PHIL WANG COMES TO THE OLD REP

BAND OF GOLD
Kay Mellor’s classic TV series adapted for the stage

SWAN LAKE
Birmingham Royal Ballet’s spectacular production returns

RAIN OR SHINE
places to visit during the February school holidays
Belgrade Theatre
Coventry

THE SLIGHTLY ANNOYING ELEPHANT
25 – 27 Feb
from £9*

THE SMASH HIT WEST END COMEDY FROM THE CREATORS OF THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG
25 – 29 Feb
from £15*

A MONSTER CALLS
BY PATRICK NESS
3 – 7 Mar
from £15*

A LAD AND A DREAMER IN THE MUSICAL
10 – 14 Mar
from £15*

THE TWISTED TALE OF HANS AND GRETEL
17 – 19 Mar
Kids from £9.50*

WILLY RUSSELL'S BLOOD BROTHERS
17 – 21 Mar
from £18*

BOOK NOW 024 7655 3055 www.belgrade.co.uk
*Ticket prices include a £1.50 booking fee. No booking fee applies if booked online.
The Red Shoes - Matthew Bourne’s iconic production returns to Birmingham Hippodrome feature on page 32

Lana Del Rey brings her Lust For Life to Resorts World Arena page 17
Sarah Keyworth brings new show Pacific to The Glee Club feature page 22
Peter Pan Goes Wrong Olivier Award-nominated play returns to the Birmingham Rep page 26

Your 16-page week-by-week listings guide page 51

Contents February Birmingham.qxp_Layout 1 22/01/2020 18:08 Page 2

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

This publication is printed on paper from a sustainable source and is produced without the use of elemental chlorine. We endorse the recycling of our magazine and would encourage you to pass it on to others to read when you have finished with it.

All works appearing in this publication are copyright. It is to be assumed that the copyright for material rests with the magazine unless otherwise stated. No part of this publication may be reproduced, or stored in an electronic system, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise, without the prior knowledge and consent of the publishers.
Wild! Renowned photography show visits Birmingham

The internationally acclaimed Wildlife Photographer Of The Year exhibition is coming to Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery this summer (Saturday 23 May - Sunday 6 September). The world-renowned display, on loan from the Natural History Museum in London, features exceptional images which capture ‘fascinating animal behaviour, spectacular species and the breathtaking diversity of the natural world’.

Search on for mini pop stars to perform in Brum

A popular children’s music brand is searching for new dance talent to take part in the UK leg of a world tour. The Kidz Bop youngsters kick off their first-ever UK headline tour this Easter and are looking for seven virtual support acts whose videos will be premiered on a big screen at the live shows. Dance groups simply have to select their favourite Kidz Bop song and send in a film of their own choreographed routine/music video performance... For more information, visit cuffeandtaylor.com. The Kidz Bop live show visits Birmingham Symphony Hall on Saturday 11 April.

Samantha Womack and Tom Chambers team up

EastEnders favourite Samantha Womack is to star in a brand new production of Dial M For Murder at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Monday 20 to Saturday 25 April. The genre-defining thriller also features Strictly Come Dancing’s Tom Chambers. For more info and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com/birmingham

New name for iconic Brum city centre venue

Arena Birmingham is set to be renamed Utilita Arena Birmingham as part of a major new partnership with ‘Britain’s leading Smart Pay As You Go (PAYG) Energy provider’. The iconic city-centre venue will take up its new name on 15 April. Utilita has a growing presence in the UK live events industry, having partnered with a number of major music festivals in recent years.

Bake-off fun in Brum!

Bake-off fun has come to Brum - courtesy of a brand new baking venue in the city’s Digbeth district.

Hosted in a fully kitted-out marquee with 12 bake stations and a treasure trove of customisable decorations, The Big Birmingham Bake is led by a team of professional bakers. For more information, visit thebigbirminghambake.com

Hippodrome welcomes Verve Poetry Festival

Birmingham’s very own Verve Festival of Poetry & Spoken Word has made the city’s Hippodrome theatre its new home. Now in its fourth year, Verve has become synonymous with a lively and celebratory approach to programming poetry of every kind. From raucous performance poetry and quiet reading events to studious workshops and open mic, the programme encourages audiences not only to see their favourite poets but try something new. Verve takes place at the Hippodrome from Thursday 20 to Sunday 23 February.

4 whatsonlive.co.uk
Green light for Birmingham’s tallest building

Birmingham City Council has approved plans for what will be the city’s tallest building. The 61-storey 503-apartment skyscraper will be built at 100 Broad Street. The scheme is valued at up to £150million, with proposals also including two retail units on the ground floor and a sky lounge bar/restaurant on the top floor.

Yardley-based Europe Property Investment is the company behind the application. Glancy Nicholls Architects in Birmingham prepared the plans.

Disney-themed brunch in Brum

A Disney-inspired boozy singalong fancy-dress party is coming to Birmingham this summer. Taking place at a secret city-centre location on 27 June, the Magical Brunch features 90 minutes of themed entertainment, along with a ‘high tea’-inspired food offering and a Disney-themed quiz with prizes. Participants can also add an hour of bottomless alcohol or an hour of bottomless sparkling to their ticket. To book your place, visit eventbrite.co.uk

Birmingham Royal Ballet all loved up at Symphony Hall

A brand new love affair gets under way this Valentine’s Day evening when Carlos Acosta makes his first public appearance as Birmingham Royal Ballet’s Director. BRB and the man selected to replace David Bintley look like a match made in heaven and come together for the first time at the city’s Symphony Hall on Friday 14 February. Carlos will take to the stage in conversation with BBC Midlands Today presenter Nick Owen. The company and its internationally acclaimed orchestra, the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, will then present A Valentine’s Celebration Of Music And Dance.

A Beauty of a show for Christmas

The Old Rep Theatre in Birmingham has announced that its Christmas show will be classic fairytale Beauty And The Beast. Running from Friday 20 November to Wednesday 30 December, the production will be the sixth festive-season show produced by the venue in association with Birmingham Ormiston Academy (BOA).

Commenting on the news, the Old Rep’s Executive Director, Michael Penn, said: “Beauty And The Beast is an inspiring tale, perfect for children and families. The Old Rep are delighted to be teaming up with BOA and the creative team behind last year’s wonderful production of The Snow Queen to present a fresh and exciting take on this classic story.”

Vamos offsetting carbon emissions

The UK’s leading mask theatre company has collaborated with conservation charity Trees For Life to set up a tree grove in the Scottish Highlands. Worcester-based Vamos’ aim is to offset the carbon emissions from the 23-venue tour of its new theatre production, Dead Good.

The trees will help to re-wild the Caledonian Forest. Commenting on the initiative, Vamos’ Artistic Director, Rachael Savage, said: “This particular project is something we are doing whilst we work on more long-term sustainability for the company. This isn’t a quick solution; we are fully aware trees take up to 20 years to mature, but this is a positive springboard for us. This interim move invests in a better future and supports invaluable reforestation in the Scottish Highlands.”
Krazy fun in Sandwell

Sandwell Valley Country Park will host its first ever Soapbox Derby in the autumn (4 October).

Birmingham & Sandwell Krazy Races is a free-entry event that will see ‘weird, wacky and wonderful carefully crafted carts’ hurtle down a track consisting of chicanes, obstacles and water features. The event will feature between 40 and 50 teams, with participants encouraged to raise as much money as possible for Birmingham Children’s Hospital Charity or a charity close to their heart. For more information, visit krazyraces.co.uk

Summer of Fame

Birmingham theatre The Alexandra has opened the application process for children and young people aged from nine to 24 who would like to take part in a full-scale production of Fame The Musical this summer.

The initiative runs from Friday 14 to Saturday 29 August and culminates in five fully staged performances on The Alexandra’s stage. To find out more and apply, head to bit.ly/fame2020. The deadline for applications is Friday 17 April.

Dinosaur Disco!

Youngsters should get set for a Jurassic adventure to remember when the Dinosaur Disco hits town this month! Presenters Bryony Morrison and Charlotte Skinner discover the dimensions of music (with a little help from a number of City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra musicians) in an interactive exploration of symphonic repertoire. The hour-long show is presented at Birmingham’s CBSO Centre on Monday 10 and Friday 14 February.

Celebrate Africa

The UK’s first annual African cultural festival is set to be held in the West Midlands this summer.

Described as a ‘party for all things Africa’, Ubuntu Pride will celebrate African culture through traditional music, arts, dance and food. The event is expected to take place outdoors in Coventry on 1 & 2 August.

Taking a leap of faith and popping the question?

With 2020 being a leap year, Birmingham venues Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill and Bardolino Pizzeria at The Cube are encouraging women to follow tradition by ‘popping the question’ to their loved one this February the 29th.

“ar’s idea is to add a little sparkle to what could turn out to be quite an occasion,” says Sophie Boulton, wedding manager at The Cube. “So those who do propose in either the Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill or Bardolino Pizzeria will be given a bottle of fizz to celebrate.”
TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS 2020
FRI 7 FEBRUARY, 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT: THOMAS TROTTER 800TH RECITAL
MON 10 FEBRUARY, 1PM
SYMPHONY HALL

A VALENTINE’S CELEBRATION OF MUSIC AND DANCE WITH BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET & THE ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA
FRI 14 FEBRUARY, 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

QUEEN SYMPHONIC
SAT 15 FEBRUARY, 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW 2020
WED 19 FEBRUARY, 7:30PM
TOWN HALL

REBECCA FERGUSON
TUE 25 FEBRUARY, 7:30PM
TOWN HALL

BRENDAN COLE SHOW MAN
MON 2 MARCH, 7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

A NIGHT AT THE SYMPHONY HALL WITH THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AND FRIENDS
MON 30 MARCH 2020
7:30PM
SYMPHONY HALL

BOOK ONLINE thsh.co.uk

Funded by

Town Hall renovation also funded by
Bringing Band Of Gold to the stage for the first time, writer-director Kay Mellor is promising fans that they’re in for a treat: “They’ll get all the joy and the suspense they had from the television version,” says the creator of one of the most-watched shows in British TV history. “But it’s live theatre, so it has that excitement to it because it’s unfolding in front of their very eyes.”

Kay has revised the plot of the first series for the stage version, adding in a few twists to keep it fresh and surprising: “It’s funny and it’s sad,” she says, “and audiences are going to be told a big story not over six weeks but across two hours, with a beginning, middle and end.”

Set in the early 1990s, just as the TV series was, the stage version brings back the iconic characters and moments that made Band Of Gold such a sensation when it premiered on ITV. But the killer of young mother turned sex worker Gina won’t be the same, with Mellor teasing: “I think people will be more satisfied than they were with the TV revelation.”

Leeds-born Kay was originally inspired to write the hard-hitting drama when, on the way to a party, she and her husband drove through Lumb Lane in Bradford - a notorious hangout for sex workers - and were approached in their car by a young woman. “It was like someone had hit me in the solar plexus,” Kay recalls, “because she was so young - 14 or 15 - and my daughters weren’t much older than that.”

Haunted by the encounter, Kay left the party early to track down the girl but was told by another sex worker that the teenager had ‘pimp problems’. “I never saw her again, but I started thinking, ‘What is it that drives a woman onto the Lane to sell her body?’”

It took eight years for her to get Band Of Gold onto TV, “fighting everybody and literally begging people to read the script. I was an unknown writer writing about sex workers in the north of England, and who’s gonna put that on television?”

The fight paid off. The show wasn’t just a gripping crime drama, it was a phenomenon. More than 15 million viewers tuned in each week, fans held Band Of Gold parties where they’d catch the latest episode over wine and pizza, and bookies took bets on the identity of Gina’s killer before the big reveal at the end of the first series.
Kay Mellor’s Band Of Gold

Kay would go on to become one of the UK’s most successful and revered dramatists, penning television shows including Playing The Field, The Syndicate and Girlfriends. She also turned her much loved TV series, Fat Friends (which aired from 2000 to 2005), into a hugely successful stage musical, which she also directed.

Band Of Gold remains a firm favourite with Mellor fans. She smiles about people in the street still yelling, “What’s happened to Carol?” in reference to Cathy Tyson’s feisty prostitute, who takes Gina (Ruth Gemmell) under her wing. “And I get in taxis and the driver goes, ‘I love that Band Of Gold. Why don’t you write some more of it?’”

Twenty two years on from the series finale, Kay has done just that – opting for a stage version of the classic story with a brand new cast, rather than trying to bring back original stars Tyson, Geraldine James, Barbara Dickson and Samantha Morton for a sequel.

“There’s nothing like sitting in an auditorium listening to your play and hearing people laughing and applauding. It’s absolutely magical. It’s like a drug.”

After reworking Band Of Gold, she worked shopped it twice and made big changes, but the anonymous feedback from the second workshop was that everyone would pay to see it and everyone would recommend it to a friend. “That’s when I thought, ‘Okay, let’s take this to the next stage’.

“I decided to set it in its original time period because actually nothing much has changed since then. If anything, things have become harder with austerity and Universal Credit. People just can’t get to the end of the week. There are more sex workers than there were 20 years ago – people selling their bodies basically to feed their kids or make ends meet. It’s more relevant to today than ever before.

“We’ve assembled this brilliant new cast of great actors and some well-known faces, and it allows me to re invent Band Of Gold for both its long-term fans and those coming to it for the first time.”

Gaynor Faye, who recently left Emmerdale to be able to star in the play, takes over from Geraldine James as Rose and agrees the Band Of Gold revival couldn’t be more timely: “It’s more than two decades on and I think we’re in a worse position than we were then,” she says. “There’s as much if not more poverty now. People are really struggling and more people are visiting food banks.”

Rose is like the mother hen, ruling the Lane where the younger girls work.

“She’s very territorial and nobody is stepping on her patch,” explains Gaynor, “but she’s a good friend and the kind of person everyone would hope would have their back because she’s tough.”

Laurie Brett plays Anita, “a working class survivor who’ll do whatever it takes to get through life”. She rents out a room to the girls for a cut of their earnings. “She’s very multi layered and a really interesting person,” says Laurie, who’s best known from EastEnders and Waterloo Road. She was a fan of the TV show when it premiered: “It was extremely gritty and it still is. Plus, it was an honest portrayal of women who weren’t victims. Yes, they were victims of circumstance but not in terms of their everyday lives.”

Coronation Street and dinnerladies star Andrew Dunn is Ian, a counsellor and client with all sorts of flaws. “He has this front as a pillar of the community, but in the background there’s a lot of other stuff going on,” Ian explains. “That’s really interesting to play.”

The role marks a reunion for Ian and Kay Mellor, who starred as husband and wife in the play A Passionate Woman at Hull Truck Theatre in 2010. “Kay was fantastic to work with, so I’m really looking forward to working with her again. Band Of Gold was one of the first dramas to have so many female characters at its centre, and the story is still relevant. Prostitution may have diversified but it’s still happening.”

Fellow Coronation Street star and X-Factor winner Shayne Ward is relishing the role of DCI Newall, the detective tasked with finding Gina’s killer. Newall was played by David Schofield in the TV original. Schofield was in his 40s at the time, whereas Ward is in his mid-30s. His take on the DCI is as a younger man keen to make his mark: “He wants to be taken seriously, and although he’s a nice guy, he’s also now in charge of the investigation so wants to assert his authority.”

After three years on Corrie, Shayne is excited about going out on his first ever tour in a play. “I’m looking forward to how much I can learn from working with so many great actors - and of course with Kay. I used to watch The Syndicate on TV and think, ‘I’d love to be in something like that’, never imagining I’d even get to meet Kay let alone work with her. It’s a massive privilege.”

To research the role of Carol, Emma Osman has delved into documentaries about sex workers: “It’s interesting to see how, even though they have to be tough, they’re also very vulnerable - just everyday girls in extraordinary circumstances,” notes the actress whose credits include Doctors and Snatch. “They’re so resilient. Carol constantly talks about not wanting to be controlled, to be independent and her own woman. She’s so scared of being abandoned. I really appreciate being given the opportunity to do something so powerful, and to play a character who’s so strong and feisty.”

Sacha Parkinson is equally thrilled to be playing Gina, who is driven to prostitution after splitting from her abusive husband, Steve. Sacha was only three when Band Of Gold started and has made the decision not to watch the series. “That kind of mirrors Gina’s own experience of going into a world she doesn’t know anything about,” says the former Corrie star, whose CV also includes The Mill and Mr Selfridge. “Getting to work with Kay is an amazing opportunity. Band Of Gold has been her baby for years, so to be a part of her exploring it again is really special.”

Holbyoaks regular and Dancing On Ice finalist Kieron Richardson is making his professional stage debut as bad boy Steve, who becomes a prime suspect in Gina’s murder. Kieron has a strong connection to Band Of Gold - his father was an on set security guard for the TV show.

As a youngster, Kieran would go along to the set, where he would hang out in Carol’s house and ride around in the blue police van.

“Watching them all work is one of the reasons I got into acting in the first place,” he explains, “so it’s kind of come full circle.”

Kay Mellor’s Band Of Gold shows at the Alexandra, Birmingham, from Monday 10 to Saturday 15 February.

whatsonlive.co.uk 9
Cosmetic Surgery
OVER 35 YEARS OF QUALITY CARE
We are multi-award winning specialists with over 35 years’ experience of Surgical and Aesthetic minimally invasive treatments. We see over 15,000 new patients every year and pride ourselves on catering to their individual needs. We have world-class specialists in Cosmetic & Plastic Surgery.
The Private Clinic Birmingham offers you a safe, clinical environment where you'll be welcomed by our friendly and experienced team. Our personalised experience begins with a no-obligation consultation to identify your requirements and concerns.
• FUE Hair Transplants and Hair Restoration
• Breast Augmentation
• Body Cosmetic surgery
• Nose reshaping
• Facelifts
• Varicose Vein Removal for Men & Women
• Liposuction & Body Contouring
• Skin Treatments
• Ear pinnig
• Rafealo® for Piles Haemorrhoids Removal

MAKE 2020 YOUR YEAR. BOOK A CONSULTATION:
0121 429 2233 theprivateclinic.co.uk
88 Hagley Road, Birmingham, B16 8LU

The Private Clinic of Harley Street
Because it’s your body

26 FEB – 7 MAR
FAUSTUS
THAT DAMNED WOMAN
A radical reimagining of the Faust myth

20 MAR – 4 APR
TARTUFFE
The RSC’s wickedly hilarious version of Molière’s classic makes its Birmingham debut

10 – 14 MAR
POET IN DA CORNER
Music, dance and spoken word collide in this story inspired by Dizzee Rascal’s seminal album

COMING SOON...
Birmingham Repertory Theatre
Box Office 0121 236 4455 | BIRMINGHAM-REP.CO.UK

10 whatsonlive.co.uk
COMING SOON TO THE ALEXANDRA

**KAY MELLOR’S BAND OF GOLD**
MON 10 – SAT 15 FEB

**PETER PAN GOES WRONG**
TUE 18 – SAT 22 FEB
R SAT 22 FEB 2.30PM  & SAT 22 FEB 7.30PM

**BUDDY**
TUE 3 – SAT 7 MAR
30 TERRIFIC YEARS!

**WHAT’S IN A NAME?**
WED 11 – SAT 14 MAR

**JAMIE**
MON 16 – SAT 21 MAR
& WED 18 MAR 7.30PM

**THE WOMAN IN BLACK**
TUE 31 MAR – SAT 4 APR

**PUCCINI LA BOHÈME**
TUE 14 APR

**DIAL M FOR MURDER**
MON 20 – SAT 25 APR
CAP WED 22 APR 7.30PM

**FOOTLOOSE**
MON 4 – SAT 9 MAY
& THU 7 MAY 7.30PM

---

AD AUDIO DESCRIBED  | CAP CAPTIONED  | R RELAXED  | S SIGNED

THE ALEXANDRA
EST. SINCE 1901

ATG TICKETS BOX OFFICE 0844 871 3011*
ATGTIKTETS.COM/Birmingham

*Calls cost up to 7p per minute, plus your phone company’s access charge.
REVIEW: Indico Street Kitchen

Authentic North Indian dishes and a buzzing atmosphere

Prestigious Indian street food restaurant Indico Street Kitchen has recently opened its second venue in the second city. Already a firm favourite with diners in Shirley and paying tribute to the bustling streets of North India, Indico adds an authentic and exciting experience to The Mailbox’s impressive selection of canalside bars and restaurants. The vibrant venue features Bollywood art, street photography and hand-drawn paintings & murals by local artists, not to mention jazz-inspired mixes of Indian classics. A true taste of Punjabi culture!

The extensive menu includes a selection of hot and cold chaats (tapas-style sweet, sour, salty and spicy sharing dishes), Indian curries, a range of thals and biryanis and a ‘from the tandoor’ section. It also has ‘lunch and later’ options - including burgers and rolls - and an extensive selection of beers, wines and spirits. There’s a specially designed cocktail menu with an Indico twist too!

Whilst sipping our cold pints of Cobra and tucking into some poppadoms and chutneys, my partner and I perused the mouth-watering menu. After a lengthy discussion, we chose as starters the Punjabi samosa chaat, the chilli paneer and the Punjabi fish pakora, all from the hot chaats section.

The latter boasted fried battered cod served with a rich tamarind mayonnaise. The batter lacked slightly in flavour, but the fish was cooked perfectly and the mayonnaise certainly packed a punch.

As did the paneer dish. A fiery Indo-Chinese fusion, the stir-fried cottage cheese was cooked nicely and served on a bed of salad, peppers and fresh green chillies. It showcased just the right amount of heat and was an enjoyable dish with which to kick off proceedings.

The most flavoursome starter, however, was the samosa. Packed full of delicious spicy vegetables and chickpeas, and served with a sweet onion relish, it was my favourite dish of the evening at that particular point in proceedings.

Daal makhani is one of our favourite Indian dishes. Featuring black lentils and red kidney beans, prepared in the restaurant’s special spices and gently cooked in an ever-so-moreish creamy sauce, the dish was devoured without complaint. It wasn’t the best daal makhani I’ve ever tried, but then I’ve tried a generous amount of heat; enough to make you reach for your beer afterwards, but not so much that it overpowered the flavour of the sauce.

As tempting as the Mughlai lamb rogan josh was for our second main course, we chose the tandoori dhaba chicken. Topped with crunchy onions, the dish featured succulent and perfectly prepared pieces of tandoori chicken tikka cooked in a curry sauce. Bursting with authentic North Indian flavours, it boasted a generous amount of heat - enough to make you reach for your beer afterwards, but not so much that it overpowered the flavour of the sauce.

We also ordered a side of steamed basmati rice, a cheese chilli naan and some masala fries, all of which were very tasty indeed and the perfect accompaniments to the mains.

If you’re still hungry - although Indico’s portion sizes are impressive - the restaurant offers a range of the finest Indian sweets and desserts. These include kulfi (a rich & creamy traditional Indian ice cream with pistachio chunks), the classic gajar ka halwa (grated carrot cooked and sweetened in condensed milk and served with panacotta ice-cream) and our favourite - gulab jamun. With a big night of dancing ahead of us, we sensibly decided to share a dessert - we couldn’t leave without trying at least one! The heavenly gulab jamun - soft milk dumplings which are deep fried and then soaked in a rose-scented sugar syrup - were served with a delightful panacotta ice-cream and proved to be the perfect way in which to end our evening at Indico. If you have a sweet tooth (or even if you don’t), I thoroughly recommend ordering a portion. I’d always choose savoury over sweet, but these are seriously delicious.

Boasting authentic and vibrant dishes and an atmosphere to match, Indico Street Kitchen is well worth a visit. We stopped by on a Friday evening and the place had a real buzz. In short, the restaurant is a great addition to Birmingham’s premier luxury shopping & lifestyle destination.

Lauren Foster

| Food: | ★★★★★ |
| Service: | ★★★★★ |
| Ambience: | ★★★★★ |
| Overall value | ★★★★★ |

Indico Street Kitchen
113 - 115 Wharfside Street
Level 3 The Mailbox
Birmingham B1 1RF
Tel: 0121 643 9388
It’s showtime at The Loft Birmingham!

Visiting Birmingham Hippodrome, The Alexandra or The Old Rep? Then be sure to pop into The Loft Birmingham and take advantage of its new pre-theatre dinner menu.

Available every Tuesday to Saturday from 5pm to 7pm, diners can enjoy two courses for £12.50 or three for £16.

Resorts World to host exclusive dinner

A trio of local chefs are teaming up for an exclusive guest dinner at Sky By The Water - Resorts World Birmingham’s popular rooftop bar & restaurant.

Matt Cheal, head chef of Cheal’s of Henley, and Aaron Darnley and Darryl Collins, head chef and pastry chef respectively at Sky By The Water, will collaborate on a six-course dinner.

The event takes place on Sunday 16 February. Tickets cost £75 per person, with a ‘welcome’ drink in the Secret Winter Garden included in the price.

Malmaison’s MalBox deli & bar now open in The Mailbox

A new deli & bar operated by Malmaison has opened in Birmingham’s premier luxury shopping & lifestyle destination.

Adding to The Mailbox’s already impressive offering of drink & dine destinations, MalBox will serve up the best of Chez Mal in the Urban Room on Level 2. The new outlet offers a selection of cakes, pastries, salads, soups and baguettes alongside a choice of hot and cold drinks.

MalBox opens from 9am until 5pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm on Saturdays, and from 10am until 4pm on Sundays.

Love is in the air at Marco Pierre White’s

Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Restaurant has revealed details of its Valentine’s weekend three-course set menu, priced at £39.95 per person.

Dishes include 28-day aged Chateaubriand for two, served with triple cooked chips, pommes frites, green salad with truffle dressing, roasted vine tomatoes, watercress, Bearnaise and peppercorn sauce.

The eatery is also offering two-for-one French Martini cocktails.

The Valentine’s menu is available from Thursday 13 to Monday 17 February.

Book now via the restaurant’s website.

Feel the love this Valentine’s Day at Harvey Nichols

Feel the love this Valentine’s Day and enjoy three courses of indulgent food at Harvey Nichols Birmingham.

For £45 per person (to include a glass of Harvey Nichols Brut Champagne) or £60 per person (with a bottle of Harvey Nichols Rosé Champagne), diners can celebrate the most romantic day of the year by tucking into some truly mouthwatering dishes. These include: lobster taco with caviar crème fraîche and a shellfish dressing; butter curry monkfish tail with rice and flatbread; fillet of beef Rossini; and salted caramel chocolate fondant with coffee ice cream.

The Harvey Nichols Valentine’s Menu is available on Friday 14 & Saturday 15 February from 12pm to 10pm.

You can make a reservation by visiting harveynichols.com
# Upcoming January-March 2020

## January 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 24th</td>
<td>Bongo's Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25th</td>
<td>Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26th</td>
<td>Vintage Kilo Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 31st</td>
<td>Dnb Allstars Hybrid Minds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## February 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 1st</td>
<td>Bongo's Bingo / Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6th</td>
<td>Reggaeton Gasolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 7th</td>
<td>Andy C DJ Set Feat. Tonn Piper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8th</td>
<td>Just The Tonic Comedy Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14th</td>
<td>Bongo's Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 15th</td>
<td>Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22nd</td>
<td>Pop Up Ball Pool Bar / Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28th</td>
<td>Pulse W/ Macky Gee, Skepsis, Kanine, Cajama, LazCru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 29th</td>
<td>Look A Like Festival / Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## March 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 6th</td>
<td>Peter Andre Live / Garage Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7th</td>
<td>Just The Tonic Comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feat. Phil Nichol, Simon Wozinak, Paul Foot, Tom Toal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8th</td>
<td>Lulu's Vintage Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13th</td>
<td>Bongo's Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14th</td>
<td>From The Jam-Setting Sons / Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21st</td>
<td>Martin Kemp Live / Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27th</td>
<td>Bongo's Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28th</td>
<td>Worth The Weight Vintage Kilo / Control Saturdays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Coming Soon

- **April 3rd**: LiveWire The AC/DC Show  
- **April 21st**: Lloyd Cole  
- **May 6th**: Ward Thomas

---

**www.theassemblyleamington.com**  
**Spencer St, Royal Leamington Spa, Leamington Spa, CV31 3NF**  
**Info: 07440 635 132**  
**Tickets available from website**  

Search Assembly Leamington
**CBSO: Walton’s Viola Concerto**

**Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 27 February**

French violist Lise Berthaud is on a mission to find the dark heart of Walton’s smouldering Viola Concerto in this latest afternoon of exceptional musicmaking from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. A part of the prestigious BBC Radio Three New Generation Artists Scheme - which allowed her to perform with all BBC orchestras - Berthaud and her colleagues will perform the Viola Concerto live and in the studio. The programme also features John Foulds’ April - England and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ A London Symphony. Associate Conductor Michael Seal takes the helm.

**Mahan Esfahani In-The-Round**

**Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 22 February**

The only harpsichordist ever to be a BBC New Generation Artist, Mahan Esfahani is eager to raise the profile and appeal of his genteel and often-derided instrument of choice. But the Iranian musician is under no illusions about how difficult a task it’s going to be: "The harpsichord is like the posh, pretty boy in prison," he told the Guardian recently. “He’s gonna get beaten on.”

Esfahani’s Birmingham concert sees him performing in the round, presenting a programme that features works by, among others, Johann Sebastian Bach.

**CBSO: Walton’s Viola Concerto**

**Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 27 February**

French violist Lise Berthaud is on a mission to find the dark heart of Walton’s smouldering Viola Concerto in this latest afternoon of exceptional musicmaking from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. A part of the prestigious BBC Radio Three New Generation Artists Scheme - which allowed her to perform with all BBC orchestras - Berthaud and her colleagues will perform the Viola Concerto live and in the studio. The programme also features John Foulds’ April - England and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ A London Symphony. Associate Conductor Michael Seal takes the helm.

**Birmingham International Recorder And Early Music Festival**

**Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 February**

A highly anticipated event in the Conservatoire’s calendar, this three-day get-together features the all-female Fontanella Quintet, who’ll be performing an eclectic mix of music from ancient to modern times. Harpsichordist Robin Bigwood (pictured) takes on Bach’s ‘Goldberg’ Variations, while spirited early music trio Blondel perform medieval and renaissance music on a colourful collection of shawms, bagpipes, curtals and recorders.

**Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra**

**University of Birmingham, Sun 9 February**

One of the region’s best known and most admired non-professional orchestras, the Birmingham Phil are previous winners of the What’s On Readers’ Award for ‘best orchestra in the Midlands’. Their latest concert sees them presenting a programme featuring works by Enescu (Romanian Rhapsody No1), Mahler (Symphony Nos 5: Adagietto), Williams (Hymn To The Fallen) and Elgar (Enigma Variations). It also includes a first performance of Ian Rae’s Pacific Concerto. Michael Lloyd is the man with the baton.

**Karolos String Trio**

**Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 7 February**

A co-operative of nine of the UK’s leading chamber players, Karolos often play in smaller sub-groups… which is exactly what they’re doing for this Bromsgrove Concerts presentation. Violinist Harriet Mackenzie, Sarah-Jane Bradley (viola) and cellist Graham Walker are the trio here taking on the challenges of performing works by Mozart, Beethoven and Stephen Dodgson.

**Ruisi Quartet**

**Barber Institute, Birmingham, Fri 14 February**

There are innumerable worse ways to spend a Valentine’s Day lunchtime than by sitting in the Barber with your beloved, enjoying a performance by these hugely talented Royal Philharmonic Society award winners. The concert programme features music by Britten, Webern and Beethoven.
AN EVENING WITH WHITNEY
THE WHITNEY HOUSTON HOLOGRAM TOUR
BACKED BY LIVE BAND, SINGERS AND DANCERS
04 March 2020
ARENA BIRMINGHAM
theticketfactory.com
ticketline.co.uk | ticketmaster.co.uk
A KENNEDY STREET PRESENTATION

Half Term Fun
Family Theatre
Beastly Belle
Sat 15 & Sun 16 February | Ages 4+
Roald Dahl & the Imagination Seekers
Fri 21 - Sat 22 February | Ages 5+
macbirmingham.co.uk | 0121 446 3232

PIZZAEXPRESS Live
BIRMINGHAM
SUN 1 FEBRUARY SAT 8 FEBRUARY TUE 14 FEBRUARY
SNAKE DAVIS KATIE BIRTILL IMAANI
FRI 13 MARCH SAT 14 MARCH THU 19 MARCH
GARETH GATES BELLA & THE BOURBON BOYS RAXSTAR
SAT 15 FEBRUARY SAT 22 FEBRUARY SAT 7 MARCH
GUY CHAMBERS JAHMÉNE MERRILL OSMOND LEDDRA CHAPMAN
FRI 20 MARCH SAT 21 MARCH SAT 27 MARCH
VULA VIEL JOHN FISHER POWERHOUSE GOSPEL CHOIR
SUN 29 MARCH
COMING SOON
pizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizzapizza
Beans On Toast
The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham, Sat 8 February
Climate emergency, Boris as PM, rail-melting heatwaves, a No-Deal Brexit...
Given all of the above, Beans On Toast decided that the obvious title for his most recent album of social-commentary songs was The Inevitable Train Wreck!
Emerging from the London folk scene over a decade ago and singing mainly about sex, drugs and politics, the artist otherwise known as Jay McAllister is a surefire bet for an entertaining evening out.

Beth Hart
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 9 February
“More than any record I’ve ever made, I’m open to being myself on these songs,” says American singer-songwriter Beth Hart in talking about her new album, War In My Mind. “I’ve come a long way with healing, and I’m comfortable with my darknesses, weirdnesses and things that I’m ashamed of - as well as all the things that make me feel good.”

Lana Del Rey
Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Sat 29 February
New York-born Elizabeth Woolridge Grant, more commonly known as Lana Del Rey, last year released her sixth studio album, Norman F*cking Rockwell, to widespread acclaim. The record picked up two Grammy nominations and reached number one in the UK album charts.
Fusing tragic romance with glamour - and in the process referencing plenty of pop culture, particularly 1950s and '60s Americana - Rey's previous offerings include Born To Die, Ultraviolence and Lust For Life, all of which also topped the charts.

Dubioza Kolektiv
O2 Institute, Birmingham, Wed 12 February
In 2003, a group of friends from Bosnia and Herzegovina decided to form a band...
Along with local Balkan flavours, Dubioza Kolektiv’s musical influences include ska, punk, reggae, electronic and hip-hop, to name but a few. Now established as one of the best and most popular live outfits in Eastern Europe, and after blowing away audiences around the UK last year, the band this month play Birmingham in support of their brand-new album.

The 1975
Arena Birmingham, Tues 25 February
The 1975 have enjoyed a phenomenal rise to fame over the past few years - their 2018 album, A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships, was their third consecutive UK number one. The BRIT and Ivor Novello Award winners are set to release their fourth album, Notes On A Conditional Form, on the 21st of this month.

Caravan Palace
O2 Academy, Birmingham, Sat 1 February
Caravan Palace fuse hedonistic house and old school jazz to euphoric effect. Their decadent, potent cocktail of jazz manouche, hip-hop, jive, house and beats defies simple categorisation and delivers with a punch.
The musical virtuosity of the Parisian seven-piece band, combined with their panache, flair and genuine joy in performing live, guarantees a riotous good time.
They visit Birmingham in support of upcoming sonically explosive album, Chronologic.
Award FINALISTS in each category announced! VOTE for your WINNER!

What's On
Readers' Awards

Yes, you VOTED in your thousands in the first round of nominations in the What's On Readers' Awards - over 15,000 votes across the West Midlands region! Now it’s time for you to VOTE once more to choose your ultimate WINNER in each category! Here are the award shortlist finalists:

Midlands Large Theatre
- Birmingham Hippodrome
- Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford
- The Alexandra, Birmingham
- The REP, Birmingham
- Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
- Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Best Touring Musical
- Les Misérables
- Kinky Boots
- The Rocky Horror Show
- Blood Brothers
- Dirty Dancing

Best Home-Produced Show
- Billionaire Boy - Belgrade Theatre
- The Boy In The Dress - RSC
- Brassed Off - New Vic Theatre
- The Snow Queen - The Old Rep
- The 39 Steps - New Vic Theatre

Best Dance Production
- Birmingham Royal Ballet: Beauty And The Beast
- Birmingham Royal Ballet: The Nutcracker
- Burn The Floor
- Matthew Bourne: Romeo And Juliet
- Matthew Bourne: Swan Lake

Best Orchestra/Choir
- Birmingham Cathedral Choir
- Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra
- Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra
- CBSO
- North Staffs Symphony Orchestra

Best Classical/Operatic Production
- Birmingham Festival of Early Music
- Birmingham Philharmonic: Movie Music
- CBSO: Viennese New Year
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra: The Planets
- Welsh National Opera (WNO): Autumn Season

Best Touring Theatre Play/Show
- Abigail's Party
- An Inspector Calls
- Educating Rita
- The Girl On The Train
- The Mousetrap

Best Pantomime in The Midlands 2019/20
- Aladdin - Stourbridge Town Hall
- Aladdin - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
- Cinderella - Lichfield Garrick
- Dick Whittington - Wolves Grand
- Sleeping Beauty - Regent Theatre
- Snow White - Hippodrome

Best Pantomime Dame 2019/20
- Andrew Ryan - Snow White, Birmingham Hippodrome
- Ben Humphrey - Snow White, Swan Theatre, Worcester
- Brad Fitt - Aladdin, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
- Christian Patterson - Sleeping Beauty, Regent Theatre
- Ian Adams - Dick Whittington, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
- Wally Wombat - Aladdin, Stourbridge Town Hall

Best Kids Show
- Dear Zoo Live!
- Horrible Histories
- The Tiger Who Came To Tea

VOTE today at whatsonlive.co.uk
Best Music Venue
- The Snowman
- The Worst Witch

Best Arts/Cultural Festival
- Birmingham Comedy Festival
- Birmingham Weekender
- Lichfield Arts’ Fuse Festival
- Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival
- The Big Feast, Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Worcester Arts Festival

Best Exhibition
- Apollo 50 - The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
- Home Of Metal Presents Black Sabbath: 50 Years - Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Wildlife Photographe Of The Year - Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry & Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Best Amateur Dramatic/Operatic Group Production
- BMOS: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
- Birmingham Ormiston Academy: Lord Of The Flies
- Coventry Musical Theatre Society: Annie
- Get Your Wigle On: Grease
- Lichfield Operatic Society: Avenue Q

Best Comedy Night
- Comedy Carousel at The Glee Club, Birmingham
- Comedy at Henry Tudor House
- Funhouse Comedy - various
- Just The Tonic, Birmingham
- Laugh Out Loud Comedy - various

Best Midlands Music Venue
- Arena Birmingham
- Birmingham Town Hall
- O2 Academy, Birmingham
- Resorts World Arena, Birmingham
- Symphony Hall, Birmingham
- The Empire, Coventry

Best Midlands Music Festival
- Birmingham Pride
- Download Festival
- Godiva Festival
- Shrewsbury Folk Festival
- Worcester Music Festival
- Let’s Rock, Shrewsbury

Best Midlands Food Festival
- Colmore Food Festival, Birmingham
- Foodies Festival, Birmingham
- Lichfield Food Festival
- Ludlow Food Festival
- Shrewsbury Food Festival

Best Street Food Vendor
- Bournville Waffle Co
- Buddha Belly
- Dick’s Smokehouse
- Patty Freaks
- Urban Cheesecake

Best Midlands Market
- Beckett’s Farm, Birmingham
- Bullring Indoor Market, Birmingham
- FarGo Village, Birmingham
- The Market Hall, Shrewsbury
- Moseley Arts Market, Birmingham

What’s On

BIRMINGHAM

Best Arts/Theatre Venue
- Blue Orange Theatre
- The Crescent Theatre
- Midlands Arts Centre
- The Old Joint Stock
- The Old Rep Theatre

Best Music Festival
- Birmingham Pride
- Birmingham & Solihull Jazz & Blues Festival
- Moseley Folk & Arts Festival
- Mostly Jazz, Funk & Soul
- Solihull Summer Fest

Best Food Festival/Event
- BBC Good Food Show
- Birmingham Cocktail Weekend
- Colmore Food Festival
- Digbeth Dining Club
- Foodies Festival at Cannon Hill Park

Best Visitor Attraction
- Birmingham Back to Backs
- Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Cadbury World
- National Sealife Centre
- Thinktank

Best Outdoor Event
- Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market
- Ice Skate Birmingham
- Great Birmingham Run
- Peaky Blinders Festival - Digbeth
- Summer In Southside

Best Midlands Music Festival
- Birmingham Pride
- Colmore Food Festival, Birmingham
- Birmingham Weekender
- Birmingham Ormiston Academy: Lord Of The Flies
- Coventry Musical Theatre Society: Annie
- Get Your Wigle On: Grease
- Lichfield Operatic Society: Avenue Q

Best Comedy Night
- Comedy Carousel at The Glee Club, Birmingham
- Comedy at Henry Tudor House
- Funhouse Comedy - various
- Just The Tonic, Birmingham
- Laugh Out Loud Comedy - various

Best Midlands Music Venue
- Arena Birmingham
- Birmingham Town Hall
- O2 Academy, Birmingham
- Resorts World Arena, Birmingham
- Symphony Hall, Birmingham
- The Empire, Coventry

Best Midlands Food Festival
- Colmore Food Festival, Birmingham
- Foodies Festival, Birmingham
- Lichfield Food Festival
- Ludlow Food Festival
- Shrewsbury Food Festival

Best Street Food Vendor
- Bournville Waffle Co
- Buddha Belly
- Dick’s Smokehouse
- Patty Freaks
- Urban Cheesecake

Best Midlands Market
- Beckett’s Farm, Birmingham
- Bullring Indoor Market, Birmingham
- FarGo Village, Birmingham
- The Market Hall, Shrewsbury
- Moseley Arts Market, Birmingham

FINALISTS in each REGION

and choose your WINNER!
The easy way to give the gift of theatre

TheatreTokens.com

260 Use Theatre Tokens at any show from more than theatres nationwide
**What's On**

**FINALISTS in each REGION**

### WEST MIDLANDS

**WARWICKSHIRE**

**Best Arts/Theatre Venue**
- Albany Theatre, Coventry
- Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
- Criterion Theatre, Coventry
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford
- Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**Best Music Venue**
- Art In The Park, Leamington
- Godiva Festival
- Leamington Food and Drink Festival
- Stratford River Festival
- Stratford-upon-Avon Music Festival

**Best Visitor Attraction**
- Black Country Living Museum
- Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust
- Dudley Zoo
- RAF Cosford Museum
- Wightwick Manor

**Best Event**
- 1940s Evening - BCLM
- Black Country Boating Festival
- Cosford Air Show
- Peaky Blinders Nights at BCLM
- Wolverhampton Literature Festival

**Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue**
- The Robin, Brierley
- The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**Best Independent Restaurant**
- Cafe Vin Cinq, Rugby
- Cheals of Henley
- Henley-in-Arden
- Dugard and Brow, Warwick
- My Dhabba, Coventry
- The Cross, Kenilworth

**Best Independent Restaurant**
- Bolero Bar & Kitchen, Worcester
- Dine India, Bidford
- The Old Rectifying House, Worcester
- The Olive Branch Mediterranean Bistro & Wine Bar, Worcs
- Oysters at No.1, Worcester

**WARCROSSHERES**

**Best Arts/Theatre Venue**
- Atrix, Bromsgrove
- Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
- Malvern Theatres
- Norbury Theatre, Droitwich
- Swan Theatre, Worcester

**Best Music Venue**
- Drumsmonds Bar, Worcester
- Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
- The Marr's Bar, Worcester
- Paradiisides Music Cafe Bar, Worcester
- The Queen's Head, Bromsgrove

**Best Music Festival**
- Bromsgrove Folk Festival
- Sunshine Festival
- Upton Blues Festival
- Upton Jazz Festival
- Worcester Music Festival

**Best Event**
- The Dragon Slayer - Warwick Castle
- HSBC Let's Ride Coventry
- Monster Jam - Ricoh Arena
- The Motor Show - Ragley Hall
- Stratford Literary Festival

**Best Visitor Attraction**
- Coventry Transport Museum
- Kenilworth Castle
- Shakespeare's Birthday Trust
- Warwick Castle

### SHROPSHIRE

**Best Arts/Theatre Venue**
- The Hive, Shrewsbury
- Ludlow Assembly Rooms
- The Place, Telford
- Theatre On The Steps
- Theatre Severn

**Best Music Venue**
- Eleven, Tenby-on-Trent
- Lilichfield Guildhall
- The Sugarmill, Stoke
- The Underground, Stoke
- Victoria Hall, Hanley

**Best Music Festival**
- Lilichfield Arts'Fuse Festival
- Lilichfield Blues & Jazz Festival
- Lilichfield Festival
- Lilichfield Festival Of Folk
- Staffs Fest

**Best Arts Festival**
- Big Feast, Stoke-on-Trent
- Lilichfield Festival
- Stafford Arts Festival
- Stoke Literary Festival

**Best Food Festival**
- Great British Food Festival
- Lilichfield Food Festival
- Stafford Cheese & Ale Festival
- Stone Food & Drink Festival
- Tamworth Food Gusto Festival

**Best Visitor Attraction**
- Ginger & Co.
- The Old Rectifying House, Shrewsbury
- Taj Mahal, Willenhall
- Tramway, Telford
- Wellington Tea Rooms

**Best Event**
- Staffordshire Autumn Food Festival
- Staffordshire Food & Drink Festival
- Staffordshire Food and Drink Festival
- Staffordshire Food Festival
- Staffordshire Food Festival

**Best Visitor Attraction**
- Apple Tree, Shrewsbury
- Drayton Manor Theme Park
- Lichfield Cathedral
- Monkey Forest

**Best Independent Restaurant**
- Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury
- Albert's Shed, Southwater
- The Buttermark, Shrewsbury
- Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
- The Hive, Shrewsbury

**Best Independent Restaurant**
- CSONS, Shrewsbury
- Dough and Oil, Shrewsbury
- Pancake House, Shrewsbury
- Hundred House, Telford
- Hunters of Little Wenlock, Telford

**Best Independent Café**
- The Bird’s Nest Cafe, Shrewsbury
- The Buttermark, Shrewsbury
- The Furnace Kitchen, Coalbrookdale
- Ginger & Co.
- House Coffee Co.

**SHROPSHIRE**

### WHATSONLIVE.CO.UK

VOTE NOW!
THE SOUNDS OF THE ROARING 20S

Max Raabe and the Palast Orchester head to Birmingham on their first ever UK tour...
Million-selling German crooner Max Raabe is the debonair, white-tie-and-tails-wearing front man of the critically acclaimed Palast Orchester, who'll be coming to Birmingham this spring.

Formed in Berlin in 1986, the orchestra perform music of the 1920s and '30s to audiences across the globe, along the way garnering rave reviews and scooping glittering gongs like they're going out of fashion.

Fifty-seven-year-old Max has received numerous awards for his commitment to the music of the era, including an ECHO Classic award for his interpretation of Mack The Knife. In November, the ensemble's new MTV Unplugged album went straight into the Top 10 in the German pop charts.

What's On caught up with Max ahead of the Palast Orchester's Birmingham stop-off next month...

The orchestra has been together for more than 30 years, Max - so why has it taken so long to tour to the UK?

We have played some concerts, at the Cadogan Hall in London and Shepherd's Bush Empire, and had invitations to festivals like Twinwood and the Secret Garden Party. We had wonderful concerts and they were always very successful. In spring, I have my second solo concert at Wigmore Hall in London - which is a wonderful concert hall - but it's not so easy for artists from Europe to go to your island. I think you have incredible artists and musicians - maybe that's the reason why.

How would you describe Max Raabe And The Palast Orchester?

We're a 13-piece orchestra playing the music of the 1920s and 1930s. We have four saxophones, two trumpets, one trombone, rhythm section with sousaphone, double bass, drums, guitar, banjo and a violin player - she's the only lady in the orchestra. This is by chance. Our first violin player was played by the girlfriend of one of our saxophone players. And when he left, we asked a student of ours to play for a concert and he said, 'For one concert I will do that, but I have no time to come with you to play concerts and stay in your band'. But then we realised how wonderful it is to have a woman in the orchestra. Our current violinist, Cecilia Crisafulli, has been with us for 13 years.

How many musicians have played in the orchestra since it was founded in the mid-1980s?

There are still eight people from that time. But since the mid-'90s we've had the same lineup. We're a student band - an old one!

What was it that first interested you in the particular style of music which the orchestra play?

The music was always there when I was a child. Each Sunday there were black-and-white films on TV - not only German and Austrian films from the 1920s and 1930s but also movies from the United States, with Fred Astaire. There was always a scene where somebody was singing and a band was playing in a big hotel.

In my father's record collection there was an instrumental song called Crazy About Hilde. It was funny and fast, but there was a melancholy sub-note in there by the saxophones and the vibrato of the trumpet. It was like listening through a pipe into another room, another era. So I went to flea markets in the next big town, Münster, and bought some of these 78 records - not only German but also sometimes English songs.

You started performing the songs as a teenager. What was the reaction from friends and family?

My parents were shocked. My friends, they loved it. We had a very active church, and every family and friend went there. Once a year there was a big party and they asked us to do some sketches or play some music - and that was the first time I put on my father's top hat and sang these songs. It was wonderful. They loved it, and it was fun for me. I never thought I'd one day become a musician.

You went on to study classical singing at college in Berlin, where you and your friends formed the orchestra...

I financed my study with that music but told nobody about it. One of my teachers came to me and said, 'Another professor told me that you sing songs from the '20s and '30s. Take care; it may ruin your voice and can be dangerous or difficult. I don't like this idea that you sing other material.'

He was then at a concert we did and said, 'You do it well, you don't stress your voice, you have a wonderful technique and I see you don't mix it up. You have this classical way to sing and you have this '20s light crooning style of singing. Don't do it too much, but it's okay with me.' So I didn't have to be a waiter or a taxi driver during my studies; I could just earn money with music.

When did you know the Palast Orchester was going to be more than just a hobby?

After a year, we were invited to perform at a ball, playing in the foyer. People stood in front of our stage and asked us to play again and again. It was then that we realised we were on the right track. Then we did our first concert, got some TV jobs and said to ourselves, let's continue for as long as people want to hear us, and for as long as we want to do it. And we're still doing it!

Where do you find all the original arrangements from the '20s & '30s?

The first ones we found in flea markets, then we found a big old publishing company in Berlin.

A few years ago, we did a tour of the States, including a concert in Chicago. A couple of weeks beforehand, somebody said, 'Do you know there's a big library in Chicago with some original stock arrangements from the '20s & '30s?' We went and found around 30 arrangements and just had to pay the copy for them. It felt like Christmas! Incredible!

How do you decide which material to perform for each concert?

We have more than 600 songs in our repertoire. We mix it up with songs I compose and play songs of the countries we're travelling through. When we have a tour through somewhere like Scandinavia, we do one programme, then when we go to Japan, we sing some Japanese songs. Recently we had a concert in Milan and the programme had five Italian songs.

One of the songs we'll play in the United Kingdom is I Won't Dance, a wonderful arrangement from 1935 which we found in Chicago. We have Noel Coward songs and some by Al Bowlly. We play it in the way it was played in the early 1930s, in the pre-swing era.

How do you feel when you stand at the front of the orchestra singing these songs?

It makes me feel lucky because I always discover new colours and variations. My aim is to entertain the audience and transport them out of reality. The music was written to take its audience away from their everyday problems, and I'm pleased to say that it still works today.

Max Raabe And The Palast Orchester perform at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Thursday 5 March.
Alexei Sayle
Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 28 & Sat 29 February

Having long ago been in the vanguard of the alternative-comedy movement, Alexei Sayle certainly knows how to work a crowd - particularly as most members of his audience have been diehard fans of his stand-up for 40 long years.

Sayle shot to stardom in the late 1970s/early 80s, presenting a brash, loud and hugely political act at the legendary Comedy Store.

His regular appearances in cult BBC sitcom The Young Ones then brought him to wider public attention.

He's branched out considerably in more recent times, trying his hand at kids TV, documentaries and even a bit of Shakespeare.

A big-screen appearance in the execrable Carry On Columbus is probably one element of his CV best forgotten, though...

Sarah Keyworth

Sarah Keyworth's original premise for her new show, Pacific, was that she was turning into her dad. But then things moved on a bit. “It ended up being about how I, as a woman who likes to perceive herself as being slightly masculine, almost resents the feminine parts of herself. It’s about learning that I don’t have to be the biggest, strongest woman in the room. It’s like learning how to become a modern man.”

Sarah is in a relationship with fellow comic Catherine Bohart. “In a misogynistic way, I like the idea of looking after my girlfriend,” she says, “but in reality, if my girlfriend left me for long, I’d starve!”

Dom Joly
Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 13 February; The Place, Telford, Tues 18 February; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Thurs 20 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 2 March; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Tues 3 March; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Sat 15 March; Stourbridge Town Hall, Wed 8 April; The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 9 April

From a launch-pad provided by Trigger Happy TV, Dom Joly has led an intriguing and extraordinary life. Some of the highlights - well, highlights according to Dom anyway - include world drinking, skying down volcanoes, holidaying in Chernobyl, trying to fly across the Grand Canyon strapped to an eight-foot rocket, and eating from Gillian McKeith’s pants while imprisoned in the Australian jungle...

...Some guys have all the luck.

Simon Brodkin
Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 26 February; The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 5 April

Former medical doctor Simon Brodkin is perhaps best known as the creator of comedy character Lee Nelson, a bling-wearing Stella-swigging South London geezer.

Simon has also hit the headlines for his unwavering commitment to the business of being a top-quality prankster. He famously handed Prime Minister Theresa May her P45 at the Conservative Party Conference. This latest tour sees him taking on perhaps his trickiest task yet - going on stage as himself. It’s a challenge he’s very much looking forward to meeting, though:

“There’s no bigger buzz in the world than turning up in a new city, making 2,000 people laugh and then sleeping with about five of them afterwards. The only downside is chlamydia.”

Sarah Keyworth
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 22 February; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 6 March

Sarah Keyworth's original premise for her new show, Pacific, was that she was turning into her dad. But then things moved on a bit. “It ended up being about how I, as a woman who likes to perceive herself as being slightly masculine, almost resents the feminine parts of herself. It’s about learning that I don’t have to be the biggest, strongest woman in the room. It’s like learning how to become a modern man.”

Sarah is in a relationship with fellow comic Catherine Bohart. “In a misogynistic way, I like the idea of looking after my girlfriend,” she says, “but in reality, if my girlfriend left me for long, I’d starve!”

John Shuttleworth
Birmingham Town Hall, Wed 5 Feb; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 13 Feb; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 2 March; The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 9 April

Midlands-based lovers of light comedy and understated but up-to-the-minute fashions here get the chance to enjoy another laugh-ter-filled evening in the company of Sheffield’s raconteur par excellence.

The creation of actor Graham Fellows - a one-time chartbuster with 1970s’ hit, Jilted John - Shuttleworth has been making his presence felt on the UK comedy circuit for more than 30 years.

This latest show finds John a pale shadow of his former self. Years of strenuous DIY - not to mention playing his organ while perched on a multi-pack of Diet Sprite with no lumber support - has taken its toll...

Expect classic songs, new stories, and the unmistakable pungent whiff of Deep Heat ointment...

Simon Brodkin
Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 26 February; The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 5 April

Former medical doctor Simon Brodkin is perhaps best known as the creator of comedy character Lee Nelson, a bling-wearing Stella-swigging South London geezer.

Simon has also hit the headlines for his unwavering commitment to the business of being a top-quality prankster. He famously handed Prime Minister Theresa May her P45 at the Conservative Party Conference. This latest tour sees him taking on perhaps his trickiest task yet - going on stage as himself. It’s a challenge he’s very much looking forward to meeting, though:

“There’s no bigger buzz in the world than turning up in a new city, making 2,000 people laugh and then sleeping with about five of them afterwards. The only downside is chlamydia.”

Sarah Keyworth
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 22 February; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 6 March

Sarah Keyworth's original premise for her new show, Pacific, was that she was turning into her dad. But then things moved on a bit. “It ended up being about how I, as a woman who likes to perceive herself as being slightly masculine, almost resents the feminine parts of herself. It’s about learning that I don’t have to be the biggest, strongest woman in the room. It’s like learning how to become a modern man.”

Sarah is in a relationship with fellow comic Catherine Bohart. “In a misogynistic way, I like the idea of looking after my girlfriend,” she says, “but in reality, if my girlfriend left me for long, I’d starve!”

John Shuttleworth
Birmingham Town Hall, Wed 5 Feb; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 13 Feb; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 2 March; The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 9 April

Midlands-based lovers of light comedy and understated but up-to-the-minute fashions here get the chance to enjoy another laugh-ter-filled evening in the company of Sheffield’s raconteur par excellence.

The creation of actor Graham Fellows - a one-time chartbuster with 1970s’ hit, Jilted John - Shuttleworth has been making his presence felt on the UK comedy circuit for more than 30 years.

This latest show finds John a pale shadow of his former self. Years of strenuous DIY - not to mention playing his organ while perched on a multi-pack of Diet Sprite with no lumber support - has taken its toll...

Expect classic songs, new stories, and the unmistakable pungent whiff of Deep Heat ointment...
**Dane Baptiste**

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 29 February; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 20 March; Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 29 March

It’s certainly been a whirlwind few years for London-born funnyman Dane Baptiste. In 2014, he became the first ever black comedian to be nominated for the ‘best newcomer’ award at the Edinburgh Fringe, a success he achieved with debut solo show Citizen Dane. In the ensuing years he’s established himself on the UK comedy circuit to excellent effect, his constant and industrious honing of his act earning him a loyal and ever-expanding fanbase. Jokes include: “Dubai is what would happen if you gave a 12-year-old a trillion dollars to redecorate his bedroom.”

**Phil Wang**

The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 9 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 16 February; Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sun 5 April

Phil Wang’s first ever five minutes behind the mic as a standup comedian were spent telling other people’s gags. “I thought standup was like karaoke with jokes,” he recalls. “Most of the material I used was stolen, but I learned fast and immediately started writing my own material.” Inspired to become a comedian by his desire to avoid having to get up in the mornings, Phil is one of the newer kids on the comedy block and describes his style of humour as smart, cheeky and always changing. Jokes include, “Dying is a lot like camping. I don’t want to do it,” and “I’m white and Chinese. I’m both majorities, bitch. I’m Pepsi and Coke.”

**Brum Craic**

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 20 February

Making a welcome return for this second Brum Craic, James Cook (pictured) will once again be hosting a show that’s designed to provide a high-profile platform for some of the comedy world’s most promising new acts. Callum Oakley and Lindsey Santoro are among those who will be strutting their hopefully laughter-worthy stuff on this particular occasion.

**Jonny Awsum**

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Mon 3 February; Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Fri 21 February

‘If you can’t beat them, join them’ seems to have been the perspective taken by musical comic Jonny Awsum. Having served as a barman at London’s Chuckle Club for eight long years, Jonny decided it was high time he put down the pint glasses and picked up the microphone himself. Fame then came his way courtesy of Britain’s Got Talent, in which he performed This Is A Musical with Ant & Dec and The Triangle Song with David Walliams. Five-star reviews at Edinburgh and a starring role in panto followed, with Jonny now ticking off another first by heading out on his debut solo tour.

**Jimeoin**

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 9 February; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 19 February

Fancy a straightforward comedy night with a straight-talking - well, actually, a rambling - master of mirth? If so, then the sublime Jimeoin is the fella for you. A gimmick-free one-man comedy machine, Jimeoin’s proved he’s got what it takes on all manner of top TV programmes, including Michael McIntyre’s Comedy Roadshow and Jason Manford’s Comedy Rocks. He visits Stafford with his new touring show, the appropriately titled Ramble On.
Don’t be fooled by the title of Tony Law’s new touring show - Identifies - because it has very little to do with the on-trend topic of identity!

“I tried to do a show that was really nothing about identity as best I could,” says Tony, “’cos that’s just how I work, to be contrarian!”

The Canadian-born Law came to London in the 1990s and established himself as an inventive and idiosyncratic comedian. Part of a lineage that includes Spike Milligan, Monty Python and Eddie Izzard, Tony presents shows that are perhaps best described as flights of surreal and absurd fancy. Freewheeling but well-structured, they are peppered with grand ideas, stories about everyday incidents, contemplations on time travel, occasional props and even the odd song.

In fact, Identifies concludes with a brand new composition written solely by the comedian.

“I trained myself to make sounds on a guitar and have written my very first song! I’ve done music before, but I’ve always got real musicians involved. They’ve made the music after I’ve hummed the song and then tried to make it into a thing. With this one, I forced myself to learn enough strumming sounds to be able to accompany myself. So I have a closing song!”

As well as a musical finale, Identifies also sees Tony addressing politics for the first time.

“My closing also features a bit of Brexit. I wouldn’t say it was pro-Brexit, but it’s pro people who voted Brexit, which is a little twist for me. It’s not saying one way or another, it’s saying something nice about all of the people, whichever way they voted. It sounds quite naff but it comes across quite good. It’s just a way of acknowledging our brothers and sisters who have different opinions. That was the idea behind it.”

Tackling a thorny subject without offending either side required Tony to look deeper into the reasons why people made their decisions.

“That was hard to do because I had to learn about all the reasons why someone wanted to do Brexit - because I didn’t know. But I needed to find out all of their reasons, not do it half-arsed like most people do - patronisingly looking down their nose and saying, ‘they’re idiots, they don’t really know!’ I didn’t want to go from that angle, so I dived into it and really got my head around it.

“That’s a bit of a departure for me. It’s a little bit political, but it’s not preaching.”

As with all of Tony’s shows, Identifies has changed since it debuted last year. The content is pretty much the same, but the delivery and the pacing are different - something which he attributes to a change in musical taste.

“The shows never seem to get too locked down. If you hear a recording of this material when I first did it, it will sound the same, the words won’t be that different for most of it, but there’ll be different inflections and a different pace to it. It slowly morphs.

“This show was written while listening to Toto, Supertramp and Steely Dan. It has a bit of a vibe like that - a 1970s vibe. But since I’ve been touring it, [US alt-rock pre-grunge heroes] Pixies have taken over. Pixies seems about right because of the urgency with which I deliver the material. It’s like a fricking train... ch-ch-ch-ch... but then slow, and then fast and loud.

“Almost every show of mine seems to have a life of its own.”

Tony Law: Identifies is at The Glee Club Birmingham, on Friday 14 February. For tickets and more details, visit glee.co.uk
Runaway West End and Broadway hit Once The Musical focuses on the passionate love experienced by two musicians, not only for their craft but also for one another. A new touring production will next month be casting its spell over Midlands theatre-goers. What’s On met up with the stars of the show...
Based on the 2006 cult feature film of the same name, Once is about two lost souls - a Dublin street busker and a Czech musician - who unexpectedly fall in love. The musical follows the pair’s lives over a period of five days.

Once’s Celtic folk music and lyrics - written by the stars of the film, Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová - have won Grammy, Academy and Olivier awards. Complete with a book by award-winning Irish playwright and screenwriter Enda Walsh, Once also took home the coveted Tony Award for best musical in 2012.

So what has made this heartwarming show such a resounding success?

“I think it’s a combination,” says Emma Lucia, one of the stars of the touring production that’s next month visiting the Midlands. “The storyline itself is so naturalistic - so much so that it appeals to all kinds of people of all ages and backgrounds. But also it’s the fact that all of the music is played by the actors on stage. It’s very unique in that sense.”

“The story itself is definitely something everyone can connect to,” adds Emma’s co-star, Daniel Healy. “We’ve all had those crossroads moments in life, those real chances or decisions that people often look back on and wish they’d dealt with differently. Once is about that kind of moment. It’s a real urban fairytale: it’s got great music with an Irish connection, a genuine story about love and loss, and a narrative about dreams coming true.”

Dan has been involved with the show for many years and feels a real affinity with his character, Guy: “I might have picked up a few tips being in the West End cast! I understood the lead in that, so I’ve seen many different incarnations. But I can honestly say that this is the best cast there’s been out of all of the versions I’ve seen or been involved with - and that’s not including myself, by the way! This cast is so bloody talented! Everyone involved in Once is a joy to be around, and I think the audience will feel that reflected in the show.

“Guy is a really great part that everyone can bring their own take to because he is so relatable. I would say that he’s really the closest character to myself that I’ve ever played. I’m a singer-songwriter who busked for years when I was young, so there are elements of Guy that I’m so connected to. Just like Emma, I saw the show and realised that was the part I was meant to play. But at the time in my life I first auditioned for the Broadway show and was then an understudy in the West End, I do think I was too young. So it was the right decision to wait until now to take the lead. The cool thing about Guy is that he is the ‘any man’ or ‘everyman’ - and now I’ve seen so many different versions of him, I can really make the part my own. The character in himself is almost nondescript, as it’s the pain and the journey in Once that’s perhaps more important. He’s like a blank canvas.”

With a background both as an actor and a musician (but very separately), Dan doesn’t consider himself the typical musical theatre performer: “I come from my acting and my singer-songwriter background above anything else, so I’ve had a real dual career in that way. I’ve managed to play music at quite a high level and be in West End plays, so I’m very lucky in that sense. What I think is great about Once is that it attracts people on both sides of the coin: whether you’re a massive musical theatre fan or prefer plays, Once is a show you’ll want to see. Moderate and hardcore theatre-goers and musical theatre lovers alike will be captivated by it. Guy is literally my dream role. The part could’ve been written for me in a sense, because of my Celtic upbringing and being an actor/musician.”

Dan’s background in music includes a close working relationship with Ronan Keating.

“I became good friends with Ronan when he played Guy in the West End and I was his understudy. I just saw him as this hugely successful fella who was following a similar path to me, and we became great mates. He heard one of my songs online and asked me if I’d do some writing for him. I ended up doing six songs on one of his albums, and then a slot opened up in his band about four-and-a-half years ago. So I’ve played with him ever since, touring the world and everything. It’s been really great! I’m still writing songs with him now, including one for Netflix’s Galapagos. But over and above all that, he’s a good pal, and hopefully he’ll come down to see the show.”

And what about Dan’s own music?

“I’m absolutely still working on that, too. It has crossed my mind that, as soon as Once has settled down a bit and we’ve got into the rhythm of touring, I might slowly start putting something together. I hope to have a new album finished by the time we stop touring!”

Emma is returning to the role of Girl.

“It’s great to revisit the part because, in our line of work, you can always dig deeper into a role, get more out of it and give more to it. I definitely relate to Girl’s personality more than her circumstances. For example, I don’t have a child and I’m not Eastern European, but I think I do relate to her optimistic outlook. She’s very positive and tries to be quite uplifting for others, even if she’s not feeling great herself - and that’s definitely something I try to do and the type of person I continue to aspire to be.”

“With Once, I’m playing a lead role as opposed to covering it, like I did with Beautiful: Carole King The Musical. I’m actually really glad that I did that first, as being in the ensemble and being a swing or understudy is a real rite of passage. You learn what it feels like to be a part of the show but not front-and-centre. Then I think you are even more appreciative both of your big break and your other cast members too. It’s a big step up in terms of pressure, but I feel so excited and lucky to be playing a lead role at my age.”

So why should Midlands theatre-goers go to see Once? Emma continues: “Markéta Irglová, who co-wrote the music, said that you can be a complete stranger to someone but once you start making music together, it’s like your souls merge. There’s something about that unspoken connection - the way music brings people together regardless of background - that Once captures in the best possible way.”

“There are a lot of people out there who are genuinely inspired to chase their dream, whatever that may be,” says Dan. “Once has a lasting effect, which I also felt when I watched it myself. It really does encourage people to make sure they’re doing what they love. Art should be all about getting right outside your own headspace and being taken on an incredible journey - and, of course, for you then to reflect it onto your own life and experiences. It’s so humbling to see people so moved by this musical, especially when you’re just going out there to do a job you love and giving absolutely everything you can. Once is a beautiful piece, besides being multi-award-winning, and this is your opportunity to see it in its best form yet!”

**Once The Musical shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 March; Malvern Theatres from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 March, and the Alexandra, Birmingham, from Monday 1 to Saturday 6 June.**
A play about a play that goes wrong isn’t a new idea by any means, but it’s certainly a winning one, as the plaudits garnered by this cheeky hit ably illustrate. One reviewer laughed so much he feared he was going to hyperventilate, another admitted his funny bone had been well and truly struck by the piece, while a third laughed and laughed until “the tears ran down”.

Having first introduced audiences to the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society in the Olivier Award-winning The Play That Goes Wrong, Mischief Theatre Company here let loose those selfsame comic creations on a production of JM Barrie’s children’s classic. The only trouble is, the bumbling thesps are more than a little accident-prone. So much so, in fact, that they’re not even sure they’ll manage to reach the curtain call, let alone Neverland...

Asking For It
The REP, Birmingham, until Sat 15 February

This critically acclaimed stage adaptation of Irish author Louise O’Neill’s novel focuses on the experiences of fictional main character and sexual-assault victim Emma O’Donovan. “I’m incredibly proud of the book and its message,” says Louise, “which is why I was so excited by the prospect of a stage adaptation. The prospect of this message getting as far and wide as possible is incredible. Sexual violence is such an epidemic in our culture, an important and devastating issue that needs to be addressed and eradicated; and we’re not going to do that unless we face the issue head-on.”

Ten Times Table
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 17 - Sat 22 February

Mention of Alan Ayckbourn and a list of brilliant observational comedies springs readily to mind. Ten Times Table, first performed in early 1977, is one of them. A cast of high-profile television actors here star in a story revolving around the Pendon Folk Festival committee, a calamitous ensemble led by the over-excitable Ray and coming complete with Marxist schoolteacher, military dog-breeder and octogenarian secretary. Robert Daws, best known as the team captain in ITV’s gentle 1990s’ cricket comedy, Outside Edge, takes top billing.

Home Of The Wriggler
The REP, Birmingham, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 26 February; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 27 February

Birmingham’s ever-impressive Stan’s Cafe here make a welcome return with a story they describe as a playful, kaleidoscopic soap-opera. The production is set in a far-distant post-oil future and finds four investigators piecing together the interwoven stories of families who once lived in the shadow of the Longbridge car plant. Built from true stories and industrial history, the show sees its industrious performers turning dynamos to light the stage with car headlights, bringing to life dozens of humdrum fragments of everyday moments.

Peter Pan Goes Wrong
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 18 - Sat 22 February; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 25 - Sat 29 February

Society in the Olivier Award-winning The Play That Goes Wrong, Mischief Theatre Company here let loose those selfsame comic creations on a production of JM Barrie’s children’s classic. The only trouble is, the bumbling thesps are more than a little accident-prone. So much so, in fact, that they’re not even sure they’ll manage to reach the curtain call, let alone Neverland...
Louis Sachar’s 1998 young-adult novel, Holes, is a staple of the national curriculum and much loved by children and adults alike. Nottingham Playhouse’s new stage version is coming to a theatre near you...

“The play, like Louis Sachar’s award-winning novel, is about a teenager, Stanley Yelnats, who gets falsely accused of stealing an old pair of sneakers,” explains Adam Penford, Artistic Director of Nottingham Playhouse, the theatre behind a brand new stage adaptation of the book. “Stanley is sent to Camp Green Lake, which certainly isn’t green and no longer has a lake. It’s a dried-up lake-bed and now very much like a desert. Every day he has to dig a hole, five foot deep and five foot wide, as a reforming character-building exercise. Stanley quickly discovers that the warden who runs the camp is hunting for something, so he starts investigating. Holes is an epic mystery adventure story!

“The novel was written in the late ’90s and has been studied by schools ever since. I think people really engage with Holes for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Louis Sachar himself said, everyone as a child has an obsession with digging a huge hole to see how far they can get into the earth, maybe even out the other side! So just that starting premise is one that grabs people’s imaginations.

“Secondly, it’s a really gripping story, the book is certainly a page-turner - and on stage
When I looked into it, I saw that Sachar had much of an amazing play it would make. I thought how in love with it very quickly. I thought how read in their lifetime. Of course, I got through a explains: "I read the novel quite a few years has been a long time in the making - as Adam Sachar adapted Holes for the stage himself, Sachar does almost hint that there are some becomes much more empowered. In the end, 'family curs [p]pen to him and he blames bad luck and his lot of questions for the reader. Stanley is kind pollen to the story, then you’re in a really privileged friendship. Stanley makes friends with Zero, who’s the boy in the camp who never speaks. Everyone else presumes he’s either mute or stupid, but he turns out to probably be the brightest of them all. Watching their friendship develop is really beautiful. It’s also about the love between Stanley and his parents. 

"The other underlying narrative is this question of destiny, and whether you have control over the way your life turns out or not. What’s very clear on it is that Louis doesn’t really answer that question by the end, so while the storyline itself is tied up neatly, it still leaves a lot of questions for the reader. Stanley is kind of an anti-hero in the beginning; things happen to him and he blames bad luck and his ‘family curse’. Then, as the play goes on, he starts to take control of his own destiny and becomes much more empowered. In the end, Sachar does almost hint that there are some things out of our control and there’s definitely some sort of magic in the world we live in.”

Sachar adapted Holes for the stage himself, but the Nottingham Playhouse production has been a long time in the making - as Adam explains: “I read the novel quite a few years ago from a list of 100 that everyone should read in their lifetime. Of course, I got through about three, but one I did read was Holes. So I read it as an adult rather than a child and fell in love with it very quickly. I thought how much of an amazing play it would make. When I looked into it, I saw that Sachar had already adapted it himself, but at that point it had only ever been staged in America. I managed to get hold of his agent in New York, but one of the big questions was how to actually stage this: how can you dig holes on stage? We did a series of several workshops over 10 years ago, followed by a small version at the Wimbledon Theatre Studio, and that went down really well. I was trying to sell Holes as an idea to theatres and there was a lot of interest. But I never quite managed to land it as a full-scale production. So of course, when I was appointed artistic director at Nottingham Playhouse, I finally got to programme Holes myself! We’ve been working on it for over 10 years, and the version we put on at Nottingham was so successful that Fiery Angel, our producers, picked it up and decided to tour the Playhouse production around the UK.”

The popular film adaptation of Holes, starring Shia LeBeouf and Sigourney Weaver, was released back in 2003. What can fans expect from the stage version?

“Lots of people are huge fans of that film, or have only seen the film and never read the book. There’s a lot to admire about the movie, especially the cast, but theatre definitely requires the audience to use their imagination a little more. The geographical location is one of the most important parts of the story because it’s so evocative, but we can’t create that naturalistically on stage. We have to use signifiers in the set, props and costume to transport people to the desert location or to the top of the mountain, God’s Thumb, and back in time to the 1890s, when Green Lake was a flourishing community with an actual lake. The power of imagination is the power of theatre. That’s the major difference.

"Also, there are quite a large number of characters, so in our production you’ll see an actor taking on five, six, seven or more different roles. There’s a huge pleasure in seeing the same person transform from a 40-year-old camp warden to an 85-year-old Latvian pig breeder! I think asking the audience to invest in this journey and take a very active part in creating it very much fits Holes anyway. Sachar’s story is very much about believing in yourself, others and the world - and we ask our audience to believe in the production.”

Other creatives who’ve worked on the show include Simon Kelly, who designed for the acclaimed adaptation of Noughts And Crosses. The puppetry, meanwhile, is the brainchild of War Horse’s Matthew Forbes.

“Undoubtedly our creative team is why we were so successful in Nottingham. Family shows do often require a large creative team, to use as many different theatrical elements as possible in a collaborative way to create an engaging story. So we knew there’d have to be puppetry because the dangerous yellow-spotted lizard is a huge part of Holes. All the characters are terrified of the lizard, which can kill with a single bite, so the audience really needs to believe in that or the stakes of the story fall short. We needed a really good puppetry designer and director to achieve that, so Matt was the absolutely perfect person. Likewise, with the set design from Simon, the story takes place in so many different locations and so many different timelines that a really skilled designer was essential. In the play, there’s 1860s Latvia, Greenlake in the 1890s and Stanley’s present day, which is mid-’90s for us. We needed a very fluid set design that could cross between the different timelines in an imaginative way. It’s a real collaborative team effort. Holes also has plenty of music and choreography working alongside the other disciplines.”

Adam is most proud of the intense emotional response of audiences to the Nottingham Playhouse production: “The audience really buy into the world we’ve created on stage and really care about our characters. For example, when Stanley and Zero are under threat at the end, the audience are gasping out loud and shouting out against the baddie - and are even moved to tears by the positive ending. So even though this is a very stripped-back production that asks the audience to really work hard with their imaginations, it feels like we’ve really been able to get to the heart of Sachar’s story, to the point where they feel like they’re actually in the middle of it themselves.”

Adam admits that he’s envious of people who have yet to discover the delights of Holes: “If you know the book or the film, then our production is a real joy to relive. If you’re new to the story, then you’re in a really privileged position because it’s a truly gripping tale, with so many twists and turns. I’m really envious of anyone encountering this story for the first time!”

-----

Holes runs at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 18 to Saturday 22 February. Malvern Festival Theatre from Wednesday 4 to Saturday 7 March and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 19 to Saturday 23 May.
Vamos Theatre's new show, Dead Good, tells the story of a friendship between two men who are staring death in the face. Both Bob and Bernard have been told that they're dying - but the pair are determined to live life to the full while they still can.

Embarking on one last adventure, the two men discover that coming close to death actually makes life, love and friendship more precious.

Vamos Theatre has an impressive reputation for tackling difficult subjects and creating shows which audiences love. The Worcester-based company uses full masks to tell its stories without words - and having turned the spotlight on dementia, the health service and post-traumatic stress in the past, Artistic Director Rachael Savage felt the time was right to investigate society's attitudes towards life and death.

“The main reason we’re telling this story is to ask how the dying teach us to live, and how do we live fully?” she says. “I never thought I’d do a show about death because I’m terrified by it, but it’s been really good for me to tackle this subject because I’ll talk about it now. And across all of the research I’ve done, I’ve laughed more than I’ve cried.”

The original inspiration for Dead Good came from an audience member who also hap-
There can be such a thing as a ‘good death’, and getting to change that.”

As part of her 18 months of research, Rachael visited hospices where she talked to staff caring for patients with terminal diagnoses.

At Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge, I met Dave, a patient living with prostate cancer. He told me about how being terminally ill had changed him, changed his relationships and changed his capacity to love. He’s just like a bottomless pit now in terms of his capacity to love.

Then I went to St Richard’s Hospice in Worcester, which has a Men’s Space Group. The men who attend it have the kind of friendships that you make when there’s nobody else who can really understand what you’re going through. There, I met two chaps named Nick and Pete, who are phenomenally good friends, and that friendship is based not only on care and compassion for each other but also humour. They giggle and laugh and rib each other and take the mick all the time.”

Medical staff and patients helped Rachael develop the story to ensure it remained authentic.

“We’ve invited Pete and Nick into the rehearsal room, and their double act has informed the whole piece. I’ve shared every script and rehearsal video with Nick, and he’s fed back on it.

“The way in which we see death portrayed on television or by Hollywood is often dramatised, and what I’ve really tried to do is to tell it as accurately as possible. We want to demystify death and take the fear out of it. We’re a death-denying society, and the show is trying to change that.”

Rachael is sure Dead Good will build on the success of previous Vamos’ productions Finding Joy, A Brave Face, Nursing Lives and Much Ado About Wenlock.

“I think people expect to go away from one of our shows having laughed and cried and with something to think about. I give a voice to people who often don’t have one, so our shows have to be about things that I’m passionate about, and that I want to make people think differently about.”

Rachael believes these messages reach the audience all the more effectively because Vamos’ characters are masked: “Full mask theatre draws people in. The actors have detailed scripts, objectives, the same things as other actors, but when there’s the full mask on top, there’s a real clarity of thought. We pull the audience in to us so that we’re connecting with them intellectually. They’re working out what’s going on, and through that we also have a really close connection to their heart, where we can make them feel. What I hope is that the feeling then bounces back to the brain so that we can make them think.

“My belief is that Dead Good is an important story to tell. I hope audiences will take away the message that life is precious and that their family and friends are precious. Love and laughter are wonderful things and, without making it into a cliché, it’s important to get out there, live life and learn what’s important.”

Taking the part of Bob in Dead Good is Aron De Casmaker, who’s worked with Vamos in the past. The Canadian clown performer has honed his skills in Cirque du Soleil’s Alegria and the hit international touring production, Slava’s Snow Show.

“Bob is one of the two men who go on this great adventure soon after they both find out they’re terminally ill,” explains Aron about his character. “He’s somebody who’s had a very simple and joyful journey through life - until recently, that is, when he’s been diagnosed with cancer of the prostate.

“That really put him into a position of questioning his existence, so he moved from being with his wife and being a retired auto-mechanic to deciding he’s going to die alone. He left his wife to seek solitude, but then he meets this other man, Bernard, who doesn’t let him have that solitude and forces him to find joy in these fleeting moments.

“I’m really excited about this project. The idea of finding the lightness in dark material really attracts me to the theatre. In this production we’re hitting head-on a very realistic view of death, and then finding the joy and the lightness that comes from that. We want the audience to come out of the show with a sense of extreme elation and joy that will resonate far beyond the walls of the theatre.”

Aron is a big fan of masked acting, which he believes helps to create a special link with Vamos’ audiences: “You have to be conscious of the simplicity that you’re bringing to every moment, but at the same time it’s a very common language. It’s non-verbal, but often we will have an audience member after a show saying they’re convinced the mask moved and that they heard what the character was saying!”

The show uses eight masks in total, all of which have been carefully crafted by Russell Dean of Strangeface Masks to ensure the characters can progress through the story.

“With a mask, you’re playing with people’s perceptions,” Russell explains. “If the character is going on a long journey in the show, you need to put into the mask maybe three, four or five different expressions. With the masks for the two lead characters, I’ve put in sadness, regret, optimism, grim determination and melancholy. It’s not the full expression. It’s the photo you throw away when people are between crying and laughing; that’s what you play around with.

“When a mask first comes on stage, by having the suggestion of a smile or the suggestion of tears, we embrace all of those possibilities. Then we start to project back onto it what we think is appropriate at that moment. The mask isn’t changing, we’re projecting onto it. It’s the audience who’s doing the work.”

Russell discusses the characters with Rachael before making small maquettes for each one. He then makes a video of the maquettes, which he sends to Rachael before agreeing the final masks. With Bob and Bernard, he needed to ensure they had distinct personalities: “The two men have an age gap between them, and you really do need to accentuate that. With masks you are playing on stereotypes because that’s the way our perception works. So if it’s an older guy, you have to put them into an older-person stereotype, with grey hair and bags under their eyes.

“With stereotyping, you’re playing into something which isn’t really acceptable, but it’s the way the mask and the character is played which makes the difference. Often the most subtle and brilliant mask performances are the ones where the mask sets out who the character is expected to be, but then the character is developed into this extraordinary individual.”

And the results certainly create some memorable theatrical moments: “Mask theatre tends to shoot straight to the heart. It’s a very emotional experience which tends to go very deep and stay with you. People will think about the show for a long time afterwards.”

Dead Good shows at Malvern Theatres on Wednesday 5 February, The Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, on Thursday 6 February, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Wednesday 26 & Thursday 27 February, and the Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thursday 5 & Friday 6 March.
The History Boys
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 7 - Sat 22 February

“I think I’d always wanted to write something about a charismatic schoolmaster, and that went back quite a long way,” says playwright Alan Bennett in talking about his award-winning The History Boys. The story unfolds in a boys’ school in northern England in the 1980s. A young teacher named Irwin has been brought in to coach the pupils for the Oxbridge exam - but fellow teacher Hector believes instead in learning for its own sake.

“Realistically the person who parents would want teaching their child would be Irwin, as Irwin would get you into university,” says Bennett. “However, sentimentally their hearts would be with Hector because he’s the type of teacher everyone wants. Everybody always wishes they’d learned more poetry at school and had someone who would inspire them like that. And it’s the fact that, in a way, I couldn’t resolve this conflict in my head which made me write the play.”

In Pursue
The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 10 - Sat 15 February

Substance misuse and celebrity stalking are the name of the game in Eleanor Higgins’ short-but-satisfying production, which picked up plenty of plaudits at last year’s Edinburgh Fringe. Described as an LGBT ‘Fleabag meets Miranda’, the play features Higgins in the role of ‘Woman’, a self-proclaimed “really hot lesbian” who’s initially in denial about her alcoholism. Instead, she rationalises that life would be so very much better if only she could date her idol, television’s Sue Perkins. But one brief glimpse of her heroine in a bookshop and one daring foray backstage at a TV studio later, Woman starts to realise that maybe the source of her trouble isn’t her undeclared love for an already-partnered television star but rather the potent liquid sitting at the bottom of her glass...

Drip Drip Drip
Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 27 February

The tiny but taboo-busting Pipeline Theatre here present a thought-provoking play that sees a trainee nurse from Eritrea, a second-generation immigrant Muslim doctor and a discredited academic who’s being treated for cancer becoming the strangest and most dysfunctional of ‘families’. Cornish company Pipeline have described their production as a love letter to the NHS. It’s certainly that alright, but it’s plenty more besides, not least a provocative study of an organisation creaking under the strain of a reprehensible rise in racism and bigotry...

Jekyll & Hyde
The Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 26 - Fri 28 February

Henry Jekyll is not himself, not by a long chalk, in this updated version of Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic novella. Forget all about the familiar version of the Victorian-era London-located gruesome gothic drama, in which Jekyll’s alter-ego, the malevolent Mr Hyde, conducts his reign of murderous mayhem in the prevailing darkness of a thick pea-souper or several... In this new version, Henry Jekyll is a young, bold, liberal and ambitious American senator who’s poised to run for the most powerful office in the land - the Presidency of the United States. What could possibly go wrong?...

Voldemort And The Teenage Hogwarts Musical Parody
Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 18 February - Sun 1 March

Lessons in love and proper snake maintenance were among those learned by the evil Voldemort back in the days when he was just plain old Hogwarts teenager Tom Riddle... This Harry Potter musical parody reveals young Tom’s fascinating story, from his time in a rock band to the experience of learning how to kiss from a snake. It even reveals that he once had a Hufflepuff girlfriend...
EXPLORE THE MAGIC OF LIVE THEATRE
AT WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE

THU 16 APR
THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY

SAT 18 – SUN 19 APR
PEPPA PIG’S BEST DAY EVER

TUE 28 APR – SAT 2 MAY
WBOS PRESENT FLASHDANCE THE MUSICAL

SUN 3 MAY
RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC

MON 4 MAY
NORTHERN BALLET PRESENT LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

TUE 5 – SAT 9 MAY
THE MOUSETRAP

MON 11 MAY
THE ELVIS TRIBUTE ARTIST WORLD TOUR

SUN 17 MAY
THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

MON 18 MAY
A TRIBUTE TO ITALIA 90

BOOK ONLINE grandtheatre.co.uk • BOX OFFICE 01902 42 92 12
THE QUEENDOM IS COMING...

From Tudor queens to battling boss-women, SIX sees the wives of Henry VIII take to the stage to tell their own versions of their lives. This celebration of 21st century girl power sees the cast backed by the show’s all-female band, The Ladies In Waiting.

SIX’s runaway success has shown no signs of abating since it premiered as a student production at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2017. The musical was nominated for five 2019 Olivier Awards, continued to sell every available seat in London’s West End and will soon transfer to Broadway - with tours also planned for Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and Canada.

“This definitely isn’t a normal musical,” says Jodie Steele, whose character’s historical counterpart is Catherine Howard. “It has only one act and is definitely more like a concert than usual - take a Girls Aloud gig and a musical and SIX is right in the middle! The running storyline is that we’re competing as Henry VIII’s wives, fighting over who had it worse. It’s all about the competition until near the end, where the queens realise competing is ridiculous and come together instead. There’s so much historical information to get across that there isn’t room for different side-stories - we’re all on the same path. It’s a very unique concept, for sure! ”

The woman who I play, Catherine Howard, is widely known as the queen who nobody cares about - and she’s Katherine with a ‘K’ in SIX. The two most famous queens, Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn, refer to her in the musical as the most forgettable of the three.
Catherine of Aragon is the first queen and married to Henry for the longest, so in the show she wears gold and is very arrogant about that. She’s the most outspoken, competitive and sassy. Music-wise she’s based on Beyonce.

“Anne Boleyn is the queen who came in whilst Catherine of Aragon was still there – and the character seems the hot favourite with the youngssters. Boleyn has that Avril Levigne rock-chick vibe, and her colour is green. Her and Aragon argue throughout the musical because they were the overlapping queens who met and clearly didn’t like each other! Bobo [Boleyn] is very outspoken, confident, quirky and has plenty of cheeky one-liners. I’d say she’s my favourite queen in the show.

Jane Seymour is the total opposite of the first two: she’s reserved and quiet, just like Seymour was in real life. She’s the queen who gave Henry his son, Edward, and then died. Henry really did love her and she really did love him. So her song is a ballad like those from Adele, and she wears white in her costume to signify innocence. But then obviously our show is pulling history into the future, so Jane still has more of an edge to her than a Tudor queen would've been allowed.

“The latter queens aren't as talkative and feisty as the first three. Anna of Cleves (Anna of Cleves in history) is laid-back and doesn't argue - but she’s also the biggest, baddest boss-woman out of all six. Cleves can’t win the contest of who had the worst time from Henry and she knows that. Henry decided Anne was really ugly and didn’t want to be married to her, so she managed to play that to her advantage, twist his arm and get loads of money and a palace out of him. Her song is rap, like Lil' Kim, and she wears red.

“Then comes me as Katherine at number five - channelling pretty-in-pink Ariana Grande. The survivor, Catherine Parr, dons blue and is very quiet throughout the show, sitting back to watch the situation very much like Parr did in real life. She was an incredibly intelligent woman who knew that to outlive Henry and not end up like the previous five queens, she just needed to sit on the sideline and hold her tongue. Even though Parr was Catholic and fought against the new religion Henry created to divorce Aragon, she very much had to keep her opinions to herself after he took a liking to her. She’s the calmest and sternest out of the six, biding her time until her solo - an absolutely huge Alicia Keys-esque song that unites all the queens.

“Then we do the last three numbers as a group, flipping history on its head and saying how it would've been if these six very different but equally amazing women had lived nowadays.”

In the end, SIX is all about female empowerment.

“The queens finally come to realise that they’re all equal and there’s no need to fight each other, which I think is so relevant to now. Neither our obsession with social media and comparing ourselves to others, nor the online trolling that comes out of it, are healthy things. SIX is really fighting against that. I think that SIX really is right up there in the women’s movement that’s happening at the moment, showing that women can have a say while supporting one another. Women having to sit on their opinions or do things they don’t want has no place in our society.

“There are plenty of boys and men who’re fans of SIX too, which is so, so important. In this movement of empowering women, we absolutely have to get males involved too, or we’ll never get where we want to go. We will never be able to change what happened to Henry’s wives, but somehow we’ve changed their fate for the youngsters and used their tragic stories for something good. Teachers message me thrilled with what we’re doing with SIX, as their pupils come to school after seeing it brimming with excitement for history and wanting to know more about female historical figures overlooked in a man’s world. Seeing history from a woman’s point of view is so different. SIX is all over the world. It’s really unstoppable and doesn’t seem to be tiring!”

The SIX cast album is the second highest-streaming cast recording in the world. Why does Jodie think this is?

“The music is so current and plays on lots of young people’s idioms while also using social-media slang. I think sometimes pop doesn’t want to be too cheesy so doesn’t play on that, but SIX really has fun with that idea in the lyrics. It’s just so current, catchy and cheeky! And it builds to this massive rock chorus at the end. People of all ages can’t help connecting with the show. Adults have a little laugh to themselves when they recognise how their teenagers speak, and the kids, teenagers and young adults themselves find it relatable. In terms of the score as a whole and the success of the album, because every song is so different, it’s like going to an ice cream parlour and being able to get all the flavours: pop, rock, ballads, house. In that way, it’s like the album is a compilation of strong women in music.

“It’s funny and ironic, though, that in a show where it’s all about being equal, it’s so easy for people to pick their favourites. People come away loving the queen who ‘spoke’ to them the most, and that’s fine. You can identify with one person more than another, but that doesn’t mean you have to try and bring down the women you don’t relate to as much.

The musical’s ethos even impacts on the cast members’ off-stage relationships with one another: “I’ve been so lucky in my career; I’ve done so much in my seven years as a professional. I’ve covered, I’ve been an alternate standby and I’ve been a leading lady, but SIX is so special because every single person is so equal. All shows say that it’s a ‘team effort’, but I think with the manner in which the musical’s message makes its way into the very dynamics of the cast, it’s even more the case with SIX. We’re so supportive of each other, so I love living in and sharing SIX’s message. If we just pick each other up rather than bring each other down, then wow, the world will be a better place to live in.”

SIX shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March and Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 21 - Saturday 25 July.
When the cat prowls, the flock takes fright...

Former Coronation Street star Tracy Shaw talks about her spooky role in a new touring production of The Cat And The Canary...

What’s The Cat And The Canary about, Tracy?
Mr West was a millionaire who died quite some time ago. His solicitors have collected his whole family together 20 years later to announce who he named as his heir. They all arrive in the middle of nowhere in Devon, at the creepy old house where he used to live. His housekeeper still lives there, keeping the property just as it was when Mr West was alive. There’s obviously a lot of tension between the family members about who is going to inherit his money. Right at the beginning of the play, the heir is announced, but then the plot thickens as people start disappearing.

Who do you play?
My character is Annabelle West. She’s a successful writer who left the country a few years ago but has now come back. She also spent some time in the house with her grandfather years and years ago. The psychological complexity of this piece really is quite huge, especially for my character.

The show has an impressive cast, too. What are they like to work with?
They’re so talented. Britt Ekland is our ‘housekeeper’ - she’s just marvellous... And I grew up listening to Marti Webb’s fantastic voice. Ben Nealon from Soldier Soldier is brilliant, and so is Gary Webster from Minder. Mark Jordon, who played my husband in Casualty a few years ago, is a pleasure to work with again. It’s an absolute honour to be working on such a stimulating project with a company of lovely actors who I really admire.

What attracted you to the project?
I don’t think I’ve ever before had the chance to work on a piece that’s been updated because of the reality of how we watch theatre and TV nowadays. Things are faster and not so obvious now. To do that work tastefully to a play written in the 1920s, and not just to produce your average whodunnit, is quite difficult. We want people to come along, watch the show and be enthralled. We have the most amazing set. The action takes place in the big old house, so it’s got these fabulously eerie paintings with staring eyes! As an actor, getting this job makes me feel like I’m the cat who got the cream.

People might think that because you’re a well-known television face, you don’t have to audition... There are periods where I think, “Maybe my time’s up”. But the truth is that it’s absolutely right that I find myself sitting there with another hundred people who look similar to me. It keeps me really grounded, and I never take anything for granted. Then, when I get that part and end up back on stage or TV, I feel like the luckiest person alive because I’m doing a job that I love. That’s what this business is like. There are a lot of knocks, but you occasionally get a job that’s as stimulating as this one. I’m really grateful.

How do you feel about taking The Cat And The Canary on tour around the UK?
I love going on tour. I miss my children, obviously, but I get to visit these lovely places around England, work in these gorgeous theatres and entertain people. That makes me feel alive. I’m such a theatre geek in the sense that I just get excited about the history and the way they’re built and the tiles backstage.

Audiences know you best for your television work... I sort of fell into TV, but I still adore it. Because I did Corrie for so long, I feel that television is second nature to me, but there’s something about theatre that just makes me feel alive. That’s why I look on this job - you have to work your brain so much harder. I have to be so alive every night; it really keeps me on my toes.

What was it like to be part of Coronation Street?
It was magic. Growing up, I used to spend a lot of time with my great grandma watching the show. I learned TV in Corrie. I love working with people I can learn from - admiring them and constantly learning - and I worked with the most amazing people on that show. I’d only just come out of drama school and was suddenly catapulted into a world I was unfamiliar with. I rolled with it and never regretted it for a minute. It’s the most prestigious programme I’ve ever worked on, and I’m thoroughly proud to have been a part of it.

The Cat And The Canary shows at Malvern Theatres from Monday 17 to Saturday 22 February.
A little known fact about silent-era Hollywood movie star Charlie Chaplin and his fellow Englishman, Stan Laurel - who, of course, found fame as part of a double-act with Oliver Hardy - is that they were both members of the famous Fred Karno music-hall troupe that set sail for New York in 1910. Stan, who understudied Charlie on arrival in the US, returned home shortly afterwards. His big break lay several years ahead of him... Chaplin, by contrast, had become a global name within five years of setting foot on American shores.

In a show which, on its producers' own admission, plays somewhat fast and loose with the truth, these two early-20th-century funnymen are rightly celebrated for their immense contribution to cinematic comedy. A post-show discussion will take place after the performance on the 26th.

**Revenge**
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 13 - Sat 15 February; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 17 & Tues 18 February
An MP with a charmed life, a journalist with an axe to grind, and a dead body that brings the two protagonists into close and incendiary contact with one another...
Louise Jameson, best known to oldies who remember 1980s television as the long-time love interest of Jersey-based copper Jim Bergerac, is the woman at the helm of this well-reviewed touring show.

**The Ballad Of Maria Marten**
New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 26 - Sat 29 February
In Suffolk in the summer of 1827, Maria Marten was the victim of what would become known as The Red Barn Murder. Not only did news of the killing send immediate shockwaves throughout the nation, but in the near-two centuries which have followed, the story of Maria's tragic demise has provided inspiration for playwrights and filmmakers across the globe. But what about the woman at the centre of the tragedy? What was her story? This 'spinetingling' new appraisal of events in the red barn aims to find out...

**First Time**
Lichfield Garrick, Fri 7 February
Edinburgh Fringe star Nathaniel Hall here presents a funny and frank autobiographical solo show about ‘staying positive in a negative world’.
Nathaniel contracted HIV during his first ever sexual encounter, aged 16.
“At a time when I was trying to make sense of my sexuality,” he recalls, “I was getting this message that gay men just get AIDS and die anyway, so what was the point.

“The show is very funny. I think there’s humour hidden in even the darkest places, and you’re never too far from a laugh in First Time. It also has fabulous storytelling, some bad drag, audience participation and moments of quiet reflection, but it ends in a really hopeful place.”

**The Cat And The Canary**
Malvern Theatres, Mon 17 - Sat 22 February
Erstwhile sex symbol, former Mrs Peter Sellers and one-time ‘Bond girl’ Britt Ekland heads the cast of this famous murder-mystery, a story that’s been adapted for the cinema on three separate occasions, most famously with Bob Hope taking top billing. When the descendants of the late Mr West gather at a remote mansion to find out who will inherit his fortune, events take an unexpected and deadly turn...
Presented by the Classic Theatre Company.

**The Boy In The Dress**
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sun 8 March
David Walliams’ The Boy In The Dress - helmed by RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran - ticks all the boxes of the feelgood family musical: young protagonists, splendidly choreographed scenes (including football playing and disco dancing), a lightweight but thoroughly engaging storyline, a timely message (about embracing difference) and a fantastically memorable score (by one of the world’s hottest songwriting partnerships - Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers).
The show is fun, fast, lively, colourful, clever and utterly absorbing, with an energetic and confident cast who’ve evidently got the greatest of faith in their material and more than enough talent to maximise the magic.
Theatre for younger audiences...

**Puss In Boots**
The REP, Birmingham, Fri 14 & Sat 15 February
Smoke, mirrors, hidden trapdoors, a host of puppets, a working windmill and an avalanche of fruit & nuts - oh, and a talking cat - ensure that this latest presentation of the ever-enchanting tail - sorry, tale - of Puss In Boots will keep children well and truly entertained. CBeebies’ Patrick Lynch is the man coordinating the fur-filled fun for moggie-loving youngsters to enjoy.

**The Three Billy Goats Gruff**
The Core Theatre, Solihull, Wed 19 February
Wondering what to do with your three-to-seven-year-olds during the half-term break? Well, if you take them along to this ‘trip-trapping musical adventure’, then not only will one of the holiday afternoons be beautifully taken care of, there’s also every chance that they’ll have a thoroughly smashing time. With songs and dances to clap along to and not one but three billy goats gruff taking perilous journeys across a rickety bridge in search of greener pastures, what’s not to enjoy?...

**Milkshake! LIVE**
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 16 February; The Place, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 22 February; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 7 March
Milkshake Monkey’s desire to put on a new musical has hit the skids due to a nasty bout of rampant stage fright - so thank heaven that Fireman Sam, Noddy, Shimmer & Shine and all their friends are on hand to help out... If you’ve watched the TV series and/or been to a previous live production, you’ll already know what to expect from this particular Milkshake! show. If not, get ready for an event that promises lots of laughter, bucket-loads of family fun, bags of audience participation and plenty of singing and dancing.

**Exciting Science**
Stourbridge Town Hall, Wed 19 February
Designed to enlighten, educate and entertain children aged four and older, Exciting Science promises plenty of ‘wiz, bang, pop and splurt’, as the show’s scientists carry out all manner of fun and fact-filled live experiments. So if you think your kids would enjoy seeing some boffins create a volcanic eruption, turn a vacuum cleaner into a missile launcher and take aim with a smoke blaster, then this is definitely the show to check out.

**Room On The Broom**
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 3 & Tues 4 February
Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, the creators of The Gruffalo and We’re Going On A Bear Hunt, are the team behind this ‘spell-binding’ tale of a witch who makes the mistake of thinking she can fit a daft dog, a beautiful bird and a friendly frog - as well as her own cat - on her broomstick without it snapping in two. And when a hungry dragon appears, things really start to hot up... Tall Stories is the highly rated company presenting this Olivier Award-nominated show for children aged three and older.

**What A Wonderful World**
Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 16 & Mon 17 February
“Before anything new is made, it must first be dreamed,” say Lyngo Theatre in explaining their new show. “From our moon-base in the Sea of Tranquility, we get a great view of the earth, and it’s time to make a new one just like we do every night! What shall we put in tomorrow’s world? Snowballs and flamingos, of course! So all aboard the sleeper train as it takes us on our dream voyage. “We start with putting the stars in the sky and move through history, discovering fire all over again and finally arriving at the one-world tree, where we celebrate the new world that we made all together. “This is a truly amazing romp through the universe, where you can get your hands on the stuff of creation!”
The Red Shoes

Matthew Bourne’s award-winning smash-hit returns to the Midlands...
Three years after its original much-heralded run at Birmingham Hippodrome, Matthew Bourne’s The Red Shoes is making a highly anticipated return to the venue.

The production takes many of its cues from the 1948 film of the same title, which found its own inspiration in Hans Christian Andersen’s fairytale about a pair of enchanted shoes that force their wearer to dance until she dies. The movie reworks Andersen’s warning against vanity into a tale of all-consuming, almost Faustian ambition.

Widely regarded as the greatest dance film ever made, The Red Shoes centres on young ballerina and star in the making Vicky Page. When Vicky falls for the company’s charismatic composer, Julian Craster, the jealous Lermontov forces her to choose between love and her career, knowing full well that for Vicky, dancing is as important as life itself.

Bourne’s stunning adaptation reinvents the story live on stage, brilliantly capturing a sense of the film’s strange, unsettling atmosphere and delving deep into the complex psychology of the characters.

Producing a stage version of the movie had been on Matthew’s to-do list for quite some time. On rewatching the film, he was surprised to find himself feeling more sympathetic towards the manipulative instructor than he had been in the past.

In another nod to the movie, the whole score for the production has been pieced together from works by legendary film composer Bernard Hermann - best known for his iconic soundtracks to The Twilight Zone and Alfred Hitchcock’s Psycho.

Celebrities across the globe have been lavish in their praise of Bourne’s sumptuous production, with Liza Minnelli declaring: “I’ve never seen anything like this. I’m in love!”

Emmerdale actor and Strictly Come Dancing 2019 winner Kelvin Fletcher has also heaped praise on The Red Shoes. A novice when it comes to watching live ballet, Kelvin said of the production: “It just blew me away, it really did. The first thing I did when the show finished, I texted Oti (Mabuse) and said, you have to come and see this; it’s amazing!”

The Red Shoes shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 February.

“Every duet, every group number, you know exactly what’s going on from the movement. It’s like watching dialogue.”

Zizi Strallen

In Bourne’s take on the story, Vicky has even more reason to be ambitious. A wartime orphan living with an increasingly distant aunt, the on-stage Vicky is far less privileged than the film Vicky. Like Matthew himself, she begins as something of an outsider, taking nothing for granted and being under no illusion about how hard she must work for every success. To have come so far perhaps makes the prospect of hanging up her ballet shoes all the more difficult to accept.

“The genius about Matthew’s work is that you could watch it a hundred times and every time you’d discover a different layer.”

Bruno Tonioli

It’s such a powerful story and Matthew tells it really beautifully. It transports you. It’s sensational. It really is sensational.

David Walliams
New play The Whip captures the ‘moment’ when people of many different political persuasions collide in 1830s London. This Royal Shakespeare Company production explores the concerns of different people in Britain in the lead-up to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. What’s the price of the slaves’ freedom? Who should shoulder that cost?

And why not focus on moral conundrums much closer to home?

“Abolition was delivered in Britain in 1834, following an Act of Parliament in 1833,” says dramatist Juliet Gilkes Romero, the woman behind the play. “Some 800,000 Caribbean slaves were freed following a compensation award to the slave owners in the Abolition Act. But actually, afterwards, the slaves were required to work an apprenticeship of up to seven years because it was considered that they needed to prepare for their freedom. That meant they continued working for their former owners for no pay, but the owners no longer felt responsible for their care because...
the slaves were no longer their property.

“Following wide-scale protests across the Caribbean, the apprenticeship scheme had to be abolished, and in 1838 slaves were finally free. I think it’s relatively unknown that the act which passed in 1833 wasn’t quite the abolition of slavery it claimed to be.

“The other thing that people will probably find surprising is the slavery compensation act itself. Money was borrowed - 40% of the government’s national budget - to pay off already-wealthy slave owners. It was £2million at the time, which equates to between £20billion and £23billion in today’s terms! Slave owners became fantastically rich. The loan for this pay-off ended in 2015, so if you were working in and before that year, then that’s where some of your taxes were going. For me, as a descendant of the slave trade, I was astonished to find that out. I got access to the actual Abolition Act from 1833 and the transcripts from the actual debates from the House of Commons. I’ve transferred a lot of the language that was used there and channelled people’s real concerns into the play. What really excites me as a journalist and as a dramatist is handling these untold stories over to the public. I wouldn’t say my writing is didactic; I’m exploring the handprint of the past on the present day, but through very human stories. I don’t want to be preachy, to the public really weren’t being represented in the House of Commons. The 1830s is where all of this starts to collide, and that’s what The Whip is all about. What happened in these years is really revolutionary. The Factory Act stopped children of a certain age working for more than 10 hours, as back then children as young as five were working in British cotton mills. So the piece isn’t just about the emancipation of slaves in the Caribbean, but also the emancipation of working children and the working class in general.”

Very individual, human stories are central to The Whip. Many of its characters are based on real-life figures.

“The majority of the action takes place either in the House of Commons itself, or in the house of one of the politicians - the chief whip, Boyd, whose job it is to drum up support and deliver the Abolition Act through the Commons. He has a huge battle trying to deliver this, as many of the house have their own interests in cotton and the Slave Trade. We also meet Lord Maybourne - loosely based on Lord Melbourne, the then home secretary - and explore his machinations on either side of the debate. We also encounter opposition MPs led by a back-bencher who has slaves and has been made head of the West India Committee, which was a pressure group making sure slave owners were properly compensated for what they would get per head of slave. Many MPs in the Commons were either slave owners or had cotton factories in Britain.

“Another character, Mercy, is based on Mary Prince, a runaway slave who came to Britain and became the first black woman to deliver a petition to parliament. She spoke about her own experience of the dreadful, inhumane abuses on the plantations. In the play, Mercy is working very closely with the chief whip to try and deliver this act.

“Another prominent woman is Horatia, who has fled working in the north and lost her child from being crushed to death in a cotton mill. She represents that side of the British story. She ends up working in the home of the chief whip, and her interest is in the state of Britain’s factories and getting children out of those working conditions, rather than being concerned with the fate of slaves in a far-off colony. So when these two women meet, they’re rivals in some way and have different political agendas, but they slowly begin to realise the commonality in their causes.

“Horatia and Mercy are examples of the early seeds of women’s suffrage. There’s a very clear narrative when we think of the suffragettes paving the way for women to vote, but their battle started way, way before then. While men certainly had the political voice in the 1830s, women have a very strong voice in The Whip. So the piece is certainly also about the emancipation of women, and that definitely resonates today. I don’t think enough has changed, particularly if you look at the proportion of women in modern slavery, or the gender pay gap. Mercy and Horatia are both very strong, intelligent women who go about politics in different ways.

“The Whip is all about how important it is to be heard. Another character is Edmund, a young, escaped slave who Boyd has taken in and raised to be an English gentleman. So we also have his story, about what it means to completely lose who you are; how it feels to be plucked from your home, your family, and suddenly have an English home instead. So the play explores many different identities that Britons can relate to.”

Juliet is certain The Whip has universal resonance: “This play speaks to so many different aspects of British society, regardless of background. The Whip has a full 360-degree view of 1830s Britain that resonates today and tells a powerful story that I hope opens up many discussions. When I see theatre, I want to be set alight with passion and continue to debate well beyond the curtain falling - and I think The Whip will do that.”

The Whip shows at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon, from Saturday 1 February to Saturday 21 March.
Dance previews from around the region

Richard Alston Dance
Malvern Theatres,
Tues 11 & Wed 12 February
A choreographer who’s very much at the forefront of contemporary dance in the UK, Richard Alston takes inspiration directly from the music he uses. This month sees Alston’s highly rated company perform in Malvern for the 22nd and, sadly, last ever time; the ensemble is calling it a day after 25 years of impressive performances.
The decision to shut up shop has been made as a result of the way in which the Arts Council funds its clients. “When you reapply [for a grant],” Richard explains, “you have to present a business plan and make changes to what you’re doing. I felt that there was a lot of pressure on The Place, our London home, to make some kind of change with the company, and instead to give money to younger choreographers, who would then be touring.”

Gary Clarke Company: Wasteland
Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 27 & Fri 28 February
Following on from Coal, his show about the 1984/85 Miners Strike, Gary Clarke here turns his attention to the early 1990s, a time when the coal industry was in terminal decline. It was also a period when Britain’s illegal rave scene was flourishing. A raver himself, Gary has brought together the two at-first-glance-unconnected subjects in this sequel to Coal. “Rave was a subculture that came out of oppression,” explains the Barnsley-born choreographer. “The factories, warehouses and mills were now home to new communities. But rather than working, those communities were dancing and playing music.”
Dance

“I feel like I’m speaking on behalf of young people who are angry,” says choreographer Botis Seva in talking about his critically acclaimed show. “I don’t believe it’s just me. I’m saying it for them, too.”

Co-produced by Sadler’s Wells London and Seva’s powerhouse company, Far From The Norm, BLKDOG blends hip-hop dance with free-form antics to present a bleak, vital and haunting commentary on the challenges of being a childlike adult and an untamed artist. Joss Arnott’s shows are highly charged, visually stunning and technically brilliant - and this latest production promises more of the same. When Worlds Collide has been described as a powerful, exhilarating masterclass featuring an original, cinematic music score and impressive lighting. The bill also features Fuel - a work inspired by the young company’s seemingly boundless energy - and An Event - a piece exploring how people feel in that moment between everything being fine and everything falling apart.

BLKDOG
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 11 February
“I feel like I’m speaking on behalf of young people who are angry,” says choreographer Botis Seva in talking about his critically acclaimed show. “I don’t believe it’s just me. I’m saying it for them, too.”

Co-produced by Sadler’s Wells London and Seva’s powerhouse company, Far From The Norm, BLKDOG blends hip-hop dance with free-form antics to present a bleak, vital and haunting commentary on the challenges of being a childlike adult and an untamed artist.

Autin Dance Theatre: Square One
Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 12 February
Project-based professional company Autin Dance Theatre make a welcome return with a show that delves into its founder & choreographer Johnny Autin’s own personal journeys through mental, physical and spiritual changes. Presented as a “work in progress”, the 30-minute solo production, combining digital media and dance theatre, is followed by a Q&A with Autin. “We draw on contemporary social issues and events to make work which is beautifully crafted, accessible and relevant,” says Johnny. “The company is gaining a reputation for creating powerful performances, catapulting audiences into intense dance-worlds which we hope will resonate with them long after they leave the auditorium.”

Birmingham Royal Ballet: Swan Lake
Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 18 - Sat 29 February
Birmingham Royal Ballet here presents a spectacular production of a timeless classic. Set to Tchaikovsky’s mesmerising score, Swan Lake tells the story of Odette, a beautiful princess who, caught under the wicked spell of the evil Von Rothbart, must spend the daytime hours as a swan, returning to human form only when night falls... A sumptuous visual feast, BRB’s show presents an evening of ballet which is ideal not only for the seasoned dance-goer but also the first-time trier.

Joss Arnott Dance
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Fri 14 February
Joss Arnott’s shows are highly charged, visually stunning and technically brilliant - and this latest production promises more of the same. When Worlds Collide has been described as a powerful, exhilarating masterclass featuring an original, cinematic music score and impressive lighting. The bill also features Fuel - a work inspired by the young company’s seemingly boundless energy - and An Event - a piece exploring how people feel in that moment between everything being fine and everything falling apart.

Giovanni Pernice: This Is Me
Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 27 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 21 March; Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 27 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 7 June; The Place, Telford, Thurs 25 June
There’s no Strictly Live tour for Giovanni Pernice this year - the hugely popular danceman has been way too busy getting ready to hit the road with this brand new show of his own. A homage to the music and dances which have inspired him on his journey from competition dancer to one of Strictly’s biggest stars, This Is Me sees Giovanni bringing together his natural Italian charm with ‘beautiful choreography and a fabulous soundtrack’. He’s joined by a cast of professional dancers for what will be his fourth touring show.
Twenty years in dance...

2 Faced Dance Artistic Director Tamsin Fitzgerald talks about the company’s latest triple bill featuring an exciting new piece by choreographer Fleur Darkin...

Tell us about the title of the programme - Everything [But The Girl]. What's its significance, Tamsin?

We sat down as a team to all throw our suggestions for names into the hat. We had a long chat about perceptions of the company, the type of work we do and the fact that often audiences think that the work is created by a man or the company is run by a man. As someone growing up in the '90s, I often listened to the group Everything But The Girl, and although the band was named after a shop sign, I’d forgotten what an incredible piece it is. We’ve made some small changes and tweaks to the choreographic work. The main change is that at certain tour dates we will have live musicians accompanying the work. Alex Baranowski has re-scored the work so that it can be accompanied by some incredible musicians. We’re working with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group on this element, and I think it’s going to be pretty special.

Have you and Fleur Darkin worked together before, and what is it about her work that inspired you to commission her to make a piece for 2 Faced Dance’s 20th anniversary?

I’ve never worked with Fleur before, but I’ve seen some of the work that she did for Scottish Dance Theatre. We commissioned Fleur because she’s someone who works very differently from me. Her work is incredibly theatrical and she’s someone who has challenged the status quo. She’s bright, talented and an incredibly generous person who is also willing to work collaboratively. These are rare attributes but they appeal to me. She’s bold, and we like bold at 2Faced Dance.

In ‘7.0’ are any of the original dancers performing? How did you cast both your pieces?

None of the original ‘7.0’ dancers are performing in the work, but all the original dancers are still performing or have gone on to build their own companies. I cast it based on the original choreography and have tried to pair up the skill level, individuality and style of each dancer. It’s a tricky one when you create work on the individuality of a dancer rather than create movement that any dancer could do. It’s harder work to then recreate or reimagine a work on a new company, but it’s worked and I’d forgotten what an incredible piece it is. We’ve made some small changes and tweaks to the choreographic work. The main change is that at certain tour dates we will have live musicians accompanying the work. Alex Baranowski has re-scored the work so that it can be accompanied by some incredible musicians. We’re working with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group on this element, and I think it’s going to be pretty special.

How does it feel to be celebrating 20 years in the dance industry?

I think about all the other dance companies which are either still running or have folded, the companies that inspired me to start dancing or who I yearned to be a part of, and I think, ‘Wow, 20 years... that really is some bloody brilliant achievement!’ From having no funding to becoming an NPO, to employing a team, to travelling round the world, to changing lives and to making all of that work based in a place that has little cultural landscape - it’s phenomenal, really. It’s really about the people who’ve been part of that journey, without whom I couldn’t have made it work.

What are the highlights of the company’s 20th anniversary?

The trip to Haiti just after the earthquake, which inspired ‘7.0’, is one of my most vivid memories. Seeing the small difference that dance made to children who had nothing was very moving. I felt very emotional throughout the trip. It was totally inspiring.

The company’s international reputation is very important, and I know I’m extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to travel and tour to different countries. Last year I was commissioned to create a new work and dance film for UCCA Dune Art Museum in China. I have never seen a building like it - it’s completely space-age! It’s an incredible collection of curved white buildings carved into a dune on a beach in the coastal city of Qinhuangdao in China. We had a great time there and met some wonderful people. We performed at the MTV Europe Awards in Lisbon and were subsequently invited to audition for Madonna! At the time, I was thinking, “But we’re just a little youth dance group from nowhere, so why does Madonna want to work with us?” We didn’t get the gig, but boy, was I proud! And I’m particularly proud of creating and running our all-female choreography programme, The Bench, which was designed to encourage women to develop the necessary shift in mindset to push past the glass ceiling and create new work. We may not have changed the world, but I think we made a difference.

2Faced Dance’s ‘Everything (But The Girl) is performed in the Patrick Studio at Birmingham Hippodrome on Thursday 6 & Friday 7 February.
WORLD PREMIERE
2Faced Dance Company
EVERYTHING (BUT THE GIRL)
Thurs 6 & Fri 7 Feb
Bold and striking dance.

Gary Clarke Company
WASTELAND
Thurs 27 & Fri 28 Feb
Gritty tale of 90s rave culture.

WORLD PREMIERE
DeNada Dance Theatre
MARIPOSA
Fri 27 & Sat 28 Mar
Passion, sacrifice and love.

dancexchange.org.uk
0844 338 5000
Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Dx registered charity no. 1045364
Birds Of Prey: And The Fantabulous Emancipation Of One Harley Quinn  CERT 15
Starring Margot Robbie, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Jurnee Smollett-Bell, Rosie Perez, Chris Messina, Ella Jay Basco, Ali Wong, Ewan McGregor
Directed by Cathy Yan (USA)
Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn was the best thing about the critically derided Suicide Squad (2016) and now, rightly, she gets a movie all to herself. Here, Harley has split up with her boyfriend the Joker (who could really do with his own movie) and teams up with the superheroes Black Canary and Huntress to help save a young girl with a price on her head, targeted by the awful, iron-fisted Black Mask (Ewan McGregor). In keeping with this new brand of female heroism, Birds Of Prey is directed by a woman, the Chinese-American Cathy Yan. And with Margot Robbie on board as producer, one hopes that this will do every bit as well as Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel, although the film’s restrictive certificate will limit its demographic reach. Still, there’s already talk of a sequel, dubbed Gotham City Sirens.
Released Fri 7 February

Dolittle  CERT PG (106 mins)
Starring Robert Downey Jr, Antonio Banderas, Michael Sheen, Jessie Buckley, and the voices of Emma Thompson, Rami Malek, Tom Holland, Ralph Fiennes
Directed by Stephen Gaghan (USA)
Hugh Lofting’s immortal children’s novel about the veterinarian who can talk to animals is back in a new live-action adaptation. Robert Downey Jr follows in the footsteps of Rex Harrison and Eddie Murphy as the eccentric hermit with a gift for zoological linguistics. The reported re-shoots don’t bode well, though.
Released Fri 7 February

Underwater  CERT 15 (95 mins)
Starring Kristen Stewart, Vincent Cassel, Jessica Henwick, John Gallagher Jr, Mamoudou Athie, TJ Miller
Directed by William Eubank (USA)
When an earthquake wrecks their subterranean laboratory, a crew of underwater researchers find themselves prey to creatures of the deep. No doubt the critters are furious about the plastic waste they’ve been exposed to...
Released Fri 7 February

Fantasy Island  CERT tbc
Starring Michael Peña, Maggie Q, Lucy Hale, Austin Stowell, Portia Doubleday, Michael Rooker
Directed by Jeff Wadlow (USA)
Based on the cult TV series of 1977, this big-screen version adds a decided note of horror. Here, the enigmatic Mr Roarke (Peña) facilitates his clients’ wildest dreams on his remote tropical island, when those fantasies suddenly turn pear-shaped.
Released Fri 14 February
**Emma**  
**CERT tbc**  
**Starring:** Anya Taylor-Joy, Johnny Flynn, Bill Nighy, Mia Goth, Miranda Hart, Josh O’Connor  
**Directed by:** Autumn de Wilde (UK/USA)

It’s been four years since we’ve seen a big-screen Jane Austen adaptation and 24 years since Gwyneth Paltrow played the rich, conning and fanciful Emma Woodhouse on film. Here, Anya Taylor-Joy (The Witch, Split, Glass) dons the bustles and bonnets in a production directed by the New York photographer Autumn de Wilde.

**Released Fri 14 February**

---

**Brahms: The Boy II**  
**CERT tbc**  
**Starring:** Katie Holmes, Ralph Ineson, Owain Yeoman, Christopher Convery  
**Directed by:** William Brent Bell (USA)

Not surprisingly, this is a sequel to The Boy (2016), in which a nanny was expected to babysit a porcelain doll called Brahms. Now a new family moves into the creepy Heelshire Mansion, where the youngest son discovers that Brahms is still resident. You can’t keep a good doll down...

**Released Fri 21 February**

---

**The Call Of The Wild**  
**CERT tbc**  
**Starring:** Harrison Ford, Dan Stevens, Omar Sy, Karen Gillan, Bradley Whitford  
**Directed by:** Chris Sanders (USA)

Another familiar American tale is brought back to the big screen - again - with Harrison Ford as the outdoorsman who befriends Buck, the St Bernard/Scotch collie sold to freight haulers in the Yukon. Based on the 1935 adaptation of the Jack London novel (which starred Clark Gable and Loretta Young).

**Released Fri 21 February**

---

**Greed**  
**CERT 15 (104 mins)**  
**Starring:** Steve Coogan, David Mitchell, Isla Fisher, Ollie Locke, Sophie Cookson, Asa Butterfield  
**Directed by:** Michael Winterbottom (UK)

Filmed on the Greek island of Mykonos, Michael Winterbottom’s latest satire focuses on a high street fashion mogul with more money than sense. But as Sir Richard Mceedie (Coogan) begins to celebrate his 50th birthday, things start to go awry...

**Released Fri 21 February**

---

**Like A Boss**  
**CERT 15 (83 mins)**  
**Starring:** Tiffany Haddish, Rose Byrne, Salma Hayek, Jennifer Coolidge, Natasha Rothwell, Billy Porter  
**Directed by:** Miguel Arteta (USA)

Two friends as different as chalk and cheddar set up a cosmetics firm together and immediately get into financial trouble... Expect the comedy to be on the broad side.

**Released Fri 21 February**

---

**Little Joe**  
**CERT 12a (105 mins)**  
**Starring:** Emily Beecham, Ben Whishaw, Kerry Fox, Kit Connor, David Wilmot, Lindsay Duncan  
**Directed by:** Jessica Hausner (UK/Germany/Austria)

Joe is the recipient of a special plant designed to bring pleasure, created by his mother, Alice, a corporate plant breeder. But the flower has other ideas... Emily Beecham won the best actress award at Cannes last year for her part as Alice.

**Released Fri 21 February**

---

**Dark Waters**  
**CERT 12a (126 mins)**  
**Starring:** Mark Ruffalo, Anne Hathaway, Tim Robbins, Bill Camp, Victor Garber, Bill Pullman  
**Directed by:** Todd Haynes (USA)

Partly based on an article in The New York Times Magazine, this legal thriller stars Mark Ruffalo as a corporate lawyer who defends chemical companies against allegations of pollution. But when he visits an affected farm in West Virginia - close to where his grandmother lives - he can no longer turn a blind eye...

**Released Fri 28 February**

---

**Sonic The Hedgehog**  
**CERT tbc**  
**Starring:** James Marsden, Jim Carrey, Ben Schwartz (as the voice of Sonic), Tika Sumpter, Neal McDonought  
**Directed by:** Jeff Fowler (USA)

Sonic is not a real hedgehog, of course, but a super-fast extraterrestrial who arrives on Earth to escape intergalactic profiteers. But then he’s hunted by a maniacal roboticist (Jim Carrey), who also wants to exploit his powers. Based on the Sega video game. Older readers may remember Jim Carrey from such films as Dumb And Dumber and The Truman Show.

**Released Fri 14 February**
**Parasite** CERT 15 (132 mins)
Starring Song Kang-ho, Lee Sun-kyun, Cho Yeo-jeong, Choi Woo-shik, Park So-dam
Directed by Bong Joon-ho (South Korea)
Parasite is an odd beast, a black comedy that wants to be Yorgos Lanthimos by way of Park Chan-wook. It’s perhaps best that you know no more than that as the film’s impact rests on its ability to surprise. It is, though, deliciously crafted and is as deadpan as a black skillet. A Seoul family struggles to make ends meet by constructing pizza boxes, a humiliating task as they’re not very good at it. Then a school friend of Ki-woo’s suggests that he could make a little money in the holidays by tutoring the teenage daughter of a wealthy family he knows. It’s certainly a start and soon Ki-woo has got his sister a job as an art therapist in the same household... It’s an artful conceit dexterously unfolded by the Korean director Bong Joon-ho, winning the Palme d’Or at Cannes last year on a unanimous vote. It also snared the Golden Globe award for best foreign-language film and has six Oscar nominations under its sash.
Released Fri 7 February

**Downhill** CERT tbc
Starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Will Ferrell, Miranda Otto, Zoë Chao, Zach Woods, Alex Macqueen
Directed by Nat Faxon and Jim Rash (USA)
A remake of the Swedish masterpiece Force Majeure (2014), Downhill is the story of a family involved in an avalanche and of the emotional consequences. While the original was not without its streaks of black humour, the humour would seem to be more at the forefront here, which could be interesting.
Released Fri 28 February

**The Invisible Man** CERT tbc
Starring Elisabeth Moss, Oliver Jackson-Cohen, Aldis Hodge, Storm Reid, Harriet Dyer
Directed by Leigh Whannell (Australia/USA)
When an abused wife inherits her late husband’s fortune, she suspects there is more to the set-up than the eye can see... In spite of the numerous adaptations of HG Wells’ 1897 classic, this is actually a reboot of James Whales’ 1933 film version. However, with the advances in CGI, this man should look genuinely invisible.
Released Fri 28 February

**True History Of The Kelly Gang** CERT 18 (124 mins)
Starring George MacKay, Essie Davis, Nicholas Hoult, Thomasin McKenzie, Charlie Hunnam, Russell Crowe
Directed by Justin Kurzel (Australia/UK)
The legendary outlaw and bushranger Ned Kelly goes on the run from the authorities in 1870s’ Australia. Based on the Booker Prize-winning novel by Peter Carey.
Released Fri 28 February
Visual Arts previews from around the region

Lindsey Mendick: The Yellow Wallpaper

Eastside Projects, Birmingham, until Sat 11 April

Ghostly ceramics crawling and sprawling into the gallery space tell Lindsey Mendick’s highly unusual story. Dropping out of art school and taking to her bed at her parents’ house following a nervous breakdown, she one night found herself wondering why there were six men dressed in black pacing the cul-de-sac on walkie talkies.

When she told her mother what she had seen, her mum found the story impossible to believe, due to her daughter’s mental state at the time.

Not long afterwards, the media broke the story about the poisoning of Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko, who, it turned out, had been Lindsey’s neighbour...

As well as responding to her experience that terrifying night, Lindsey’s new exhibition also references an 1892 gothic novella by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The Yellow Wallpaper tells the story of a young mother with postnatal depression who is haunted by the garish wallpaper that appears to mutate from the walls of the room in which she is convalescing.

Meera Syal: COMING HOME

Sat 11 Jan – Sun 5 Apr

Meera Syal: COMING HOME presents a portrait of Wolverhampton-born author, actor and comedian Meera Syal by photographer Jason Bell, on loan from the National Portrait Gallery, London. Bell’s stylish image is the result of a collaboration between artist and sitter, and pokes fun at Bollywood stereotypes, a longstanding theme in Syal’s work.

The portrait is on loan as part of the National Portrait Gallery’s COMING HOME project, which sees portraits of famous sitters going to places with which they have a strong connection.

Free admission
Cornwall As Crucible: Modernity And Internationalism in Mid-Century Britain
The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, Wed 19 February - Sun 17 May
Taking as its inspiration the Barber’s recently acquired Constructivist sculpture - Russian artist Naum Gabo’s Linear Construction In Space No1 - Cornwall As Crucible considers the relationships and networks that existed between artists who lived and worked in the county (and most particularly in St Ives) during the mid-20th century. Featuring works by, among others, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Peter Lanyon and Sandra Blow, the exhibition examines the artists’ development of a visual language that explored the boundary between representation and abstraction. The installation also investigates the impact which the distinctive Cornish landscape had on the work of the artists residing in the region.

Mayflower 400 Exhibition
Worcester Art Gallery & Museum, until Sat 21 November
Given that one of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed on the Mayflower from Plymouth in the UK to Plymouth, Massachusetts, was born and educated in Worcestershire, it’s hardly surprising that the county is here taking the opportunity to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the historic transatlantic voyage.
Edward Winslow was born in Droitwich and educated at Worcester’s Kings School. He would go on to serve as governor at Plymouth Colony... Drawing on 17th century archaeology & costume and featuring a collection of indigenous American and Canadian objects, the exhibition shines a spotlight on stories of colonialism, taking a look at the European occupation of the Alaskan shores and seas in the years which followed the Mayflower’s voyage. Worcestershire is one of 11 locations in England which is this year working with local, national and international partners to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower.

Quinn: A Journey
Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, Fri 14 February - Sun 31 May
This thought-provoking multi-dimensional experience is a meditation on grief, loss, loneliness, the human search for meaning and the possibility of redemption through time and landscape. Comprising large-format photographs, moving-image pieces, ephemera and text vignettes, the work focuses on the character of William Henry Quinn, a young man who walks from the south west of England to the far north of Scotland during the period after the Second World War. Although presenting a fictional account, photographer, artist and writer Lottie Davies uses her installation to reference the real-world experiences of young men and women after they have been exposed to extreme trauma.

Kapow!
The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 8 February - Sun 27 February
The influence on art & design of cartoon and comic-book superheroes, super heroines and super villains is explored in this brand new exhibition. The show brings together painting, fashion, photography, costume design, ceramics and illustration. Work by artists Duggie Fields, Jason Atomic & Emma Rodgers features.
LEGOLAND Discovery Centre
Birmingham

BUILD CREATE & PLAY
At the ultimate indoor LEGO® playground

BOOK NOW: Birmingham.LEGOLANDDiscoveryCentre.co.uk

LEGO CITY
Join our awesome event!
25th January - 1st March

National SEALIFE Birmingham
Stop the Marine Mayhem!
Meet the PJ Masks and help defeat the night-time baddies!

PJ MASKS
visitsealife.com/birmingham

NEW EVENT
Feb 1 - March 1
Events previews from around the region

Get Hands On
With History
Kenilworth Castle,
Sat 15 - Sun 23 February
Young visitors to Kenilworth this half term can discover what it was like to live, work and fight in a real-life castle. Little lords and ladies will have their skills put to the test with plenty of hands-on activities, including the challenges of sword fighting and shooting with a bow & arrow.

Race Retro
Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
Fri 21 - Sun 23 February
Twenty-four thousand motorsport fans are set to descend on Stoneleigh Park this month for the 2020 edition of Race Retro. The event covers every discipline, from formula racing to motorcycling, and includes two live rally stages across the weekend. World-class cars, motorsport legends and 250 specialist exhibitors also feature.

Adults Night: Valentine’s Special
Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham,
Wed 12 February
Ever fancied visiting Legoland Discovery Centre but didn’t have any little ones in your life to take along? Well, not to worry, because now you can justifiably ‘go it alone’, courtesy of the venue’s once-a-month adults-only event. This month’s Valentine’s Special sees plenty of prizes being put up for grabs throughout the night. It also features workshop classes held by the venue’s Master Model Builders, providing Legoland enthusiasts with all manner of sure-to-be-useful tips and tricks.

Medieval Festival of Archery
Warwick Castle, Sat 15 - Sun 23 February
The UK’s only Medieval Festival of Archery sees professional archers demonstrating their skills in daily shows and competitions. And for those who fancy getting interactive, a have-a-go archery option is also available.

Make And Play Engineers: Pixel Art
Coventry Transport Museum,
Wed 19 and Wed 26 February
Kids aged between two and eight can here explore the patterns, contrasts and colours of pixel art, a process which is used to make characters for computer games. The sessions also provide youngsters with the chance to make their very own extraordinary-looking creatures, the kind that could well have escaped from a computer game!
FEBRUARY HALF TERM

Wrap up warm and join us this February Half Term for some winter fun in the Gardens.
17 – 21 February 2020
There will be lots of fun activities for all weathers such as:
Arts & Crafts, Bug Hunting and Story Trails!

For more information please contact reception or visit us at:
birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/whatson

Find us on: 🌐 Facebook
Your support keeps the Gardens growing

NEW Events February.qxp_Layout 1  22/01/2020  18:35  Page 3

BRITISH MOTOR MUSEUM

Fuel their imagination
THIS HALF-TERM
15 FEB – 1 MAR
Inspire your family with our FUTURE themed activities.
*See website for details

Mollie, 7.
Future Fuel Technician

britishmotormuseum.co.uk/families
J12 M40, Gaydon, Warwickshire, CV35 0BJ

NECRESTORATIONSHOW.COM

SPRING’S BEST CLASSIC CAR SHOW
27-29 MARCH 2020 • NEC, BIRMINGHAM
Get hands on, sit back and learn, and be entertained at the friendliest of classic car shows!
Over 1,000 Classic Cars • 150+ Car Clubs • Live Demonstrations • 250+ Traders
Car Dealers • Celebrities • Restoration Experts

*Saving is against on-the-door ticket prices and is already applied when booking online. The code is used for marketing purposes only. Advance tickets are available until midnight Thursday 26 March 2020. To book over the phone please call 0844 688 6796 (calls cost 7p per minute plus network extras).
Events previews from around the region

**Dragon Hunt**
Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire,
Sat 15 - Fri 21 February
Tamworth Castle’s resident dragon, Ruby, and her brother, Hafgrim, have gone missing while playing a game of hide & seek. And they’re probably going to stay horribly lost too, unless some young and enthusiastic half-term-holiday visitors are willing to put in the hard yards to help find them!... The hunt is just one of numerous dragon-based activities taking place at the castle this month. Kids can also learn how to decorate the dragon’s den, identify dragon eggs and have a go at a dragon-related craft activity.

**Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show**
NEC, Birmingham, Tues 18 - Sun 23 February
With over 400 exhibitors all under one roof, the Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show is a must-visit event for anybody who loves exploring the great outdoors. Visitors to the show can check out new leisure vehicles and caravan holiday homes, browse tents of all shapes and sizes, and pick up a wide range of accessories and gadgets for their next big adventure.

**The Classic Dirt Bike Show**
Telford International Centre, Shropshire,
Sat 15 & Sun 16 February
This annual off-road and road-racing show here makes a welcome return and comes complete with an outdoor autojumble. Star guests confirmed for the 2020 get-together include American World Trials 1979 champion Bernie Schreiber and 1970 British 500cc motocross champion Bryan Goss.

**Discover The Pride**
West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley,
Sat 15 - Sun 23 February
West Midland Safari Park debuts its latest additions to the pack this month, as seven new lion cubs make their first appearance on the safari drive-through. Visitors can also book an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the African Lion house and meet the pride of lions, including its youngest members.

**Half-term activities at the RSC**
Royal Shakespeare Company venues, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Mon 17 - Fri 21 February, check rsc.org.uk for individual venues
The RSC is taking inspiration from its current production of David Walliams’ The Boy In The Dress this half term. From free craft workshops exploring the themes of the book, to learning the dances and songs from the show in special performance workshops, there’s plenty for visitors to enjoy. Other highlights include backstage theatre tours, playing dress-up in the RSC’s dressing-up cabinet, and the chance to check out a free The Boy In The Dress-inspired exhibition.
The Big Bang Fair
The NEC, Birmingham,
11-14 March 2020

Book your free tickets and join the fun at the largest celebration of STEM for young people in the UK!

The Big Bang Fair inspires and engages children with:
• 100+ hands-on activity stands and interactive workshops
• Exciting theatre shows
• Excellent careers information and the opportunity to talk to thousands of scientists and engineers.

Family Day is on Saturday, 14 March 2020 - book online via our website: www.thebigbangfair.co.uk

---

SPACE-TACULAR
FEBRUARY HALF TERM FUN

* DESTINATION SPACE LIVE SHOW
* 4K PLANETARIUM

Plus, don’t miss
mini-brum
The interactive mini city where children are in charge!
birminghammuseums.org.uk
Events from around the region

**Become A Codebreaker**
Enginuity, Ironbridge, Shropshire,
Sat 15 - Sun 23 February
Codebreaking-themed activities are the order of the day at Enginuity this half term, with visitors able to learn about cracking codes by making their own codebreaking devices. Drop-in activities include making a cipher wheel to send & receive secret messages and having a go on an Enigma-style machine to uncover a classified message.

**Pirate And Princess Takeover**
Alton Towers, Staffordshire,
Fri 14 - Sun 23 February
Well shiver those timbers and straighten that tiara - Alton Towers Resort is certainly the place to take your little pirates and princesses this half-term holiday!
The popular visitor attraction is hosting a range of family-focused themed activities this month, including an action-packed production, a fancy-dress parade and an interactive game show - after which there’s a ‘fabulous’ party to enjoy! Away from the princess & pirate theme, visitors can check out Sharkbait Reef to see a variety of amazing fish, splash around in the tropical surroundings of the Alton Towers Waterpark, and enjoy a round of what’s being termed ‘extraordinary’ golf.

**February FUTURES Half Term**
British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warks
Sat 15 February - Sun 1 March
Themed around the exhibition The Car. The Future. Me., FUTURES features activities aimed at encouraging children to investigate what the cars of their future might look like. Little ones can make their very own futuristic vehicle using recycled materials, and then light it up with LEDs. There’s a special family trail to enjoy too, challenging visitors to find the missing parts needed to fix the car.

**The National Wedding Show**
NEC, Birmingham,
Fri 28 Feb - Sun 1 March
For couples currently planning their big day, the National Wedding Show is a must-visit event. Boasting over 250 wedding specialists from across the country - covering everything from photography and suit-making to jewellery and floral displays - there’s plenty of opportunity to tick off some of the items on your hefty planning list!
Brides-to-be can also check out the latest bridal trends at the weekend’s catwalk shows, pick up useful hints & tips from numerous experts, and even try on a wedding dress or several, with some exhibitors offering exclusive at-show discounts.

**Days Of Gore**
Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove,
Tues 18 - Thurs 20 February
Daily presentations about ‘the gooey, gory and gruesome realities of yesteryear’ promise to keep youngsters well and truly entertained at Avoncroft Museum this half-term holiday.
As well as providing fascinating insights into the history of medieval medicine, hygiene, execution and torture, the venue is also laying on plenty of craft-based activities, including gooey feel boxes and the chance to make your very own slime.
Thinktank Science Museum
Millennium Point, Birmingham, B4 7XG
Birmingham’s award-winning science museum offers a fun-packed day out for all the family to enjoy. From steam engines and talking robots to gurgling guts and a chocolate-wrapping machine, Thinktank features more than 200 hands-on science & technology displays and numerous historical collections. Highlights include MiniBrum, a new interactive gallery for under-eights, a new 4k planetarium and a science garden. There’s also an extensive programme of events and activities to enjoy throughout the year.
You can also: Get building at a weekend of Lego family workshops, taking place 8 & 9 February.

Ironbridge Gorge Museums
Ironbridge, nr Telford, Shropshire
The World Heritage Site of Ironbridge Gorge is home to 10 award-winning attractions. These include the recreated Victorian town of Blists Hill, fun science museum Enginuity, and the Jackfield Tile Museum, a venue that brings to life ‘the artistry of ceramic art’. An Annual Passport ticket allows visitors to enjoy daytime admission to all 10 attractions for 12 months.
You can also: Try your hand at the Victorian tube lining technique at Jackfield Tile Museum’s tile-decorating workshops on 17, 19 & 21 February.

National Sea Life Centre Birmingham
Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HL
The National Sea Life Centre is home to more than 2,000 creatures (including black-tip reef sharks, a giant green sea turtle and a colony of gentoo penguins), many of which have been rescued or successfully bred as part of the global Sea Life breeding initiative. The venue also features the UK’s only 360-degree ocean tunnel, providing visitors with the opportunity to get up close and personal with the underwater residents. And in a UK first, 2020 will see two rescued Alaskan sea otters become resident in the attraction’s new multi-million-pound marine rescue facility.
You can also: Help PJ Masks defeat the nighttime baddies this half-term holiday!

World of Wedgwood
Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST12 9ER
Find out all about the Wedgwood brand and its rich 250-year heritage at World of Wedgwood. Featuring a V&A Museum collection, a factory tour, a contemporary tearoom, a restaurant and the Wedgwood Flagship retail store, the venue boasts a wide range of things to see and do. Explore the 240-acre Wedgwood Estate - with its open, landscaped grounds, canals and beautiful woodlands - or maybe try your hand at the potter’s wheel in the Master Craft Studio. Or how about creating your very own piece of Wedgwood bone china tableware in the Decorating Studio...
You can also: Make a Mother’s Day gift at hand & footprinting workshops during the half-term holiday.
Shakespeare’s Family Homes
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire
Discover the people and places behind the world’s greatest storyteller by visiting his five family homes in Stratford-upon-Avon. These include: Shakespeare’s Birthplace, the home in which he was born and grew up; the family home of his mother, Mary Arden; and the cottage in which his wife, Anne Hathaway, spent her childhood. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust also offers The Full Story tickets, which allow 12 months of unlimited visits to all five properties. You can find out more at shakespeare.org.uk
You can also: Check out a brand new Shakespeare XR experience at the Shakespeare’s New Place site.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3TR
Nestled away behind steel, concrete and roaring traffic in the busy heart of Birmingham is a lush oasis of calm that you may never have noticed. Featuring four large glasshouses boasting an air of Victorian grandeur, lively animal inhabitants and interactive children’s areas set in 15 acres of landscaped greenery, Birmingham Botanical Gardens is the perfect place to escape the hustle and bustle of the city.
You can also: Hire Gardens’ Explorer family backpacks from the reception desk every day during opening hours. Each backpack is bursting with creative activities and suitable for all ages.

Warwick Castle
Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 6AH
Boasting more than 1,100 years of history, Warwick Castle has plenty to see and do. History buffs can explore the castle’s Great Hall, battlements, towers and turrets, while family-friendly entertainment comes in the form of a Horrible Histories maze, the Castle Dungeon experience and a number of daily shows and activities.
Top tip - if you purchase your tickets online and it rains for one hour or more during your time at the castle, the venue will guarantee you a free return visit.
You can also: Attend the UK’s only Medieval Festival of Archery, taking place at the castle this month. Check page 43 for information.

Cadbury World
Bournville, Birmingham, B30 1JR
Cadbury World is a wonder of chocolate delights and activities. Start your exploration of the venue in Aztec Jungle, travelling back over 1,000 years to the tropical rainforest of the Mayan Indians to discover the origin of the cocoa tree. Then visit Europe and find out about the arrival of cocoa in England, before moving on to Birmingham’s Bull Street, where John Cadbury opened his first shop.
There’s lots more to see and do on the Cadbury World adventure, including Purple Planet and the world’s biggest Cadbury shop!
You can also: Enjoy either breakfast or afternoon tea with Cadbury characters during weekends and school holidays.
VOSS EVENTS PRESENTS

RU PAUL DRAG RACE
WORLD TOUR 2020

MAY 12
BIRMINGHAM
Arena Birmingham

TICKETS:
THETICKETFACTORY.COM
What’s On

Sat 1 - Sun 9 February

Olga Koch at Cherry Reds Cafe Bar
Fri 7 February

Mon 10 to Sun 16 February

Polyphia at The Mill, Digbeth
Thurs 13 February

Mon 17 to Sun 23 February

Roald Dahl & The Imagination Seekers at MAC Birmingham
Fri 21 & Sat 22 February

Mon 24 to Sat 29 February

Three Men In A Boat at The Core Theatre, Solihull
Fri 28 February

Music  I Comedy  I Theatre  I Dance  I Film  I Events  I Visual Arts  I and more!
### Through the February

**Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery**

**WHITWORTH WALLIS ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: LEANNE O’CONNOR**
Leanne’s work responds to the stained-glass and metalwork collections held within the Industrial gallery, the Museum Collections Centre and Community History & Archives Service in Smethwick, until Mon 1 June.

**DRESSED TO THE NINES**
Exhibition about dressing up and going out, from around 1850 to the present day, until Fri 4 Sept.

**BIRMINGHAM REVOLUTIONS - POWER TO THE PEOPLE**
Display exploring Birmingham’s vibrant and varied history of protest and activism, until Fri 4 Sept.

---

**Ikon Gallery**

**MERYL MCMASTER - AS IMMENSE AS THE SKY**
Using photography to explore identity and its distinct cultural landscapes, this exhibition features new and recent work which sees Meryl drawing on her dual heritage to examine broader questions about being in the world, until Sun 23 Feb.

**ZOZOU GROUP – DOOR OPEN – MERYL MCMASTER - AS IMMENSE AS THE SKY**
Video installation by two anonymous individuals, Fri 7 Feb - Fri 17 Apr.

---

**MAC, Birmingham**

**CRAFTING A BETTER FUTURE**
Exhibition raising awareness of homelessness, showcasing scarves made by members of the West Midlands Craft and Design Group, until Sun 1 Mar.

**ART AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THE DISABILITY ARTS MOVEMENT**
Display of work by a civil rights group of artists and activists who fought the marginalisation of disabled people. Their work supported the struggle, which led to the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995, until Sun 22 Mar.

**THE INFLUENCE PROJECT**
Photography exhibition celebrating the impact of leading black musicians on contemporary sound and culture, until Sun 22 Mar.

---

**RBSA Gallery**

**RBSA START 2020**
Exhibition displayed over three floors and featuring artwork in a wide range of media, until Sat 15 Feb.

---

**The Barber Institute**

**THE MUGHALS: POWER AND BEAUTY AT THE INDIAN COURT**
Exhibition exploring courtly life, power and culture in the Indian subcontinent under Mughal rule (1526 - 1858), until Sun 2 Feb.

**A TALE OF TWO EMPIRES: ROME AND PERSIA**
Exhibition exploring how the ancient superpowers of Rome and Persia spun humiliating defeats and promoted their bloody victories on the small pieces of art circulating in the pockets of the masses, until Sun 15 Mar.

---

**Other VISUAL ARTS**

**PRE-WINDRUSH TO THE PRESENT DAY**
Heritage exhibition celebrating the long history of black representation on the Hippodrome stage, until Fri 21 Feb.

**VANLEY BURKE EXHIBITION - HOME**
Portraits of Birmingham’s female Black elders, in the places they feel most at home, are brought to life via augmented reality that sees the women in the portraits tell their stories and talk directly to viewers about what home means to them, until Fri 21 Feb.

**HERSTORY**
An exhibition about gynaecology, access, stigma, politics of health, DIY and hacker culture, until Sat 24 May.

---

**Gigs**

**CARAVAN PALACE**
Sat 1 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham.

**THE BAND CAMINO**
Wed 5 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham.

**SAM LEE**

**CODY KO & NOEL MILLER: TINY MEAT**
*GANG - GLOBAL DOMINATION TOUR* Thur 6 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham.

**MAN & THE ECHO**

**RELAX-FLAG**

**DELANI**
Thurs 6 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham.

**ASH SHEEHAN LIVE**
Thurs 6 Feb, T in the Park & B’ham.

**SMOKE FAIRIES & SPECIAL GUESTS**
Fri 7 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham.

**THE WILDHEARTS | BACKYARD BABIES**
Fri 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham.

**TOVEY BROTHERS**
Sat 8 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham.

**RONI SIZE + LTJ BUKEM**
Fri 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham.

**VICE CITY: ABBA NIGHT**
Fri 7 Feb, hare & Hounds, Birmingham.

**TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS 2020**
Fri 7 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC**
Fri 7 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham.

---

**52 whatsonlive.co.uk**

---

52 whatsonlive.co.uk
Saturday 1 - Sunday 9 February

Classical

ALICJA HUMENIUK VIOLIN CONCERT Programme includes works by Bartok & Ravel. Mon 3 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

GOLDMUND QUARTET Featuring Florian Schötz (violin), Pinchas Adt (violin), Christoph Vandory (viola) and Raphael Paratore (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Dobrinka Tabakova and Debussy. Tues 4 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TIMOTHY RIDOUT VIOLIN CONCERT Programme includes works by Hin demith, Tues 4 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

HYUNGI LEE PERCUSSION RECITAL Programme includes works by Kazunori Miyake, Piazzola arr. Plus Chang, Paul Lansky, Matt Ogden, Toccata, Keiko Abe JS Bach & Emmanuel Se journe. Tues 4 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

SESTINA EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLE Programme comprises Cantatas by the Bach family, Wed 5 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

KUSS STRING QUARTET Programme comprises Beethoven’s String Quartet Op.131, Wed 5 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

NICOLA BENEDETTI VIOLIN MASTERCLASS Thurs 6 Feb, The Brindash Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO: NICOLA BENEDETTI Also featuring Klaus Mäkelä (conductor). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky & Berlioz. Thurs 6 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme includes works by Ian Rae, Enescu, Mahler, Williams & Elgar. Sun 9 Feb, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

Theatre

THE BODYGUARD Alexandra Burke stars as Rachel Marron in the much-acclaimed romantic thriller, until Sat 1 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS Featuring Lesley Joseph, Matt Slack, Joe McEllderry, Faye Brookes, Flawless, Doreen Tipton & Andrew Ryan, until Sun 2 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome


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

THE VICAR OF DIBLEY Stage show based on Richard Curtis’ iconic TV series, Fri 25 Jan - Sat 1 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

HOUSE GUEST Francis Durbridge’s thriller, Tues 28 Jan - Sat 1 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF SMACK AND CRACK An ‘angry, funny, love song to a lost generation, inspired by the playwright’s own experience of jail & rehab’, Wed 29 Jan - Sat 1 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

ASKING FOR IT UK stage premiere of Louise O’Neill’s devastating novel about sexual consent, Wed 29 Jan - Sat 15 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

THE INVISIBLE MAN Amateur staging of HG Wells’ classic story, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 9 Feb, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

GASLIGHT The Crescent Theatre presents its version of Patrick Hamilton’s Victorian thriller, Sat 1 - Sat 8 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE WHIP Provocative new play set in London at the dawn of the 19th century. Politicians gather to abolish the slave trade once and for all - but at what cost?... Sat 1 Feb - Sat 21 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE GHOST LIGHT Birmingham Ormiston Academy & The Old Rep come together to tell the story of one family through the generations, Sun 2 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Ellen Kent Opera present a new production of Puccini’s heartbreaking tale. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Tues 4 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

UTE LEMPER: RENDEZVOUS WITH MARLENE One-woman show in which Ute tells the story of Marlene Dietrich, singing songs from all chapters of the German performer’s Berlin cabaret years through to her Bacharach collaborations, Tues 4 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

VAMPIRE’S ROCK: GHOST TRAIN Musical sensation featuring ‘some of the greatest classic rock anthems of all time’, Wed 5 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

MACBETH Fast-paced adaptation of Shakespeare’s tale of ambition, power and revenge, Wed 5 - Fri 7 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, B’ham

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES Eve Ensler’s acclaimed production, consisting of a series of personal monologues delivered by a diverse group of women, Wed 5 - Sat 8 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

FAT, FUNNY & FEARLESS Mother, blogger and self-confessed cake addict Jessica Jones, also known as @thefatfunnyone, performs her very first one-woman show... Fri 7 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, B’ham

AN IMPROVISED MURDER Evening of stories, laughter, games and death... Fri 7 Feb, Axtrix, Bromsgrove

FIRST TIME Award-winning HIV-plus theatre maker Nathaniel Hall presents his autobiographical solo show set in 1980s London at the height of the AIDS crisis. Fri 7 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

MACBETH Fast-paced adaptation of Shakespeare’s tale of ambition, power and revenge, Wed 5 - Fri 7 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, B’ham

THE HISTORY BOYS In-house production of Alan Bennett’s classroom comedy, Fri 7 - Sat 22 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Kids Shows

THE NAUGHTY FOX Immersive, multisensory journey of friendship and play for little ones and their grown-ups, Fri 7 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

LUNA: A PLAY ABOUT THE MOON Storytelling, music, history and science combine in a tale for younger audiences, Sat 8 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Comedy

ELEANOR TIERNAN, ADAM HESS, ROSIE JONES & COMIC TRC Sat 1 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SUUKI OJLA Sat 1 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY AWSUM Sat 1 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOHN SHUTTLEWORTH Wed 5 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall, Birmingham

KOJO ANIM Thurs 6 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

PHIL NICHOL PLUS COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 6 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MILTON JONES Fri 7 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

SEAN MCLAUGHLIN & OLGA KOCH (PICTURED) Fri 7 Feb, Cherry Red’s Cafe-Bar, Birmingham

whatsonlive.co.uk 53
**Spring Highlights**

**Sunday 16 February** 7.30pm

**CALIFORNIA DREAMIN’**
The music of the Mamas and Papas

**Wednesday 19 February** 1pm

**THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF**
A trip trapping musical adventure!

**Thursday 20 February** 7.30pm

**DOM JOLY’S HOLIDAY SNAPS**
Travel and Comedy in the Danger Zone!

**Tuesday 3 March** 7.30pm

**CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL TRIBUTE**
Performed by The Fortunate Sons

**Wednesday 4 March** 7.30pm

**NICHOLAS CRANE: OUR ISLAND STORY**
Author, geographer and cartographic expert

**Thursday 5 March** 7.30pm

**DON’T PANIC!**
The UK’s only tribute to Dad’s Army

---

**COMING UP IN FEBRUARY**

**Jekyll & Hyde**
Wednesday 26 - Friday 28 February

Thirteen-turn Off West End Award-Nominated Amers & Trapp Theatre bring their critically-acclaimed modern twist to Robert Louis Stevenson’s iconic gothic classic, remooring it as a gripping political thriller set in the halls of American power. This bold new adaptation stays true to the original texts themes, making it a great night of entertainment for fans of the novel, a thrilling and clear presentisation for GCSE students of the text. This perfect launching point for newcomers to the tale.

★★★★★ Breaking The Fourth Wall

---

**Ute Lemper**
Tuesday 4 Feb

**Luna**
Saturday 8 Feb

**Daliso Chaponda**
Tuesday 12 Feb

**Sam Avery**
Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 Feb

**Floyd In The Flesh**
Friday 14 Feb

**GUY: The Musical**
Sunday 16 Feb

**ELO Again**
Thursday 20 Feb

**Queen Rhapsody**
Friday 21 Feb

**Beyond The Barricade**
Saturday 22 Feb

**Josie Long**
Tuesday 25 Feb
Saturday 1 - Sunday 9 February

Birmingham

THE ARENACROSS TOUR 2020 ‘Seat-grabbing’ entertainment from some of the world’s best indoor Motocross racers and Freestyle MX stars, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

PRIMROSE HOSPICE LANTERN WALK Primrose Hospice fundraising walk along a beautiful 1.5 mile route around the grounds of Ragley Hall, Sat 1 Feb, Ragley Hall, Alcester

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD (PG) Comedy/Drama. Starring Dev Patel, Hugh Laurie. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 7 - Thurs 13 Feb

THE LAST AMERICAN FREAK SHOW (15) Documentary. Starring Samantha X and Dylan. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 9 Feb

Friday 7 - Sat 8 Feb

HOT WHEELS MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE Show combining Hot Wheels’ iconic jumps and stunts with epic crashing and smashing, until Sun 2 Feb, Arena Birmingham

TEA WITH A TWIST PRESENTS DISCO TEA Interactive party games, live cabaret performances and competitions, Sat 8 Feb, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

THE MURDER OF FRANCIS CRAWFORD Enjoy the Back to Back’s Courť 15 in a new and unique way. Interrogate the suspects, follow the clues and help the police solve the mystery of the death of Francis Crawford, Fri 7 Feb, Birmingham Back to Backs

HARRY POTTER BOOK NIGHT ‘A magical’ evening of things to make and do inspired by Harry Potter, Thurs 6 Feb, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

HARRIET Dyer Sat 8 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Soni Razdan. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

AMANDA (15) Drama. Starring Vincent Lacoste, Iasrae Multier. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

MOTHER (PG) Documentary. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 5 Feb

PINK WALL (15) Drama. Starring Tatiana Maslany, Jay Duplass. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 6 Feb

JOJO RABBIT (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 7 & Mon 10 Feb

THE INDEPENDENT LISTINGS: Monday 31 Jan - Saturday 1 Feb

SEBERG (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Kristen Stewart, Yvan Attal. Mid- lands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

PARASITE (15) UNDERWATER (15)

Film

FILM INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

PINOCCHIO (U) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Dickie Jones, Christian Rub. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 Feb

SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG) Animation/Action. With the voices of Rachel Brosnanahan, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 1 Feb

MARRIAGE STORY (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Feb

NO FATHERS IN KASHMIR (15) Drama. Starring Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Nigam, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

UNDERWATER (15)

Friday 7 - Sat 8 Feb

HOT WHEELS MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE Show combining Hot Wheels’ iconic jumps and stunts with epic crashing and smashing, until Sun 2 Feb, Arena Birmingham

LEGO CITY: REPORT FOR DUTY Complete the build challenges and become a LEGO City hero, until Sun 1 Mar, Legoland Discovery Centre,

Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

HARRY POTTER BOOK NIGHT ‘A magical’ evening of things to make and do inspired by Harry Potter, Thurs 6 Feb, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

HARRIET Dyer Sat 8 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Soni Razdan. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

AMANDA (15) Drama. Starring Vincent Lacoste, Iasrae Multier. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

MOTHER (PG) Documentary. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 5 Feb

PINK WALL (15) Drama. Starring Tatiana Maslany, Jay Duplass. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 6 Feb

JOJO RABBIT (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 7 & Mon 10 Feb

THE INDEPENDENT LISTINGS: Monday 31 Jan - Saturday 1 Feb

SEBERG (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Kristen Stewart, Yvan Attal. Mid- lands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

PARASITE (15) UNDERWATER (15)

Film

FILM INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

PINOCCHIO (U) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Dickie Jones, Christian Rub. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 Feb

SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG) Animation/Action. With the voices of Rachel Brosnanahan, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 1 Feb

MARRIAGE STORY (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Feb

NO FATHERS IN KASHMIR (15) Drama. Starring Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Nigam, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

UNDERWATER (15)

Friday 7 - Sat 8 Feb

HOT WHEELS MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE Show combining Hot Wheels’ iconic jumps and stunts with epic crashing and smashing, until Sun 2 Feb, Arena Birmingham

LEGO CITY: REPORT FOR DUTY Complete the build challenges and become a LEGO City hero, until Sun 1 Mar, Legoland Discovery Centre,

Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

HARRY POTTER BOOK NIGHT ‘A magical’ evening of things to make and do inspired by Harry Potter, Thurs 6 Feb, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

HARRIET Dyer Sat 8 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Soni Razdan. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

AMANDA (15) Drama. Starring Vincent Lacoste, Iasrae Multier. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

MOTHER (PG) Documentary. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 5 Feb

PINK WALL (15) Drama. Starring Tatiana Maslany, Jay Duplass. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 6 Feb

JOJO RABBIT (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 7 & Mon 10 Feb

THE INDEPENDENT LISTINGS: Monday 31 Jan - Saturday 1 Feb

SEBERG (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Kristen Stewart, Yvan Attal. Mid- lands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

PARASITE (15) UNDERWATER (15)

Film

FILM INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

PINOCCHIO (U) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Dickie Jones, Christian Rub. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 Feb

SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG) Animation/Action. With the voices of Rachel Brosnahan, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 1 Feb

MARRIAGE STORY (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Feb

NO FATHERS IN KASHMIR (15) Drama. Starring Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Nigam, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

UNDERWATER (15)

Friday 7 - Sat 8 Feb

HOT WHEELS MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE Show combining Hot Wheels’ iconic jumps and stunts with epic crashing and smashing, until Sun 2 Feb, Arena Birmingham

LEGO CITY: REPORT FOR DUTY Complete the build challenges and become a LEGO City hero, until Sun 1 Mar, Legoland Discovery Centre,

Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

HARRY POTTER BOOK NIGHT ‘A magical’ evening of things to make and do inspired by Harry Potter, Thurs 6 Feb, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

HARRIET Dyer Sat 8 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Soni Razdan. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

AMANDA (15) Drama. Starring Vincent Lacoste, Iasrae Multier. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 2 Feb

MOTHER (PG) Documentary. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 5 Feb

PINK WALL (15) Drama. Starring Tatiana Maslany, Jay Duplass. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 6 Feb

JOJO RABBIT (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 7 & Mon 10 Feb

THE INDEPENDENT LISTINGS: Monday 31 Jan - Saturday 1 Feb

SEBERG (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Kristen Stewart, Yvan Attal. Mid- lands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

PARASITE (15) UNDERWATER (15)

Film

FILM INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

PINOCCHIO (U) Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Dickie Jones, Christian Rub. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 Feb

SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG) Animation/Action. With the voices of Rachel Brosnahan, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 1 Feb

MARRIAGE STORY (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 1 - Sun 2 Feb

NO FATHERS IN KASHMIR (15) Drama. Starring Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Nigam, Jarrett Bruno. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan - Sat 1 Feb & Mon 3 - Tues 4 Feb

LITTLE WOMEN (U) Drama. Starring Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 31 Jan

UNDERWATER (15)
WITNESS LEGENDS BEGIN

11 - 15 MARCH
ARENA BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY 10 - SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY

**Gigs**

- **Katya And The Comedy Queens** Mon 10 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham
- **Amigo The Devil** Mon 10 Feb, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham
- **Dandelion Squash + Status + Isla Wolfe + Naomi Jandol** Mon 10 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
- **Emilia Märtensson** Mon 10 Feb, Symphony Hall, B’ham
- **Mabel** Tues 11 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham
- **APRE + Special Guests** Tues 11 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
- **Loathe** Tues 11 Feb, The Asylum, B’ham
- **Fred Deakin Presents The Lasters** Tues 11 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall
- **Madi Sasia** Tues 11 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham
- **Yacht** Tues 11 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
- **Bowing For Soup** Wed 12 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham
- **Mae Muller** Wed 12 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
- **Gospel Central** Wed 12 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham
- **A Void + Meme Detroit + Exhaler + Spt** Wed 12 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
- **Dubioza Kolektiv** Wed 12 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
- **Granny’s Attic** Wed 12 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, B’ham
- **Inhaler** Thurs 13 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham
- **Polyphia** Thurs 13 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth
- **Hyphoe** Thurs 13 Feb, The Asylum, B’ham
- **Zank Sabbath** Thurs 13 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
- **Roger Bird & The Wyze Guyz** Thurs 13 Feb

**Classical Music**

- **Lunchtime Organ Concert with Thomas Trotter** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Schumann, Rachel Laurin, Ad Wammes & Paul Dukas (arr. T. Trotter), Mon 10 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**Theatre**

- **In Pursuit** New LGBT comedy/drama described as ‘Fleabag meets Miranda’, Mon 10 - Sat 15 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, B’ham
- **Band of Gold** World premiere based on Kay Mellor’s award-winning TV series of the same name, Mon 10 - Sat 15 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham
- **Pilot Nights** Work-in-progress presentations by ‘some of the UK’s most exciting theatre makers..., Tues 11 Feb, The REP, Birmingham
- **To Move in Time** ‘Tyrone Huggins’ one-man show walks a thin line between comic absurdity and melancholia, Wed 12 & Thurs 13 Feb, The REP, Birmingham
- **The Twisted Tale of Hansel and Gretel** New slant on the much-loved Brothers Grimm favourite, Wed 12 - Sat 15 Feb, Patrick Studio, Birmingham

**Comedy**

- **Dalisso Chadponda** Tues 11 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham
- **Sam Avery** Wed 12 - Thurs 13 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham
- **Paul Sinha** Sat 15 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
- **Janey Godley** Sat 15 Feb, Antrix, Bromsgrove
- **Jack Tucker** Sun 16 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham
- **Tom Stade** Sun 16 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**Kids Shows**

- **First Stages: Puss in Boots** CBeebies presenter Patrick Lynch brings the classic tale to life using puppetry, smoke & mirrors, and a hidden trap...
HIGHLIGHTS
FEBRUARY 2020

MUSIC
Anna Meredith
Sun 9 Feb

DANCE
BLKDOG
Tue 11 Feb

DANCE
GERMAN CORNEJO
Tango Fire
Wed 12 Feb

MUSIC
KODO Legacy
Fri 14 Feb

DANCE
Birmingham Royal Ballet
A Valentine's Celebration of Music and Dance
Sat 15 Feb

CLASSICAL
Chineke!
Mon 17 Feb

CLASSICAL
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Wed 26 Feb

FAMILY
The Little Prince
adapted by Inua Ellams, directed by Femi Elufowoju, Jr
Thu 27 – Sat 29 Feb
Age 5+

Box Office 024 7652 4524  warwickartscentre.co.uk
Warwick Arts Centre, The University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL

Warwick Arts Centre – The region’s biggest arts and entertainment venue.

Warwick Arts Centre - The region's biggest arts and entertainment venue.
Monday 10 - Sunday 16 February

Starring Charlize Theron, Nicole Kidman. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 14 - Thurs 20 Feb

Events

ADULT NIGHT Special event for adult fans of LEGO - use the Centre’s facilities and enjoy some creative play sessions, Wed 12 Feb, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

EDWARDIAN TEAROOMS LATE: VALENTINE DINNER Head to BMAG for a romantic four-course meal, complete with a Robert Lane serenade, Fri 14 Feb, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

LEGO LATES AT THINKTANK Late event combining the Museum at Night initiative with LEGO activities and challenges. Ages 18+ only, Fri 14 Feb, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

GREAT BRITISH SHOOTING SHOW Featuring the largest and most varied choice of shooting-related products anywhere in Europe, Fri 14 - Sun 16 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

PIRATE AND PRINCESS TAKEOVER Pirate and princess-themed activities for all the family, exclusively available to short-break guests, Fri 14 - Sun 23 Feb, Alton Towers, Stoke-on-Trent

The List Birmingham 10 - 16 February.qxp_Layout 1 22/01/2020 11:06 Page 4
MINIATURA®

The Dolls' House Show
21st & 22nd March 2020 - NEC, Birmingham, UK

Hordle Castle!
The lifelong creation of Jon Trenchard
Over 100 exhibitors and thousands of miniatures
Ticket Hotline 0844 5811291

See more on our website www.miniatura.co.uk
List of exhibitors, Regular Blog and Subscribe to win prizes!

My Night with Reg
by Kevin Eldon
Thu 12 - Sat 14 Mar
Funny, sad and sweet, this is an award-winning dark comedy about the relationships of a group of gay men and their connections to the unseen yet magnetic Reg.
The List Birmingham 17 - 23 February

Monday 17 - Sunday 23 February

Classical Music

CBSO: Respighi’s Roman Trilogy
Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Vilde Frang (violin). Programme includes works by Shostakovich & Respighi, Wed 19 - Thurs 20 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Fontanella Quintet: Urban Love Songs
Programme includes works by Dowland, Holborne, Purcell, Gershwin, Pete McCarr & Radiohead, Thurs 20 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Robin Bigwood: JS Bach Goldberg Variations
Fri 21 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Tom Poster Piano Concert
Programme includes works by Schumann, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Grieg & Chopin, Fri 21 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

New Music Ensemble feat. Percy Pursglove
Fri 21 Feb, Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham

Mahan Esfahani in-the-Round
Harpichord concert. Programme includes works by Orlando Gibbons, Miroslav Srmka, Wladyslaw Szpilman, Arvo Pärt & Chopin, Fri 21 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

Amy Catton & Thomas Ryan
Sat 22 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Brahms: Piano Quintet
Peters, Purcell, Grieg & Chopin, Fri 21 Feb, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

The List Birmingham 17 - 23 February

Comedy

An Evening with Vic & Bob
Mon 17 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Jamal Jaddoo
Mon 17 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Jordan Brookes
Tues 18 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Jimeoin
Wed 19 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Tom Ward & Comedy Carousel with Andy Robinson
Thurs 20 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Bags of Laughter
Featuring Shappi Khorsandi (pictured), Hugh Dennis, Count Arthur Smith, Hardeep Singh Kohli, Simon Brodkin, Jo Enright, Geoff Whiting & Becky Brunning, Fri 21 Feb, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Theatre

Peter Pan Goes Wrong
Mischief Theatre present a ‘riotous’ spin on a timeless classic, Tues 18 - Sat 22 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Kazuki Yamada conducts the CBSO at Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Gigs

MAX & HARVEY
Mon 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FLARES
Mon 17 Feb, Mama Roux’s, Birmingham

King Nun + Special Guests
Mon 17 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

Girl Ray
Tues 18 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

Jellowl
Tues 18 Feb, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

Hot Chocolate
Wed 19 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

The Classic Rock Show 2020
Wed 19 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

John Kirkpatrick
Wed 19 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

Cage the Elephant
Thurs 20 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

Napalm Death
Thurs 20 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Elo Again: Re-Discovery Tour
Thurs 20 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Trevor Watts and Dialogue with Strings
Thurs 20 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Thank You Scientist
Thurs 20 Feb, Mama Roux’s, Birmingham

The Collective
Thurs 20 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

Hello Again - The Catapult Club ft. Hot Little Hands
Fri 21 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

X Ambassadors
Fri 21 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Guns 2 Roses
Fri 21 Feb, Route 44, Birmingham

Twin Peaks
Fri 21 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

The Fureys
Fri 21 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Hardo + Mass House
Fri 21 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

Fleetmac Wood Presents Sea of Love Disco
Fri 21 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

Max & Harvey
Fri 21 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

S-X + Special Guests
Fri 21 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

Queen Rhapsody
Fri 21 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Midge Ure - Vienna & Visage: The 1980 Tour
Fri 21 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

The Inspector Cluzo
Fri 21 Feb, The Alex & Bishop, Birmingham

The Counterfeit Stones
Fri 21 Feb - Sat 22 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Psycho Dollz
Sat 22 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

Solid Soul
Sat 22 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

Dry Cleaning + Pozzi
Sat 22 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

Mama Presents An Evening of Genesis
Sat 22 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Belie and the Bourbon Boys Featuring Amy Cat Walton
Sat 22 Feb, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

The Main
Sat 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Jack Garratt
Sat 22 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

New Rules
Sat 22 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

Fred Zeppelin
Sat 22 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall

Sanchez & Barrington
Sat 22 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

The Reytons
Sat 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Palaye Royale: The B-Stars World Tour
Sun 23 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

The Sensational 60s Experience Tour
Sun 23 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Atif Aslam
Sun 23 Feb, Arena Birmingham

The Sherrlocks
Sun 23 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Fleeting wood Presents Sea of Love Disco
Mon 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

Mahan Esfahani in-the-Round
Harpichord concert. Programme includes works by Takemitsu, R. Strauss & Chopin, Mon 17 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: Respighi’s Roman Trilogy
Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Vilde Frang (violin). Programme includes works by Shostakovich & Respighi, Wed 19 - Thurs 20 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Fontanella Quintet: Urban Love Songs
Programme includes works by Dowland, Holborne, Purcell, Gershwin, Pete McCarr & Radiohead, Thurs 20 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Robin Bigwood: JS Bach Goldberg Variations
Fri 21 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Tom Poster Piano Concert
Programme includes works by Schumann, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Grieg & Chopin, Fri 21 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

New Music Ensemble feat. Percy Pursglove
Fri 21 Feb, Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham

Mahan Esfahani in-the-Round
Harpichord concert. Programme includes works by Orlando Gibbons, Miroslav Srmka, Wladyslaw Szpilman & J.S. Bach, Sat 22 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

Catores Consort
An evening of varied cappella vocal music, Sat 22 Feb, St John Baptist Church, Berkswell, Nr Solihull

Blondel Medieval and Renaissance Band: Of All the Birds
Programme reflects on the perfection of nature in medieval and renaissance music Sat 22 Feb, St John’s College Chapel, Oxford

CBSO Youth Orchestra: Elgar’s Symphony No.1
Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky & Elgar, Sun 23 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

John Kearns
Fri 21 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Paul McCaffrey
Fri 21 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Tom Ward, Andy Robinson, The Raymond & Mr Timpkins Revue & Laura Lexx
Fri 21 - Sat 22 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Garrett Millerick, Russell Hicks, Junior Simpson & Dave Longley
Sat 22 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

Tom Stade
Sun 23 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Peter Pan Goes Wrong
Mischief Theatre present a ‘riotous’ spin on a timeless classic, Tues 18 - Sat 22 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham
The Influence Project
Until Mar 2020

A photography exhibition celebrating the impact of leading black musicians on contemporary sound and culture.

London-based Congolese photographer Alexis Chabala and curator Lorayne Crawford have captured the characters of these icons and some of the contemporary artists they’ve influenced through beautiful portraiture, film and sound, to offer visitors a unique and important interpretation of musical history.

macbirmingham.co.uk
0121 446 3232
Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH
Registered company no: 718449 / Registered charity no: 509079

GREAT CONCERTS IN BIRMINGHAM

Sunday 16 February 2020 at 3pm
Larry Blank:
BIG BAND BROADWAY
with Martin & Shirlie Kemp

It's bold, it's brassy, it's the music of Broadway at its best

With music from
FUNNY GIRL GUYS AND DOLLS
SWEET CHARITY A CHORUS LINE
GYPSY WEST SIDE STORY CABARET
GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES

With guest singers
Rachel Tucker & Matt Ford
Larry Blank conductor

Symphony Hall, Birmingham
thsh.co.uk 0121 780 3333
**Kids Shows**

**EXCITING SCIENCE SHOW** Entertainment for younger audiences, featuring ‘silly, fun and factual science experiments’, Wed 19 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF** Trip-trapping musical adventure, Wed 19 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**RAOLD DAHL & THE IMAGINATION SEEKERS** Family show inspired by the works of Roald Dahl, Fri 21 - Sat 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre

**NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:**


**LIKE A BOSS (15)** Drama/Thriller. Starring Charlize Theron, Nicole Kidman. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 21 & Mon 24 Feb

**THE HOLY MOUNTAIN (18)** Drama/Fantasy. Starring Alejandro Jodorowsky, Horacio Salinas. Foreign language, subtitled. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 22 Feb

**A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD (PG)** Biography/Drama. Starring Tom Hanks, Matthew Rhys. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 21 - Thurs 27 Feb

**CATTLE HILL (PG)** Animation. With the voices of Marit Andreassen, Oda Osvoi Avatmark. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 22 Feb

**BEST PRACTICE FILMS**

**MOTIONHOUSE WORKSHOP - CREATIVE DANCE CAMP** Have fun discovering creative dance with Motionhouse’s professionals. Suitable for experienced dancers and newcomers alike, Mon 17 - Tues 18 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre

**SPOTLIGHT TOUR** A walking tour through the history of Aston Hall with our learning officer and volunteers, Thurs 20 Feb, Aston Hall

**FLAMES OF LONDON CRAFT ACTIVITY** Use a variety of craft materials to create and decorate your own 17th-century London buildings, Tues 18 Feb, The Core Theatre

**FLORAL SUNCATCHERS CRAFT ACTIVITY** Have a go at making your own piece of jewellery, Thurs 20 Feb, Blakesley Hall

**THE CARAVAN, CAMPING AND MOTORHOME SHOW 2020** The UK’s largest display of leisure vehicles, static holiday homes, lodges and tents, Tues 18 - Sun 23 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**SMETHWICK ENGINE STEAMING DAY** See the world’s oldest working steam engine in all its glory, Wed 19 Feb, Thinktank Science Museum

**ANIMALMANIA** Come face to face with lizards, snakes, chinchillas, hedgehogs, giant bunnies, tortoises and creepy crawlies, Wed 19 Feb, Blakesley Hall

**LEGO® CONSTRUCTION** Spark your imagination and build your own ideas, Wed 19 Feb, Full of Fun

**ROALD DAHL & THE IMAGINATION SEEKERS - Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham**
GET THE UK’S LEADING ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE
DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR EVERY MONTH

And at just £2 an issue to cover the postage and packing, there’s never been a better time to get it delivered!

All you need to do now is choose the regional you’d like...

Birmingham, Warwickshire
Wolverhampton, Shropshire
Staffordshire, Worcestershire

It’s easy - just call our subscription hotline on 01743 281714
SIMPLY PAY THE POSTAGE AND PACKING COST OF £2 PER ISSUE BY DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD!
The List Birmingham 24 - 29 February.qxp_Layout 1  22/01/2020  18:05  Page 2

Monday 24 - Saturday 29 February

Gigs

Boy & Bear Mon 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham
The Murder Capital Mon 24 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
Cultdreams + Special Guests Mon 24 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
New Year's Day Tues 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham
Me, Myself & I & Barry Steele Tues 25 - Bar Four, The Core Theatre, Solihull
Goo Goo Dolls Tues 25 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
Ring of Saturn Tues 25 Feb, Mama Roux’s, Birmingham
The 1975 Tues 25 Feb, Arena Birmingham
Rebecca Ferguson Tues 25 Feb, Town Hall, Birmingham
Hotel Lux Tues 25 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
The Boys Are Back! Sive, A1, Damage, 911 Tues 25 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
The Dead South Tues 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham
Saint PHX Tues 25 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
D’One Wed 26 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
Gabibdon Wed 26 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham
Roving Crows Wed 26 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, B’ham
God Damn + Special Guests Wed 26 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
The Luka State Wed 26 Feb, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham
Cavetown Thurs 27 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
The Mysteries Thurs 27 Feb, Castle & Falconston, Birmingham
Del Camino Thurs 27 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham
Joe Stilgoe Thurs 27 Feb, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

Novatines Thurs 27 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
George and Elton: Faith & Love Thurs 27 Feb, Antrix, Bromsgrove
Editors Thurs 27 Feb, Arena Birmingham
Parlamio + Special Guests Thurs 27 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
Lennox Stella Fri 28 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
TFS: Rookie Fri 28 Feb, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham
The Original Fri 28 Feb, Route 44, B’ham
Chante Celetse (3-Hour Set) Fri 28 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Kyle Gass Company Fri 28 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham
Nanna Radleys Fri 28 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham
Mark Kingswood Fri 28 Feb, Town Hall, Birmingham
The Script Fri 28 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham
Deja Vega + The Pagns S.O.H + Hudos Fri 28 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
Dub FX Fri 28 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, B’ham
Terrorvision Fri 28 Feb, KE Steel Mill, Wolverhampton
Techno Bible Presents... Wylo Launch Party Fri 28 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, B’ham
Jepgafia Sat 29 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham

Sterephonics Sat 29 Feb, Arena Birmingham
Lana Del Rey Sat 29 Feb, Resorts World Arena, B’ham
As December Falls Sat 29 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham
Get Stoned Sat 29 Feb, Route 44, Birmingham
Melted Messiah Sat 29 Feb, Scruffy Murphy’s, Birmingham
Teodra Moses - 15th Anniversary of Complex Simplicity Sat 29 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
The Mission - The United European Party Tour Sat 29 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham
Bakers Reunion with Decadence Sat 29 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Clearwater Creedence Revival Sat 29 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove
3 of a Kind Sat 29 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham
Heavy Disco Spectacular Sat 29 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B’ham
Nanna Radleys Sat 29 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham
Nanna Radleys Sat 29 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham
Thuemer Sat 29 Feb, Heavy Disco, Birmingham
Indoor Oldschool Garage Festival Sat 29 Feb, The Hanger, Wolverhampton
Example Sat 29 Feb, O2 Academy, B’ham

Classical

Lunchtime Organ concert with Thomas Trotter Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Franz Lehár & Maurice Durufle, Mon 24 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall
James Gilchrist (Tenor) & Anna Tilbrook (Piano) Programme includes works by Schubert, Jonathan Dove & Barber, Wed 26 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham
Orchestra of the Swan: Immortal Beloved Featuring Jason Lai (conductor) & Lauren Zhang (piano). Programme includes works by Schumann, Beethoven & Xiaoran Jiang, Wed 26 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
CBSO: Walton’s Viola Concerto Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Michael Seal (conductor) & Lise Berthaud (viola). Programme includes works by Foulds, Walton & Vaughan Williams, Thurs 27 Feb, Symphony Hall, B’ham
CBSO: A Night on Broadway Featuring Michael England (conductor) and Alice Fearn, Scott Davies, Ashley Day & Sophie Evans (vocalists). Programme includes scores from Chicago, Cabaret, West Side Story, Wicked and more... Fri 28 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
Orchestra of St John Chamber Ensemle Programme includes works by Mozart, Malcolm Arnold & Beethoven, Fri 28 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove
CBSO: A London Symphony Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the CBSO Youth Chorus, the CBSO Children’s Chorus & Michael Seal (conductor). Programme includes works by Foulds, Gary Carpenter & Vaughan Williams, Sat 28 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

Josie Long Tues 24 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham
Alex Edelman Wed 26 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham
Barbara Nice, Meredith Benson, Kate McCabe & Maureen Younger Wed 26 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove
Spencer Jones & Comedy Carousel with Andy Robinson Thurs 27 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham
Adam Rowe Fri 28 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham
Tom Binns Fri 28 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham
Jamali Maddix Fri 28 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
Spencer Jones, Tez Ilyas & Dave Johns Fri 28 - Sat 29 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham
Alexei Sayle Fri 28 - Sat 29 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
Marlon Davis, Helen Bauer, Stuart Goldsmith & Barry Dodds Sat 29 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham
Dane Baptiste Sat 29 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Theatre

Spamalot Amateur staging presented by the Licfield Operatic Society, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Feb, Licfield Garrick
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat Starring Britain’s Got Talent 2019 finalist Mark McMullan as Joseph, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Strange Tale of Charlie Chaplin & Stan Laurel Nostalgic bio drama paying homage to two men who changed the world of comedy forever, Tues 25 - Sat 29 Feb, The REP, Birmingham
Faustus: The Damned Woman Radical reimagining of Christopher Marlowe’s provocative tale, told from a female perspective... Wed 26 Feb - Sat 7 March, The REP, Birmingham
Jekyll & Hyde Arrows & Traps Theatre give Robert Louis Stevenson’s gothic classic a modern twist, Wed 26 - Fri 28 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, B’ham
Drip Drip Drip Pipeline Theatre tackles the rise of racism and bigotry in the NHS, Thurs 27 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
Oklahoma! SOsage Factory Youth Theatre present an amateur production of the Rodgers & Hammerstein classic, Thurs 27 - Sat 29 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull
Three Men in a Boat Ridiculous tale of men behaving badly while messing about on boats, Fri 28 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

whatsonlive.co.uk 65
Monday 24 - Saturday 29 February

**A ROCK’N’ROLL SUICIDE** Charting the life of nearly-was-a-rock-star Gypsy Lee Pistolero, AKA Lee Mark-Jones, Fri 28 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**EDITH IN THE DARK** Thriller by Philip Meeks, Fri 28 Feb - Thurs 7 March, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

**HAMLET** The Crescent Theatre Company present a ‘carefully cut version’ of Shakespeare’s searing tragedy, Sat 29 Feb - Thurs 7 March, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**Cabaret**

**FASCINATING AIDA** Evening of cabaret with Dillie Keane, Adèle Anderson & Liza Pulman, Sat 29 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**WASTELAND** Gary Clarke’s rave-inspired story of northern life with the coal industry in terminal decline, Thurs 27 - Fri 28 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**Talks**

**AN EVENING WITH ANN CLEEVES** The author of popular TV series Shetland & Vera talks about her books and adaptations, as well as her latest bestseller, The Long Call, Tue 25 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CURATOR TALK AND TOUR** Join Anna Berry as she talks about her experiences as a curator and the inspiration for exhibition Art and Social Change: The Disability Arts Movement, Thurs 27 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre, B’ham

**Film**

**NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:**

- **MR. JONES (15)** Biography/Drama. Starring James Norton, Vanessa Kirby. Midlands Arts Centre, B’ham, Fri 28 Feb
- **A HIDDEN LIFE (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring August Diehl, Valerie Pachner. Foreign language, subtitled. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 28 Feb
- **THE MAN WHO KILLED DON QUIXOTE (15)** Adventure/Comedy. Starring Adam Driver, Jonathan Pryce. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 28 - Sat 29 Feb
- **THE LION KING (PG)** Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Donald Glover, Seth Rogen. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 29 Feb
- **WAVES (15)** Drama/Romance. Starring Taylor Russell, Kelvin Harrison Jr. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 29 Feb

**Events**

**WHAT CAREER LIVE? & WHAT UNIVERSITY LIVE?** For students aged between 15 and 19, Fri 28 - Sat 29 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW** Meet with 200-plus wedding specialists, including venue coordinators and award-winning photographers, Fri 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**SUTTON COLDFIELD BOOKFEST** Meet your favourite authors, discover astonishing books and enjoy some interactive storytelling fun, Sat 29 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall and Sutton Coldfield Library, Birmingham

---

**TAKING FLIGHT**

Discover dream design

25 January – 14 June 2020

Depart on a journey of invention and explore the evolution of flight in this immersive exhibition. No previous flying experience needed, so get ready to wing it.

#CovTakesFlight

Find out more: transport-museum.com

Exhibition created by TECHQUAD in partnership with Coventry Transport Museum. Designs by Fircather and objects on loan from Midland Air Museum.

Taking flight contains material reproduced with permission from Rolls Royce. All Rights Reserved.

---

66 whatsonlive.co.uk
UK’s only Medieval Festival of Archery

15th - 23rd February

Be part of the action in a brand new live action show, included with all entry tickets!

Book online and save at warwick-castle.com
SIR PETER WRIGHT & GALINA SAMSOVA’S

SWAN LAKE

18 - 29 FEB 2020
brb.org.uk/swanlake

MUSIC PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
CHOREOGRAPHY PETER WRIGHT,
LEV IVANOV & MARIUS PETIPA
PRODUCTION PETER WRIGHT &
GALINA SAMSOVA
DESIGNS PHILIP PROWSE
LIGHTING PETER TEIGEN
LIVE MUSIC ROYAL BALLET SINFONIA

Delia Mathews as Odile © Bella Kotak

Media partner
The Telegraph
Birmingham City Council
Arts Council England