of Hanif Kureishi's iconic screenplay, presented against a 'funky' backdrop of '80s music & culture, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS** S.T.A.M.P.S present an amateur staging of Rodgers & Hammerstein's famous musical, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**AN INSPECTOR CALLS** The National

Theatre's landmark production of JB Priestley's classic thriller, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**HOW TO BE AMAZINGLY HAPPY** Storytelling & physical comedy combine in a one-woman show, Thurs 7 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**OKLAHOMA!** Get Your Wiggle On presents its version of Rodgers & Hammerstein's romantic musical, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 Nov, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**MEDEA** Playbox Theatre present a contemporary re-imagining of Euripides' searing tragedy, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 Nov, The Dream Factory, Warwick

**INVISIBLE LINES** 'Innovative, highly physical & thought-provoking' work exploring the invisible divides and connections between races, languages & cultural expectations, Thurs 7 - Wed 13 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**OTHELLO** The Pantaloons relocate Shakespeare's classic tragedy to a jazz-age setting... Fri 8 Nov, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**SQUID HEART** Two-woman improvised show inspired by a single word from the audience. Part of Foundry Festival, Fri 8 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**THE BARN ULTIMATUM** Brand new comedy from Tom Allsopp, Fri 8 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**BROKE & SOBER** Play exploring mental health problems, including PTSD & clinical depression. Part of Foundry Festival 2019, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**REBECCA** Amateur staging presented by Our Star Theatre Company, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Nov, Norbury Theatre, Droitwich

**THE BOY IN THE DRESS** World premiere based on David Walliams' bestselling book and featuring songs by Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers, Fri 8 Nov - Sun 8 Mar, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**WHOSE STORY IS IT ANYWAY?** Kevin Tomlinson & Abi Hood present a series of stories and scenes spontaneously created and based on audience suggestions and donated objects, Sat 9 Nov, Farlow & Oretton Village Hall, Nr Kidderminster

**QUEER AND NOW** Whirlwind showcase of short work-in-progress performances from the next generation of queer Midlands theatre-makers. Part of SHOUT Festival, Sat 9 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**A WISH IN TIME** Adventures with Grimley the gnome in an introduction to theatre, Sat 9 Nov, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**DUMTEEDUM LIVE** Immersive Archers experience offering fans of the show a chance to listen to Emerald O'Hanrahan (Emma Grundy) talk about her character and the programme, Sat 9 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**ALGORITHMS** Sadie Clarke's one-woman show offers frank observations about bisexuality while highlighting the pitfalls of modern dating, Sun 10 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

## Kids Shows

**WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT** Little Angel Theatre's acclaimed adaptation returns to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Michael Rosen's beloved book, until Sun 3 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**THE SCARECROW'S WEDDING** Stage version of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's bestselling book, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY** The People's Theatre Company bring one of the world's best-loved nursery rhymes to life..., Sat 2 - Sun 3 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Cabaret

**THE FOOTSIE CLUB** Evening of burlesque, variety & cabaret, Fri 1 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

**THE DREAMBOYS** The UK's most famous male strip show, Thurs 7 Nov, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**TINA T'URNER TEA LADY'S STEAMY BINGO** Laugh, dance and play to win as Tina spins her cage of balls to a high-energy '80s soundtrack, Thurs 7 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

## Dance

**DIVERSITY - BORN READY** Featuring 'dance, illusions, mind-blowing stunts and inspiring stories', Fri 1 - Sun 3 Nov, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

**SHADOW & LIGHT DIWALI DANCE PERFORMANCE** Choreographed performance in celebration of Diwali, Sat 2 Nov, The Core, Solihull

**THE WIZARD OF OZ** Presented by Ballet UK, Sat 2 Nov, Swan Theatre, Worcester



**GENIUS** Six dancers perform two 'dramatic explorations of genius', Thurs 7 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE RITE OF SPRING & LEFT UNSEEN** Phoenix Dance Theatre present a double-bill - Jeanguy Saintus' reworking of The Rite Of Spring, and an emotive exploration of inclusion & isolation in Left Unseen, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

## Talks / Spoken Word

**JAMES KETCHELL - CHASING EXTREMES** Spend an evening with the only man on the planet to have reached the summit of Everest, rowed the Atlantic & cycled the world, Sat 2 Nov, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG: ALL MOUTH & SOME TROUSERS** Brand new and 'deliciously irreverent' account of a career that has taken Alexander from comedy to presenting to documentary-making to singing to becoming the voice of Toilet Duck, Sun 3 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**AN EVENING WITH SIMON REEVE** An evening with the world's leading adventure traveller, Mon 4 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JAMES KETCHELL - CHASING EXTREMES** Spend an evening with the only man on the planet to have reached the summit of Everest, rowed the Atlantic & cycled the world, Tues 5 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**BEN FOGLE - TALES FROM THE WILDERNESS** Join the modern-day explorer as he shares stories about crossing Antarctica and conquering Everest, Tues 5 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**HIT THE ODE** Unique performance poetry night featuring talented spoken-word artists, Fri 8 Nov, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**MONOLOGUE SLAM UK** Fast-paced night out featuring 'the most exciting new talent that Coventry has to offer', Sat 9 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**OFFICIAL SECRETS (15)** Biography/Drama. Starring Keira Knightley, Matt Smith. Malvern Theatres, Fri 1 - Thurs 7 Nov

**BAIT (15)** Drama. Starring Edward Rowe, Mary Woodvine. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sat 2 Nov

**THE FAREWELL (PG)** Comedy/Drama. Starring Shuzhen Zhao, Awkwafina. Foreign language, subtitled. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sat 2 - Thurs 7 Nov

**HONEYLAND (12a)**



Documentary/Drama. Starring Hatidze Muratova, Nazife Muratova. Foreign language, subtitled. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sun 3 - Wed 6 Nov

**DOWNTON ABBEY (PG)** Drama. Starring Tuppence Middleton, Matthew Goode. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sun 3 - Thurs 14 Nov

**MYSTIFY: MICHAEL HUTCHENCE (15)** Documentary. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 6 Nov

**AFTER THE WEDDING (12a)** Drama. Starring Michelle Williams, Julianne Moore. Malvern Theatres, Fri 8 - Thurs 14 Nov

**HITSVILLE: THE MAKING OF MOTOWN (12a)** Documentary/Music. Starring Berry Gordy, Smokey Robinson. Malvern Theatres, Sat 9 - Tues 12 Nov; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sat 9 - Tues 12 Nov

**JOKER (15)** Drama/Thriller. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro. Malvern Theatres, Sat 9 - Wed 13 Nov

**HUSTLERS (15)** Comedy/Crime. Starring Constance Wu, Jennifer Lopez. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sun 10 - Thurs 14 Nov

## Events

**HAUNTED CASTLE** A week of ghostly goings-on at Tamworth Castle's haunted spooktacular, until Fri 1 Nov, Tamworth Castle

**CANDY & COBWEBS** Halloween trick-or-treat event for under-eights and their grown-ups, until Fri 1 Nov, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire

**HALLOWEEN TILE DECORATING** Create your own Halloween or luna-themed designs at family drop-in tile decorating workshops on weekdays over the half-term break, until Fri 1 Nov, Jackfield Tile Museum, Telford

**TO BIND A WITCH! ACTIVITY SESSIONS** Find out about the witch craze of the 17th century, then make your own witch bottle and poppets to ward off witches and spirits, until Fri 1 Nov, The Commandery, Worcester

**OCTOBER HOLIDAY AT COVENTRY TRANSPORT MUSEUM** Explore, test and celebrate all types of energy sources, until Sat 2 Nov, Coventry Transport Museum

**BRICK OR TREAT** 'The most spook-tacular event of the year', until Sat 2 Nov, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

**A-SCARIUM** Discover the spooky creatures that lurk beneath the waves, until Sun 3 Nov, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

**SIMPLY CHRISTMAS - THE CRAFTY CHRISTMAS SHOW** 'An extravaganza of exclusive ranges of bespoke and unusual gifts, including glass, jewellery,

art, candles, ceramics and clothing', until Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**BRICKLIVE** Opportunity for children aged 12 & under to play, create and discover with Lego bricks, until Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW** Featuring supplies, innovations, new product launches, demonstrations and workshops, until Sun 3 Nov, NEC, B'ham

**FAMILY FUN DAYS - HALLOWEEN 2019** Enjoy a spooky outdoor trail and take-home activities, until Sun 3 Nov, Packwood House, Solihull

**THE WIZARD EXPRESS** The Wizard Express is steaming back to the Severn Valley Railway to take young witches and wizards on a magical journey to Wizard School, until Sun 3 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**OCTOBER HALF TERM AT SHAKESPEARE'S FAMILY HOMES** Enjoy a whole week of half-term fun with hands-on activities, until Sun 3 Nov, Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford Upon Avon

**SPOOKY WITLEY COURT WITH CREEPY CRITTERS** Featuring 'wicked' crafts and a 'spooktacular' Halloween quest around the grounds, until Sun 3 Nov, Witley Court, Worcestershire

**SPOOKY KENILWORTH CASTLE WITH CREEPY CRITTERS** Featuring 'wicked' crafts and a 'spooktacular' Halloween quest around the castle, until Sun 3 Nov, Kenilworth Castle

**WHERE'S WALLY? THE BIG MUSEUM HUNT** Join the search for Wally this half term, until Sun 3 Nov, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

**FREDDO'S HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR** Arrive dressed up and join in the fun as Freddo creates his very own Halloween monster, until Sun 3 Nov, Cadbury World, Birmingham

**THE HAUNTED CASTLE** With wondrous witches, Horrible Histories and fear-some attractions, experience Warwick Castle's 'best ever haunted castle event', until Sun 3 Nov, Warwick Castle

**SPOOKY SPECTACULAR** Featuring Halloween decorations with illuminated, themed scarecrows and hundreds of pumpkins, until Sun 3 Nov, West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley

**OCTOBER HALF TERM - FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD** Create some spooktacular crafts as part of the venue's Festival Of The Dead celebrations, until Sun 3 Nov, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**HOME AND HIBERNATE - OCTOBER HALF-TERM FAMILY TRAIL** Take a look at all the different types of homes made at Croome by both people and wildlife, until Sun 3 Nov, Croome Park, Worcester

**FIENDISH FELONS - HALF TERM** Dis-

cover the dastardly deeds of criminals in the past and the putrid punishments they faced, until Sun 3 Nov, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**HALLOWEEN 2019** A spooktacular Halloween experience featuring 'the spookiest day and night events', until Sun 3 Nov, Tudor World, Stratford-upon-Avon

**FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD** The hugely popular 'deathly fiesta' returns for its fourth year with a production combining carnival, circus, theatre and clubbing, Fri 1 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**DIWALI FESTIVAL OF LIGHT ACTIVITIES** Featuring workshops in shadow puppet-making, dance & performance, glowing sculptures and an illustration competition to help visualise the Diwali story, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR** Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Nov, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Tamworth

**MUSEUMS AT NIGHT: HOUSE PARTY ON HENLEY STREET** The universe is in disorder, and outrageous characters from yesteryear have broken free to throw a party with a twist at Shakespeare's pad, Fri 1 - Sat 2 Nov, Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-Upon-Avon

**MIND BODY SPIRIT FESTIVAL** Three-day event offering 'spiritual seekers' a safe place in which to commune and share their ideas, beliefs and philosophies, Fri 1 - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, B'ham

**CAKE INTERNATIONAL** Featuring 'the biggest and most groundbreaking displays, the wildest competition entries and the most famous cake stars from around the world', Fri 1 - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**THE STRATFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL** Featuring a host of respected writers and broadcasters, Fri 1 - Sun 3 Nov, various locations in Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE NATIONAL PET SHOW** 'The perfect place to experience everything pet-related', Sat 2 - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS 2019** Featuring snooker tournament winners from the previous 12 months, Mon 4 - Sun 10 Nov, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

**CHRISTMAS AT SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE** Featuring floral displays and a glass of wassail, Mon 4 Nov - Sun 5 Jan, Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-Upon-Avon

**WWE LIVE** 'Bursting with all the drama and energy of a rock concert', Wed 6 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**THE HISTORIC GHOST WALK OF WORCESTER** Follow the guide into deep, dark pockets of Worcester and discover a side to the Faithful City that you never knew existed, Wed 6 Nov, Elgar Statue, Worcester

**MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - DENS** Build dens of all shapes and sizes, Wed 6 Nov, Coventry Transport Museum

**BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET** The popular Christmas markets return, Thurs 7 Nov - Mon 23 Dec, Birmingham City Centre

**THE LANCASTER INSURANCE CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW** The world's largest gathering of car and motorcycle clubs, Fri 8 - Sun 10 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**THE CLASSIC MOTORBIKE SHOW** Featuring a host of outstanding two-wheeled classics, Fri 8 - Sun 10 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**MEDIEVAL BANQUET** Immersive evening of medieval entertainment and hearty food & drink, Sat 9 Nov, Warwick Castle

**INTERNATIONAL MODEL BOAT SHOW** Featuring over 600 models from 25-plus club & society displays, Sat 9 - Sun 10 Nov, Warwickshire Event Centre, Leamington Spa

**GREAT BRITISH MODEL RAILWAY SHOW** Family-friendly weekend, Sat 9 - Sun 10 Nov, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**UNDERWATER SUPERHEROES** Find your ultimate ocean superpower as you test yourself against some powerful sea creatures, Sat 9 - Fri 22 Nov, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham



House Party on Henley Street - Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon



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### Gigs

**VAMPIRE WEEKEND** Mon 11 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**FEEDER** Mon 11 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL** Mon 11 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**QUAKER CITY NIGHT HAWKS** Tues 12 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LIAM GALLAGHER** Tues 12 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**REEL BIG FISH** Tues 12 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LOVELYTHEBAND** Tues 12 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**JACK SAVORETTI** Tues 12 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**IAN SIEGAL** Tues 12 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**DIAMOND - THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE** Tues 12 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**FLEECEY FOLK: DAOIRI FARRELL** Tues 12 Nov, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**THE PITMEN POETS** Wed 13 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**HALF-ALIVE** Wed 13 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ME, MYSELF & I - BARRY STEELE** Wed 13 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**HELLO AGAIN - THE STORY OF NEIL DIAMOND** Wed 13 Nov, The Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**KATHRYN TICKELL & THE DARKENING** Wed 13 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**CHRISTINA AGUILERA** Thurs 14 Nov, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

**TOM WALKER** Thurs 14 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ONE NIGHT IN DUBLIN** Thurs 14 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE POOZIES** Thurs 14 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**THE SENSATIONAL 60'S EXPERIENCE** Thurs 14 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**GOLDLINK** Thurs 14 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE STYLISTICS** Thurs 14 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE RIGHTEOUS JAZZ** Thurs 14 Nov, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

**TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN** Fri 15 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ROMA COVE & KROOKED TONGUE** Fri 15 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS** Fri 15 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**PEARL JAM UK** Fri 15 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MR EAZI** Fri 15 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DREADZONE** Fri 15 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**PITCH BACK** Fri 15 Nov, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

**YONAKA** Fri 15 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TWIST & SHOUT** Fri 15 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**ABBA FOREVER** Fri 15 - Sat 16 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL '80S LIVE** Sat 16 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BOURBON ALLEY** Sat 16 Nov, Marris Bar, Worcester

**THE COUNTERFEIT STONES** Sat 16 Nov, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**THE DOORS ALIVE** Sat 16 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE DUALERS** Sat 16 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE CLONE ROSES + KAZABIAN** Sat 16 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**FREE RADIO HITS LIVE 2019** Sat 16 Nov, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**METRONOMY** Sat 16 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE HOOTEN HALLERS** Sat 16 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE COUNTERFEIT STONES** Sat 16 Nov, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**TULISA** Sat 16 Nov, Kasbah, Coventry



**THE MERSEY BEATLES** Sat 16 Nov, Albany Theatre, Coventry

**IVORY WAVE** Sat 16 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**FOY VANCE** Sat 16 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**BARRY STEELE** Sat 16 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**A TRIP 2 THE OLDSKOOL** Sat 16 - Sun 17 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**RAYMOND FROGGATT** Sun 17 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**REUBEN JAMES** Sun 17 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**EASY SUNDAYS** Sun 17 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**FREYA RIDINGS** Sun 17 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham



**ORLA GARTLAND** Sun 17 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

### Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by Bach (arr. Widor), Guilman, G. Thalben-Ball, Parry, Sibelius & Duruflé, Mon 11 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE CHAMBER CHOIR & BAROQUE ORCHESTRA: GENTLE FLAME** Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme includes works by JS Bach & Liz Johnson (Gentle Flame), Tues 12 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CBSO: CAPRICCIO ESPAGNOL** Featuring Jaume Santonja Espinós (conductor) & Clara Mouriz (mezzo soprano). Programme includes works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Montsalvatge, Falla & Prokofiev, Wed 13 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR GALA CONCERT** Featuring Paul Spicer (conductor) & The Musical and Amicable Society Orchestra. Programme includes works by JS Bach, Handel & Haydn, Sat 16 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral

**THE ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC WITH VIKTORIA MULLOVA** Also featuring Richard Egarr (director & harpsichord) & James Hall (countertenor). Programme includes works by CPE Bach, JS Bach & Haydn, Sat 16 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: HANDEL'S MESSIAH** Featuring The Musical & Amicable Society Baroque Orchestra, David Wynne (conductor), Penny Appleyard (soprano), Philippa Thomas (mezzo), Xavier Hetherington (tenor) & James Williams (baritone), Sat 16 Nov, Church of St Alban the Martyr, Birmingham

**WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: MOZART'S REQUIEM** Sat 16 Nov, Worcester Cathedral

**CBSO FAMILY CONCERT** Featuring Jaume Santonja Espinós (conductor) & Catherine Arlidge (presenter). Programme includes works by Britten, John Williams, Piazzolla, Tchaikovsky, Arban, Beethoven & Brahms, Sun 17 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHOIR: MASS IN BLUE** Also featuring Lichfield Cathedral Young Voices & the Young Phoenix Singers, Sun 17 Nov, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

**CHANDOS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor) & Roberto Ruisi (violin). Programme includes works by Berlioz & Prokofiev, Sun 17 Nov, Malvern Theatres

### Comedy

**FLO & JOAN** Tues 12 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JIM DAVIDSON** Tues 12 - Wed 13 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**BEN ELTON** Thurs 14 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**JOHN ROBINS** Thurs 14 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ROBERT WHITE, JO ENRIGHT & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 14 Nov, The Glee Club, B'ham

**SHAZIA MIRZA** Fri 15 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**DARREN HARRIOTT** Fri 15 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**TIM MINCHIN** Fri 15 & Sat 16 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**IAN STONE, IAN SMITH, ROBERT WHITE & JO ENRIGHT** Fri 15 & Sat 16 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROMESH RANGANATHAN** Fri 15 & Sat 16 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JACK WHITEHALL** Fri 15 - Sun 17 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**GEORGE EGG** Sat 16 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**RUDI LICKWOOD, MATT BRAGG, TUDUR OWEN & HAYLEY ELLIS** Sat 16 Nov, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

**GEOFF NORCOTT** Sat 16 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**LADIES NIGHT FEAT. NOREEN KHAN, VIBS BHATIA & DJ AK BEATS** Sat 16 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**IMPROV COMEDY WITH BOX OF FROGS** Sun 17 Nov, The Glee Club, B'ham

**MICKEY SHARMA, ANUVAB PAL, SUKH OJLA & OMID SINGH** Sun 17 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SHAZIA MIRZA** Sun 17 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

### Theatre

**LAYILA** Siana Bangura's drama concerning a 15-year-old Sierra Leonean British girl whose life is turned upside-down when her grandma suddenly dies, Mon 11 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**THE MOUSETRAP** Susan Penhaligon stars in Agatha Christie's legendary thriller, Mon 11 - Sat 16 Nov, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**TEN TIMES TABLE** Robert Daws, Deborah Grant, Robert Duncan & Mark Curry star in Alan Ayckbourn's 'tumultuous comedy', Mon 11 - Sat 16 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**JUMPROV** Featuring improvisational theatre company Jumprov. Part of Foundry Festival, Tues 12 Nov, The REP, Birmingham



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THE PEOPLE FIGHT BACK  
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**JIM DAVIDSON**  
The People Fight Back



**SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS**  
The Story of the Dubliners  
FRI 15 NOV 7.30



**A DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS**  
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| 29/1 | Syd Lawrence Orchestra & Singers         | £24     |
| 31/1 | The Neil Diamond Story                   | £22     |
| 1/2  | Sing-a-Long-a The Greatest Showman       | £16/£12 |
| 1/2  | Sing-a-Long-a Bohemian Rhapsody          | £16/£12 |
| 16/2 | California Dreamin'                      | £23.50  |
| 20/2 | Dom Joly Live                            | £18     |
| 21/2 | The Fureys                               | £22     |
| 22/2 | Mama - An Evening of Genesis Music       | £18     |
| 07/3 | Quill                                    | £19     |
| 17/3 | Wanted! - Powerful Drama                 | £14/£12 |
| 19/3 | Foster & Allen                           | £29     |
| 25/3 | Jimmy Buckley                            | £23.50  |
| 9/4  | Woodland Tales with Granddad             | £10     |
| 15/4 | The Sooty Show                           | £14     |
| 22/4 | Herman's Hermits                         | £24     |
| 20/5 | Johnny McEvoy                            | £22     |
| 22/5 | The Opera Boys                           | £20     |
| 23/5 | Back to the Sixties 2 - Brothers in Song | £23.50  |

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**DICK WHITTINGTON**  
The Pantomime  
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**ARTRIX** November 2019

**Saturday 2 November**  
**KIM LOWINGS & ANDREW LOWINGS**  
Father and daughter folk duo



**Thursday 7 November**  
**NT LIVE: HANSARD**  
Live screening as part of NT Live's 10th birthday season



**Friday 8 November**  
**POOR NAMELESS BOY**  
A new generation of folk music from singer-songwriter Joel Henderson



**Thursday 14 November**  
**I WANNA BE YOURS**  
Paines Plough and Tamasha's play about first dates, first laughs and first loves



**Friday 15 November**  
**SHAZIA MIRZA: COCONUT**  
A hilarious and uplifting joyride into the art of survival



**Friday 22 November**  
**SAJEELA KERSHI & GUESTS: IMMIGRANT DIARIES**  
Sublime true stories from a cast of performers



**COMING SOON:** The Official Receivers, G2 - Definitive Genesis, Bromsgrove Concerts: Hyungi Lee Abba Forever, George Egg: Moveable Feast, Raymond Froggatt: The Singer Songwriter 2019 Tour Allie Moore: Fair Cop Unleashed, Bromsgrove Concerts: Mark Bebbington, Graham Parker The Simon and Garfunkel Story, The ELO Experience: Greatest Hits and More Tour 2019 Fizzogs - The Greatest Showwench, NT Live: Present Laughter, Quill Christmas Concert, Cara Dillon All & Sundry: Snow White, Little Star Baby Show, Santa's Christmas Countdown...

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**SHACKLETON'S CARPENTER** One-man show of survival and intrepid action adventure, Tues 12 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**BRIGHT PLACES** Unapologetically honest and sometimes comical exploration of one woman's unique take on life with multiple sclerosis, Tues 12 - Fri 15 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**MY FAIR LADY** Amateur staging presented by Bilston Operatic Company, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** King's High School & Warwick School present an amateur staging of the iconic sci-fi musical, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Nov, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**CELEBRATE THE SEASON** Worcester Musical Theatre Company present an evening of dance, song & comedy, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Nov, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**AN INSPECTOR CALLS** The National Theatre's landmark production of JB Priestley's classic thriller, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS: TRIBE 25** Brand new show featuring 'skill, stamina and red-hot rhythms to stir your soul!', Wed 13 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**PILOT NIGHTS** An evening of eclectic performance from 'some of the UK's most exciting theatre companies', Wed 13 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**FATHERS, FAMILIES & F\*CKBOYS** One woman's journey to reconnect with her father in order to connect with herself, Wed 13 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**QUEENS OF SHEBA** 'Hilarious, moving and uplifting' stories of four passionate black women battling everyday misogyny, Wed 13 - Sat 16 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CHEETAH SISTERS** Autobiographical piece exploring the conflict of national and personal identity involved in interracial adoption. Part of Foundry Festival, Thurs 14 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**I WANNA BE YOURS** Paines Plough present a debut play from slam poetry champion Zia Ahmed, Thurs 14 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CROFT & PEARCE: DOUBLE TAKE** Stars of BBC Radio Four's The Croft & Pearce Show present their new narrative sketch show, Thurs 14 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

**DICK WHITTINGTON - GROWN UPS ONLY!** Adult-only pantomime starring Lee Redwood as Sarah the Cook & Gwynfryn West as Dick, Fri 15 Nov, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**UNEXPLODED ORDNANCES** Split Britches combine a Dr Strangelove-inspired performance with a 'daring forum for public conversation' that explores ageing, anxiety, hidden de-

sires and how to look forward when the future is uncertain, Sat 16 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**LAYILA** Siana Bangura's drama concerning a 15-year-old Sierra-Leonean British kid whose life is turned upside down when her grandma suddenly dies, Sat 16 Nov, The REP, B'ham

**THE SNOW QUEEN** Hans Christian Andersen's family classic following the adventures of inseparable friends Kai & Gerda, Sat 16 Nov - Mon 30 Dec, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH LENNY HENRY: WHO AM I, AGAIN?** Sun 17 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Kids Shows

**THE GRUFFALO** Musical version of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's classic picture book for children, Mon 11 - Tues 12 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**DEAR ZOO LIVE!** Rod Campbell's best-selling book is brought to life with puppetry, music and audience participation, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 Nov, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

## Dance

**ACOSTA DANZA** Programme of new & existing works from ballet superstar Carlos Acosta, Mon 11 - Tues 12 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**YAATRA** Jaivant Patel presents an evening of 'captivating' solo kathak and contemporary dance, Wed 13 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

**THE NUTCRACKER** Presented by Russian State Ballet, Thurs 14 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**DON QUIXOTE** Russian State Ballet fuse 'duels and spectacular choreography with a dash of Spanish passion', Fri 15 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**GISELLE** Presented by Russian National Ballet, Fri 15 Nov, The Roses, Tewkesbury

**SHOUT VOGUE BALL** Club culture meets high art as Vogue Houses come together from across the UK (including Birmingham's very own House of Bab) to compete for dance supremacy in a catwalk spectacular pulled straight from New York City's iconic ballroom culture, Fri 15 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

**SWAN LAKE** Presented by Russian State Ballet, Sat 16 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**AN EVENING WITH NAHID SIDDIQUI** Exclusive Midlands performance from one of Europe's leading Kathak dancers, Sun 17 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

## Talks / Spoken Word

**SIR RANULPH FIENNES: LIVING DANGEROUSLY** Join 'the world's greatest living explorer' as he recounts his personal journey, Wed 13 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE CYCLING PODCAST GRAND TOUR 2019** Evening of cycling analysis, reportage & insight with experts Richie Moore & Lionel Birnie, Wed 13 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

## Cabaret

**BURGERZ** Performance artist Travis Alabanza presents a show that is 'timely, unsettling and powerful', Fri 15 - Sat 16 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry & Sun 17 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**BURLESQUE'D - A STAGE SPECTACULAR** Theatrical adventure fusing the world of musical theatre with the mystery of cirque... Fri 15 - Sat 16 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**THE LAUNDROMAT (15)** Drama. Starring Gary Oldman, Sharon Stone. The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Mon 11 - Wed 13 Nov

**NON-FICTION (15)** Comedy/Drama. Starring Guillaume Canet, Juliette Binoche. Malvern Theatres, Tues 12 - Thurs 14 Nov

**THE AERONAUTS (PG)** Adventure/Biography. Starring Felicity Jones, Eddie Redmayne. Malvern Theatres, Fri 15 - Thurs 21 Nov

## Events

**MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - GEARS** Explore gears and cogs to figure out how to get everything moving, Wed 13 Nov, Coventry Trans-

port Museum

**PLANETARIUM LATES: AMAUROSIS** Intriguing 3D performance, partly in the dark, that investigates what happens when music becomes your emotional guide, Thurs 14 Nov, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

**WHERE LIGHT FALLS** Historic England project using light and poetry to tell the story of the people who risked their lives to preserve historic buildings during the Second World War, Thurs 14 - Sat 16 Nov, Coventry Cathedral

**FESTIVE GIFT FAIR** The biggest indoor Christmas shopping fair in the Midlands is back, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Nov, NEC, Birmingham



**WINTER CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL** Featuring some of the best chocolate makers and traders in the Midlands, Sat 16 Nov, FarGo Village, Coventry

**AVONCROFT FEST-OF-ALE** Featuring hand-picked ales, ciders and perries, plus a selection of breads and cheeses, Sat 16 Nov, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**MCM BIRMINGHAM COMIC CON** The UK's biggest modern-pop-culture event returns to Birmingham, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS** Enjoy a 'scrumptious day out that's choc-full of festive fun this Christmas at Cadbury World', Sat 16 - Sun 17 Nov, Cadbury World, Birmingham

**THE GAYDON CHRISTMAS MARKET** Featuring 'quality gifts and produce' such as liqueurs, mead, preserves, chutneys, soft toys and jewellery, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Nov, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**CHRISTMAS GIFT FAYRE** Explore festive stalls 'overflowing' with hundreds of unusual gift ideas, decorations, festive food & drink, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**SANTA SAFARI** Featuring a four-mile self-drive safari and a visit to Santa, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Nov, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**MOTORCYCLE LIVE** The UK's largest motorcycle show, Sat 16 - Sun 24 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**TORNADO!** The world famous locomotive makes a welcome return, Sun 17 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster



Jon Boden & The Remnant Kings - Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

## Gigs

**STEVE HACKETT: GENESIS REVISITED** Mon 18 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**MAVERICK SABRE** Tues 19 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JOHN MAYALL** Tues 19 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**PENELOPE ISLES** Tues 19 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SHAKESPEARS SISTER** Tues 19 Nov, Symphony Hall, B'ham



**D BLOCK EUROPE** Wed 20 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MARTIN STEPHENSON & THE DAINTIES** Thurs 21 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH THE STEVE HILLAGE BAND** Thurs 21 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**PROFESSOR GREEN** Thurs 21 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MATT OWENS** Thurs 21 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**CALEXICO AND IRON & WINE + LISA O'NEIL** Thurs 21 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**FOLK IN THE FOYER: THE BLUE MOTEL** Thurs 21 Nov, Evesham Arts Centre

**BIG GIGSPANNER BAND** Thurs 21 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**BAT FOR LASHES** Thurs 21 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**YUNGBLUD** Fri 22 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**SHED SEVEN** Fri 22 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**SCARLXR** Fri 22 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**GLASS CEILINGS** Fri 22 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CHRIS BANNISTER PERFORMS THE MUSIC OF JOHN DENVER** Fri 22 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**WITHIN: SYSKA FLUTES & MRL BRASS ENSEMBLE** Fri 22 Nov, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**DROP DOWN SMILING** Fri 22 Nov, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin, Coventry

**GERRY COLVIN BAND** Sat 23 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**ZOE SCHWARZ BLUE COMMOTION** Sat 23 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester



**HAWKWIND 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR** Sat 23 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**SILVERS REUNION** Sat 23 Nov, The Tin Music And Arts, Canal Basin,

Coventry

**JON BODEN & THE REMNANT KINGS** Sat 23 Nov, The Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**SCOUTING FOR GIRLS** Sat 23 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**GENTLEMEN'S DUB CLUB** Sat 23 Nov, Kasbah, Coventry

**JADE BIRD** Sat 23 Nov, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THE DESTROYERS** Sat 23 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**PUP** Sat 23 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**NEW MODEL ARMY** Sat 23 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**RHYS LEWIS** Sat 23 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**GREEN HAZE** Sat 23 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**TOKYO MYERS** Sun 24 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MAHALIA - LOVE & COMMITMENT TOUR** Sun 24 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SIXTIES GOLD** Sun 24 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**FLEECEY FOLK: WILL POUND** Sun 24 Nov, The Fleece Inn, Bretherton, Nr Evesham

**PRATEEK KUHAD** Sun 24 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE ROSES CHOIR** Sun 24 Nov, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**SIR WAS** Sun 24 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

## Classical Music

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK WIND ORCHESTRA & PERCUSSION AUTUMN CONCERT** Mon 18 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**COULL QUARTET: LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS** Featuring Roger Coull & Philip Gallaway (violins), Jonathan Barritt (viola) & Nick Roberts (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, Shostakovich, Schubert & Mendelssohn, Wed 20 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CBSO: BEETHOVEN & STRAVINSKY** Featuring Gustavo Gimeno (conductor) & Jeremy Denk (piano), Wed 20 Nov (2.15pm), Symphony Hall, B'ham

**MARK BEBBINGTON PIANO CONCERT** Programme includes works by Fauré, Poulenc, Franck & Chopin, Fri 22 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CBSO: FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSICS** Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor) & John Suchet (presenter). Programme includes works by Coates, Satie, Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns, Grainger, Sibelius, Walton, Grieg, Mahler, Chabrier, Elgar, Stravinsky & Ravel, Fri 22 Nov, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**PALISANDER RECORDER QUARTET: BEWARE THE SPIDER!** Sat 23 Nov, Unitarian Chapel, Warwick

**CBSO: BEETHOVEN & STRAVINSKY** Featuring Gustavo Gimeno (conductor) & Jeremy Denk (piano), Sat 23 Nov (7pm), Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**STRATFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Programme includes works by Copland, Gershwin & Dvorak, Sun 24 Nov, Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon

## Comedy

**FRANK SKINNER** Tues 19 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE DOLLOP - LIVE PODCAST** Tues 19 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SUZI RUFFELL** Wed 20 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ARDAL O'HANLON** Thurs 21 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ALFIE MOORE** Thurs 21 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**JANE GODLEY, SEAN COLLINS & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 21 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**VIR DAS** Fri 22 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**RAW COMEDY** Fri 22 Nov, Evesham Arts Centre

**SAJEELA KERSHI & GUESTS** Fri 22 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**TAT VISION LIVE** Fri 22 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SIMON LOMAS, VINCE ATTA, JANE GODLET & SEAN COLLINS** Fri 22 & Sat

23 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ANDY PARSONS** Sat 23 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**SEAN PERCIVAL, JOEY PAGE, EMMANUEL SONUBI & DARIUS DAVIES** Sat 23 Nov, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**COUNT ARTHUR STRONG** Sat 23 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**LOU SANDERS** Sun 24 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT SPECIAL FEAT.**

**LOST VOICE GUY, ROBERT WHITE & MICKY P KERR** Sun 24 Nov, Kidderminster Town Hall, Kidderminster

## Theatre

**TROJAN HORSE** A very local story about a community torn apart by racial division, 'British values' and the culture of the government's Prevent strategy, Tues 19 - Thurs 21 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**FAME** Keith Jack & Jorgie Porter star in a new stage adaptation of the hit 1980s film, Tues 19 - Sat 23 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**CABARET** John Partridge takes on the role of Emcee in Kander & Ebb's landmark musical. Anita Harris & Kara Lily Hayworth also star, Tues 19 - Sat 23 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**CATS** Redditch Operatic Society present an amateur staging of Andrew Lloyd Webber's ground-breaking musical, Tues 19 - Sat 23 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ONE UNDER** Winsome Pinnock's evocative play about the power of guilt and the quest for atonement, Tues 19 - Sat 23 Nov, The REP, Birmingham

**THE PRODUCERS** St Augustine's MTC present an amateur staging of the Mel Brooks musical, Tues 19 - Sun 24 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**TALBOT HOUSE: A HOME FROM HOME** Story in words and music about the World War One refuge set up for all soldiers, regardless of rank, Wed 20 Nov, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**THE MILLER'S STORY** Physical comedy, music & song combine in Clown Noir's adaptation of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales story, Thurs 21 Nov, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**THE GREATEST SHOWWENCH** Hollywood has The Greatest Showman, the Black Country has The Greatest



Showench! Fizzog are back with their latest production... Thurs 21 Nov, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**FIRST TIME** HIV-plus theatre-maker Nathaniel Hall presents a 'funny and frank' autobiographical solo show about staying positive in a negative world, Thurs 21 - Fri 22 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**A DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS** Robert Powell & Sue Jameson celebrate the life & times of Charles Dickens through readings & scenes from his best-loved novels. Clive Conway accompanies on flute while Christine Croshaw plays piano, Sun 24 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

## Kids Shows

**BILLIONAIRE BOY** New staging of David Walliams' bestselling story, Wed 20 - Sat 23 Nov, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

## Cabaret

**TORI SCOTT IS PICKLED** Join the New York-based cabaret star as she celebrates her poor life choices and unconditional love of vodka, Sat 23 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

## Dance

**GENIUS** Six dancers perform two 'dramatic explorations of genius', Tues 19 - Wed 20 Nov, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**RICHARD ALSTON DANCE COMPANY: THE FINAL EDITION** Diverse mix of dance & music featuring two brand new works by Alston & Martin Lawrence, Thurs 21 - Fri 22 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ROMEO & JULIET** Performed by the award-winning Ballet Cymru, Fri 22

Nov, Malvern Theatres

**THE NUTCRACKER** Birmingham Royal Ballet perform Sir Peter Wright's world-famous festive production, Fri 22 Nov - Sat 14 Dec, Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE NUTCRACKER AND I** New family performance 'for anyone who dares to dream', Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Talks / Spoken Word

**ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG** Brand new and 'deliciously irreverent' account of a career that has taken Alexander from comedy to presenting to documentary-making to singing to becoming the voice of Toilet Duck, Mon 18 Nov, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

**GORDON BUCHANAN: ANIMAL FAMILIES & ME** Join the acclaimed television wildlife cameraman as he shares stories of his experiences with some of the world's most fearsome and majestic animals, Mon 18 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**MY MOUNTAIN LIFE BY SIMON YATES** An evening with one of the most accomplished exploratory mountaineers of all time, Mon 18 Nov, The Albany Theatre, Coventry



**BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH** Zephaniah shares a selection of favourite stories and poems, Fri 22 Nov, Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE** New show



Richard Alston Dance Company - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

fusing poetry & spoken word, Sat 23 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Events

**MINI MOTORISTS** Under-fives activity morning, introducing youngsters, through play, to the world's largest collection of historic British cars, Mon 18 Nov, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**SENSORY STORIES AND RHYMES TRANSPORT MUSEUM SPECIAL** Explore the museum's collections through songs, stories, movement and sensory play, Tues 19 Nov, Coventry Transport Museum

**MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - TRAVELLING THE WORLD** Play with maps and transport, Wed 20 Nov, Coventry Transport Museum

**BLAKESLEY BY NIGHT** An atmospheric costumed evening tour and a rare chance to see Blakesley Hall by moonlight, Fri 22 Nov, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

**FROST FAIR** Featuring crafts, gifts, fine foods and unique and original presents, Fri 22 Nov, Ragley Hall, Alcester

**FAMILY SATURDAY: THIS MAKES THAT WITH THESE - TOOL SKILLS SPECIAL** Explore how different fabrics are used in vehicles, practise tool skills and take a creation home, Sat 23 Nov, Coventry Transport Museum

**FARGO'S VEGAN FESTIVAL** Find new products, try new food and explore veganism, Sat 23 Nov, FarGo Village, Coventry

**EDWARDIAN TEAROOMS LATE: SILENT NOIZE PRESENTS THE SILENT DISCO** The Silent Disco returns for a third year after enjoying huge success in 2017 & '18, Sat 23 Nov, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

**WARLEY NATIONAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION** Featuring more than 90 lay-

outs from the UK and abroad, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

**BIG PICTURE FILM FESTIVAL** Weekend of family-favourite films, modern movie classics, street food, wraparound activities and creative collaborations, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**SANTA HUNTS** Help the museum's festive costumed guides find the man himself, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**LEGO ENGINEERS** Can you and your family design and build great engineering solutions using only LEGO blocks? Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, Think-tank Science Museum, Birmingham

**CHRISTMAS THROUGH TIME** Take in the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas across the years, Sat 23 Nov - Tues 24 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS** Enjoy a 'scrumptious day out that's choc-full of festive fun this Christmas at Cadbury World', Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, Cadbury World, Birmingham

**SANTA SAFARI** Featuring a four-mile self-drive safari and a visit to Santa, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Nov, West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**MEET SANTA** Say hello to the man himself by visiting the Antarctic Ice Cave, Sat 23 Nov - Mon 23 Dec, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

**SANTA'S SLEEPOVER** Experience 'the most magical Christmas escape', Sun 24 Nov, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

**FESTIVE MARKET** Discover some unique gift ideas at a variety of stalls, Sun 24 Nov, Aston Hall, Birmingham

**TORNADO!** The world famous locomotive makes a welcome return, Sun 24 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster



Billionaire Boy - The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham



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### Gigs

**LEWIS CAPALDI** Mon 25 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**RONNIE WOOD** Mon 25 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DAN OWEN** Mon 25 Nov, The Big Comfy Bookshop, Coventry

**FOUNTAINES D.C** Mon 25 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ELECTRIC SIX** Tues 26 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SKEPTA** Tues 26 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**NAAZ** Tues 26 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**RUEL** Tues 26 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ADAM ANT** Tues 26 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ELVIS PRESLEY** Wed 27 Nov, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**SHOW OF HANDS** Wed 27 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SUNSET SONS** Wed 27 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MAC DEMARCO** Wed 27 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY** Wed 27 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**SWARMZ** Wed 27 Nov, O2 Academy, B'ham

**T.REXTASY** Thurs 28 Nov, Albany Theatre, Coventry

**TWELFTH DAY** Thurs 28 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS** Thurs 28 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**WSTR** Thurs 28 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**RED HOT CHILLI PIPERS** Thurs 28 Nov, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**GRAHAM PARKER** Thurs 28 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**DIDO** Thurs 28 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**AMON AMARTH: BERSERKER WORLD TOUR 2019** Thurs 28 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**FAT WHITE FAMILY** Thurs 28 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JESSICA BOSWELL** Thurs 28 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BABYBIRD** Thurs 28 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS** Fri 29 Nov, Arena Birmingham

**WSTR** Fri 29 Nov, Kasbah, Coventry

**THE TOTAL WHO SHOW** Fri 29 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**GIGGS** Fri 29 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PRINCE TRIBUTE - ENDORPHINMACHINE** Fri 29 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ALDOUS HARDING** Fri 29 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MYJO CHRISTMAS CONCERT** Fri 29 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**GLENN HUGHES** Fri 29 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BASTILLE** Fri 29 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**NICK HARPER** Fri 29 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**DUB PISTOLS** Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ELO EXPERIENCE** Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**JOOLS HOLLAND AND HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA** Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**GORDON HENDRICKS IS ELVIS** Sat 30 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**YOUNG DOLPH & KEY GLOCK** Sat 30 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TRUE ORDER - THE SOUND OF NEW ORDER** Sat 30 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NORTHLANE** Sat 30 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**XILLA** Sat 30 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BOWIESQUE** Sat 30 Nov, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**KREPT & KONAN** Sat 30 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MORETALLICA** Sat 30 Nov, The Marr's Bar, Worcester

**THE SPIRIT OF ELVIS** Sat 30 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**KIKI DEE & CARMELO LUGGERI** Sat 30 Nov, Albany Theatre, Coventry

### Classical

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by JS Bach, Balfe, Stanford, Prokofiev & Widor, Mon 25 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**BLAKE** Wed 27 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**PIANO SHOWCASE FEAT. SALOMÉ CHITAIA & YICHENG PAN** Programme includes works by Haydn, Tchaikovsky & Balakirev, Wed 27 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO: HAYDN & MOZART** Featuring Riccardo Minasi (conductor), Oliver Janes (clarinet) & Nikolaj Henriques (bassoon). Programme includes works by Haydn, Strauss, Beethoven & Mozart, Wed 27 Nov (7.30pm), Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO: HAYDN & MOZART** Featuring Riccardo Minasi (conductor), Oliver Janes (clarinet) & Nikolaj Henriques (bassoon). Programme includes works by Haydn, Strauss, Beethoven & Mozart, Thurs 28 Nov (2.15pm), Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE HALLÉ** Featuring Courtney Lewis (conductor) & Nicholas Trygstad (cello). Programme includes works by Ravel, Elgar & Sibelius, Thurs 28 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**PAVEL KOLESNIKOV PIANO CONCERT** Programme includes works by Chopin, Beethoven, Schumann, Bartók & Debussy, Thurs 28 Nov, Malvern Theatres

**TALICH STRING QUARTET** Featuring Jan Talich & Roman Patočka (violins), Radim Sedmidubsky (viola) & Petr Prause (cello). Programme includes works by Kalivoda, Dvorak & Beethoven, Fri 29 Nov, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

**BEN BALDWIN & FRIENDS: SERENITY 3** An evening of operatic arias, art songs and musicals, Sat 30 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE LONDON CONCERTANTE: VIENNESE CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT** Sat 30 Nov, Coventry Cathedral

### Comedy

**THE INDIANS ARE COMING FEATURING MICKEY SHARMA, ANUVAB PAL, SJ MAGIC, SUKH OJLA & OMID SINGH** Mon 25 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**JAMES ACASTER** Wed 27 Nov, Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon

**JACK DEE** Thurs 28 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**MIKE WILMOT PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 28 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOHN ROBINS** Thurs 28 Nov, The Regal, Evesham

**DARREN HARRIOTT** Fri 29 Nov, Warwick

Arts Centre, Coventry

**JETHRO** Fri 29 Nov, Evesham Arts Centre

**COUNT ARTHUR STRONG** Fri 29 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**MIKE WILMOT, JONNY AWSUM, SUSIE MCCABE & COMIC TBC** Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOHN ROBINS** Sat 30 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

**ROB ROUSE, SARAH KEYWORTH, NOEL JAMES & HAYLEY ELLIS** Sat 30 Nov, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**JUDI LOVE** Sat 30 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**BARNSTORMERS COMEDY NIGHT** Sat 30 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

### Opera

**GILBERT & SULLIVAN A LA CARTE** Miscellany of musical numbers, Tues 26 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

### Theatre

**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', Mon 25 - Sat 30 Nov, Malvern Theatres



**MALCOLM STENT'S SONGS OF PRAISE** Christmas Spectacular Hymns, carols & songs with a comedy sparkle, Tues 26 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**CHRISTMAS WITH STEPTOE & SON** Festive misadventures with the nation's favourite rag-and-bone men, Tues 26 - Thurs 28 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL** Presented by the award-winning BMOS Musical Theatre Company, Tues 26 - Sat 30 Nov, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH LENNY HENRY: WHO AM I, AGAIN?** Wed 27 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**JANE EYRE** Blackeyed Theatre present a new staging of Charlotte Brontë's Gothic masterpiece, Wed 27 - Thurs 28 Nov, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT** Presented by Youth Group Production, Wed 27 - Sat 30 Nov, Norbury Theatre, Droitwich



*Twelfth Day - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry*

**PUSS IN BOOTS** Festive favourite written by and starring Iain Lauchlan, Wed 27 Nov - Sat 11 Jan, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**THE LOCK IN CHRISTMAS CAROL** 'Half gig, half dance show and half panto', Thurs 28 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull



**CINDERELLA** Festive family favourite starring Rebecca Keatley (CBeebies) and Sam Rabone, Thurs 28 Nov - Sun 5 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**TREASURE ISLAND THE PANTO** Amateur staging presented by Pride & Joy Theatre, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**CINDERELLA** Fri 29 Nov - Sun 12 Jan Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY** Joe Landry's theatrical version of one of the most popular Hollywood films of all time, Sat 30 Nov - Sat 7 Dec, Criterion Theatre, Coventry

**BEAUTY & THE BEAST** Sat 30 Nov - Sat 28 Dec, Bedworth Civic Hall

**ALADDIN** Festive family show written & directed by Ben Crocker, Sat 30 Nov - Sat 4 Jan, The Roses, Tewkesbury

**PETER PAN** JM Barrie's swashbuckling creation flies into Birmingham for Christmas, Sat 30 Nov - Sun 19 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

## Kids Shows

**KIPPER'S SNOWY DAY** Original songs & music, puppetry and humour combine in a stage version of Mick Inkpen's much-loved book, Tues 26 Nov - Tues 31 Dec, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**RAYMOND BRIGGS' FATHER CHRISTMAS** Join Santa on the busiest day of his year - Christmas Eve, Wed 27 Nov - Sun 29 Dec, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Cabaret

**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 27 Nov, Palace Theatre, Redditch

## Dance

**STEP SONIC** Tom Dale Company present a double-bill of new choreographed works where the body is the main starting point, Tues 26 - Wed 27 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE LITTLE PRINCE** Luca Silvestrini's Protein re-imagine the classic tale, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, DanceXchange, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Talks / Spoken Word

**GORDON BUCHANAN: ANIMAL FAMILIES & ME** Join the acclaimed television wildlife cameraman as he shares stories of his experiences with some of the world's most fearsome and majestic animals, Mon 25 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS

**HELLO DOLLY! (PG)** Adventure/Comedy. Starring Barbra Streisand, Walter Matthau. Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton, Mon 25 Nov

**MIDNIGHT COWBOY (18)** Drama. Starring Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight. Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton, Tues 26 Nov

**BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID (PG)** Biography/Crime. Starring Paul Newman, Robert Redford. Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton, Wed 27 Nov

## Events

**FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA AT THE ENGINE HOUSE** Travel on a heritage steam train before settling down for Afternoon Tea served to your table, Tues 26 - Thurs 28 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS - CHAIN REACTIONS** Investigation into the concept of cause-and-effect, Wed 27 Nov, Coventry Transport Museum

**BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW WINTER** It's never too early to start thinking about Christmas! Start planning a food-filled day out with friends and family, Thurs 28 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

**ART & ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE** Featuring 180 specialist dealers exhibiting a wide range of pieces, from classic to contemporary, Thurs 28 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, NEC, Birmingham

**THE WORCESTER VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS**

**FAYRE** Featuring almost 200 stalls across the city centre, selling local arts & crafts, street food and gifts, Thurs 28 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, Worcester City Centre

**STEAM IN LIGHTS** A 'spectacular illuminated adventure along an enchanting Severn Valley with a dazzling extravaganza of magical creatures, sparkling lights, snowfall and thrills', all enjoyed from the warmth and comfort of a historic carriage, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**MAKING MERRY: ARTS, CRAFTS AND GIFTS FAIR** Experience the sights, sounds and smells of the season and find unique gifts for family and friends, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Nov, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**BEOWULF** Costumed performance of the legendary story, Sat 30 Nov, Aston Hall, Birmingham

**MOROCCAN FIRE NIGHTS** Evening fusing 'incredible entertainment with a delicious festive feast and a spectacularly themed environment', Sat 30 Nov - Sun 22 Dec, NEC, Birmingham



**CHRISTMAS CAROL TRAINS** Sing along or just soak up the festive atmosphere as you get Christmas off to a traditional start with an evening of carols and festive songs, Sat 30 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**SANTA HUNTS** Help the museum's festive costumed guides find the man himself, Sat 30 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**MINICHRISTMAS** Activities include tree decorating, paper-chain making and snowflake cutting, Sat 30 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS** Enjoy a 'scrumptious day out that's choc-full of festive fun this Christmas at Cadbury World', Sat 30 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, Cadbury World, Birmingham

**CHRISTMAS AT COALBROOKDALE** Meet Santa in this all-new experience, Sat 30 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Ironbridge, Shropshire

**SANTA SAFARI** Featuring a four-mile self-drive safari and a visit to Santa, Sat 30 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**SANTA SPECIALS** Experience the magic of Christmas on a steam train ride through the Severn Valley with Santa, Sat 30 Nov - Sun 1 Dec, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

**CHRISTMAS BRICKTACULAR** Enjoy seasonal building activities, Sat 30 Nov - Tues 24 Dec, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

**ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS KINGDOM** Visit Father Christmas and receive a golden key to unlock a magical toyshop in which every child can choose their very own present, Sat 30 Nov - Tues 24 Dec, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**CHRISTMAS AT THE CASTLE** 'Festive fun perfect for the whole family', Sat 30 Nov - Tues 31 Dec, Warwick Castle



Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry





BIRMINGHAM  
ROYAL BALLET



BIRMINGHAM  
HIPPODROME

SIR PETER WRIGHT'S

# THE NUTCRACKER

**22 NOV – 14 DEC**

[brb.org.uk/nutcracker](http://brb.org.uk/nutcracker)

Karla Doorbar as Clara. Photo © Bella Kotak

CHOREOGRAPHY **PETER WRIGHT, LEV IVANOV & VINCENT REDMON**  
MUSIC **PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY**  
DESIGNS **JOHN F. MACFARLANE**  
LIGHTING **DAVID A. FINN**  
LIVE MUSIC **ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA**



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Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

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Three Witches from 'Macbeth', Johann Heinrich Fuseli (1741 – 1825)  
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18 October 2019 – 19 January 2020

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