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anniversary show in Stafford



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Kevin & Joanne Clifton's dance sensation in Stoke



#### MCM COMIC CON

fans and anime enthusiasts



a must-see NEC show for sci-fi

## gatehouse theatre



HANNEKE
ROUW
THURSDAY 5 MARCH
@ 7.30PM



THURSDAY 16 APRIL @ 7.30PM





THE UNREMARKABLE DEATH OF MARILYN MONROE

WED 18 & THURS 19 MARCH @ 7.30PM



FRIDAY 17 APRIL @ 7.30PM





LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR

SATURDAY 21 MARCH @ 7.30PM



SUNDAY 19 APRIL @ 7.30PM







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Shropshire What's On





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#### Lyn Paul back in iconic stage role

Lyn Paul returns to the role of Mrs Johnstone when Willy Russell's 'play with music', Blood Brothers, stops off at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this month (Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 March). Blood Brothers then returns to the region to play Lichfield Garrick (Tuesday 7 -Saturday 11 April)

Paul rose to fame in the early 1970s as a member of the New Seekers. She was the group's featured vocalist on their 1972 Eurovision Song Contest entry, Beg, Steal Or Borrow, and lead vocalist on their 1974 number-one hit, You Won't Find Another Fool Like Me... For further information or to book tickets. visit grandtheatre.co.uk or lichfieldgarrick.com

#### **Shropshire Kids Festival** Telford back next month



Shropshire Kids Festival makes a welcome return to the Telford International Centre next month (10 & 11 April).

This year's event features attractions including giant inflatables, go-karting, a foam party, martial arts, a helter-skelter slide, a space-hopper track, nerf wars, an obstacle course, football arena, a hockey shoot-out and a circus tent.

The festival will also feature a dedicated zone for the under-fives. For more information and to save money by purchasing tickets in advance online, visit shropshirekidsfest.co.uk.

#### Artworks on the streets in Stoke-on-Trent festival

Large-scale outdoor artworks, street performers, numerous free creative workshops and the chance to journey through an immersive experience entitled Mysterious Moth all feature in the line-up of entertainment at Festival Stoke, a two-month programme of arts events taking place in the town centre. "Our aim is to celebrate all that's good about

Stoke, both the town where we're based and the wider city too," say the organisers of the event, which runs from 14 March to 16 May.

#### Get set for the Hurricane Challenge at RAF Cosford

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, RAF Cosford is challenging people to walk, run, jog, swim or bike 8oK in 80 days. The venue's Hurricane Challenge starts on 21 April, with participants having until 10 July (the date on which the Battle of Britain began in 1940) to complete it. To find out more, visit rafmuseum.org.uk.



#### A tasty trail in Shropshire

Shropshire Festivals has cooked up a new event that mixes the great outdoors with eating and drinking delicious local produce. The Shropshire Tasty Trail, taking place on Sunday 31 May, will leave muddy



footprints rather than carbon ones, with the aim being to source ingredients locally to

keep food-miles to a minimum.

The trail - an eight to nine-mile walk - will include four stop-offs where walkers will be able to enjoy some tasty cuisine. Visit shropshiretastytrails.co.uk for more information.

#### Amber Davies to star in Bring It On: The Musical

Love Island 2017 winner Amber Davies will this summer team up with four-time gymnastic Olympic medallist Louis Smith to star in Bring It On: The Musical at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre (Tuesday 30 June - Saturday 4 July). Inspired by the film of the same name, the show is being publicised as 'a high-flying, energy-fuelled journey which tackles

friendship, jealousy, betraval and forgiveness wrapped up in explosive choreography and tricks'. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at atgtickets.com



#### The otters have arrived...

The UK's first ever sea otters have safely touched down at Birmingham's National Sea Life Centre following a 5,000-mile journey from Alaska as part of a pioneering education and conservation project.

The otters are now in quarantine at the venue's purpose-built multi-million pound Marine Mammal Rescue Facility, where they will become permanent residents.

### Grease Is The Word for Peter

Australian singer Peter Andre will star in selected performances of Grease when the hit musical stops off in the region this autumn. As well as reprising the role of Teen Angel, which Peter previously played during the show's run at Birmingham Hippodrome, he will also take the parts of Vince Fontaine and the Sergeant. Commenting on the news, he said: "I had the most wonderful time last year working with our genius director, Nikolai Foster, and the incredible Arlene Phillips, helping create a new, slick, sexy version of this timeless musical with the most talented cast. I'm delighted to be given the opportunity to also perform two additional roles this time round," Grease plays Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 20 - Saturday 24 October; and Lichfield Garrick from Tuesday 7 - Saturday 11 November.



### Swanning about in Burton...

The town of Burton-upon-Trent will feature a swan sculpture trail this summer. Designed by talented artists and sponsored by local businesses and organisations, no fewer than 25 swans will be taking up residence in Burton's streets and open spaces for 10 weeks from July onwards. For more information, visit burtonswans.co.uk



#### Cooking up a treat - Waitress heads to the Midlands...

Smash-hit Broadway and West End musical Waitress will stop off at Birmingham Hippodrome next year (Monday 29 March - Saturday 3 April 2021) as part of its first ever UK & Ireland tour.

Based on the 2007 movie, Waitress tells the story of Jenna, an expert pie maker in a small town

who dreams of a way out of her loveless marriage. A baking contest in a nearby county and the town's new doctor may offer her a chance at a new life, while her fellow waitresses offer their own recipes for happiness...

For more information about the show and booking tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

#### Frenchie 'pupup' in Stafford

If you're a dog lover with a particular soft spot for Frenchies, be sure to check out Revolution Stafford's, er, *Pup*-Up Cafe on Saturday 7 March.

Event attractions include unlimited free puppuccinos for all the Frenchies, competitions for the best-dressed pups, and the chance to mingle with up to 50 other Frenchies & owners. For more information, visit fatsoma.com



#### Calling young folk stars of the future

One of the Midlands' leading music festivals is offering folk stars of the future a platform on which to showcase their talents and reach new audiences.

Shrewsbury Folk Festival has opened applications for its Launchpad stage, providing young musicians with the chance to gain experience playing at a major music event.

The festival is looking for bands, duos or solo musicians aged 16 to 26 who live in Shropshire, Mid Wales or the West Midlands to



pitch for one of the slots on the Launchpad stage, which is once again being sponsored by Midlands What's On magazine. Successful applicants will perform at least three 30-minute sets during this year's festival (at the West Mid Showground, 28 - 31 August). To apply, send a short biography, links to performances (Soundcloud, YouTube etc) and your contact details to jo@shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk before 8 May. Only selected performers will be contacted.



### Pussycat Dolls to perform at Wolves Racecourse

Chart-topping mega-group The Pussycat Dolls are reuniting for a UK tour and will perform at Wolverhampton Racecourse this summer.

The multi-platinum pop sensations, who have sold more than 54 million records worldwide and streamed over one billion times, will appear at the venue on Friday 21 August.

Commenting on the forthcoming concert, frontwoman Scherzinger said: "I love all my girls so much and can't wait to show you what we've got in store for you. It's been a long time coming but this feels like the perfect time to remind the world what it means to be a Pussycat Doll."

## Shropshire girl bids to raise awareness on climate change

Eleven-year-old Lulu Reynolds from Shropshire has decided to 'do her bit' to help secure the future of the planet. With a little help from the grown-ups around her, Lulu has organised the county's first ever Climate Change Awareness Fair.

Taking place at Pontesbury Public Hall on Sunday 29 March, the event will feature a selection of eco-friendly information stalls and contributions from a number of expert speakers.

Commenting on the fair, Lulu said: "It is an incredible planet and yet we're destroying it. We've been pushing the earth's boundaries too far, too fast. We've reached a turning point, but we still have time - if we act now."



show in big Shropshire exhibition

World's elite watercolour masters on



The exhibition International Watercolour Masters makes a welcome return in May, featuring 120 paintings by 39 talented artists. The show will be staged in the Ford Hall adjacent to the Shropshire-located National Sports & Conference Centre, Lilleshall Hall. The event, which runs from 5 to 15 May, will include at least three practical demonstrations by the artists every day, with workshops and a pop-up art market also featuring. Visit saa.co.uk/masters for further information.

#### Sandwell Valley stroll with the alpacas

Sandwell Valley Country Park is offering visitors the chance to enjoy a walk with the alpacas this month and next. Taking place on Wednesdays throughout March and April, the 30-minute experience - which is open to children aged 11-plus and, of course, to adults! - features a 'welcome' talk, the chance to take the alpacas out on a stroll, afternoon tea and free entry into Sandwell Park Farm. To book and *arrange* payment - you can't pay over the phone - call 0121 569 3070.

### Tamworth Literary Festival returns

Tamworth Literary Festival returns this month, presenting nine events across a period of six days (Monday 2 - Saturday 7 March).

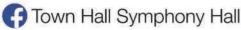
Highlights include open-mic storytelling and poetry evening, a crimewriting workshop and panel discussion about the ongoing popularity of crime fiction, and workshops in both short-story writing and how to get published. For more information, visit tamlitfest.wordpress.com

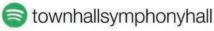
### Auditions for the stars of tomorrow

Young persons talent agency & school Stagebox are holding auditions at Birmingham Hippodrome on Sunday 15 March. Stagebox auditions thousands of children each year in theatres across the country and trains company members during the school holidays to an unrivalled professional level. The company also creates musical films on exclusive locations, and has racked up an impressive 13 million YouTube views.

Book your child's audition at: stageboxmusicaltheatre.co.uk

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TOWN HALL BIRMINGHAM

SYMPHONY HALL BIRMINGHAM



BLADE RUNNER IN CONCERT THU 26 MARCH, 7:30PM SYMPHONY HALL



REMEMBERING THE OSCARS 2020 THU 9 APRIL, 7:30PM SYMPHONY HALL



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



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60TH ANNIVERSARY
TOUR
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TOWN HALL



AN EVENING WITH
DEBBIE HARRY &
CHRIS STEIN IN
CONVERSATION
FRI 24 APRIL, 8PM
SYMPHONY HALL

**TOWN HALL PRESENTS** 



SAT 28 & SUN 29 MARCH







#### **SAT 28 MARCH 1PM**

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DRUNK WOMEN SOLVING CRIME TABLE MANNERS WITH JESSIE WARE

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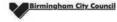
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One-woman show The Unremarkable Death Of Marilyn Monroe catches up with the blonde bombshell in the hour before her untimely death. The play's writer & director, Elton Townend-Jones, chats about a production that puts one of the 20th century's greatest icons centre stage...

From factory worker to pin-up model and onwards to Hollywood stardom, Marilyn Monroe was one of the 20th century's most iconic sex symbols.

Although Monroe's 1962 death by barbiturate overdose was ruled a suicide, many conspiracy theories continue to circulate.

Dyad Productions' The Unremarkable Death Of Marilyn Monroe aims to delve into the story of the film star's mysterious demise at the age of 36. The company specialises in work that relies on solo performer Rebecca Vaughan - who founded Dyad in 2009 - creating and taking centre stage in one-woman shows. These have included Austen's Women and I, Elizabeth.

Rebecca was joined by fellow writer, producer and actor Elton Townend-Jones shortly after she'd started the company.

"At Dyad we try to reveal new things about characters or famous figures, particularly women - strong women," explains Elton. "In the case of The Unremarkable Death Of Mari-

lyn Monroe, it's an extremely intimate show. The play is a 90-minute monologue set in the room in which she dies. She reminisces, travelling back to unravel and peel away the layers of her life and display to us all her actual thoughts. It's really all about love. Not just amorous love, but love for relations and friends. That intimacy creates a kind of trust and authority that means you come to rely on what she says being true - at least to the character I've created in that moment.

"Marilyn really had very little agency. When men and women were signed up to certain film studios in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, they really had no control over their careers - nor even their personal lives to some extent. They were groomed by the studio to turn up at particular events and behave a certain way, or play a particular type of part in their movies. This show definitely aims to give Marilyn her voice back. I was really aware that I didn't want to make her look foolish or like a clown, which was the case with a lot of the media at the time she was alive."

Elton was inspired by Marilyn from an early age and has taken her influence with him throughout much of his personal and professional life: "When I was 12, I saw Some Like It Hot for the first time. I was really taken in by the film and by Marilyn. I then got it into my head that I wanted to do a stage production of Some Like It Hot, which never came to anything. But years later I became an actor, on the back of which I became a director and subsequently a writer too. I'd always identified with the vulnerabilities of Marilyn and always suspected there was more under the surface than we were being told. So when I came to Dyad Productions, I already knew that I wanted to explore her more.

"There are all kinds of conspiracy theories surrounding Marilyn herself and her death: her connection with the Kennedys, her miscarriages, her drug & drink problems, her succession of marriages. As I was in my 30s when Dyad Productions was founded, I'd had a lot more life experience than I'd had when I was a lot younger - I'd been around the block a bit, so to speak. I began to sympathise and empathise with things that were clear to me about Marilyn's personality. I researched to find out more

about her, then gradually brought together this idea of being alone with her in the final hour of her life. The more I found out about her, the more I became concerned that she was being overwhelmed by her public persona and by all the negativity that surrounded her. I wanted to find out about the person underneath and how she actually felt about her life."

Elton believes The Unremarkable Death Of Marilyn Monroe gives a unique and heartfelt insight into the woman who started life as Norma Jeane Mortenson: "Marilyn went through a lot. She had a very difficult childhood because she was abused. She lived away from her mother because her mother was a single parent who had to work full-time. So she was left in the interesting system of foster parenting in America, where the foster children still saw their actual parents at weekends. I spent a lot of time looking at press photos of Marilyn at different moments in her life and got ideas for my dialogue through a combination of what I thought about that moment of Marilyn's life and what I imagined she might be thinking. I got the actress who plays Marilyn, Lizzie Wort, to do a similar thing when I came to direct the show. But what I wanted to do, having done so much research, was fill in the gaps with my writing. I was able to draw out different bits of information and connect the dots in a way that I don't think anyone has done before. Whether or not they're true connections is another matter entirely - it's up to the audience to decide! Effectively what I'm writing is a work of fiction, so I do have artistic licence, but everything is based on true events, things she said and things she did. For example, Hollywood talked about how she was always late for work. It turns out she had really bad colitis, so it's unsurprising to me that she wasn't always able to be where she should've been. There were plenty of other people saying that she was a truly professional, underrated woman with a keen mind and a love of reading - a far more intelligent woman than her persona suggested. However, in my research I was able to connect all the negative stuff people said about her to genuine reasons why that

Elton is often asked how he's able to 'write like a woman': "With The Unremarkable Death Of

might've been the case."

Marilyn Monroe, I wanted to be honest and true to both her voice and my own. I related to her also because my mother had several marriages, so I had several 'dads', and I've been an actor. I felt like I could write about Marilyn in such a way that revealed the true person behind the icon, but also make it a very personal work. I wanted to be able to say things that a lot of men don't write about when it comes to relationships, love and sex. I was able to do that in this show. A lot of people, particularly women, have come up to me after the show and asked how I've managed to really get into a woman's head and present her in an authentic way. For me, it's the same as getting into anyone's head, and that's just my job as a writer. I don't see different thoughts and responses to moments in life as only being attributed to a certain gender. I was brought up to be a feminist by my mother. I think that's often seen as a dirty word, but it's definitely stood me in good stead."

So how does Elton hope the audience responds to his play?

"I hope the immediate, surface response people have is to consider how complex and interesting Marilyn really was. I hope the piece reveals something the audience didn't know before, and that they feel empathy and sympathy for her. On a broader level, I hope that anyone watching acknowledges that people are going through their own difficulties and problems. Also, that even if you do feel like you're struggling in your own life, you should continue to be yourself and not let anyone grind you down.

"Forget the conspiracy theories, ignore what you think you know. Come along and see the truth behind the myth. Meet the woman behind the icon, and be there at the moment of her death, in an award-winning performance from a great, great actor. But bring a hankie, just in case..."

The Unremarkable Death Of Marilyn Monroe shows at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre on Wednesday 18 & Thursday 19 March, and then at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Friday 20 March.

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LA BOHEME

**FRIDAY 13 MAR** 

REGENT THEATRE



AJ AND CURTIS PRITCHARD IN AJ LIVE 2020

SAT 14 MAR

REGENT THEATRE



THE INTERNATIONAL AWARD-WINNING MUSICAL ONCE

TUE 17 - SAT 21 MAR

REGENT THEATRE



THE HYSTERICAL SEQUEL TO THE HIT SHOW MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2

WED 25 MAR

REGENT THEATRE



DIRECT FROM THE WEST-END THRILLER LIVE

THU 26 MAR - SAT 28 MAR

REGENT THEATRE



THE SMASH HIT FRESH OFF THE WEST END CABARET

TUE 31 MAR – SAT 4 APR

REGENT THEATRE



JOE PASQUALE IS FRANK SPENCER IN SOME MOTHERS DO 'AVE 'EM

TUE 14 APR - SAT 18 APR

REGENT THEATRE



NORTHERN BALLET'S
LITTLE RED RIDING
HOOD

SUN 3 MAY

REGENT THEATRE



THE MUSICAL PARODY FRIENDS!

**TUE 5 MAY** 

**REGENT THEATRE** 



KEVIN AND JOANNE CLIFTON FACE OFF IN BURN THE FLOOR

WED 6 MAY

**REGENT THEATRE** 

THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW WED 26 FEB VH

RE-TAKE THAT: TAKE THAT THE GREATEST HITS THE SING-A-LONG

SAT 29 FEB WH

BEN FOGLE - TALES OF THE WILDERNESS

THU 19 MAR WH

THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN
- HOW SWEET IT IS

- HOW SWEET IT IS SAT 21 MAR WI THE BOOTLEG BEATLES
SUN 22 MAR VII

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC 2020 SAT 28 MAR VH

THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES

THE SHIRES
WED 29 APR VH



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## REVIEW: Bella High-quality food and attentive staff at family-owned Italian

Family-owned restaurant Bella has been an integral part of the Wolverhampton food scene since 2001. Described as the city's 'best restaurant' by many of its visitors, Bella boasts a traditional Italian a la carte menu which includes fresh fish, meats, a selection of pasta dishes, pizzas and chef's specialities.

Located in Chapel Ash, just a short walk from the city centre, the restaurant itself is smart. Boasting a bright and contemporary interior, crisp white napkins and nicely polished glassware sit atop dark wooden tables.

On arrival, my partner and I experienced a warm welcome from the polite staff and were shown over to our window table - the best seat in the house.

The menu boasts all the mouthwatering Italian delights that you'd expect to see. We started with a selection of home-baked breads with extra virgin olive oil, sea salt and balsamic vinegar from Modena. The breads, all four varieties, were nothing short of outstanding. Different from one another in both flavour and texture, they were baked to absolute perfection. My favourite of the four showcased a churroslike texture and was brushed with herbs and salt. Divine.

After much deliberation over the starters menu, we settled on my partner's favourite, calamari, and parma ham DOP with buffalo mozzarella, seasonal fruit and a chilli & honey glaze. The latter was served with a piece of delicious bread. The calamari was cooked nicely. The batter was light, ensuring it didn't mask the flavour of the squid, and the lemon mayonnaise that came with it was a tasty accompaniment.

You can't go wrong with the time-honoured combination of parma ham and buffalo mozzarella, and Bella's offering was devoured in no time at all.

My partner and I like meat, fish, pizza and pasta to equal degrees, meaning that whenever we visit an Italian restaurant, we always struggle to choose our main courses. The fish section included chargrilled swordfish marinated in garlic, lime & red

chilli and king prawns and shrimps in brandy, garlic & tomato with a creamy sauce. The meat section featured calves liver pan-fried with marsala and red wine sauce, a rack of lamb with a herb crust, and an 8oz fillet steak served on a panella, topped with lobe of foie gras and black truffle finished with a Rossini sauce.

You can also choose from a selection of eight pasta dishes, a further six signature pasta dishes and five pizzas, all of which can be served as a calzone for an extra £1.

In the end we opted for the smoked salmon and mascarpone pizza and the 11oz rib eye steak from the specials menu. We saw the words 'white pizza base' and automatically assumed that the salmon pizza would come with a creamy white sauce base - something that we love but can rarely find. Looking back on the menu, however, it clearly stated that all pizzas included mozzarella and tomato. Oops! Although not what we thought we'd ordered, the pizza was cooked nicely and fea-

tured a generous amount of salmon. I regret not ordering a pasta dish instead, but that's entirely my own fault for being too hasty and not reading the menu correctly.

The steak, on the other hand, was everything we wanted and more. The meat itself was of a high quality, beautifully cooked, and provided a stunning melt-inthe-mouth experience. The beef was served with sautéed mushrooms and perfectly cooked hand-cut chips. As nice as the steak was, the real star of the show was the insanely good porcini sauce. The depth of flavour was something of a triumph: it was without doubt the nicest mushroom sauce I'd ever eaten.

Following a short breather, we tucked into our desserts. As the saying goes, the test of a good Italian restaurant is its tiramisu, so not surprisingly that's what we ordered. It was exemplary. Served in a tall glass, its texture was smooth and velvety and its cream & coffee flavours were perfectly balanced. I highly recommend ordering one if you visit. We also shared an appetising mille foglie, which featured nicely cooked pastry layered with fresh berries and crema pasticcera.

Having now tried Bella for myself, I'd certainly agree that it's one of Wolverhampton's best restaurants. The food is tasty, of a high quality and nicely presented; the staff are friendly and attentive. If you're in the area and love Italian food, this is your spot. Lauren Foster

Food: Service: Ambience: Overall value OVERALL

Bella 82 Chapel Ash Wolverhampton WV3 0TY Tel: 01902 427555





## BRUNCH

9 - 11.30AM

### LUNCH DINNER

12 - 9PM

2 COURSES £19.50 . 3 COURSES £24.50





\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*







## Gin Festival returns to Wolverhampton

The Secret Gin Festival returns to The Grain Store in Wolverhampton on Saturday 6 June.

The event will feature 13 hours of live music, street food, industry experts, dancing, and of course... gin!
Boasting over 500 gins and hundreds of tonics and mixers, the show also includes a free masterclass with industry leaders from Whitley Neil, Bombay Sapphire, JJ Whitley, City of London Gin and more.

Word Of Mouth Events takes over from 9pm for an after-party featuring four guest DJs playing dance, garage, chart, house and R'n'B.

### Popular vegan fair returns to Stoke

Staffordshire Vegan Fairs has announced the return of its annual Stoke event. The fair takes place at the city's Kings Hall on Saturday 30 May and will feature a wide range of stalls supplying all things vegan. Charities and ethical groups will also be in attendance. Entry is free, with admission from 11am to 4pm.

## Chop And Wok super noodle bar to open in Wellington

Popular at its various sites across Birmingham, Chop And Wok is expanding into Wellington, Telford. A pan-Asian wok-based takeaway and restaurant, Chop And Wok boasts an Asian fusion menu cooked in a live 'food theatre' where all is visible. The venue's opening date is yet to be announced.





#### Late Nights at Shrewsbury Market Hall are back for 2020

Shrewsbury Market Hall's popular Saturday Late Night events are back for 2020. Kicking off on 7 March, the street food venues, cafes, bars and stalls that have made these nights so popular will once again be opening until 10pm. Punters can enjoy flavours from around the world, including Thai, tapas, Indian, Tex-Mex and Chinese dumplings. The Lunch Box will be laying on a set menu in

two sittings and The Pizza Box will be offering a buffet. There will also be bars selling cocktails, craft beers and wines, while Tom's Table will be conjuring up both alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails.

Saturday Late Nights for the rest of the year take place on 4 April, 6 June, 27 June, 5 September, 31 October and 5 December.

#### Midlands business wins Best Street Food award

Local Birmingham business The Flying Cows has been awarded the Best Street Food gong at the Food & Drink Awards.

The Flying Cows is not your usual burger van. Owner Dan Batchelor worked as a chef for 16 years at Michelin-starred restaurants in Birmingham and London before deciding to get out of the kitchen and kickstart his own operation in 2013.

Using only the highest-quality locally sourced beef to make its burgers, The Flying Cows is a regular feature of Birmingham's multi-award-winning Digbeth Dining Club street food event. It also pops up at festivals and events around the country.





## **International Watercolour Masters**

5th May - 15th May 2020 Lilleshall Hall Shropshire TF10 9AT





Tickets on sale now www.eventbrite.co.uk



**Forthcoming Shows 2020** 



01952 382382





FD RYRNF -IF I'M HONEST...

Thurs 12 Mar @ 8.00pm



THE ULTRA 90S SHOW

Sat14 Mar @ 7.30pm



JIM DAVIDSON -**LAST MAN STANDING** 

Wed 18 Mar @ 7.30pm



CIRCUS OF HORRORS 25TH ANNIVAERSARY TOUR

Thurs 19 Mar @ 7.30pm



JIMMY BUCKLEY SPECIAL GUEST CLAUDIA BUCKLEY

Fri 20 Mar @ 7.30pm



**ARRIVAL - THE HITS OF ABBA** 

Sat 21 Mar @ 7.30pm



**FRANCIS ROSSI** I TALK TOO MUCH

Thu 26 Mar @ 7.30pm



VOODOO ROOM **HENDRIX, ERIC CLAPTON & CREAM** 

Fri 27 Mar @ 7.30pm



OH! WHAT A NIGHT FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS

Sat 28 Mar @ 7.30pm



#### BBC Philharmonic Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 27 March

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concertgoers with works from its impressive repertoire.

This latest stop-off sees the orchestra getting to grips with the lilting melodies of Dvorak's seventh symphony, while Simon Trpčeski (pictured) brings the power and virtuosity for which he's become internationally acclaimed to his performance of Shostakovich's second piano concerto. Smetana's Overture & Three Dances from The Bartered Bride also feature. Clemens Schuldt takes the baton for a concert that forms part of the 2020 Stokeon-Trent Festival.

#### Elektra Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 21 March "The blood mania appears as a terrible deformation of sexual perversity," wrote one horrified critic in reaction to Richard Strauss' Elektra when it premièred in 1909. Another was of the opinion that "the whole thing impresses one as a sexual aberration".

It's fair to say that Strauss's modern and expressionistic one-act opera, composed to a German-language libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, made some serious waves back in the early 20th century.

Making use of Sophocles' famous Greek tragedy, the piece held up a mirror to the violent society in which Strauss lived - and that violent society most emphatically did not like what it saw reflected back...

Bournemouth's talented Symphony Orchestra here get their collective teeth into a brutal, bloodthirsty but ultimately brilliant classical work.

#### **Carmina Burana**

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 14 March

The emotionally charged choral music of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana is instantly recognisable the world over,



having featured in an untold number of movie soundtracks and television commercials. The hugely popular work here receives another outing, this time courtesy of the City of Birmingham Choir performing alongside the London Concert Orchestra.

Soprano Ailish Tynan, tenor Oliver Johnston and baritone William Dazeley also contribute to what should be a truly impressive evening of musicmaking. Adrian Lucas (pictured) conducts...

#### The Marmen Quartet

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tues 31 March

The Marmen Quartet were formed in 2013 at the Royal College of Music in London and are widely admired for the courage, vitality and vigour of their performances. Winning prestigious international string quartet competitions like they're going out of fashion, the quartet visit the Potteries very much in their pomp, ready to dazzle a sure-to-be-appreciative audience with an equally sure-to-be-exquisite display of masterful musicianship. The concert programme sees them presenting quartets by Mozart and Beethoven alongside Salvatore Sciarrino's brief but hauntingly beautiful seventh Quartet, written in 1999.



## Emma Johnson and Friends: Tales From Vienna

United Reformed Church, Shrewsbury, Sat 14 March

The woman considered by many to be Britain's favourite clarinettist stops off in Shrewsbury to headline this Shropshire Music Trust event.

Offering its audience the chance to sample a taste of Vienna in its 19th-century heyday, the concert features compositions by Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Strauss and Lehar. Writer and broadcaster John Suchet is the special guest.





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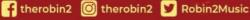


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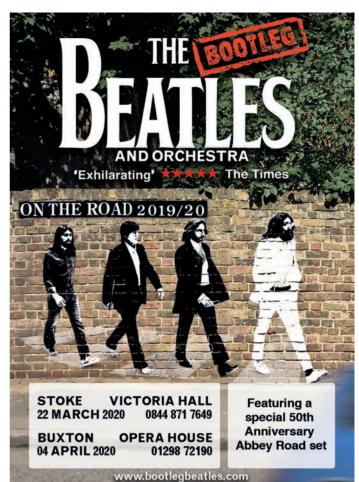


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#### **Haggard Cat**

The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 24 March

Nottingham-based duo Haggard Cat made their names in their previous act, the acclaimed hardcore band HECK.

The DIY ethic of Matt Reynolds (vocals and guitar) and Tom Marsh (drums), not to mention their propensity for pulling off memorable stunts, has garnered them a reputation as a duo who like to push boundaries. A recent memorable caper involved the musicians holing themselves up in a small concrete box for 24 hours as a visual metaphor for how Brexit will impair the ability of British bands to tour the European continent.



## Greg Russell & Ciaran Algar

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 14 March

The award-winning Greg Russell & Ciaran Algar have become one of the most soughtafter acts on the British folk scene since joining forces in 2011.

Combining Russell's powerful vocals and driving guitar style with Algar's All-Ireland-winning fiddle playing, the pair have toured extensively across the UK and Europe, along the way also finding time to release four well-received albums, including their latest offering, Utopia And Wasteland.





#### Zervas & Pepper

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Sun 8 March

Much admired for their luminous harmonies and laid-back sound, Cardiff singer-songwriters Zervas and Pepper have captured imaginations with critically acclaimed albums Lifebringer, Abstract Heart and Widerland.

The folk rock duo visit Shrewsbury to perform tracks from their latest release, Endless Road, Restless Nomad.

### The Urban Voodoo Machine

Albert's Shed Southwater, Telford, Fri 20 March

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

Expect blasting guitars, bass & drums, shrieking saxophone, washboard shenanigans and a pure, unadulterated sense of fun...

#### Jon Boden

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 11 March

Best known as the lead vocalist of progressive folk band Bellowhead - who in their day sold out the Royal Albert Hall and notched up 250,000 album sales - Jon Boden returns to Theatre Severn to perform self-penned songs, material from Bellowhead and tracks from his latest album, Afterglow.

#### **Fish**

KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton, Wed 25 March



Derek William Dick, better known as Fish, came to prominence as the lead singer & lyricist of neo-progressive '80s rock band Marillion.

He returns to UK stages this month in support of final studio album Weltschmerz. The record brings down the curtain on a memorable solo career that kicked off with 1990's Vigil In A Wilderness Of Mirrors. This Wolverhampton show sees the talented Scot performing Vigil in full, alongside songs from the new album.



## Stewart Lee

#### Midlands-born comedian brings his new touring show to the region...

Last year, after three decades in the business, Stewart Lee was hailed by the Times as 'the world's greatest living stand-up'.
His current tourer is entitled Snowflake/
Tornado, a show which sees him, in his own words, "negotiating the thin line between has-been and legend".

#### What can audiences expect from your latest show. Stewart?

It's two one-hour shows back to back. Tornado is a story show about me sharing a venue with a famous American comedian and getting chased off by his private security team. Snowflake is a more discursive, ideasdriven hour, about how some people think political correctness has supposedly imposed on people's freedoms. I'm a 1980s snowflake liberal and very much a product of political correctness, but fans of shock and awe will find enough in both shows to flip their wigs. Every new tour, I tie myself in gut-wrenching knots worrying that time will finally be called on my career, but this show has got better reviews than ever, so I am cursed to continue.

## You're in the strange position of having won every award going, being able to shift a quarter of a million tickets on tour without needing to advertise, but by no means being a household name. Does that bother you?

Not really. To some extent I engineered it, by never going on panel shows or Live At The Apollo - it was easy to do this as I was never asked. Celebrity gets in the way of the art of being a stand-up, and it's a massive pain in the backside being even a bit famous. Me being recognised is embarrassing for the kids, and we've had to take legal advice on people threatening and harassing us. The last stand-up special, Content Provider, played to two million people on the iPlayer in 2018 and there was stuff about Brexit in it, so before it went out I grew a massive beard and let

myself go a bit so that I didn't get attacked in the street. The problem is, I can't seem to find my way back to normal now, so I look like a furry bin bag.

## You mentioned the dreaded B word there. Is talking about Brexit a problem? Do you change what you say in different parts of the country?

I don't really change what I say. The on-stage Stewart Lee is an artist imposing his arrogant vision on audiences. He's not there to entertain people. He just does what he does, and if they're entertained it's an accidental by-product of the performance! But in April 2017 the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Express, Shortlist, the Daily Mail, Breitbart and Spiked Online all ran versions of the same largely made-up story, saving I was having mass walk-outs because of doing jokes about Brexit, which was entirely untrue. In the end, the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Express made minor corrections online, but it does show you how they run fake stuff up to fit their agendas. I'm a graduate who works in the arts from a 78% remain-voting constituency, so obviously my attitude to Brexit reflects that. I wouldn't be as aggressive about it now as I was last time I toured, because I don't think anyone has got what they wanted, so it just seems like a massive tragedy. But I'm not going to change who I am or what I think, even if it did lead to losing audiences, which it doesn't seem to have done. They've gone up if anything! I didn't get into this to get big crowds. I got into it to be free to do what I want. People can come and see me if they want, but it doesn't make any difference to the work I produce. I'd do it anyway, to no-one."

#### Who were your comedy influences?

Well, when I was a kid, I liked The Two Ronnies, Monty Python and The Young Ones on TV. But I think it was Dave Allen who really went in, when I come to break down what it is I do now. I realised I wanted to be a stand-up when I was 16, watching this weird punk-comedian Ted Chippington supporting The Fall in Birmingham in 1986. He didn't have any proper jokes and just liked annoying everyone, and I thought it was the best thing I ever saw. At the Edinburgh Fringe in the late '80s, I was exposed to the Scottish shockcomic Jerry Sadowitz, the dry Jewish comic Arnold Brown, the surrealist Norman Lovett, the 'performance art'-driven Oscar McLennan, and the brilliant Irish storyteller Kevin McAleer, and they all remained cornerstones of what I was doing until I finally found my voice.

#### What about now? Who do you rate today?

I was very lucky to start out when the old 'alternative comedy' values were still in place, as I think modern stand-up is bland, marketdriven and unpleasant. I still love the work of my contemporaries, like Harry Hill and Simon Munnery. I think Daniel Kitson is the greatest living stand-up, and I would like my wife Bridget Christie's act even more than I do if I wasn't married to her and knew what she was really like. Paul Sinha from The Chase is a great stand-up. From the newer comics, I really like Rosie Jones - and Ghosts, by the Horrible Histories lot, is my favourite comedy TV show since Detectorists and This Country. I saw the husband from Ghosts in a tile warehouse and was quite star-struck. And of course, he didn't know who I was, so it was all very awkward.

Stewart Lee plays Malvern Theatres on Tuesday 3 March; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Thursday 12 & Friday 13 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday 31 May; and Lichfield Garrick on Thursday 9 July



Adam Kay Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 22 March

After watching an Adam Kay performance, Stephen Fry declared, "This made me very, very happy."

Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is this month visiting the Midlands with his popular touring show, This Is Going To Hurt: Secret Diaries Of A Junior Doctor. Expect splendidly silly spoof songs and some seriously shocking stories from the NHS frontline...'

#### **Rob Auton**

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Thurs 19 March; The REP, Birmingham, Fri 20 March

Although Rob Auton recognises he's been lucky in life, he nonetheless finds day-to-day living a bit of a struggle. "I find it really hard to look at the news because it has such a bad effect on me," he explains. "That's why my shows tend to be about topics where my judgment hasn't been clouded."

The topics he's chosen have been 'yellow', 'the sky', 'faces', 'water', 'sleep', and now, 'time'. This focus on just the one subject per show distinguishes Auton from other stand-ups, many of whom tend to prefer a more scattergun strategy when it comes to the business of being funny.

One-liners include the winner of the 2013 Edinburgh Festival funniest joke award: "I heard a rumour that Cadbury is bringing out an oriental chocolate bar. Could be a Chinese Wispa."

#### Josie Long

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 12 March; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burtonupon-Trent, Fri 13 March

Josie Long's comedian pal, Nish Kumar, has referred to her as 'the David Bowie of stand-up' - a description he's used on account of the 37-year-old comic's impressive capacity for reinventing herself. London-born Long admits she likes to change her way of doing things every now and again. An example of this came post-Referendum, when despite being an enthusiastic but of course losing Remainer, she decided that her touring show would focus on the *positives* as Britain prepared itself for Brexit. Her latest on-stage offering is a tad more personal in nature, as Josie contemplates what she refers to as "the mind-bending intensity of new motherhood". Jokes include: "When I was a kid, I asked my mum what a 'couple' was and she said, 'Oh, two or three". And she wonders why her marriage didn't work out..."

#### **Geoff Norcott**

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 4 March; The Civic, Stourport-on-Severn, Fri 6 March; William Aston Hall, Wrexham, Sat 7 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 25 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 27 March

Geoff Norcott is one of the sharpest tools in the comedy shed, presenting shows which feature observational humour, satire, and even the odd impression or two.

Being a former teacher, plenty of Geoff's gags relate to school experiences and the education system. He's also made something of a name for himself in the field of sports-related humour, a niche that's yielded him plenty of work both on television and radio... Geoff's Midlands appearances see him performing his latest touring show, Taking Liberties.



#### Josh Widdicombe

Dudley Town Hall, Thurs 19 March; The Place, Telford, Tues 31 March; Malvern Theatres, Fri 3 April; William Aston Hall, Wrexham, Sun 17 May

Peddling a nice line in exasperated, self-deprecating humour, Devonraised funnyman Josh Widdicombe pumps out cleverly crafted gags at a brisk pace, hitting the mark with the vast majority of his material.



Widdicombe's jokes include: "Hotdogs cause bum cancer - that was the original slogan for McDonald's before 'I'm loving it'."

There's also: "I've no idea what the storyline of Monopoly is. Seemingly I'm a tiny dog who repeatedly wins beauty contests, on his birthday demands £10 from everybody he can see, and then bankrupts himself to stay in a hotel when he owns four houses on the next street!"

#### **Ed Byrne**

The Place, Telford, Thurs 12 March; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 14 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 17 March; Walsall Arena, Tues 24 March

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

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

So 20-plus years after first dipping his toes into the decidedly dangerous waters of stand-up, does Ed still enjoy touring? "Apart from the travel involved, which no comic likes, I love it. You have people responding to something that you've written alone in your office, and the work comes alive in a roomful of people. I like the TV things I do, but nothing can beat a live comedy audience."

#### **Richard Herring**

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 28 March

Richard Herring has developed a reputation as one of the UK's most inventive and original comedians, cleverly using his real-life trials and tribulations to inform his high-quality line in comic patter.

And he's certainly not a man to shirk big or controversial subjects when it comes to his live shows; previous tours have seen him ponder religion (Christ On A Bike), politics (Hitler Moustache) and penises (Talking Cock).

Richard is appearing in Birmingham this month as part of the city's two-day Podfest event.





Njambi McGrath Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 20 March

At age 13, Njambi McGrath was beaten up, knocked unconscious and left to die by her father. When she awoke, she walked for miles through the Kenyan countryside in her blood-covered nightdress in search of her mother, who had left the family home previously in fear of her life...

It goes without saying that life for London resident Njambi has improved immeasurably since that dark and dreadful day. Having travelled to the UK to 'lose herself', she instead found herself embarking on a career as a stand-up comedian.

Her Birmingham stop-off sees her scrutinising not only her own history but that of the UK. "I think the country is traumatised," she said in a recent interview with the London Evening Standard. "You didn't conquer three-quarters of the world with pleases and thank-yous. It caused so much pain around the world, and now this country is going through a search for identity."

#### **Paul Tonkinson**

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 11 March

Time Out Comedy Award winner Paul has been a regular on the UK laughter circuit since the 1990s and is perhaps best known from The Big Breakfast and The Sunday Show. Regularly booked by the UK Armed Forces, he was the first comic to perform in Iraq after the war officially ended and has used his experiences there as an inspiration for his comedy. "When I told my wife I'd spent much of the time lying on the floor," he says, "all I got in response was 'well we all like a lie down, don't we?""



## You're having a laugh!

We chat to Darrell Martin, founder of Just The Tonic comedy club, a new branch of which opens in Leamington Spa venue The Assembly this month...

## Tell us about your decision to open your next Just The Tonic (JTT) club in Leamington, Darrell...

I'll be honest... I got a phone call from the man who's reopened The Assembly. Once I asked a few questions, I realised what a stunning place it was, and that it could make for an amazing night out.

#### What made you decide to open your first club, in Nottingham, 26 years ago?

A love of comedy, being an unemployable graduate of philosophy & cultural studies and a recession that would not help me. I was also probably a dreamer and unrealistic.

#### What was the UK comedy scene like when you opened that first club?

There were a number of clubs in London, with the leading one being, obviously, the Comedy Store. Then there were two Jongleurs clubs, in Battersea and Camden - that was before they went national and then imploded - then a load of smaller clubs. Outside London, as I remember it, there was very little. Manchester had a small scene, with The Buzz Club on a Thursday being the best known, and there was, strangely, a great club in Hull called The Legged Dog. I think Newcastle had a weekend club, but really there was very little. Also, it wasn't really seen as a possible career. Comedians didn't see other comedians selling out arenas. It was a world full of misfits and characters who were all just happy that they weren't having to do day jobs. Well, it probably wasn't as simple as that, but to a 24-yearold it seemed that way... Big business was involved, but it wasn't as organised as now.

#### How do you decide who gets to appear at one of your venues? Do you have criteria that a comedian needs to meet - other than the obvious one of needing to be funny - in order to get the chance to perform?

We book loads of acts who we already know are great. We try and get comperes who are a bit different and really engaging with the audience. I can't stand comperes who just break up their routine into sections and talk at a crowd. A good compere needs to be a bridge between the audience and the show, not just 'tell jokes'. We also bring in newer acts that we find ourselves or that we get

recommended to us. We take eight new comedians to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe each year as part of The Big Value Comedy Shows, and when researching for that, we find new people. Also, every two or three months, I have a few days doing 'fantasy booking', where I trawl through the phone book/email list/ agents' numbers and see if any of those bigger comedians who are now off the circuit would like to come back. It's often three days wasted, but when it works. it's very exciting to be putting arena-filling acts back into the small venues.

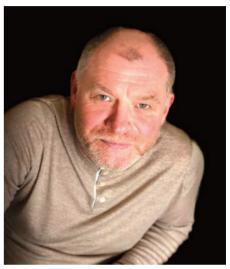
#### How does Just The Tonic differ from other established UK comedy clubs?

I think it's the effort we put into booking, and the fact that it's run by a performer. So we do our best to attract an audience that actually wants to see comedy, and we make sure that if there are people in there who are being a distraction to others, they are politely asked to leave. I think we have quite a maverick ethos. We're not rigid in what we want from performers. Often, there are people we book others don't. Because I see something in them. When you're a performer, sometimes you only need one person to believe in what you're trying to do, and that one person can allow you the freedom to grow without worry. We book a comedian called Eric Lampaert to compere. After a gig in Nottingham to about 400 people, he apologised because it hadn't been great. I said, 'Don't worry, I know you're funny'. I think he thought I was going to moan and groan. But all great comics have had duff nights. If they hadn't, then they would be bland and crowd-pleasing, and nothing new would ever happen.

## Can you recall any particularly memorable sets - performances which were real standout ones for whatever reason?

Doug Stanhope. I was talking to him backstage and then someone said, 'We're starting'. He just walked out and just seemed to carry on talking... for 120 minutes! It was astounding.

The first time I saw Johnny Vegas. I was at the Frog & Bucket in Manchester, having done a 10-minute open spot. He came up to me and said he'd seen me before supporting Rich Hall on tour and liked what I did. He'd actually



Darrell Martin, founder of Just The Tonic

heckled me on that night, asking me to do more... which is rare. He told me his name was Johnny Vegas - or he might have introduced himself as Michael Pennington - and that he was headlining. I thought, 'I bet you're shit' because I was booking really well-known acts at my club and hadn't heard of him. But when he went on, it was the most amazing performance I'd ever seen. I was absolutely stunned at how he managed to get the whole room laughing and singing. The bloke was totally crazy and fearless. When Johnny is on form, he's unrivalled.

Also Phil Kay in 1995. Sean Lock in 1996/'97... I could go on, but no one would keep reading.

## What would be your perfect Just The Tonic line-up, if you could bring together, say, four comedians for a single evening?

That's tricky because it would have to be four comedians from different stages in their career. I might have to stretch it out a bit. I'll name a couple of definite ones and then name a few others to choose from.

Definite compere: Ross Noble. Pure, joyful silliness, with the skill of making magic happen from the audience input and crafting it all into a wealth of material in his strange mind.

Headliner: Johnny Vegas 1996 - 1999 - and I reckon what's around the corner as he gets back into stand-up. He's got some of the best



scripted material, audience put-downs, audience interactions, live pottery, mayhem and off-the-cuff events to make each night unique, ended by rousing singalongs. Johnny is the most perfect and crowd-pleasing entertainer this country has known.

Others in the mix: Jenny Eclair - in-your-facefunny and no punches pulled; Jo Brand - brilliantly funny and one of the nicest people in comedy; Tim Vine - the best one-liners and silliness; Spencer Jones - the funniest man on the circuit at the moment; Daniel Kitson - if you know, you know; Sean Lock - the best scripted stand-up there is; Rich Hall - a great stand-up and musician. There are loads. This is impossible, to be honest.

## Is there a type of comedian who you simply won't book for JTT - or does anything and everything go, as far as you're concerned?

We don't book comedians who are rude to our staff. We have a strict no-dickhead policy. There are two people on that list.
There's also the odd comedian who's tried to do 'controversial' stuff who we don't book. Not because we don't book controversial comedians, but because the ones I'm thinking of weren't actually funny and were just doing lowest-common-denominator jokes and trying to shock. It's okay to shock, but it must actually be funny. I often think, 'Who are you trying to impress? Your mum and dad aren't



here and we can all swear and be sick if we want to'.

I can't really say we have any rules about who we don't book. It's all very subjective.

## What would you say about UK audiences are the reactions your comedians receive pretty similar across the country or have you noticed any regional differences in terms of how audiences respond to JTT shows?

I can't really say that there are massive differences across the UK at our clubs. But I do know from personal experience that there are some regional clubs where the audiences really take convincing if you're not 'one of them'. I'm thinking in particular of myself dying on stages in Liverpool and Newcastle. I have a fairly strong southern accent and it definitely made the crowd difficult. 'Taxi' was the politest of the words shouted. At the one in Newcastle, I was tour support for Johnny Vegas, and we arrived really late. The room was heaving and everyone was shouting 'Johnny Johnny'. His voice came over the PA to a massive cheer, then he introduced his support act - me - and out came this southerner. It was 15 minutes I would like to be able to forget. After the interval, I was in the dressing room - behind the stage, too embarrassed to walk out through the crowd surrounded by empty glasses and fags, sitting under the light of a single bulb listening to



300 people cheering the mighty Johnny Vegas. That was another 90 minutes I wish I could forget. Great fun, to be honest.

#### What's your favourite joke?

What's 'ET' short for? He has little legs.

#### Who's your own personal hero of comedy and why?

I think from the history of comedy, possibly Tommy Cooper, because he just looked and acted really daft. Not sure if 'hero' is the right word. I loved The Young Ones and Monty Python when growing up. Then there's Spike Milligan - reading his books and poems as a kid and his O series.

#### What's the hardest thing about the life and profession of the stand-up comedian?

I think it can be quite lonely. There *is* camaraderie on the circuit, but the reality is that on those Friday and Saturday nights when most normal people are out socialising and spending time with family and friends, comedians are driving around the country entertaining half-drunk strangers they will never see again. I've missed friends' weddings, family events and things that are unrepeatable. It can be rubbish like that.

#### To find out more about Just The Tonic comedy nights, head to just the tonic.com







Some of the comedians heading to Just The Tonic in Leamington Spa - (L-R) Hal Cruttenden, Diane Spencer, Gary Delaney, Lou Conran, Tom Binns and Paul Foot.



## Talking about Jamie

Former Coronation Street regular Shobna Gulati and the man playing title character Jamie - Layton Williams - chat about the touring version of hit musical Everybody's Talking About Jamie, which visits Birmingham this month and returns to the Midlands in the summer...

Everybody's Talking About Jamie may have come from humble beginnings - it was inspired by a television documentary and premiered in Sheffield - but after only a matter of months it had transferred to the West End. Since then, the musical has enjoyed blockbusting success, with five Olivier nominations, an extensive UK tour and a forthcoming feature film version testifying to its incredible popularity.

The show follows Jamie New's quest for acceptance on his journey to becoming a drag queen...

"Jamie is a 16-year-old boy who wants to go to his school prom in drag," explains ex-Coronation Street star Shobna Gulati, who is touring with the hit musical having previously appeared in the West End version. "The musical follows the ramifications of that; on himself, his family and his small community in Sheffield."

Shobna's character, Ray, has a very important part to play in Jamie's upbringing: "Jamie is the product of an essentially single-parent household. Ray is the best friend of Jamie's mum, Margaret, and has been around to watch Jamie grow up; everybody thinks of her as the aunty or surrogate father figure. You always have to have that good cop, bad cop thing going on, and I think Ray and Margaret have often swapped those roles in bringing up Jamie. Ray doesn't go backwards to go forwards and she's very much into tough love, but she also spoils him rotten. I think every character's relationship to Jamie changes throughout the musical because Jamie himself evolves. From Ray's perspective, she's worried about Jamie's dream of being a drag queen because that's just the nature of family. She definitely supports him, but she also wants to protect him."

What does Shobna think has made Everybody's Talking About Jamie such a roaring success?

"I think the world as it stands likes to put people into boxes and divide us all up. The more you can gaslight somebody into believing they don't belong, the easier it is to control the masses. Considering these polemic times, Everybody's Talking About Jamie exists at exactly the right moment. The story is so popular because it gives everyone a chance to recognise that they can be a part of

something. Everybody can be recognised in their own individual right, which is really important for anyone who feels like they're different or just on the periphery.

"Everybody's Talking About Jamie is about creating a space in which everyone can be who they want to be. I really love being in Jamie because of what it represents, the different people it represents and how it does that. The inclusivity of the show is incredible. Jamie is so out there and so inclusive as a piece, which hasn't always been my experience over the course of my career."

As well as relating to the show's ethos, Shobna can also connect with one of its musical numbers: "My favourite song has to be Wall In My Head, which comes at the beginning of the show, where Jamie is considering his life, how to get over certain obstacles that crop up and move past some personal demons. I think I relate to that song on a personal level because it's all about getting over that next wall, which is a true situation for every single one of us; I don't think anyone has hurdles they haven't had to overcome in life."

Not only has Shobna played Ray on stage, she will also appear as the character in the film version, scheduled for release in October.

"I feel so lucky to have worked with all the different Margarets that I have - each one has been absolutely astounding in their own right. The same with each Jamie. I think a lot of my joy at doing Everybody's Talking About Jamie is because of the extraordinary opportunities I've had to work with people. I've been lucky enough to tag along!

"The production has certainly given me an insight into myself. I've been in so many different renditions of the story, and what it brings to me is a sense of belonging."

Joining Shobna on tour is Layton Williams, who played Jamie in the West End. "Things be changing," he says. "People are waking up and realising that stories like Everybody's Talking About Jamie is what we want to see. We want to see everyone represented. This is a moment in history - a movement. I'm so proud to be a part of that! I'm a prime example that yes, we are absolutely moving in the right direction in terms of representation. I'm a non-white gay actor playing a part that was

once white - and now another mixed-race man has been cast in the West End version too.

"This musical tries to tell people to stay true to who they are, to be proud of themselves, and that if they're different or feel like they don't fit in, then there's a place for them in the world anyway. It's all about having hope.

"When we're young, we doubt ourselves, but it's just about knowing that things will get better. It's about surrounding yourself with your friends, family and people who you love. It also sends the message that people can change their minds! People's minds can definitely be opened. I hope that people think about all these things when they come to see the show."

Everybody's Talking About Jamie visits The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Monday 16 to Saturday 21 March and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 June.





#### The Book Of Mormon Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 4 - Sat 28 March

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

Featuring songs Spooky Mormon Hell Dream, I Am Africa, Baptize Me, All American Prophet and Tomorrow Is A Latter Day, the show has proved to be a massive hit on both sides of the Atlantic, albeit a

controversial one.

"We weren't trying to get protesters," explains Robert. "We were trying to make a show that was about the way we felt about the best parts of religion. We were writing a show about it that was sort of for atheists and believers at the same time, because it summed up how we felt about it - that whether or not the stories are true, they do something that's good. Believing in something impossible makes you do impossible things."

#### The Woman In Black

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 31 March - Sat 4 April; Malvern Theatres, Mon 11 - Sat 16 May



Adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from the Susan Hill novel, The Woman In Black is a classic ghost story first performed in 1989. It has since become one of the West End's most successful plays.

Solicitor Arthur Kipp believes that his family have somehow been cursed by a mysterious woman in black. In an attempt to tell his story, and to exorcise the evil curse which he's convinced hangs over him, he hires a young actor to assist him in recounting his experiences...

#### The Sound Of Music

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 3 - Sat 7 March

One of the most popular family musicals of all time, Rodgers & Hammerstein's The Sound Of Music is best known from its mid-1960s film version starring Julie Andrews. The show tells the story of the Von Trapp family's World War Two flight across the mountains of Austria. Along the way, it features hit songs including: Edelweiss; My Favourite Things; Do-Re-Mi; Climb Ev'ry Mountain; The Lonely Goatherd; So Long, Farewell; and, of course, the title track itself.



#### Cabaret

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 31 March - Sat 4 April

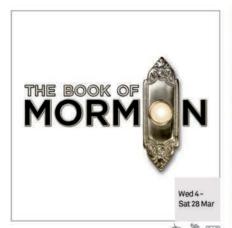
When a show visits the region which, between its stage and screen ver sions, boasts multiple Oscars, Baftas and Tony awards, it makes sense to get along and check it out.

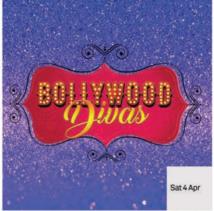
Cabaret is one such show.

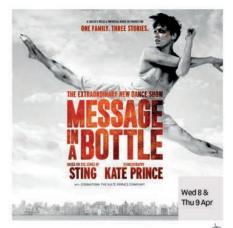


John Partridge here takes on the role of Emcee, with Kara Lily Hayworth stepping into the lead part of the legendary Sally Bowles, a nightly performer at the infamous Kit Kat Klub in early-1930s Berlin. Featuring 'show-stopping choreography, dazzling costumes and some of the most iconic songs in musical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

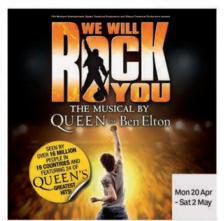
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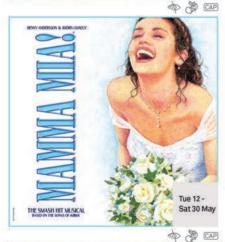


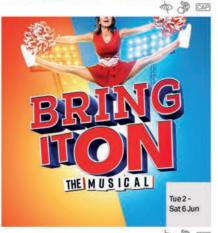


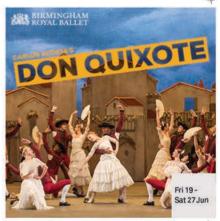


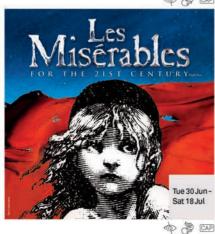




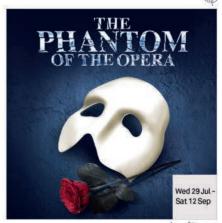














## CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS

British-Nigerian family drama The High Table plays out between the heavens and earth while exploring queerness and tradition through humour. What's On caught up with the show's writer, Temi Wilkey, ahead of the production's run at The REP, Birmingham...

Tara and Leah are two women madly in love. Their perfect Nigerian wedding in London is fast approaching, but there's a spanner in the works: Tara's parents are refusing to attend. Watching over the unfolding drama from way above are three of Tara's ancestors, roused from their eternal rest to keep the family together...

The High Table charts the conflict between queerness and heteronormative expectations, showing how it affects the same-sex couple and Nigerian family at the play's centre.

"The main thing that doesn't match up to Tara's family's expectations is that she's marrying a woman," says The High Table's writer, Temi Wilkey. "I think Tara's parents have very much been in denial about her relationship, as it doesn't fit with what they hoped for her. They're hoping that this relationship will go away and that eventually she'll settle down with a man. I can definitely relate to the feeling of worrying that your relationship doesn't quite marry up with your family.

"A lot of The High Table explores queerness and tradition through humour. I want to unpack prejudices with a laugh and a bit of love! The High Table also explores how dangerous homophobia can be, especially when we go to scenes in Nigeria, as homosexuality isn't legal there, but also by exploring precolonial attitudes to queerness in Nigeria through the presence of Tara's ancestors in the play. That also gives it an element of magical realism that can be fun for me as a writer and for the audience."

What Temi and other artists firmly believe to be systemic bias in the world of theatre and wider storytelling threatened to derail The High Table even before it was written.

"Grayson Perry talks about The Default Man - a theory of sorts that explains what kinds of stories ourselves and the media see as important ones to tell. Theatre buys into that idea of appealing to the 'norm': the white, straight, male audience. That's why there are so rarely stories about anything outside that. Often, women's stories are quite difficult to get on stage anyway - let alone a story about a black

queer woman like in The High Table. The Default Man really is about systemic bias, how that happens and how it affects the arts and other parts of society.

"I think non-straight writers and those from ethnic minorities do hold back from topics they really want to write about because of this bias, as they believe it won't get staged. Playwrights also don't seem even to notice that they don't feel empowered to write certain stories. I was part of the Royal Court's Introductory Writers Group in 2017 and we had the brilliant Darren Chetty come and speak to us he was one of the contributors to the bestselling book, The Good Immigrant. It was really useful to hear him speak. Something like 97% of children's books depict only white children. So even from a really young age, you're seeing stories about white boys and hardly any ethnic minorities, let alone as you get older and want to see something on stage. I think people feel discouraged from telling these stories, but don't even recognise that they do. It's something we need to unlearn, and recognise that our stories are just as important as anyone else's."

How did we get to this point, then: from believing The High Table would never be staged to having it programmed in two different cities?

"We had a rehearsed reading of The High Table this time last year, which was with a brilliant playwright called Tom Wright, who had a play running at Park Theatre in London. He was giving opportunities for queer writers to have a rehearsed reading of their play. Tom mentioned the play to Bush Theatre when he came in for a meeting. He really championed it! I was also rehearsing here around that time for an acting role. Things went from there. I think when I fully realised it was programmed and it got closer to the play opening, I wanted to make sure that I did all the different identities within my writing justice. But I think the most important thing is that I'm writing something that feels true to myself."

As such, bringing The High Table to the stage means a great deal to Temi. And even some of her initial worries have been dispelled.

"You don't often see Black British stories on stage. Often, if you do see Black theatre in London, it's African-American - and I think it's really important that a Black British person can see themselves reflected on stage. We exist and we matter. That's the really rewarding aspect of staging The High Table. I think the challenges are that certain things could be lost. For example, the characters speak in Nigerian Pidgin English, and that was something I was worried about because I obviously want my audience to understand what I'm trying to say. But I think because the actors play their parts so well and audiences are always cleverer than you think, it has worked out."

Having trained with the National Youth Theatre REP company and boasting impressive acting credits, including BBC & HBO British drama Years And Years and multiple productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company, does Temi think acting has influenced her writing?

"Being an actor is such a huge part of myself that it's hard to unpick where personal influence ends and professional influence starts in my writing. When people have said very nice things about my writing, they say that they can tell someone who acts has written it because the dialogue is quite fun to say. Being an actor, there are characters in The High Table that I could definitely play. I want to write stories that I would want to act in, so I think that informs how and what I write."

Most of all, Temi hopes her play has an immediate and lasting impact: "I hope The High Table makes people laugh! I also hope it'll make people think and change their perspective on queerness and Africa. Queerness in Africa was around long before colonialism arrived, and it was colonialism that brought homophobia to the continent. I want The High Table to feel like a gift to queer people, especially queer people of colour."

The High Table shows at The REP, Birmingham from Wednesday 25 March to Thursday 9 April.



#### The White Plague

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 17 - Sat 21 March

This well-reviewed work of immersive theatre sees its audience deprived of the sense of sight by virtue of pairs of whiteout goggles distributed prior to the show. The premise of the production is that a contagious virus which causes people to go blind has panicked the government into placing all affected individuals in unprepared quarantine facilities. But as the crisis becomes ever more extreme, so too does the behaviour of the people involved, with discrimination and exploitation twin evils that will seemingly have their day...

#### Queer Lady M

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Fri 20 March As interpretations of Lady Macbeth go, this one is pretty 'out there'.

Gender-fluid artist Shane Gabriel presents his version of the scheming Lady M in a show that combines 'outrageous lip-syncing, cheeky dancing and sassy conversation' with drag, Shakespeare and devised performance. Derby theatre company 1623 are the power behind Gabriel's throne. They describe their production as 'a funny and moving exploration of a unique relationship between a fierce drag queen and her anxious alterego, who join forces to fight tragedy and celebrate queerness."

#### **Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story**

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 10 - Sat 14 March; The Alexandra, Tues 3 - Sat 7 March

Seen by tens of millions of people across the globe, Buddy is an enormously enduring and touchingly affectionate portrayal of one of rock'n'roll's earliest and brightest stars. Charting the singer's meteoric rise to fame and fortune, and following his career through to his very last performance, the show features timeless Buddy classics such as That'll Be The Day, Peggy Sue, Oh Boy, Rave On and Everyday.

#### The Vicar Of Dibley

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Tues 24 - Sat 28 March The Richard Curtis-penned Vicar Of Dibley is another in a now-significant line of television sitcoms to be adapted for the stage, following in the laughter trail of other top-rated telly favourites such as Birds Of A Feather, Dad's Army and Porridge. The theatrical version is here presented by the highly rated All And Sundry and features three of the BBC TV series' most popular episodes: Engagement, Dibley Live and Love And Marriage.

#### **Circus Of Horrors**

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 4 March; The Place, Telford, Shropshire, Thurs 19 March; KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton, Fri 20 March

An off-kilter affair that bears more resemblance to a freak show than any modern definition of a circus, the one-time Britain's Got Talent act here presents a world beyond political correctness and taste.

With the performers dressed in a manner

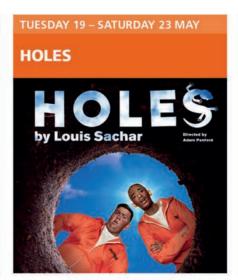
reminiscent of The Rocky Horror Show, there's no denying the skill of those participating - or indeed the ensemble's sheer 'wow' factor.

As the production's title makes clear, Circus Of Horrors' latest offering is a celebration of a quarter century spent entertaining the masses.

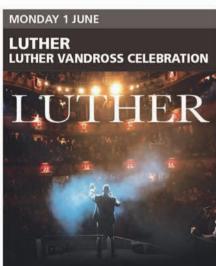


# EXPERIENCE THE Cive theatre AT WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE

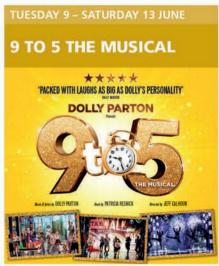


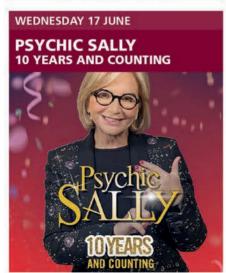




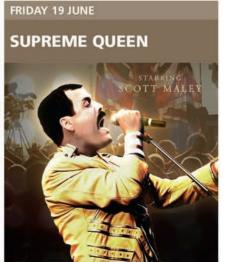














## MAXINE WALKER: UNTITLED

#### representations of black womanhood showcased at Midlands Arts Centre...

From April to June 2020, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) presents UNTITLED – an exhibition displaying the works of Birmingham-born artist Maxine Walker.

Reintroducing a pioneering artist whose practice focused on representations of black womanhood, UNTITLED is a poignant exploration of identity by a young artist at the height of her career, using photography to interrogate the intricacies of skin, blackness and being.

Active between 1985–1997, this will be Walker's first solo exhibition in her home city

of Birmingham. The exhibition at MAC has been organised by Autograph, London curated by Renée Mussai and Bindi Vora, with additional loans from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and The Photographers' Gallery, London.

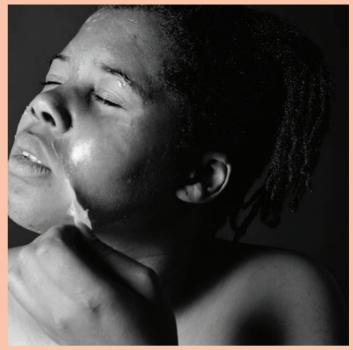
Deeply invested in creating dialogues that advocated black art practices in Britain, Walker was an influential artist and instrumental in co-founding platforms to give expression to black female photographers – including Monocrone Women's Photography Collective, Women + Photography and Polareyes.

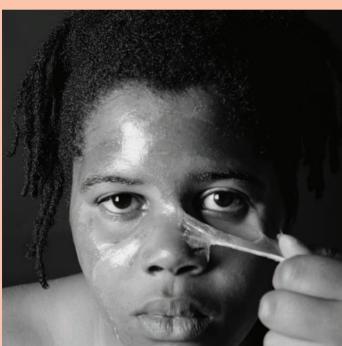
During this time, Walker regularly reviewed exhibitions and wrote features highlighting the work of her peers: international artists like Joy Gregory, Adrian Piper and Ingrid Pollard.

The exhibition at MAC will feature a selection of prints from the series Untitled (1997), framed prints from the series Black Beauty (1991), vintage photographs from The Bride (1989), plus eight framed photographs from the series Untitled (1995) on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

"These works raise important questions









Images: Maxine Walker, Untitled, 1997. Courtesy of the artist and Autograph, London © Maxine Walker

about the nature of identity and challenge stereotypes. The artist explores the fabricated format of photo-booth photography, and depicts herself through a series of guises. "In contemporary society, the rise in 'selfies' and the growth in the need to capture the 'perfect image' offers a new context in which these works can be revisited, which we at MAC feel is particularly relevant and timely for our audiences." – Deborah Kermode, Chief Executive and Artistic Director, MAC. Walker's self-portraits invite viewers to explore complex notions of beauty, masquer-

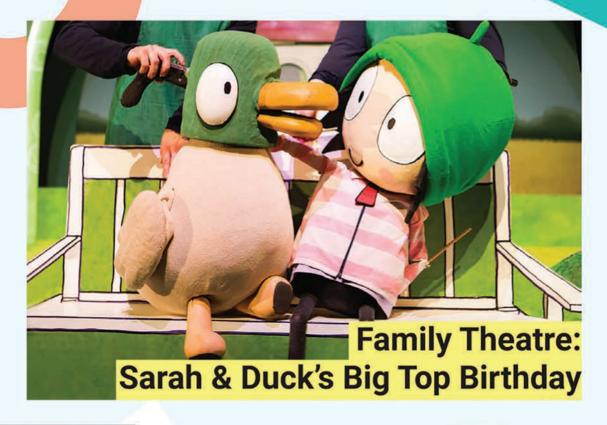
ade and vulnerability. In her seminal series of self-portraits Untitled (1997), the artist draws our attention to the features of her face in closely-cropped black and white photographs.

By magnifying the delicacy of her skin, Walker's performative works conjure a narrative that is more sinister than playful, intimating that her blackness cannot – must not – be stripped away.

These works were first published in a rare series of artists' monographs dedicated to black photographic practice, published by Autograph in the 1990s. Walker's monograph also featured her photo-booth-style self-portraits in colour, which appeared in this exhibition as original contact sheets. In this series, commissioned by Autograph and Ikon Gallery for the exhibition Self-Evident in 1995, curated by Mark Sealy, Walker transforms herself into myriad characters.

Maxine Walker: UNTITLED shows at Midlands Arts Centre's Arena Gallery from Saturday 4 April – Sunday 21 June

## Easter at MAC



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#### **Tartuffe**

The REP, Birmingham, Fri 20 March - Sat 4 April

Transferring the action of Moliere's famous comedy from the 17th century to 21st-century Birmingham, Anil Gupta and Richard Pinto the writing team who've updated the play have made the title character a Muslim cleric and turned the full glare of their spotlight on the contemporary British Muslim experience. Consistently funny and blessed with a vitality that wouldn't have been possible without the modern-day makeover, Tartuffe is alive with contemporary references, hugely and joyously accessible, cleverly punctuated by humorous interaction with the audience and chock-a-block with engaging performances. A Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company co-production, the show picked up plenty of plaudits during its Stratford run a couple of years back.

#### The High Table

The REP, Birmingham, Wed 25 March - Thurs 9 April

Temi Wilkey's The High Table features hilarity, heartbreak, celestial beings and characters who speak in Nigerian Pidgin English - an interesting set of ingredients for a debut play! When Tara's excitement about her forthcoming marriage to girlfriend Leah is tempered by her homophobic parents' decision not to attend the ceremony, high up in the heavens, three of her ancestors are jolted from their eternal rest. But can they keep the family together?... "A lot of The High Table explores queerness and tradition through humour," explains Temi."I want to unpack prejudices with a laugh and a bit of love!"

#### Man On The Moon

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 20 March

"I hope the show resonates," says writer & performer Keisha Thompson in talking about her play, Man On The Moon. "It's a Manchester story with a lot of Manchester references, so hopefully I can bring the audience into my world. I just want to connect on an emotional level, have fun, tell a story, take my audience on a journey - hopefully to somewhere they've never been before."

Telling the true-life tale of her efforts to connect with her reclusive father, Keisha's award-winning show uses poetry, looped sounds and storytelling to examine a wide range of checkpoints; from cultural displacement and religious confusions, to political paranoia and misplaced masculinity.

"The audience doesn't always need to know which bits are true and which bits aren't," continues Keisha. "It always starts with truth. What's important isn't the veracity of small details but the core message of the story."



#### The 39 Steps

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Thurs 5 - Sat 28 March

Anybody who remembers the various film versions of John Buchan's classic spy thriller will be hard-pressed to call any of them 'humorous'. So it's a bit weird, to say the least, to think of Patrick Barlow's stage version of the story having bagged the Olivier Award for best new comedy. Nonetheless, that's exactly what it managed to do back in 2007, courtesy of some imaginative thinking on the part of its creative team.

So why not catch up with handsome hero

Richard Hannay as he battles to remain

impressively stiff-upper-lipped in the face of dastardly murders and life-threatening encounters with double-crossing secret agents.

Oh, and there are some beautiful and mysterious women involved too, so it's not all bad news for our intrepid hero! Four fearless actors play no fewer than 120 roles in this real gem of a show.

#### A Monster Calls

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 3 - Sat 7 March; Malvern Theatres, Wed 15 - Sat 18 March

Siobhan Dowd had a great idea for a kids' book but was dying. So fellow author Patrick Ness wrote the story for her. The result, A Monster Calls, came to widespread public attention when it was made into a film in 2016 starring Sigourney Weaver.

A dark fantasy, it tells the story of 13-year-old Conor, whose life has been turned upside-down by his mother's illness. But one night, things begin to change for the troubled teenager, when a yew tree outside his home transforms into a gnarled monster and pays him a visit...





# WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

#### Elesha Paul Moses brings her Tina Turner tribute tour to Birmingham...

Elesha Paul Moses has paid her dues in the entertainment world. She's been striving for success in the music business for 20 years, via traditional grafting and TV talent shows.

She's now taken her singing career to a new level by starring in the mammoth tribute-show tour, What's Love Got To Do With It?, celebrating the music and life of rock & soul legend Tina Turner.

Elesha, 39, who lives in Hampshire and grew

up in Surrey, appeared on The X-Factor in 2010 alongside One Direction and winner Matt Cardle. She was in the same category as big-haired bongo-playing wild-card contestant Wagner.

She then reached the battle rounds - twice - on The Voice, first with will.i.am in a duo in 2013 and then with Tom Jones as a solo act a year later.

She had previously been mentored by

Mathew Knowles - Beyoncé's dad - on a Channel Four talent show.

Elesha is also touring the UK as the late, great Whitney Houston in Whitney: Queen Of The Night. The tour has included five sell-out shows at the Savoy Theatre in London's West End.

We spoke to Elesha about her love of performing - and about the challenges of playing two of music's most iconic stars...

You've been on the road with What's Love Got To Do With It? for a year now. How has it been, paying homage to a rock & soul legend like Tina Turner?

It's been incredible. Heading into the start of the show, I'd been pretty full-on with Whitney: Queen Of The Night, so didn't have too much time to think about it... Then it was fullon into touring mode for What's Love Got To Do With It? and we've been up and down the country ever since.

There's been so much love for the show from audiences and on social media; it's been amazing. I've been working hard on the vocals, and the band, backing singers and costumes are fantastic. We love being on the road and meeting all the fantastic fans. That's made preparing for the 2020 tour even more exciting, as we know what the reactions will be.

Fans have loved the show. What does it feel like to see such brilliant responses from the audience, and to receive the amazing reviews online?

It's surreal, especially for someone like me, as I'm really self-critical; I'm always thinking, 'What could I do better?', even when people are saying the show is fantastic. The comments we get are actually a little overwhelming, and we're so very grateful for each and every one of them. Seeing people in the audience having a brilliant night out, dancing and singing along, is what it's all about.

Whitney Houston and Tina Turner are very different artists. What's it like recreating these iconic performers live on stage?

Doing Whitney as well as Tina, you need a huge amount of stamina - vocally, physically and mentally - but in such different ways for each performance. Tina is much more the physical challenge, Whitney is the vocal challenge. But working hard to be at my best in both areas pays off on both shows.

They are such different-sounding performers. Each role strengthens my voice in such different ways, but that only helps make me better in each show.

Tina's not got a growl as such. People think it's shouting but it's not; it's a very particular tone that she has, and she's so free with her performance.

Then, when I'm on stage as Whitney, it's almost the opposite. You're so exposed and there's nowhere to hide, as it's a much slower,

more mellow pace of show.

Compare that to Tina and What's Love Got To Do With It?... Once you're on stage, there's no letting up from the moment you start. I love that very strong contrast between the two.

You have such a busy schedule, with the shows running alongside each other. With two young children, how do you manage that touring commitment with family life?

Mark, my husband, is amazing; I have the best man in the world. I definitely couldn't do it without him. My eldest daughter, Kookie, is turning eight soon, and she's only ever known me be a singer. So in some ways, she's used to it, but occasionally she'll say something. My little one, Teddy, doesn't know any different to the schedule we now have. I'm lucky she's so young.

For me, I'm able to shut it off to an extent, as I know this is all about building for their future. Whatever job you have, you have to balance family life. I also think we're so lucky to have things like Facetime now, so you can catch up easily and see them if you're away for a few days at a time.

What's your favourite song to perform as Tina Turner?

There are so many I love. Proud Mary is obviously so much fun, but I also love Typical Male and I Can't Stand The Rain. But for my absolute favourite, I'll go for Proud Mary. It always used to be Simply The Best, which people really loved and went mad for, but these days it's definitely Proud Mary.

Tina Turner is still such a huge name in music. Why do you think she's still so popular?

She's just such a great all-rounder, and she appeals to men as well as women. She's a great rock & roll artist. Her songs have never gone away. Even youngsters now, they know tracks like Proud Mary. You do those songs and they're all over it.

Tina's had difficult times too over the years, but she came through it. I think people like that side of her story too, as well as the brilliant music.

How did you get into singing and performing as a tribute artist?

When I first realised I could properly sing, I was about 13. I was always mimicking others, and that's how I taught myself. But that really big, belting voice wouldn't necessarily come out. Listening to people like Whitney Houston

and Mariah Carey, that kind of artist, was when it really came to me. Funnily, I didn't really listen to Tina Turner when I was younger. My parents played her music in the car, but it wasn't what I took to at the time.

I was singing in a club and a friend said, 'We should do something different'. I said, 'Shall we try Whitney or something?'. I went home, put down a couple of lines of Whitney and thought, 'Oh, I can sound like her'. It went from there - and a similar thing happened when I started with Tina.

You've been working in the music industry for a long time - you started writing with a record company aged just 17 and have been on TV talent shows. Can you tell us about the switch to the world of tributes?

I never used to do tributes. I was striving to do my own stuff and put out my own music. Things happened in my life. I was in-between things, not really knowing what to do. I didn't know how to get into the tribute business. At the same time, I felt that, by doing that, I would miss doing my own thing too. But I'd done my album and did lots of 'trying to make it' before doing the TV shows. I'd tried the traditional, old-fashioned methods to get signed. It was just never meant to be. So I decided it was time to take it away from being me and into being someone else.

How was your time on The X-Factor and The Voice, and what did you learn from the experiences?

When I did The X-Factor, I was in the same year as One Direction, Cher Lloyd and Wagner. Wagner was in Louis Walsh's Overs category with me, but I went home after the judges' houses round.

I was asked to audition for The Voice, and I first went when I was pregnant with Kookie - but I then realised the live shows would be on when I was due with her so had to back out. I auditioned again in 2013 as part of a duo, and again in 2014.

Doing both of those did give me a boost at the time, even though I ultimately wasn't successful. I don't know what people think of me as an artist having done those two shows, but I'm so grateful and glad to have moved on to what I'm doing now.

What's Love Got To Do With It? shows at Arena Birmingham on Thursday 19 March.



#### **Once The Musical**

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 10 - Sat 14 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 17 - Sat 21 March; Malvern Theatres, Mon 23 - Sat 28 March

Based on the 2006 cult feature film of the same name, Once is about two lost souls - a Dublin street busker, Guy, and a Czech musician, Girl - who unexpectedly fall in love. The musical follows the pair's lives over a period of five days.

"The story itself is definitely something everyone can connect to," says Daniel Healy, who stars as Guy. "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 a 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."

#### **Seeds**

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Mon 9 & Tues 10 March

With knife-crime offences in England & Wales having reached a record high, hate crimes having more than doubled over a sevenyear period and racial hate crimes making up more than



three-quarters of offences, Mel Pennant's sensitively written story of motherhood, loss, and what's left behind after the worst has happened, has much to say about modern British society. Judith Jacob (Dark Heart) and Penny Layden (Belgravia) star.

#### **Augmented**

Actress Sophie Woolley's new play, which she also performs, recounts and reflects on her own personal journey - from going deaf in her 20s to receiving cochlear implants and living, as she describes it, as a real-life 'cyborg'. "The play is about the impact on my closest relationships which my bionic hearing has had," explains Sophie. "And it's also about what this scientific, high-tech, biomedical miracle means for the future of

humanity. I wanted to write the play because

The REP, Birmingham, Mon 9 - Wed 11 March

I felt there was stigma and prejudice attached to cochlear implantation, and I wanted to overturn that narrative. It's actually quite hard to find positive stories about cochlear implants."

# Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?

Malvern Theatres, Tues 10 - Sat 14 March Edward Albee's 1962 play is best remembered from its film version, which starred Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. The play focuses on a middle-aged couple named Martha and George and examines the spectacular decline of their marriage. As the couple wage war against one another - in the process drawing their young house-party guests into a series of all-or-nothing 'games' - it becomes increasingly hard for them to distinguish the line between fact and fiction... Presented by Melting Pot Theatre Company.

#### The Glee Club

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 24 - Sat 28 March; Malvern Theatres, Tues 7 - Sat 11 April

Likened to Brassed Off but featuring barbershop harmonies, this raucous 2002 comedy visits the Midlands with a stunning success in the West End to recommend it. Richard Cameron's musical drama follows the fortunes of a colliery glee club whose director, a mining engineer named Phil, harbours a long-held secret. When the truth is finally revealed, the group's sense of solidarity is suddenly and seriously challenged...

#### The Winter's Tale

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 28 March - Fri 2 October

One of Shakespeare's later and lesser-known works, The Winter's Tale recounts the story of Perdita, who, after being lost at sea as a baby, is rescued and brought up by an old shepherd.

When she meets the king's son, Florizel, love blossoms amid the rustic revelry...

The production is being presented across the Royal Shakespeare Company's summer season, alongside new versions of The Comedy Of Errors and Pericles.

"The sea divides families in all of our plays this summer," says RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran. "Themes of separation & loss and the restorative power of time connect all three

of them. Each play is wonderfully different, yet at the same time they share a fascination with identity, the challenges of leaving your native land and the deep bonds of family."



#### Roald Dahl & The Imagination Seekers

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 15 March

Get Lost & Found theatre company have dared to imagine something terrible: a world in which the words of legendary kids' author Roald Dahl are disappearing.

And not only from the pages of books but also from the minds of children...

Hats off, then, to an organisation known as the Ancient Guild of Tale Tenders, which thinks it's got what it takes to save the day by saving Dahl's stories - but only with the help of your sure-to-be-enthusiastic little ones! A theatrical and interactive experience featuring performance, games and creative play, the production has been designed to explore a number of Dahl's extraordinary stories, including Charlie And The Chocolate Factory, The BFG and The Twits.



#### Milkshake! Live

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 7 March; Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, Thurs 9 April; Malvern Theatres, Sat 16 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 6 September



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 a Milkshake! show. If not, get ready for an event that promises lots of laughter, bucketloads of family fun, bags of audience participation and plenty of singing and dancing.

# There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sun 22 March; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Tues 7 - Wed 8 April

The People's Theatre Company - highly rated creators of the fabulous Don't Dribble On The Dragon - here bring one of the world's best-

loved nursery rhymes to life. Their show comes complete with colourful animal characters and numerous singalong songs, including If You're Happy And You Know It and Incy Wincy Spider... People's Theatre Co advise that their production is suitable for audience members aged two to 102!



#### Zog

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 18 & Thurs 19 March; Birmingham Town Hall. Sat 26 December - Sun 10 January



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

# Sarah And Duck's Big Top Birthday

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 8 March; Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley, Thurs 12 March; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Thurs 24 March; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 4 - Mon 6 April



Sarah and Duck are hitting the road this spring with a stage show that's sure to delight young fans of the Bafta-winning CBeebies series.

And the intrepid pair are not alone on their travels either. Favourite friends including The Ribbon Sisters, The Shallots, Flamingo & John and Umbrella are also all present and correct for this brand new production, getting together with Sarah and Duck to help arrange a special birthday party for Scarf Lady.



Smash-hit West End musical Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story is visiting the Midlands this month on a 30th anniversary tour. We spoke to the two actor/musicians - AJ Jenks and Christopher Weeks - who are keeping the legend and music of Buddy Holly alive on stage...

Seen by tens of millions of people across the globe, Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story is an enormously enduring and touchingly affectionate portrayal of one of rock & roll's earliest and brightest stars.

Charting the singer's meteoric rise to fame and fortune, and following his career through to his very last performance at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa, the show features timeless Buddy classics such as That'll Be The Day, Peggy Sue, Oh Boy and Rave On.

AJ Jenks and Christopher Weeks are the two actors sharing the part of Buddy in the 30th anniversary touring production of the show, alternating between the physically demanding lead role and the job of playing The Crickets' rhythm guitarist, Niki Sullivan.

"It's a massive musical phenomenon and it will probably be the biggest part of my career," says AJ. "Getting into the role of Buddy Holly is like Clark Kent but in reverse. The glasses go on and I'm Buddy!"

It was on the London stage that Buddy's legend took on a new life back in 1989. The first of the big 'jukebox' musicals, Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story proved to be a smash-hit in the West End. Touring across the world for the past 30 years, the show has introduced Buddy's music to subsequent generations.

"My dad is a massive Buddy addict," says AJ.
"His music was always on in the car when I
was growing up, so it didn't take a lot to draw
me to the show. So many other bands and

artists have been influenced by the music of Buddy Holly - from the Stones to The Beatles. I was screaming to get this part. I'd been working on getting it for the best part of a year.

"It's amazing to play such a musical legend. I still can't get over the thought of 'AJ Jenks playing Buddy Holly'. It's overwhelming. It feels like I've lucked out and won the lottery to get the part.

"Recalling the opening night of this tour last autumn still gets to me. In my final speech at the end, after the announcement of Buddy's death, I felt so emotional, I had to take a moment not to shed a tear. It dawned on me that this isn't just a normal show. It's a massive celebration of 30 years. It's scary, but I feel massively proud and honoured to be a part of it."

AJ is no newcomer to the show; he played the role of Ritchie Valens in a semi-professional production in 2018. But the 24-year-old is loving donning the trademark Buddy glasses and taking to the stage.

"It really takes a lot of energy. I do around four performances as Buddy a week. It's great to have a few days playing Niki while Chris does his thing. You have to be very careful. In the first show I really let rip on the night and afterwards felt a couple of croaks in the voice. I felt I'd gone too strong on it. I'm being quite a boring person at the moment; I'm protecting the voice, looking after myself.

"You've got to stay in shape for the role; you need endurance. You're throwing yourself around on stage with the guitar every five seconds, so you've got to be fit. Your body really aches in the morning. The best thing to do is get out and stretch, otherwise you seize up. I had a personal trainer for a while because I was starting to get a bit of a belly. I do a couple of 5km runs a week now to keep in shape."

Christopher Weeks plays Buddy for half of the performances. The 29-year-old actor/musician has previously played the role of Johnny Gustafson in two touring productions of Cilla The Musical.

"It's amazing being involved in the show -Buddy has always been on my bucket list," says Christopher. "The response has been huge; audiences dancing, going mad, both for matinees and in the evenings.

"As an audience member you want to feel like you're there; there watching Buddy Holly; there at The Surf Ballroom, Clear Lake. That feeling of live music is like nothing else, and the crowd keeps you in the moment, keeps it exciting and fresh. You try not to think too much about the enormity of playing a legend because that could drown you. You're not playing a huge legend of the rock & roll world, you are that person, feeling what he feels. It's hugely exciting and wonderful to do."

Christopher first saw the show as a young child in the 1990s. He knew the original cast album inside-out, but Musical Director Dean Elliott has taken the songs back to the original Buddy Holly.

"We're so lucky with Dean, who played Buddy for five years," Christopher explains. "He's being very authentic with the music, which is very, very cool - from Buddy's rockabilly roots to the orchestral elements he incorporated later on"

Buddy's single-minded determination to push musical boundaries is clear for all to see in the show. He was considered a rebel in his time. So do the actors see anything of themselves in the role?

"I've always been a driven person in terms of my aims and goals, and Buddy was always driving himself forward," says AJ. "I wouldn't say I'm a rebel as Buddy was. I've always cared about my hair and he loves a good suit. I identify a lot with the character in the first act - going into the studio, being cheeky; I get that. The second act is a lot harder for me because he's grown up and is more stable - and as a person, I haven't grown up.

"Buddy fell in love with Maria Elena, proposing within five hours. I don't believe in love at

the moment - I've literally just split up with my girlfriend!"

Christopher adds: "As far as similarities with Buddy go - well, I feel like I'm rediscovering my youth in act one. I also remember the feeling of going off on tour while your wife is pregnant, as I have a baby.

"For me, you give yourself over to the script, which gets easier the more you rehearse. You know who Buddy Holly is, how he stands, how he holds his guitar. Then you let go and let whatever is happening affect you."

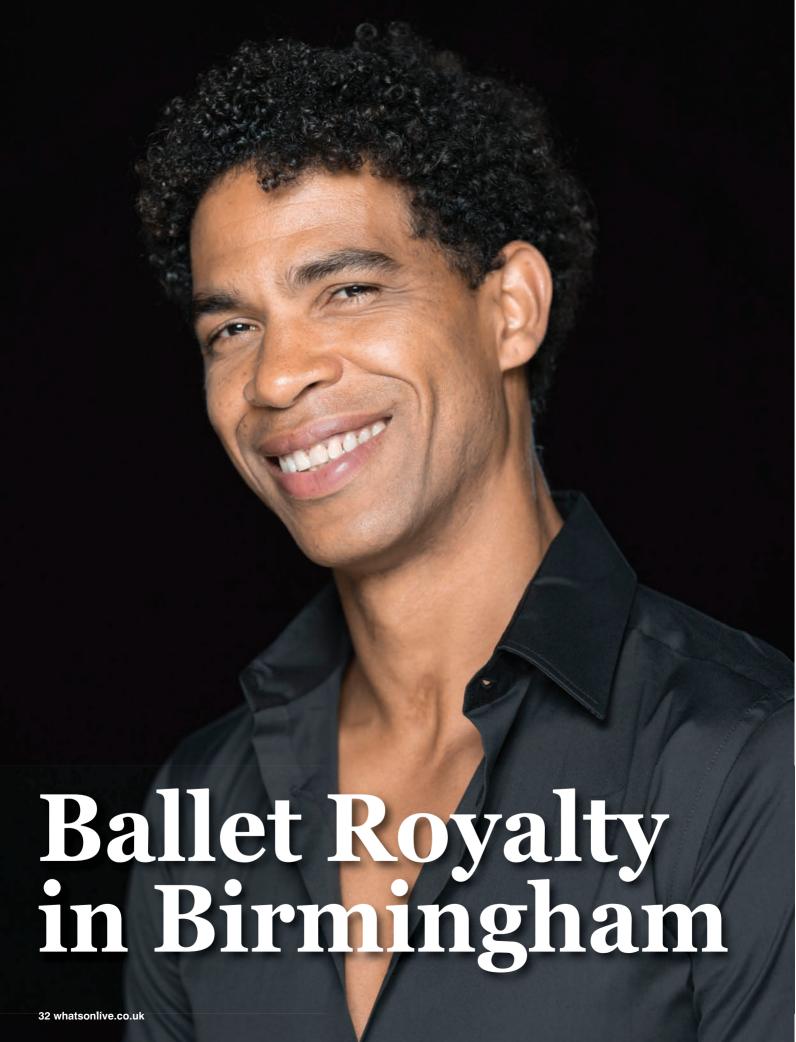
So what would the two Buddys like their audiences to take away from the show?

"It's a great education on Buddy Holly's life, music and a period of musical history that was so dramatic," says Christopher. "I'd like the audience to find out about how he lived his life, his relationship with his wife, Maria, and how brightly his star shone for that short amount of time. There's a feeling of loss and a feeling of awe at what he achieved. The feeling of warmth you get from seeing love. Take those three things away please."

"I just want them to have the best night they have ever had in the theatre," says AJ. "I've had some crap nights at the theatre, where I've walked out. I want to give everyone a show where they come out and feel a real buzz. In 18 months Buddy Holly blasted out 200 songs. It wouldn't happen now, and I don't think anyone else has done that.

"What I would love to happen is that there would be a kid in the audience thinking, 'I would love to do that'. Something clicks. If it inspires them to take up an instrument, get into theatre, get up on the stage, that would be fantastic."

Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 March and Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March.



# Cuban dancer extraordinaire and former principle at the Royal Ballet, Carlos Acosta talks about taking over as Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet...

Carlos Acosta is one of the world's most iconic ballet dancers. As well as working with both the Cuban and English national ballets, he was also a permanent member of the Royal Ballet, based at London's Royal Opera House, for 17 years.

The youngest son of a truck driver and a housewife, and raised in the slums of Havana, he represents an array of different cultures, all of which have heavily influenced both his life and his career.

And just as these influences came into play during Carlos' time as a dancer, so too will they impact as he takes on the challenges of a brand new role... the 46-year-old was recently appointed Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, replacing the long-serving David Bintley.

"The artist is a storyteller, always recollecting experiences," says Carlos, "and that's no different whether you're a dancer or a painter. I'm a human being with a past, and I'll bring all of that to the stage because everyone has different experiences of each emotion. I might have a distinctive interpretation of love, for example. My roots are very eclectic too, containing many different cultures from opposite sides of the globe: African, French, Chinese, Cuban, I feel like being from Cuba meant I was always in constant dialogue with the sun, and I think people there walk almost with a dancing step because of it. It's certainly a very colourful place! I think I bring the Cuban joy and happiness to the stage. I've also been very passionate and fearless in everything I do. For me, dancing was almost a way to survive because of my background; my life certainly could've gone a very different way. Dance became my refuge, my shelter and my best friend. That's what motivated me to go for this job with Birmingham Royal Ballet. I've always been one for breaking things and re-forming them into something new. I don't play it safe!"

Despite being classically trained himself, Carlos' company, Acosta Danza, has focused on a more contemporary style of dance.

"My name was mentioned for the Director post at Birmingham Royal Ballet and I was approached to interview for it. I thought it was crazy because I was already really, really busy. But I spoke to my wife and she encouraged me to go for it. She saw that this was an opportunity to take what I'd already achieved to a

different level and to go back to my roots as a ballet dancer. Since I retired from the Royal Ballet, I've been dancing more contemporary roles with Acosta Danza. After doing that, it's lovely to give back what I know about classical dance. I've been blessed by dancing with so many companies from around the world, and I really want to pass on that knowledge and passion so that it doesn't die with me. This is a noble opportunity for me to dance through others and positively affect both the individual dancers and the company as a whole.

"I want to present the Birmingham Royal Ballet brand as fresh, energetic and new. I want to do new things, be unpredictable and connect more with the mainstream ideas of dance and culture, whilst also preserving and performing the classics like Swan Lake at the highest possible level. I want the company to really tell the city's stories and to open up to its community more. I'm happy to do anything that's crazy!

"I also want Birmingham Royal Ballet to work with the very best creatives, institutions and companies from across the world, not only so that we can improve by comparing ourselves to them, but also so that they can act as ambassadors for us, going out and spreading the word that Birmingham is a leader in dance and the arts. We have all the elements in Birmingham to become a world leader, so that others look to us for inspiration. We just need to find a way of bringing it all together.

"I want Birmingham to have its own voice, rather than just riding the same vehicles that everyone else has for years. I hope for an entirely new ballet - new composition, choreography and story - to come from Birmingham Royal Ballet.

"Touring the UK is also fantastic and important, to get Birmingham's voice out there. I want us to continue to do that, but I want to do more in the Royal Opera House and abroad. We need to create a legacy."

So what excites Carlos about Birmingham Royal Ballet's programme for the upcoming year?

"Bringing choreographers who have never before been seen in Birmingham, or even the UK, is very important to me - whether that be through classical or more contemporary work. Our summer festival at Birmingham Hippodrome, Curated By Carlos, will be just like that. It will also bring together many more artists than just dancers. It'll be much more than you'd ever expect from a ballet company! There'll be robots, movies, literature and world premieres of dance.

"The festival will also feature my own production of Don Quixote, a ballet which has never been seen here before. It's a really vibrant, family ballet where nobody dies - which is rare, given the sometimes-gloomy themes of ballet! Don Quixote is a really uplifting, funny tale, and we hope to tour it in the future.

"My goal of getting the company back into the Royal Opera House will happen in the summer of 2021. It will be like a homecoming for myself and Birmingham Royal Ballet, and marks the end of the company's 30th anniversary year of moving up to Birmingham. Everything coming up at Birmingham Royal Ballet is about reaching out and connecting with different levels of our audience, whether they be local, national or international."

Carlos believes that 2020 could well be the start of something extraordinary from a personal point of view too: "I'm a firm believer that no one should be afraid of failure, because there's no such thing, really - everything is just an opportunity for learning. Sometimes you don't get it right - but with persistence, you will. I live my life seeing positives and opportunities to grow through my passion and enthusiasm, which I think is very much rooted in my past. There are obviously moments of sorrow in my life, but they're just as important to my overall journey. I'm very happy with the person I turned out to be because at one point I was definitely in danger of going off the rails, but I learnt from that as well.

"Life is never a linear journey: it has its twists and turns, ups and downs, but as long as you generally keep moving forward, you're doing great! I can't wait to embrace the opportunities that being Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet will present."

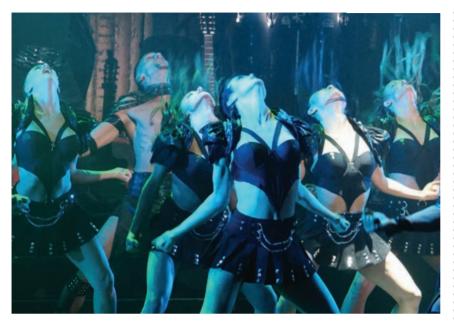
To find out more about what's coming up for Birmingham Royal Ballet in 2020/21, visit brb.org.uk ROOT E

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#### **Burn The Floor**

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 26 & Fri 27 March; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 8 April; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 6 May

"Burn The Floor is the show that ignited a spark in me and changed me forever as a performer," says Kevin Clifton, who's starring in the hit production with his sister, Joanne. "Through Broadway, West End and touring all over the world, this show

has ripped apart the rule book, revolutionised our genre and inspired and shaped me as the dancer I am today. "In 2020, I'm delighted to say that I'm coming 'home' to Burn The Floor."



#### Sonia Sabri: Akaar Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 29 March

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

Sonia's belief in the need to push the boundaries of dance is reflected in this

special performance event. "It aims to celebrate emerging and undiscovered talent," she explains, "and to support the interest and breadth of South Asian Arts being created across the Midlands." Featuring both individuals and groups, the show has previously included non-South Asian artists and performers presenting work with a South Asian flavour.

#### **Ballet Theatre UK: Giselle**

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 7 March; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 19 March; Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, Wed 1 April; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Thurs 16 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 26 April

A surreal ballet first performed in 1841, Giselle tells the story of a girl who kills herself when she finds out that her suitor has kept his real identity concealed from her - pretending to be a peasant when actually he's a member of the aristocracy. When he and another suitor visit Giselle's unconsecrated grave, they find themselves in all manner of trouble due to the presence of the Wilis - ghosts of girls jilted by their lovers. It falls to the spirit of Giselle to save her suitors from beyond the grave...

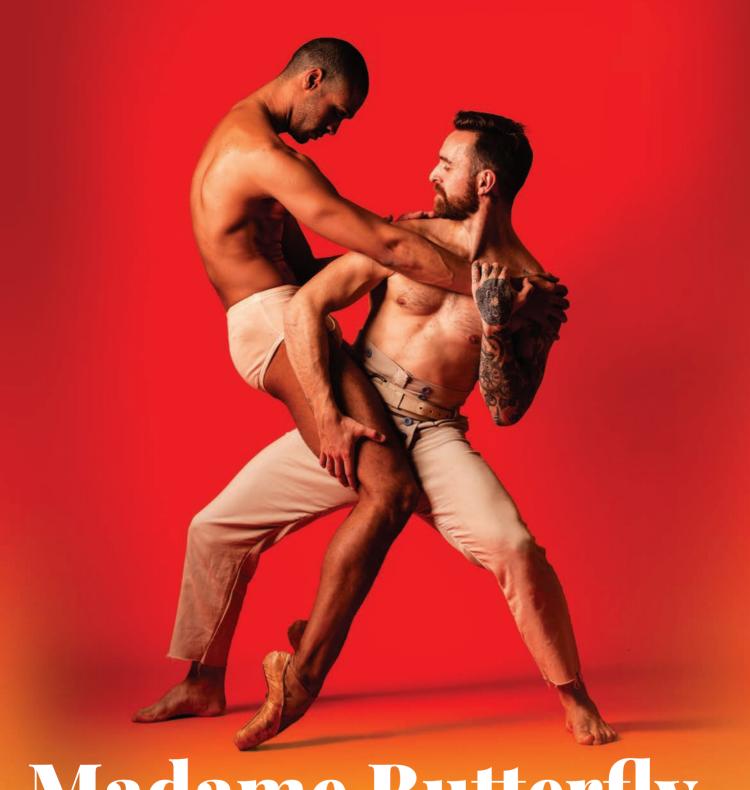


#### **U.Dance WM 2020**

Birmingham Hippodrome, Sun 29 March

Providing a regional youth dance platform, the organisers of U.Dance WM are promising an evening 'full of vibrant and exciting dance genres and themes, performed by some of the best young talents from across the West Midlands'. One of the groups who perform on the night will progress to One Dance UK's national U.Dance festival, which is being held in Glasgow this summer.





# Madame Butterfly reborn

DeNada Dance Theatre's Mariposa receives its world premiere at Birmingham's DanceXchange this month. A dance opera reimagining Puccini's Madame Butterfly, the work transports the action to the port of Havana...



The director of DeNada Dance Theatre, Carlos Pons Guerra, is one of contemporary ballet's most highly rated emerging queer voices. His latest project, a dance opera entitled Mariposa (meaning 'butterfly' in Spanish), which he's choreographed, is a transgender tragedy brimming with magical realism and drama.

Set to an original score by award-winning Spanish composer Luis Miguel Cobo, with libretto by French-Indian writer Karthika Nair, the production takes its inspiration not only from Puccini's Madame Butterfly but also from the sounds of the Caribbean.

Mariposa poses a question: in the turbulence of post-revolution Cuba - a world of neon

lights, cigar-smoke clouds, santería (voodooesque) spirits and economic uncertainty - will a young male sex worker sacrifice his gender in exchange for a better life with the foreign sailor he loves?

This brand new production is an exploration of what we are willing to give up to be loved and accepted.

"Mariposa is all about representing ethnically diverse LGBTQ+ narratives onstage," says Carlos. "It's therefore fantastic that it is opening its wings in a city as multicultural and diverse as Birmingham. We are very thankful for the generous and ongoing support of Birmingham-based arts organisations such as

DanceXchange, Dance Hub Birmingham and Birmingham Hippodrome, which continue to support me and DeNada Dance Theatre - and especially now, in the creation of this latest production. We really hope audiences from across the Midlands and further afield will be touched by this very special show - a dance version of one of the most iconic operas ever written."

DeNada Dance Theatre's Mariposa shows at Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, on Friday 27 & Saturday 28 March.



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Film highlights released in March...

#### Blumhouse's **Fantasy Island**

**CERT 15 (109 mins)** 

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 bigscreen 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 6 March

#### Military Wives CERT 12a (113 mins)

Starring Kristin Scott Thomas, Sharon Horgan, Jason Flemyng, Emma Lowndes Directed by Peter Cattaneo (UK)

When the wives of those fighting in Afghanistan form a choir, they become a media sensation... While inspired by a truelife phenomenon, this is a fictitious interpretation from the director of The Full Monty.

#### Released Fri 6 March



#### Onward CERT tbc

With the voices of Tom Holland, Chris Pratt, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Octavia Spencer, Lena Waithe Directed by Dan Scanlon (USA)



Set in a world of elves, this Pixar cartoon centres on two teenage brothers who never knew their father, a wizard in a lost time of magic. But when they are entrusted with a magic staff, there's a chance to be reunited with their dad, if only the spell would work... From the director of Monsters University (2013).

Released Fri 6 March

#### The Photograph CERT 12a

Starring Issa Rae, Lakeith Stanfield, Chelsea Peretti, Lil Rel Howery, Courtney B Vance, Kelvin Harrison Jr, Rob Morgan

Directed by Stella Meghie (USA)

Following her mother's death, a young woman finds a photograph in a safe deposit box that leads, unexpectedly, to answers about the past and a new romantic alliance. From the Canadian director of Everything, Everything (2017).

#### Released Fri 6 March



#### **Sulphur And White**

CERT **15 (121 mins)** 

Starring Mark Stanley, Emily Beecham, Anna Friel, Dougray Scott Directed by Julian Jarrold (UK)

David Tait (Mark Stanley) is a mountaineer and City trader who seems to be going places fast. But a secret from his past is eating away at him, a secret he even keeps from the woman he believes could save him... Based on a true story.

#### Released Fri 6 March



#### Bloodshot CERT tbc

Starring Vin Diesel, Eiza González, Sam Heughan, Toby Kebbell, Guy Pearce, Talulah Riley

Directed by David Wilson (USA)

After a marine is assassinated, he is resurrected by a team of scientists with superhuman powers. Based on the superhero series published by Valiant Comics.

Released Fri 13 March

#### **Calm With Horses**

CERT 15 (100 mins)

Starring Cosmo Jarvis, Barry Keoghan, Ned Dennehy, Niamh Algar, Anthony Welsh, David Wilmot

Directed by Nick Rowland (UK)

A former boxer and father to an autistic son, Douglas 'Arm' Armstrong (Cosmo Jarvis) is forced to weigh up his options when he is asked to kill a man for the shady people



for whom he works... Adapted from Colin Barrett's short story collection Young Skins.

Released Fri 13 March

#### Misbehaviour CERT 12a (106 mins)

Starring Keira Knightley, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Jessie Buckley, Keeley Hawes, Lesley Manville, Rhys Ifans, Greg Kinnear Directed by Philippa Lowthorpe (UK)



The Miss World pageant of 1970 was an event that shifted a number of goal posts. Held in London, it witnessed the birth of the Women's Liberation Movement as they stormed the stage of the Royal Albert Hall and disrupted the broadcast, claiming that the competition demeaned the fairer sex. Greg Kinnear plays the MC Bob Hope. Expect swimsuits.

Released Fri 13 March

#### My Spy CERT 12a (99 mins)

Starring Dave Bautista, Chloe Coleman, Kristen Schaal, Parisa Fitz-Henley, Ken Jeong Directed by Peter Segal (USA)

A hardened CIA agent (Dave Bautista) finds his status quo upended when he's assigned to safeguard a precocious nineyear-old girl. It's hoped to be the first in a series.

Released Fri 13 March



#### Fire Will Come CERT tbc (90 mins)

Starring Amador Arias Mon, Benedicta Sánchez, Inazio Brao, Nuria Sotelo Directed by Oliver Laxe (Spain/France/ Luxembourg)

When an arsonist is released from prison, he returns to his rural village in Galicia, northwest Spain, where he tries to fit in with his troubled past. Winner of the Jury Prize at last year's Cannes festival.

Released Fri 20 March

#### Radioactive CERT 12a (110 mins)

Starring Rosamund Pike, Sam Riley, Anya Taylor-Joy, Aneurin Barnard, Simon Russell Beale Directed by Marjane Satrapi (UK)



In spite of the serious nature of her films, Marjane Satrapi draws her material from unexpected sources. Both Persepolis (2007) and Chicken With Plums (2011), about the Iranian Revolution and suicide, collectively, were adapted from graphic novels. As is her latest, a biographical drama about Marie Curie (Pike), the pioneering physicist and chemist - and the only woman to win the Nobel prize twice.

Released Fri 20 March

#### The Truth CERT PG (107 mins)

Starring Catherine Deneuve, Juliette Binoche, Ethan Hawke, Ludivine Sagnier, Clémentine Grenier Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda (France/Japan)



The stormy relationship between a mother and her daughter, a legendary French icon and a screenwriter, respectively, comes to a head when the former publishes her autobiography. From the director of the Palme d'Orwinning Shoplifters.

Released Fri 20 March



#### The Painted Bird

**CERT 18 (170 mins)** 

Starring Petr Kotlár, Nina Šunevič, Stellan Skarsgård, Udo Kier, Harvey Keitel, Barry Pepper

Directed by Václav Marhoul (Czech Republic/Slovakia/Ukraine)

When during the Second World War a young Jewish boy is sent to stay with relatives to avoid anti-Semitism, he finds himself having to fend for himself.

Based on the 1965 novel by Jerzy Kosiński, the film is shot in black-and-white and features scenes that many might find upsetting.

#### Released Fri 27 March



#### Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway CERT PG

Starring Rose Byrne, Domhnall Gleeson, David Oyelowo, with the voices of James Corden, Elizabeth Debicki, Daisy Ridley, Margot Robbie Directed by Will Gluck (Australia/USA/India)



A rough approximation of Beatrix Potter's beloved bunny is back with more outrageous shenanigans when he, Peter, runs away from home. Expect lashings of risqué humour.

Released Fri 27 March

#### Vivarium CERT 15 (97 mins)

Starring Imogen Poots, Jesse Eisenberg, Jonathan Aris, Danielle Ryan Directed by Lorcan Finnegan (Ireland/USA/Belgium/Denmark)

When a young couple sets off to find their perfect home they find themselves trapped in an endless housing estate of identikit buildings. Filmed in Liege, in Belgium.

#### Released Fri 27 March





f@yav

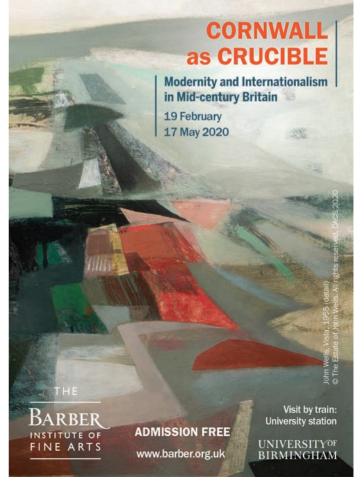
ARTS COUNCIL

# Fabric: Touch And Identity

Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park, Warwickshire, Sat 14 March - Sun 14 June

The ways in which clothes and textiles conceal, reveal and seduce through the lenses of art, design, fashion, film and dance is explored in this 'playful and provocative' exhibition. Boasting works by Vivienne Westwood, Raisa Kabir and Cathy de Monchaux, the display also features a new, immersive installation by Reiko Sudo. Subjects explored in the show include the role of fabric in shaping and communicating identity, and the part it plays in expressing sensuality and sexuality in a variety of different cultures.





Birmingham

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IKON



#### Webster And Horsfall: 300 Years Of Innovation

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 4 October

Archive material, watercolour paintings, and objects from the museum's Science & Industry collection are here combined to tell the story of Webster & Horsfall, a company which has been at the heart of steel wire and rope manufacturing in Birmingham since 1720.

The watercolours on display are the work

of Arthur Lockwood, an artist renowned for his industrial paintings of Birmingham and the Black Country. Birmingham Museums acquired over 700 watercolours and sketches by the artist as part of the Lottery-funded Collecting Birmingham project. Lockwood died last year at the age of 85

### **Phoebe Cummings: This Was Now**

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Sat 7 Mar - Sun 31 May

Ceramics as a time-based medium is the subject under consideration in Phoebe Cummings' new exhibition.

One of the UK's most well-regarded ceramic artists, Phoebe is using her show to investigate the multiple ways in which transient sculpture might be recorded,

transient sculpture might be recorded, both individually and collectively.

A new work in raw clay will evolve during the course of the exhibition, while the gallery space itself will operate as a site of live production and research, the public being invited to participate in the process of recording the changing work.

of recording the changing work. The sculpture will then be recycled and the clay used in future works.



#### 20 For 2020

The New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 5 July
A novel idea for an exhibition, 20 For 2020
features work by 20 artists from the New Art
Gallery's collections - one to represent every year
since the venue opened. They will each tell
individual stories about particular moments in
the history of the Gallery.



#### Maternal Bonds: Images Of Motherhood

The Barber Institute, Birmingham, until Sun 24 May Countless images of Mary and Christ - the best-known mother & child of them all - and a wide range of allegorical and symbolic paintings & drawings bear testimony to the interest which artists across the centuries have shown in exploring issues connected to 'motherhood'. This Barber exhibition takes a look back at 500 years'-worth of artwork based around the subject. The show includes drawings by Dutch Golden Age artists Nicolaes Maes and Adriaen van Ostade.

### **Journey To Justice**

Library of Birmingham, until Mon 27 April

Human rights education charity Journey To Justice is the organisation behind this multimedia multi-arts civil rights travelling exhibition.

As well as telling little-known stories of people who fought for freedom during the US civil rights movement, the presentation also explores the West Midlands' long history of action for social instice

Janice Kelsey, who was involved with the Children's March in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, and whose story is told in the exhibition, will visit in April.



# Homebuilding CRenovating Show

March 26-29 NEC, Birmingham

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- The Advice Centre
- The Land Hub
- The Magazine Stand
- Tricks of the Trade Stage

For more information visit

homebuildingshow.co.uk/national



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# The National Homebuilding & Renovating Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 March

If you're hoping to renovate your home this year, The National Homebuilding & Renovating Show could well help bring that dream to life.

With 500-plus exhibitors showcasing thousands of products and services, visitors can gain plenty of inspiration for their DIY plans.

The show also includes daily seminars and 50 specialist masterclasses. There's an advice centre too, where visitors can have free and impartial one-to-one chats with a wide selection of experts, including architects, builders, finance specialists and insurance advisors.



### **Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships 2020**

Arena Birmingham, Wed 11 - Sun 15 March

Returning to Birmingham for its 110th edition, Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships brings together some of the best badminton players from England and across the world for five days of top-quality action. This year's championship also has the added attraction of being the last Super 1000 Olympic qualifying event.

#### **Jawsome Sharks**

National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham, Sat 28 March -Sun 10 May

The National Sea Life Centre is looking for some brave adventurers for a brand new quest with the venue's Professor Finn. The mad professor is hoping to recruit a new team of Jawsome Rangers to help him in his mission to locate all of his missing Top Trumps cards and place them in the correct order. Along the way, guests will learn fun facts about the sharks and other amazing creatures that live in the aquarium. Once qualified, the new rangers will receive a very special reward to take home.



#### Miniatura

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 21 - Sun 22 March

Some of the finest craftspeople in the world of miniatures this month grace the NEC for the springtime edition of Miniatura.

The show features an impressive selection of stalls selling a whole host of miniatures at a wide range of prices. Workshops and demonstrations also feature.







# 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL '20 TELFORD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Indoor family fun this Easter, with over 50 FREE activities, inflatables, circus, sports, under 5 zone & so much more!

Save money when you book tickets in advance:

shropshirekidsfest.co.uk



# MCM Comic Con Birmingham

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 21 - Sun 22 March

Thousands of sci-fi fans, gamers, comic collectors, movie buffs and anime enthusiasts will once again descend on the NEC this month.

Among the well-known actors taking part in vari-

ous panel discussions, Q&As and meet-and-greets are Sherlock and Fleabag's Andrew Scott and Rob Wiethoff from Red Dead Redemption 2. New for 2020 is Pop Asia, available outside London for the first time and offering visitors all manner of Korean and Japanese fashion, food, and merchandise.



## The Big Bang Fair

NEC, Birmingham, Wed 11 - Sat 14 March

From sport and fashion to medicine and space, The Big Bang Fair helps young people explore the opportunities available to them in science, technology, engineering & maths (STEM). The event also features theatre shows, hands-on activities, interactive workshops, in-depth careers information and the opportunity to talk to scientists and engineers from leading companies across the UK.

# Shakespeare Week Super Saturday

Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust family homes, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 21 & Sun 22 March

Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust is putting a creative spin on this year's Shakespeare Week celebrations

Little ones can visit the Trust's family homes to learn new art skills and produce beautiful finished creations to take home. All participants will receive a certificate and sticker and have the opportunity to dress up for a graduation selfie.

The Shakespeare Centre plays host to Super Saturday on the 21st, a free family fun day featuring Horrible Histories illustrator Martin Brown, Ricky Martin from CBBC's Art Ninja, and author and illustrator Marcia Williams.

## **Jigsaw Festival**

Coughton Court, Alcester, Warwickshire, Sat 7 - Sun 15 March

Coughton Court's popular Jigsaw Festival makes a welcome return this month

Now in its seventh year, the event sees hundreds of donated jigsaw puzzles being put up for sale to raise vital funds for conservation work at the National Trust site. Past festivals have raised a total of £32,000. This year's funds will go towards Coughton Court's Secret & Sacred project, which takes a look at the unusual collection of objects gathered, kept and treasured by the Throckmorton family during their 600-year history in the property.











#### **Practical Classics Car & Restoration Show**

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 27 - Sun 29 March

Practical Classics Car & Restoration Show comes complete with a brand new interactive feature this month.

Classic World is designed to bring together all the elements of owning a classic vehicle including the actual driving - and allows visitors to take a journey of discovery across four key areas - Work In Progress, Staff Car Sagas, Barn Finds Revisited and the Classic World Stage.

Special guests at the show include TV motoring restorers Ant Anstead from Wheeler Dealers, Car SOS' Fuzz Townshend, and Jimmy De Ville from Goblin Works Garage and Fifth Gear.



#### **Troll-tastic Adventure**

Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham, Sat 14 March - Sun 10 May

Celebrating the release of the new Dreamworks movie, Trolls World Tour, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham is providing visitors with a 'Troll-tastic adventure' this spring.
Families can expect 'a glittery, rainbow-infused party like no other', with a host of activities including photo opportunities with favourite Trolls friends, brand new dance parties and numerous construction challenges.

#### Meet the Octonauts

Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, Sat 7 & Sun 8 March

To celebrate British Science & Engineering Week at Thinktank, Captain Barnacles and Kwazii from CBeebies show Octonauts will be meeting little ones across the weekend.

Elsewhere in the museum, families can take part in sealife object-handling sessions, watch a water science demo in the outdoor Science Garden, and get hands-on with Imagination Playground and some very special under-the-sea challenges!

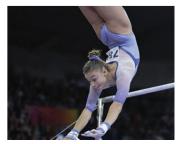


#### Gymnastics World Cup 2020

Arena Birmingham, Sat 28 March

Top international gymnasts from all over the world are battling it out in Birmingham this month for a spot at the Tokyo Olympics. Twelve male and a dozen female gymnasts - included among whom are 12 world medallists and an Olympic champion - go head-to-head in a series of events to gain vital qualification points for their country.

As the only Olympic qualification event in Britain, and with more gymnasts taking part than ever before, this is a must-attend event for all gymnastics and Olympic Games fans.



# AND NOW FOR SOMETHING

Variety, so the old saying goes, is the spice of life - and when it comes to offering people something a bit different to try out, the West Midlands is a region that's definitely not lacking in options! Here are just a few of the maybemore-unusual activities which are available to sample not too far away from your very own doorstep...



#### **DropShot Digbeth**

DropShot Digbeth is a multi-use activity destination which features a full cocktail bar, an array of craft beers, six Olympic-grade table-tennis tables, two shuffleboards, wood-fired pizzas and a sound system playing a mix of music to suit every taste.

The licensed entertainment venue is situated 50 yards from The Custard Factory, in the heart of redeveloped Digbeth.

**GREAT FOR** groups of friends. Prices start at £15 for two hours.

60 Heath Mill Lane, Deritend, Birmingham, B9 4AR



#### **Escape Live**

Working in a team of between two and six people, you have 60 minutes to escape from a locked room. Everyone must work together to find the clues and solve the puzzles to make sure you get out in time. The escape rooms on offer include Peaky Blinders (Birmingham only), Room 13, The Lab and Time Machine.

**GREAT FOR** family days out, adult birthday parties and stag & hen dos. Prices start at £17.50 per person.

18 - 24 Constitution Hill, Birmingham, B19 3LY; Fargo Studios, 54 Grafton Street, Coventry, CV1 2HW; 31 Greenhill Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6LE



#### The Bear Grylls Adventure

The world's first adventure activity centre inspired by Bear Grylls himself.
Choose your challenge: high ropes, iFLY, shark dive, indoor archery, indoor climb, escape rooms, fear zone, indoor shooting, cage snorkel and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course.

Most activities are suitable for guests aged eight-plus.

**GREAT FOR** families, groups, schools and team-building exercises. Prices start at £12.50.

NEC, National Exhibition Centre, Marston Green, Birmingham, B40 1NT

#### **Flight Club**

Flight Club is the world's first 'social darts' venue, presenting a supercharged version of the game that involves multiple players, patented dart-tracking technology and instant scoring, reimagining matches into fast-paced social experiences.

The feature bar serves a selection of craft beers and cocktails, alongside a seasonally inspired food menu.

**GREAT FOR** groups of friends. Prices are per booking, not per person. Each oche is £30 (peak) and £15 (off-peak) per 60 minutes.

13 Temple Street, Birmingham, B2 5BN

#### **Roxy Ball Room**

and Nottingham.

Roxy Ball Room features its own brand of pool, ping-pong, shuffleboard, beer-pong and 10 full-sized bowling lanes.

Keeping the action flowing from the afternoon until late into the night, the social gaming concept has already proved popular at venues in Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester

The venue serves a selection of craft beers, signature cocktails and liquor, as well as a full pizza & nibble menu - all set to the very best rock and indie soundtracks.

Roxy Ball Room is an 18-plus venue.

**GREAT FOR** adult parties. Prices start at £6 per person.

58 - 60 Heath Mill Lane, Deritend, Birmingham, B9 4AR

#### **Chance & Counters**

Chance & Counters is a new boardgame bar & cafe located in the popular Custard Factory. Boasting a bright and industrial space which fits over 100 people, this quirky venue has nearly 500 games to choose from, a varied selection of new and popular boardgames to buy, 10 draught beer & cider lines, and food options including brunch, burgers, tacos and more.

**GREAT FOR** groups of friends or even a solo visit. Pricing is £5 per person for a four-hour session.

The Custard Factory, Birmingham, B9 4AA

# COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...



#### Love<sub>2</sub>Stay

Set within 22 acres of stunning landscape, Love2Stay features a caravan park, a selection of safari lodges and a wide range of activities.

The resort boasts plenty to see and do, including a natural swimming pool, an army-style assault course, paddle boarding and woodland den building. Whether you're visiting for a mini break or a longer period of time, Love2Stay is a great base from which to explore Shrewsbury and the surrounding area.

**GREAT FOR** family breaks and days out with friends. Activity prices start from £5 per person.

Emstrey Bank, Shrewsbury, SY5 6QS



#### The Floodgate

The Floodgate offers 'an experiential night out like no other'. Situated in Digbeth and serving up the latest on-trend cocktails, cold craft beers and tasty street food, the venue offers a world of neon colour and graffiti art. Sporty types can hit a home run at Bleachers BaseBall, slide their way to victory in CurlClub, or maybe even hit a hole-in-one on the 18-hole UV wonderland PitPat course (think crazy-golf meets pool!).

**GREAT FOR** hen & stag dos and adult birthday parties.

Prices start from £10 per person.

104-108 Floodgate Street, Birmingham, B5 5SR



#### Jump In

While trampolines are the name of the game here, there's so much more to put a spring in your step. Why not start with the basketball court, where sports stars can reach for a slam dunk? If teamwork is more your thing, then the dodgeball court is a great place to dip and dive. There's even a toddler area for tiny tots to join in the fun, a twist ladder (Shrewsbury only), a balance beam (Warwick only), and great awardwinning party packages.

1 Henley Way, Shrewsbury, SY1 4YQ; Tachbrook Park, Hermes Cl, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick CV34 6NW

#### **Timberjacks**

Ever fancied trying your hand at one of history's oldest lumberjack sports? Well now you can! Timberjacks, which has sites in both Shrewsbury and Kidderminster, is the ultimate axe-throwing venue. Whether you're making a solo visit or attending as part of a team, grab an axe and have a go at hurling it at the target. Players also have the option of adding in-game extras, including apple smashing, target posters and the scoreboard challenge, where there's a cash prize to be won.

**GREAT FOR** hen & stag dos and adult birthday parties. Prices from £15 per person.

Flexspace, Unit 49, Shrewsbury SY1 3FE; Unit E Green Street, Kidderminster DY10 1RD

#### Ninja Warrior UK

Inspired by ITV's hit programme, Ninja Warrior UK, this indoor obstacle course welcomes visitors of all abilities aged fourplus.

Challenge your inner ninja by climbing, balancing, jumping and swinging across different obstacles.

The course features a number of levels of difficulty, meaning participants can gauge their progress en route to becoming a ninja warrior.

**GREAT FOR** kids and adult birthday parties. Prices start from £10 per person.

Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4NB

#### **NQ64**

Gaming venue NQ64 is a recent addition to Birmingham's buzzing creative & digital district. Combining a strong drink offering with retro gaming, it's the perfect place to unleash your inner child and get lost in a world of nostalgia.

Attractions include games such as Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, Track & Field, Street Fighter 2 and Space Invaders, as well as classic consoles like the N64, Megadrive and SNES.

**GREAT FOR** groups of friends or even a solo visit. There's no entrance fee and 15 tokens cost £6.

The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4BG



# TO BE FRANK

# Joe Pasquale chats about 'round two' of playing Frank Spencer in the stage adaptation of hit '70s TV show, Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em...

Before Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em embarked on its inaugural tour, the producers were adamant: the stage manager must be equipped with a well-stocked first-aid kit.

"Oh blimey, yes!" says the effervescent Joe Pasquale, who's once again taking on the role of Frank Spencer, the character made famous on TV in the 1970s by Michael Crawford, complete with the catchphrase, 'Ooh, Betty!'

"I do it all - hanging by my ankles and all sorts. During rehearsals the bloke choreographing the stunts fell down the stairs of the set and caught his knackers on the bannister. All he could suggest by way of reassurance was that I'd better wear a box. I mean, he was a professional stuntman and I had to do it every night!"

And now Joe's doing it all over again. Rave reviews and public support have led to Frank's return to the stage, but Joe wants to make something clear: "I don't do it as Michael's Frank Spencer; that would be an insult to Michael. I'm putting my personality into it.

"Frank isn't childish; he believes in what he's doing. The relationship between him and his wife, Betty, is a love story. He might always mess up, but she loves him anyway. For it to work, she has to; otherwise he'd just be an idiot."

Based on an original story about Frank trying to get on a TV talent show ("it's still set in the '70s, so you get the mustard wallpaper, tanktops and all the trimmings"), Joe loves that it's a family-friendly show. He nods his agreement when I suggest that with the Goes Wrong plays doing great business and successful recent revivals of comedies such as Noises Off, there seems to be renewed enthusiasm for family comedy.

"Some Mothers is two hours of surgically tight performance. It's a show without malice or aggression and is sweet, touching and very funny. It has real heart." And Joe believes giving people a good laugh is also timely: "People want comedy during times of uncertainty. Every single day of the first tour was a joy and a blessing. To get the audience laughing as much as they did was just wonderful."

The show's director and writer is Guy Unsworth. Joe freely admits that on meeting "this very well-spoken young lad who looked like an American football player", he questioned what Unsworth could possibly teach him about comedy.

"I soon realised that he's a natural. He suggests the smallest change - a tiny nuance to get the comedy out of a line - and he's always right. This kid is a classic comedy anorak who really knows his stuff. He's rewritten the script, ready for this new tour, and peppered it with even more jokes. And most of the original cast are back for the new tour too, which says a lot."

Joe is joined in the show by Susie Blake as Mrs Fisher - Frank's disapproving mother-inlaw. Spamalot co-star Sarah Earnshaw plays the long-suffering Betty.

"Susie is an experienced comic actress and she's brilliant in the show. Sarah's role is more difficult. She has to be softer and likable."

Joe confesses that, never having trained as an actor, he needed Guy's help: "He told me to do it as an absolutely proper role; no asides or ad-libbing. Putting me with really good actors also makes me raise my game. Sarah is a linchpin, and the relationship we have on and off stage is built on trust and affection."

Knowing her chum Joe so well that she can stop him deviating from the script almost before he thinks of doing so, Sarah can put the mockers on any Pasquale nonsense with nothing more than an imperceptible movement: "She'll give a tiny head shake that nobody else notices. It means 'I know you're about to do something, but don't!' She calls

me the Unstoppable Moron!"

Unstoppable is right. As well as Some Mothers, Joe constantly works on new comedy material, writes horror stories and is a talented artist - a skill he's been known to incorporate into his stand-up act.

"I'm really aware of my mortality, so you might as well live while you can," he says, waving aside any suggestion that the general schlepping of a long tour might be tiring.

"Touring in Some Mothers is a lot easier than my stand-up show. Then I usually do 40 onenighters. A week in one place is a holiday."

Joe is particularly looking forward to returning to Stoke-on-Trent with the show next month: "The theatre is welcoming and the audiences are great. I like to get out and about when I'm touring. I don't just sit there watching the telly; I get the local pamphlets from the hotel and go see whatever there is to see. I know Stoke fairly well, but there's always something new to learn about a place."

As for playing Frank, Joe knows he's likely to collect a few bumps and bruises along the way. But then he's used to 'industrial injuries,' having previously got himself stuck inside a bingo machine, broken his toe while tap dancing and dislocated a shoulder in panto.

"It's got danger written all over it for me. I wouldn't want to be my understudy!"

As for the future, there are hopes that Some Mothers may continue to delight audiences, both at home and abroad. Watch this space. But for now, go and see the show. I promise you won't regret it.

Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 14 to Saturday 18 April and The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 19 to Saturday 23 May.









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

# What's On

Sun 1 - Sun 8 March



La Voix at Tamworth Assembly Rooms

Fri 6 March

Mon 9 to Sun 15 March



Clare Teal at Stafford Gatehouse

Thurs 12 March

Mon 16 to Sun 22 March



The Blockheads at The Robin, Bilston

Thurs 19 March

Mon 23 to Tues 31 March



Georgia Ruth at The Hive, Shrewsbury

Sun 29 March

# thelist

# **THROUGHOUT MARCH**

# **Visual Arts**

#### New Art Gallery - Walsall

T00 RICH A SOIL Exhibition by three photographers presenting new work focused around portraiture, culture and female identity, until Sun 19 Apr

SARAH TAYLOR SILVERWOOD - KATHLEEN **AND SALLY SERIES** Body of drawings based on text and images abstracted from photographs, letters, and documents relating to the two creators and donors of the Garman Rvan Collection, Kathleen Epstein (née Garman) and Sally Ryan, until Sun 7 June

#### Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

**ANDREW SARGEN EXHIBITION** until Sun 5 Apr

#### Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

50 FORTY Exhibition of paintings and sculpture from the last 50 years, presented alongside a collection of new work, until Wed 25 Mar

#### Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

KAPOW! Exhibition exploring the influence on art and design of cartoon and comic-book superheroes, super heroines and super villains, until Sun 27 Sept



# Centre. Craven Arms

BEYOND, A SALOPIANS VIEW A view of nature, Shropshire Hills and farming

Exhibition bringing together Gordon's photography and Carol's pastel and watercolour paintings, until Tues 3 March

#### Weston Park

**BORROWED LAND** Collaboration of work connected to the land by three artists who met at and graduated from university with fine art degrees, until Tues 31 Mar

#### The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

NEW YEAR OPEN 2020 until Sat 7 Mar

#### Wolverhampton Art Gallery

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

50 YEARS ON: THE NORTHERN IRELAND **COLLECTION REVISITED** Exhibition featuring new acquisition Rocket Man, by Northern Irish artist Gerry Gleason, and also including items from the gallery's nationally important collection of art relating to the Troubles, until Sun 29 Mar

MEERA SYAL: COMING HOME Meera Syal by photographer Jason Bell - on Ioan from the National Portrait Gallery, London, until Sun 5 Apr

WOLVERHAMPTON AND ME Installation using the story of the Mayor of Wolverhampton's family history to reflect on the wider history of the city and its people, until Sun 5 Apr

#### Other VISUAL ARTS

NEW: PIP JONES Colourful collection of accomplished works by local artist Pip, Tues 3 Mar - Fri 10 Apr, Gallery3, Shrewsbury

**NEW: CIRCLING** New moving-image exhibition which explores the physical and emotional journeys attached to the experience of living with persistent pain, Wed 4 - Fri 27 Mar, Keele University, Staffordshire

**NEW: ELERI MILLS** Solo exhibition of paintings and drawings by the internationally established Welsh artist, Sat 7 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Ludlow

**NEW: THROUGH A LENS** Eclectic mix of photographs from the Cannock Photographic Society, Mon 9 Mar - Sun 26 Apr, Museum of Cannock Chase,

**NEW: OPEN ART EVENTS SPRING 2020** Featuring work by a wide range of local artists and craftspeople, Sat 14 -Sun 15 Mar, The Artists' Gallery, Bromfield, Ludlow

**NEW: PAINTING WITH WORDS 2020** Open exhibition celebrating the influence and inspiration of literature and language on the visual arts, Sat 14 Mar - Sat 2 May, The Willow Gallery, Oswestry



The Young Braves - Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

# Gigs

MICHAEL KIWANUKA Sun 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

METAL TO THE MASSES Sun 1 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

PAUL CARRACK Sun 1 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CREEDANCE CLEARWA-**TER REVIVED** Sun 1 Mar. The Robin. Bilston

JULIAN COPE Sun 1 Mar. The Mill. Digbeth. Birmingham

**SOUL IN THE SHED** Sun 1 Mar. Albert's Shed. Shrewsbury

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' Sun 1 Mar. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**NASTY CHERRY** Sun 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LOVE FAME TRAGEDY Mon 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ARCHIE FAULKS** Mon 2 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth. Birmingham

STAVES PLUS SPECIAL **GUESTS** Mon 2 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

PRETTY VILE EP LAUNCH / TBA / TWELVE TWELVE / P.E.T / MEEL DEEL Mon 2 Mar, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

THE WANTS + SPECIAL **GUESTS** Mon 2 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SUPERGRASS** Tues 3 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MOSA WILD Tues 3 Mar. Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ALBERT LEE Tues 3 Mar. Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

IAMDDB Tues 3 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**GROUNDCULTURE & BLACK COAST** Tues 3 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

PREGOBLIN W/ MASS **HOUSE** Tues 3 Mar. Mama Roux's, B'ham

THE JACQUES Tues 3 Mar. Hare & Hounds. Birmingham

MARIKA HACKMAN Tues 3 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CISSY STONE & HER BAND Wed 4 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

THE RUMJACKS + SPE-CIAL GUESTS Wed 4 Mar, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

BORN OF OSIRUS Wed 4 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

THAT'S AMORE Wed 4 Mar. The Place. Telford

**WILLE & THE BANDITS** Wed 4 Mar. The Robin. Bilston

**BEN WALKER** Wed 4 Mar. Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH WHIT-**NEY** Wed 4 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**ASH SHEEHAN** Thurs 5 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR -**RECKLESS HEART** Thurs 5 Mar, The Robin, Bil-

**BEN WILDSMITH** Thurs 5

Mar. Katie Fitzgeralds. Stourbridge

**OMAR** Thurs 5 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

SUCKERPUNCH Thurs 5 Mar. Deadwax. Digbeth, Birmingham

THE PICTUREBOOKS Thurs 5 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CHRIS BOWDEN PRE-**SENTS: DAVE FERRIS Thurs 5 Mar, The Blue Piano, Edgbaston, Birmingham

JADU HEART Thurs 5 Mar. Hare & Hounds. Birmingham

LUTHER Thurs 5 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PINS + YELLOW BRAIN + HONEY Thurs 5 Mar. The Sugarmill, Stokeon-Trent

THE MERSEYBEATS & FRIENDS Thurs 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GALA DISCO POLO Fri 6 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GUY CHAMBERS 'GO GENTLE INTO THE LIGHT' Fri 6 Mar, Pizza Express Live, B'ham

BLYTH POWER Fri 6 Mar. Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CROSSFAITH Fri 6 Mar, KK Steele Mill, Wolverhampton

COULD IT BE MAGIC, **TAKE THAT TRIBUTE** Fri 6 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

THE FRED SKIDMORE TRIO Fri 6 Mar, The Blue Piano, B'ham

TRAGEDY: ALL METAL

# Shropshire Hills Discovery

ZACH BARBER - SHROPSHIRE HILLS AND people, until Tues 3 March

CAROL BOWEN AND GORDON BAILEY

# **Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 March**

**TRIBUTE TO THE BEE GEES** Fri 6 Mar, The
Robin. Bilston

YOUNG BRAVES + SUP-PORT Fri 6 Mar, Albert's Shed. Shrewsbury

**STEREOPHONICS - THE PHONICS** Fri 6 Mar, The
River Rooms, Stourbridge

ANDY JOHN JONES & THE GINKGO MILK Fri 6 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**THE ORIELLES** Fri 6 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**SKABURST!** Fri 6 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK, JOHN MCCUSKER & JOHN DOYLE Fri 6 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

FUTUREPAST ZINE WITH WEST NORWOOD CAS-SETTE LIBRARY Fri 6 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BLACK PARADE** Fri 6 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

ANTARTIC MONKEYS Fri 6 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford. Stoke-on-Trent

BBC INTRODUCING SHOWCASE FEATURING ALEX OHM Fri 6 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

NSR PRESENTS: POWER 2020 Fri 6 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHOP SUEY!- NU -METAL ANTHEMS Fri 6 Mar, The Asylum, B'ham

**CHERRY SUEDE** Fri 6 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**CATAPULT CLUB FEAT. SOUTHERN SMOKE** Fri 6
Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BULSARA AND HIS QUEE-**

NIES Sat 7 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FRET AND FIDDLE Sat 7 Mar, Wade Street Church Hall, Lichfield

**SPECIAL KINDA MAD-NESS** Sat 7 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE BAREBACKS Sat 7 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

KILLER BOB, SHEBREW AND SNOG THE DOG Sat 7 Mar, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

SHOWWADDYWADDY Sat 7 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

PURPLE ZEPPELIN Sat 7 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

60S SOUNDS WITH TONY BLACKBURN Sat 7 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

KICK UP THE 80\$ Sat 7 Mar, The Robin, Bil-

**0H WONDER** Sat 7 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

MOSES BOYD Sat 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE RISING TOUR W/ SCARLET REBELS & RE-VIVAL BLACK Sat 7 Mar, Route 44, Birmingham

ATTILA THE STOCKBRO-KER Sat 7 Mar, Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

NICKLEBACK THE TRIB-UTE VS BLACK STONE CHERRY UK Sat 7 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

WAX ON Sat 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JAMES ARTHUR Sat 7 Mar, Arena B'ham OH WONDER Sat 7 Mar, THE ACID EXPERIMENT X HERITAGE SOUNDSYS-TEM Sat 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

O2 Institute, B'ham

RAXSTAR Sat 7 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

FERGUS CHANNELL + DEMELZA + TRADIN FIVES + OLLY POWELL Sat 7 Mar, Dead Wax, Birmingham

**BLEACH** Sat 7 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

JO HARMAN Sat 7 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

ETHER E Sat 7 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater. Telford

THE BOOTLEG SHADOWS Sat 7 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

MAGIC LANTERN RAVE Sat 7 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BC/DC** Sun 8 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THEM HEAVY PEOPLE -TRIBUTE TO KATE BUSH Sun 8 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**ZERVAS & PEPPER** Sun 8 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

MASSIVE WAGONS Sun 8 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**BSWA FUNDRAISER 2020** Sun 8 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, B'ham

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS Sun 8 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Can-

**BC/DC** Sun 8 Mar, Albert Shed, Southwater, Telford, Shropshire



Tenors Unlimited - The Place, Telford

# Classical & Easy Listening

SUNDAY AFTERNOON ORGAN MUSIC WITH PAUL CARR Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 1 Mar, Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley, Stourbridge

BACH @ BART'S 1 Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 1 Mar, St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton

MICHAEL BALL & ALFIE BOE Sun 1 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**TENORS UN LIMITED** Wed 4 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

THE BERYL CHEMPIN MEMORIAL MAS-TERCLASS WITH GABRIELA MONTERO Wed 4 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

CBSO: A GERMAN REQUIEM Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Camilla Tilling (soprano), Florian Boesch (baritone) & CBSO Chorus. Programme includes works by Mozart & Brahms, Wed 4 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: JANACEK & BRAHMS Featuring Philip Brett & Kate Oswin (violins), Catherine Bower & Amy Thomas (violas), Eduardo Vassallo (cello), Wed 4 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

HANNEKE ROUW IN CONCERT Programme includes works by Brahms, Allegro, Rachmaninoff, Lento & Andante, Thurs 5 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SENIOR CITIZENS ORCHESTRA CONCERT Thurs 5 Mar, Walsall Arena and Arts Centre

MAX RAABE & PALAST ORCHESTER Thurs 5 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CONCERT IN THE ROUND Featuring David Joyce (violin) & Richard Silk (piano), Fri 6 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

PETER BRADLEY-FULGONI & JOHN MOORE: A CONCERT FOR TWO PIANOS Fri 6 Mar, Allington Hall, Shrewsbury School

SHREWSBURY LIGHT ORCHESTRA: LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS Sat 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN RECITAL** Sat 7 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

GABRIELA MONTERO PIANO RECITAL

Programme includes works by Schumann, Chick Corea, Shostakovich & Montero, Sun 8 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BACH @ BART'S 1 Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 8 Mar, St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton

# Comedy

JOHN ARCHER Sun 1 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AHIR SHAH Sun 1 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**SUKH OJLA** Sun 1 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**TOMMY TIERNAN** Tues 3 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

RHYS JAMES Wed 4 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CHRISTIAN REILLY (PICTURED), DOUG CARTER, SIAN DAVIES & DAN SMITH Thurs 5 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall



Crossfaith - Steele Mill, Wolverhampton

# thelist



Circus Of Horrors - Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CHRIS WASHINGTON, CHRIS MCCAUS-LAND, PETE TECKMAN & BARRY DODDS Thurs 5 Mar, The George Hotel, Lichfield

TANYALEE DAVIS, LOUISE YOUNG & COM-EDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 5 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

JOHN SHUTTLEWORTH Thurs 5 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**ARDAL O'HANLON** Fri 6 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TROY HAWKE** Fri 6 Mar, Cornbow Hall, Halesowen

TANYALEE DAVIS, LOUISE YOUNG, JOHN FOTHERGILL & PAT CAHILL Fri 6 - Sat 7 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MITCH BENN Sat 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SLIM, QUINCY, JUNIOR BOOKER, KAYLEIGH LOUDMOUTH, SMASH & KAT Sat 7 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, B'ham

FREDDY QUINNE, ELLIOT STEEL, RUDI LICKWOOD & MICKY P KERR Sat 7 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

PAUL SINHA, SEAN PERCIVAL, TROY HAWKE & WAYNE BEESE Sat 7 Mar, Whitchurch Civic Centre, North Shropshire

**GEOFF NORCOTT** Sat 7 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

DANA ALEXANDER, KAT BOYCE, GLENDA JAXSON, CASSANDRA MARIA & AURIE STYLA Sun 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NOREEN KHAN, SHAZIA MIRZA, SUKH OJLA & GLENDA JAXSON Sun 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## **Theatre**

VOLDEMORT AND THE TEENAGE HOG-WARTS MUSICAL PARODY Brand new Harry Potter-inspired show packed with 'magic, hormones & more than a few murders', until Sun 1 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE BOY IN THE DRESS Based on David Walliams' bestselling book,

with songs by Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers, until Sun 8 Mar, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Ayon

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

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?... until Sat 21 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Cheryl Fergison, Nicole Barber-Lane, Rebecca Wheatley & Nicki French star in a 'heartfelt, reassuring and unflinching' look at the joys of menopause and friendship, Sun 1 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THEATRE SUPPER: FOOL'S GOLD Science-fiction play about money, creativity and how we decide on the value of something, Tues 3 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ASK ME ANYTHING The Paper Birds asked young people living in today's world of mobile phones and Google to write to them and ask them anything. Nothing was off limits. They received over 100 letters from across the UK. This show is their reply, Tues 3 - Wed 4 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE SOUND OF MUSIC One of the greatest musicals of all time, featuring one of musical theatre's most iconic scores, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BUDDY Award-winning West End show which tells the story of the legendary Buddy Holly, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

PATIENCE Join Birmingham Savoyguards as they journey into the topsy-turvy world of Gilbert & Sullivan, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

THE DAD'S ARMY RADIO HOUR Three

episodes are brought to life by two actors, Wed 4 Mar, Walsall Arena

CIRCUS OF HORRORS A rock'n'roll rollercoaster of amazing and bizarre acts, Wed 4 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Cheryl Fergison, Nicole Barber-Lane, Rebecca Wheatley & Nicki French star in a 'heartfelt, reassuring and unflinching' look at the joys of menopause and friendship, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ADOLF One-man show in which Pip Utton, looking uncomfortably like the Führer, stands before a huge Nazi banner and addresses his party faithful, Wed 4 - Fri 6 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE BOOK OF MORMON Outrageous musical comedy which follows the misadventures of a mismatched pair of missionaries, sent on a mission to a place that's about as far from Salt Lake City as you can get, Weds 4 - Sat 28 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

CANTERBURY TALES Drama, storytelling & song combine to paint a picture of life in the Middle Ages, Thurs 5 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE DAD'S ARMY RADIO HOUR Two actors present three episodes of the hugely popular series, Thurs 5 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**DEAD GOOD** Vamos Theatre's highly praised production, 'funny and poignant in equal measure', Thurs 5 - Fri 6 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE 39 STEPS Four actors play over 120 characters in a fast-paced caper based on John Buchan's famous spy novel, Thurs 5 - Sat 28 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

WITCH HUNT Following on from 2018's award-winning Enter The Dragons, A&E Comedy's Abigail Dooley and Emma Edwards return with a 'spell-binding, surreal and darkly hilarious tale', Fri 6 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY Goodhearted romp through favourite moments from the hit TV show, Fri 6 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE THRILL OF LOVE Amateur staging of Amanda Whittington's gripping drama about Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, Sat 7 - Sat 14 Mar, Oldbury Rep

MORGAN & WEST Expect 'explosive thrills, chemical spills and a risk assessment that gives their stage manager chills', Sun 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

# **Kids Shows**

RAT The Rat Affair reimagine The Pied Piper of Hamelin through live music & puppetry, Thurs 5 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

RAT The Rat Affair reimagine The Pied Piper of Hamelin through live music & puppetry, Fri 6 Mar, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

MILKSHAKE! LIVE Starring Fireman Sam, Noddy, Shimmer & Shine, Digby Dragon, Wissper, Nella the Princess Knight and the Floogals, alongside two Milkshake presenters, Sat 7 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

# **Cabaret**

SASHA VELOUR - SMOKE & MIRRORS Drag, visual art & magic combine in Sasha's first one-queen theatre tour, Mon 2 Mar, The Alexandra, B'ham

LA VOIX Expect 'side-splitting comedy, huge vocals, mesmerising impressions of the world's biggest divas and bucketfuls of energy', Fri 6 Mar. Tamworth Assembly Rooms



# **Dance**

SAMPAD ASIAN SPRING Annual South Asian dance extravaganza, Sun 1 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BRENDAN COLE: SHOW MAN Music & dance extravaganza from the former Strictly star and his hand-picked championship dancers, Mon 2 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SHREWSBURY GOTTA DANCE Three hundred young people from across the region take to the stage to show-case their skills in ballet, street, contemporary, jazz and more... Tues 3 Mar. Theatre Severn. Shrewsbury

**SPIRIT OF THE DANCE** Smash-hit show taking audiences round the globe via

56 whatsonlive.co.uk

# **Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 March**

a 'spellbinding' performance, Fri 6 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

FLEXUS DANCE COLLECTIVE Sat 7 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

DANCING THROUGH THE DECADES Share a journey through time to celebrate 10 years of Elegance Dance School, Sun 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## **Talks**

TOM WATSON: DOWNSIZING The former deputy leader of the Labour Party shares his honest and inspiring account of how he radically changed the way he ate, lost eight stone and reversed his type 2 diabetes, Wed 4 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

HIT THE ODE Unique performance poetry night, Fri 6 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

UNISLAM GRAND FINALS Culmination of the UK's premier student and young people's poetry event, Sun 8 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

# Film INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

RICHARD JEWELL (15) Drama. Starring Paul Walter Hauser, Kathy Bates. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 28 Feb - Thurs 5 Mar

1917 (15) Drama/War. Starring Dean-Charles Chapman, George MacKay. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 28 Feb - Thurs 5 Mar; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 6 Mar

A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBOUR-HOOD (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Tom Hanks, Matthew Rhys. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 28 Feb - Thurs 5 Mar

JUST MERCY (15) Drama. Starring Michael B. Jordan, Jamie Foxx. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 28 Feb - Thurs 5 Mar

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COP-PERFIELD (PG) Comedy/Drama. Starring Dev Patel, Hugh Laurie. Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 28 - Sat 29 Feb & Tues 3 Mar; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 3 & Thurs 5 Mar

EMMA (PG) Drama/Comedy. Starring Anya Taylor-Joy, Bill Nighy. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 28 Feb -Thurs 12 Mar; Wellington Orbit, Telford, Fri 6 Mar

**ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD (18)** Comedy/Drama. Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt. Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 2 Mar

#### MRS LOWRY & SON (PG)

Biography/Drama. Starring Vanessa Redgrave, Timothy Spall. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 2 Mar

**BLINDED BY THE LIGHT (12a)** 

Comedy/Drama. Starring Billy Barratt, Ronak Singh Chadha Berges. The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, North Shropshire, Mon 2 Mar

CALAMITY JANE (U) Comedy/Musical. Starring Doris Day, Howard Keel. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 2 Mar

SISTER ACT (12a) Comedy/Crime. Starring Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Mon 2 & Fri 6 Mar

THE FAREWELL (PG) Comedy/Drama. Starring Shuzhen Zhao, Awkwafina. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 3 Mar

A HIDDEN LIFE (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring August Diehl, Valerie Pachner. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 5 Mar

FROZEN 2 (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Kristen Bell, Idina Menzel. Sparc Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire, Fri 6 Mar

THE LIGHTHOUSE (15) Fantasy/Horror. Starring Robert Pattinson, Willem Dafoe. Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Mar

JOKER (15) Drama/Thriller. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Mar

PARASITE (15) Comedy/Crime. Starring Kang-ho Song, Sun-kyun Lee. Foreign language, subtitled. Wellington Orbit, Telford, Sat 7 Mar

**THE SOUVENIR (15)** Drama/Mystery. Starring Neil Young, Tosin Cole. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 7 Mar

THE LOST BOYS (15) Comedy/Horror. Starring Jason Patric, Corey Haim. Wellington Orbit, Telford, Shropshire, Sat 7 Mar

STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sat 7 Mar

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS (PG) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of David Thorpe, John Rhys-Davies. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sun 8 Mar

# **Events**

#### LEGO CITY: REPORT FOR DUTY

Complete the build challenges and become a LEGO City hero, until Sun 1 Mar, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

PJ MASKS Use all your creative skills and creature knowledge to help the PJ Masks avert disaster in the deep, until Sun 1 Mar, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

**THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW** Meet with 200-plus wedding specialists, until Sun 1 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

MR CADBURY'S PARROT MINI-EGG SHOW Help Mr Cadbury's Parrot find out who's been after his precious treats,



Enginuity Explorers - Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge

until Sun 29 Mar, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

GEORGIAN DAY AT SOHO Celebration of the Georgians, with a special focus on the women of the period to coincide with International Women's Day on the 8th of March, Sun 1 Mar, Soho House, Birmingham

TUDOR WOMEN GUIDED TOUR Specialist guided tour to mark International Women's Day, Sun 1 Mar, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

CINEMA POSTER SALE Seize the chance to own a piece of MAC cinema history, with hundreds of posters available to purchase, Sun 1 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

THE ORIGINAL HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS
The world's most famous basketball
team is back, Mon 2 Mar, Arena Birmincham

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: A WOMAN'S WORK TOUR Special tour focusing on the women at Aston Hall. In celebration of International Women's Day, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham

THE APPRENTICESHIP, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SHOW Returning to Telford International Centre for the 5th consecutive year, Thurs 5 Mar, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

CRUFTS & BEST IN SHOW 2020 Organised by the Kennel Club, the show celebrates the role dogs play in their owners' lives, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING Featuring heavyweight collisions and high-flying jaw-dropping action, Fri 6 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

ENGINUITY EXPLORERS New monthly activity club for children aged two to five, Fri 6 Mar, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

SOUNDS OF THE 60S LIVE WITH TONY BLACKBURN Evening hosted by Radio Two's legendary DJ, with The 60s All Star Band & Singers recreating a selection of Swinging '60s classics, Sat 7 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

BONGO'S BINGO An 'insane mix of a live show, rave and heads-down game of bingo, complete with danceoffs, plenty of heckling & lots of audience participation', Sat 7 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING Featuring heavyweight collisions and high-flying jaw-dropping action, Sat 7 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

DOWN ON THE FARM Join Scarecrow and Auntie May as they get their spring-time chores done on the farm, Sat 7 Mar, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

GHOST TOURS Exclusive opportunity to venture into the Hall at night - so prepare for a scare, Sat 7 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham

BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK CELEBRATION: MEET THE OCTONAUTS! Kids' TV favourites Captain Barnacles and Kwazii pay a visit, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, Thinktank Science Museum, B'ham

FROZEN FESTIVAL Weekend of princesses, snowmen, songs and crafts, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent

**ULTIMATE DUBS 2020** Bringing together the Ultimate VW, Audi, Seat & Skoda show cars from all over Europe, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, Telford International Centre, Shropshire



# ENTERTAINMENT CANNOCK CHASE

at the PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE

# MARCH

# **SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS**

Sunday 8 March 2.30pm & 7.30pm • £25

# COME WHAT MAY -A NIGHT AT THE MOULIN ROUGE

Thursday 12 March 7.30pm • £27.50

# **BEE GEES FEVER**

Friday 13 March 7.30pm • £22

## THE FOUNDATIONS

Saturday 14 March 7.30pm • £20

# WHITNEY – QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

Wednesday 25 March 7.30pm • £26

# AN EVENING OF ERIC & ERN

Friday 27 March 7.30pm • £22.50

# **APRIL**

# **GISELLE**

Wednesday 1 April 7.30pm • £18 • Conc £16 U16 £10

# **FOSTER AND ALLEN**

Thursday 2 April 7.30pm • £24

# HERMAN'S HERMITS

Saturday 4 April 7.30pm • £24



Box Office 01543 578 762 tickets.princeofwales.live

# thelist

# **Gigs**

#### DECLAN J DONOVAN

Mon 9 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**KOFI STONE** Mon 9 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

### EMPLOYED TO SERVE

Mon 9 Mar, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

**GEORGIA** Tues 10 Mar, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

GAFFA TAPE SANDY + BEACH RIOT Tues 10 Mar, Dead Wax, B'ham

ELIZA SHADDAD + SPE-CIAL GUESTS Tues 10 Mar, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

**TURNOVER** Wed 11 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

# **ONE NIGHT IN DUBLIN**Wed 11 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shrop-

shire **STEVIE NIMMO TRIO** Wed 11 Mar, The

Robin, Bilston

**CLANNAD** Wed 11 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JON BODEN Wed 11 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GETRZ + GEN AND THE GENERATIONS + SPIT + SEDATED SOCIETY Wed 11 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

PHIL X & THE DRILLS Thurs 12 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham CLARE TEAL Thurs 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JAX JONES Thurs 12 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham



#### YORKSTON THORNE KHAN Thurs 12 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre,

BOOTLEG BLONDIE
Thurs 12 Mar, The
Robin Bilston

Birmingham

TURNSTILE, GAG, ONE STEP CLOSER & GLIT-TERER Thurs 12 Mar, The Mill. Digbeth

SWAMPMEAT FAMILY BAND SXSW

**FUNDRAISER** Thurs 12 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ENUFF Z NUFF + SUP-PORT Thurs 12 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

KISSTORY PRESENTS THE BLAST OFF! TOUR Thurs 12 Mar, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

MARTIN TURNER: WISH-BONE GOLD Thurs 12 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

GHETTS Fri 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LONDON CALLING Fri 13 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

FALLEN + CYDONIA KNIGHTS Fri 13 Mar, The Robin. Bilston

SHAWN JAMES Fri 13 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**F00 FIGHTERS GB** Fri 13 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

TRIGGER MCPOOPSHUTE + SYSTEM RESET & LEECH BLEEDERS Fri 13 Mar, Route 44, B'ham

80S NIGHT WITH JOHNNY 2 BAD Fri 13 Mar, The Place, Telford

KINGFEST TAKEOVER Fri 13 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**THE BLINDBOY PODCAST - LIVE** Fri 13 Mar, O2
Academy, Birmingham

**TORI KELLY** Fri 13 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

FORMAT: SUGAR FREE Fri 13 Mar, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

BEE GEES FEVER Fri 13 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

DIRTY ROCKIN SCOUNDRELS Fri 13 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

CLARK TRACEY Fri 13 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

MOTORHEADACHE - THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO MOTORHEAD & LEMMY Fri 13 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

CATAPULT CLUB FEAT. THE MOOD Fri 13 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham



Clare Teal - Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

# Monday 9 - Sunday 15 March



Jon Boden - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**LUST FOR LIFE** Fri 13 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**GRAND MAGUS** Fri 13 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

OASIS VS THE STONE ROSES Fri 13 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

LIVEWIRE THE AC/DC SHOW VS WHITESNAKE UK Fri 13 Mar, KK Steele Mill, Wolverhampton

MARTIN KEMP BACK TO THE 80S Fri 13 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**DAMN THE WEATHER** Sat 14 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Sat 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**DEP LEPPARD** Sat 14 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ULTRA 90S SHOW Sat 14 Mar, The Place, Telford

**TOKY053 CLUB NIGHT** Sat 14 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**BATTLE OF THE DECADES** 

**BAND** Sat 14 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

LONDON CALLING: SAN-DINISTA 40TH ANNIVER-SARY Sat 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**ULTIMATE GREEN DAY**Sat 14 Mar, The Slade
Rooms, Wolverhamp-

ALY BAIN & PHIL CUN-NINGHAM Sat 14 Mar, Wade Street Church Hall, Lichfield

**COUNTERFEIT STONES**Sat 14 Mar, The Robin,
Bilston

**THE SOUTHMARTINS** Sat 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DARK SIDE OF THE WALL Sat 14 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**NORTHERN SOUL** Sat 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ARQ** Sat 14 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

POPESTARS (GHOST TRIBUTE) SERMON Sat 14 Mar, Route 44, Birmingham

**H0TR0X** Sat 14 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrews-

bury

**THE FOUNDATIONS** Sat 14 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Can-

**POPPY** Sat 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DAVE BUSBY 3 Sat 14 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater

THE ENDINGS & ANDREW PEARCE Sat 14 Mar, Ludlow Brewery, South Shropshire

UPROAR: THE LASER SPECTACULAR 2 Sat 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**REBIRTH 90S RAVE** Sat 14 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**VERTIGO BAND** Sat 14 Mar, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

METAL TO THE MASSES -HEAT 3 Sat 14 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

JAMIE CULLUM Sun 15 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Sun 15 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall



The Counterfeit Stones - The Robin, Bilston

# **Classical**

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Mathias, Vaughan-Williams, W.T. Best & Stanford, Mon 9 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

PRE-CBSO CONCERT SHOWCASE Featuring Olga Eckert & Malfalda Galante (violins), Maria João Antunes (viola), Griffith Wadkin (cello) & Beth Haughan (piano). Programme comprises Dvorak's Piano Quintet in A, Tues 10 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBS0: BARTOK & BRUCKNER Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) & Piotr Anderszewski (piano), Tues 10 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JESS GILLAM SAXOPHONE RECITAL Also featuring Zeynep Özsuca (piano). Programme includes works by Graham Fitkin, John Harle and Gavina Bryars, Thurs 12 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

CONCERT IN THE ROUND Featuring Pupils of Packwood Haugh School, Fri 13 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: CARMINA BURANA Featuring Adrian Lucas (conductor), Ailish Tynan (soprano), Oliver Johnston (tenor), William Dazeley (baritone), City of Birmingham Choir & Winchester College Quiristers Children's chorus, Sat 14 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHES-TRA Featuring Cameron Chin See

TRA Featuring Cameron Chin See (trumpet) & Peter Morris (conductor). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Hummel & Mendelssohn, Sat 14 Mar, Wolverhampton Grammar School

EMMA JOHNSON & FRIENDS Featuring The Carducci Quartet & special guest John Suchet. Programme includes works by Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Strauss, Strauss II & Léhar, Sat 14 Mar, United Reformed Church, Shrewsbury

BACH @ BART'S 1 Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 15 Mar, St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton

# **Comedy**

**KOJO ANIM** Mon 9 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

IVO GRAHAM Tues 10 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SIMON EVANS** Wed 11 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL TONKINSON, SOL BERNSTEIN & DAN NIGHTINGALE Wed 11 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**GARRETT MILLERICK** Thurs 12 Mar, The REP, Birmingham COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBIN-SON & COMIC TBC Thurs 12 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ED BYRNE** Thurs 12 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

MARK STEEL Thurs 12 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**STEWART LEE** Thurs 12 - Fri 13 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**RACHEL FAIRBURN** Fri 13 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANNY MCLOUGHLIN, PHIL JERROD, ANGELOS EPITHEMIOU & COMIC TBC Fri 13 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

STEVE N ALLEN, ADAM MORRISON & PIERRE HOLLINS Fri 13 Mar, Molineux Stadium. Wolverhampton

MITCH BENN Sat 14 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

GEOFF BOYZ, STEVE HALL, AARON SIM-MONS & DAVE LONGLEY Sat 14 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ALFIE MOORE Sat 14 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

**SHAZIA MIRZA** Sat 14 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire



JESSICA FOSTEKEW Sat 14 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

JESSICA FOSTEKEW Sun 15 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

## Theatre

AUGMENTED Sophie Woolley's brand new play is a personal story about the joy and conflict of being able to hear again after years of total deafness, Mon 9 - Wed 11 Mar, Birmingham Repertory Theatre

THE CAT & THE CANARY Britt Ekland, Mark Jordon, Tracey Shaw, Marti Webb, Gary Webster, Ben Nealon & Eric Carter star in a new version of the popular murder-mystery, Mon 9 - Sat 14 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**OUR HOUSE** Amateur production by Kidderminster Operatic & Dramatic Society, Mon 9 - Sat 14 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

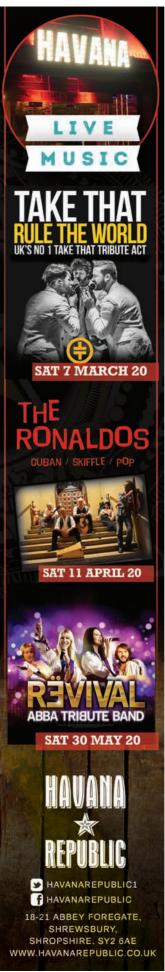
LOUDER IS NOT ALWAYS CLEARER Humorous and moving story about one man's attempt to cope, fit in and be accepted. Tues 10 - Wed 11 Mar.

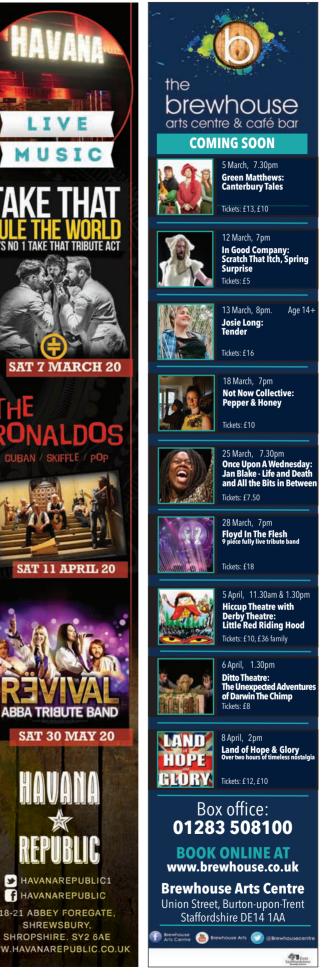






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HOLD ON LET GO

# thelist

# Monday 9 - Sunday 15 March

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

MOVING BODIES One-man show combining storytelling with old wartime songs and an original soundscape to tell a darkly comic, heart-wrenching story, Tues 10 - Wed 11 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

BUDDY Award-winning West End show telling the story of Buddy Holly, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

POET IN DA CORNER Coming-of-age story inspired by Dizzee Rascal's seminal album, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

SIX Acclaimed new musical in which the six wives of Henry VIII tell their stories... Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ENTER STAGE WRITE Transition Stage Company celebrate new writing, Wed 11 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

WHAT'S IN A NAME? Egos, childish resentment and unspoken feelings rise to the surface in Jeremy Sams' comedy, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

TRELAWNY OF THE WELLS Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Theatre Company present Arthur Wing Pinero's celebrated comedy, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

TOM N ROB: BREAK FREE A 'captivating' duet of comedic dance theatre and choice songs... Thurs 12 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

SCRATCH THAT ITCH, SPRING SURPRISE A chance for theatre makers to try out new ideas in front of an audience, Thurs 12 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

FORGET ME NOT - THE ALZHEIMER'S WHODUNNIT Rob Gee's acclaimed one-man show exploring how we perceive people with dementia, Thurs 12 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY Qweerdog Theatre's debut play explores the relationship between two brothers and their friend, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

LA BOHÉME Korean soprano Elena Dee stars as Mimi in Ellen Kent's staging of Puccini's romantic tragedy, Fri 13 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE TWISTED TALE OF HANSEL AND GRE-TEL Imaginative version of the Brothers Grimm classic, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

IDOL - JAMAL GERALD A 'daring and unapologetic' examination of religion, pop culture and Black representation, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

CONFESSIONS OF A COCKNEY TEMPLE DANCER Shane Shambhu reimagines ideas of race, language and culture, Sat 14 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick THE MARISHA WALLACE TOUR An evening with one of the West End and Broadway's most highly acclaimed leading ladies, Sat 14 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

CLINTON BAPTISTE - THE PARANORMALIST RETURNS! Join the star of Peter Kay's Phoenix Nights as he takes audiences on a 'hilarious yet touching journey through his life and out the other side'. Sat 14 Mar, Walsall Arena

# **Kids Shows**

SARAH & DUCK'S BIG TOP BIRTHDAY Puppetry, storytelling & music combine in a production based on the BAFTA award-winning CBeebies show, Thurs 12 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

YOUR TOYS Physical theatre & puppetry combine in a heartwarming story about friends pulling together... Fri 13 Mar, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

RAPUNZEL: A TANGLED MUSICAL TALE Immersion Theatre present a brand new musical version of the classic fairytale, Sat 14 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROALD DAHL AND THE IMAGINATION SEEKERS Interactive theatre show fusing performance, games & play. Suitable for children aged six-plus, Sun 15 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

# **Cabaret**

LA VOIX Expect 'side-splitting comedy, huge vocals, mesmerising impressions of the world's biggest divas and bucketfuls of energy', Fri 13 Mar, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

## **Dance**

AJ LIVE New show from Strictly favourite AJ Pritchard, Sat 14 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

LOST IN THE RHYTHM Strictly Come Dancing's Amy Dowden is joined by her partner, Ben Jones, and former Strictly finalist Colin Jackson for an evening of Latin & ballroom, Sun 15 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

# **Talks**

AN EVENING WITH FRANKIE BRIDGE: OPEN Join the ex-member of The Saturdays as she talks about her battle with mental illness... Mon 9 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**SIMON WESTON: MY LIFE, MY STORY** Inspirational show about one man's

journey from the front line of war to a life of contentment, Wed 11 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

SLAUGHTERING THE SACRED COWS Dynamic event examining current issues relating to the challenges and opportunities of Disability Arts, Wed 11 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH SARAH J MASS Special event celebrating the launch of House Of Earth And Blood - the first book in Sarah's first-ever adult series, Crescent City, Fri 13 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

# **Film**

#### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

JOKER (15) Drama/Thriller. Starring Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro. Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 9 Mar

DOWNTON ABBEY (12a) Drama/Romance. Starring Michelle Dockery, Matthew Goode. The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 9 Mar

PARASITE (15) Comedy/Crime. Starring Kang-ho Song, Sun-kyun Lee. Foreign language, subtitled. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 9 - Thurs 19 Mar; Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 13 -Sat 14 Mar

A LIFE MORE ORDINARY (U) Action/Adventure. Starring Stephen Samson, Louise Smythe. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 10 Mar

A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBOUR-H00D (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Tom Hanks, Matthew Rhys. Stoke Film Theatre, Tues 10 Mar; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 10 & Thurs 12 Mar

KNIVES OUT (12a) Comedy/Crime. Starring Daniel Craig, Chris Evans. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 10 Mar

#### THE DIVINE ORDER (12)

Comedy/Drama. Starring Marie Leuenberger, Maximilian Simonischek. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 11 Mar

#### MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS (U)

Comedy/Drama. Starring Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 12 Mar

FIRST LOVE (15) Comedy/Crime. Starring Becky, Bengal. Foreign language, subtitled. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 12 Mar

MOLIÈRE (12a) Biography/Comedy. Starring Romain Duris, Fabrice Luchini. Foreign language, subtitles. Sparc Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire, Thurs 12 Mar

MILITARY WIVES (12a) Comedy/Drama. Starring Jason Patric, Corey Haim. Wellington Orbit, Telford, Fri 13 Mar; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 13 - Thurs 26 Mar

#### HONEYLAND (12a)

Documentary/Drama. Starring Hatidze Muratova, Nazife Muratova. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 13 Mar

#### IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK (15)

Drama/Romance. Starring KiKi Layne, Stephan James. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Sat 14 Mar

RICHARD JEWELL (15) Drama. Starring Paul Walter Hauser, Kathy Bates. Lichfield Garrick, Sat 14 Mar

BAIT (15) Drama. Starring Edward Rowe, Mary Woodvine. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 14 Mar

## **Events**

ADULT NIGHT Use the facilities of Legoland and enjoy some creative play sessions, Wed 11 Mar, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

GUIDED TOUR: HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF THE BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GAR-DENS Learn more about how the Gardens were designed, the history of the Victorian glasshouses and how the visitor attraction has evolved over time, Wed 11 Mar, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

THE BIG BANG FAIR 2020 Featuring theatre shows, interactive workshops & exhibits, and careers information from STEM professionals, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2020 Showcasing the best of badminton, the championship returns for the 110th time, Wed 11 - Sun 15 Mar, Arena Birmingham

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM'S ARTS & SCIENCE FESTIVAL Week-long celebration of research, culture and collaboration, Wed 11 - Tues 17 Mar, The University of Birmingham

SOUNDS OF THE 60S LIVE WITH TONY BLACKBURN Evening hosted by Radio Two's legendary DJ, with The 60s All Star Band & Singers recreating a selection of Swinging '60s classics, Sat 14 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

**LEGO WEEKEND WORKSHOP** Take part in a range of Lego-themed activities, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

THE PHOTOGRAPHY & THE VIDEO SHOW
Try out the latest kit and listen to talks
by legendary photographers and
filmmakers, Sat 14 - Tues 17 Mar,
NEC, Birmingham

TROLL-TASTIC ADVENTURE Whether you're a pop diva or a rock god, prepare for the Discovery Centre's Troll-tastic Adventure, Sat 14 Mar - Sun 10 May, Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham

# thelist

# Gigs

**LOUISE REDKNAPP** Mon 16 Mar. O2 Institute. Birmingham

PALACE Tues 17 Mar. O2 Institute, B'ham

ARTHUR DOHERTY BAND Tues 17 Mar. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**HAK BAKER** Tues 17 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE REGRETTES** Wed 18 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NICK DEWHURST BAND Wed 18 Mar, Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

**ELVIS COSTELLO & THE IMPOSTERS** Wed 18 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NF - THE SEARCH TOUR Wed 18 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

STRAY AND THE **GROUNDHOGS** Wed 18 Mar, The Robin, Bil-

KIDA KUDZ Wed 18 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE IRISH SESSION 'THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE' Wed 18 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DANCING ON TABLES + **SPECIAL GUESTS** Wed 18 Mar. The Sugarmill. Stoke-on-Trent

MIKE FARRIS Wed 18 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

HITS OF MOTOWN Wed 18 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CLOSE TO YOU - AN INTI-**MATE TRIBUTE TO THE **CARPENTERS** Thurs 19 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

**THE BLOCKHEADS** Thurs 19 Mar. The Robin. Bil-

**THE CAT EMPIRE** Thurs 19 Mar, O2 Institute. Birmingham

TWINNIE Thurs 19 Mar. O2 Academy, B'ham

THE HYPNOTICS / BLACK **BOMBERS** Thurs 19 Mar, Hare & Hounds,

**CIGARETTE SOCIAL CLUB** Thurs 19 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO

Birmingham

WITH IT Thurs 19 Mar, Arena Birmingham

QUILL Thurs 19 Mar. Lichfield Garrick

**HIGHLY SUSPECT** Thurs 19 Mar. O2 Institute. Birmingham

**SHINDIGERY** Thurs 19 Mar. Walsall Arena and Arts Centre

THE LAST ROGUES Fri 20 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TONY STANTON BAND + FUTURE FIRES Fri 20 Mar. Albert's Shed. Shrewsbury

THE URBAN VOODOO MACHINE Fri 20 Mar. Albert's Shed, Southwater Telford

**ULTIMATE COLDPLAY** Fri 20 Mar, The Robin, Bil-

THE GEORGE MICHAEL LEGACY Fri 20 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

KINGS & CAPTAINS Fri 20 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**BOILER ROOM PRES.** BASS & PERCS: BIRM-INGHAM Fri 20 Mar. Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE SKA45S Fri 20 Mar. The River Rooms, Stourbridge

JIVE TALKIN Fri 20 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre. Market Drayton. North Shropshire

NIRVANA TRIBUTE Fri 20 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford. Stoke-on-Trent

SKULL FOX Sat 21 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**LEE SCRATCH PERRY** Sat 21 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DAOIRÍ FARRELL Sat 21 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

**ARRIVAL - THE HITS OF** ABBA Sat 21 Mar. The Place, Telford

**BROKEN WITT REBELS** Sat 21 Mar, KK Steele Mill. Wolverhampton

TINY LEAVES Sat 21 Mar, The Hive, Shrewshury

FOREVER ELTON Sat 21 Mar. Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

**BUDDY HOLLY & THE CRICKETERS** Sat 21 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**LEE SCRATCH PERRY** Sat 21 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FOLK THE SYSTEM Sat 21 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's. Stourbridge

**DAN REED & DANNY** VAUGHN Sat 21 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

YELAWOLF Sat 21 Mar. O2 Institute, B'ham

THE GREATEST HITS OF **MOTOWN - HOW SWEET** IT IS Sat 21 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ENDINGS Sat 21 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

POP DIVAS LIVE! Sat 21 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MAETLIVE Sat 21 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**ROMAN KEMP** Sat 21 Mar. The Robin. Bilston

MICROBABY Sat 21 Mar, Albert's Shed. Shrews-

**ABEL SELAOCOE** Sun 22 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

SHREYA GHOSHAL LIVE 2020 Sun 22 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**SNAKE OIL & HARMONY** Sun 22 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

REAL LIES Sun 22 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES Sun 22 Mar. Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



The Blockheads - The Robin, Bilston

# Classical & **Easy Listening**

OPERA NORTH: ARYA SITAR CONCERTO A unique evening of Sitar, orchestral & choral music, Thurs 19 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**CONCERT IN THE ROUND Featuring** Carleton Etherington (organ recital), Fri 20 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

JIMMY BUCKLEY Fri 20 Mar. The Place, Telford, Shropshire

BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHES-TRA: ELEKTRA Featuring Kirill Karabits (conductor) & Catherine Foster (Elektra) Sat 21 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BUBLE MEETS SINATRA: THE SHOW-**DOWN Sat 21 Mar, Walsall Arena and Arts Centre

WALSALL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: MAGIC OF THE MOVIES Sat 21 Mar, St Barnabas Chuch Centre, Erdington, Birmingham

**ABEL SELAOCOE CELLO CONCERT** Sun 22 Mar. Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

BACH @ BART'S 1 Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 22 Mar, St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton

**UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM MUSIC** SOCIETY: VERDI'S MESSA DA REQUIEM Featuring Philharmonic Orchestra and University Chorus, Daniele Rosina (conductor), Julian Wilkins (chorus master) and Gweneth Ann Rand (soprano), Sun 22 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

# Comedy

TEO. VIO & COSTEL Mon 16 Mar. The Glee Club, Birmingham

ED BYRNE Tues 17 Mar, Theatre Severn. Shrewsbury

JIM DAVIDSON Wed 18 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

LLOYD GRIFFITH Wed 18 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KEVIN BLOODY WILSON Thurs 19 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MIKE BUBBINS, KEITH FARNAN & COM-**EDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 19 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

ROB AUTON Thurs 19 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Thurs 19 Mar, **Dudley Town Hall** 

ALFIE BROWN Fri 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NJAMBI MCGRATH Fri 20 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham ROB AUTON Fri 20 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

LAURA LEXX Fri 20 Mar, Bilston Town Hall

MIKE BUBBINS, KEITH FARNAN, JOSH BAULF & COMIC TBC Fri 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CHRISTIAN REILLY. PETER BUSH. STE-FANO PAOLINI & PETE OTWAY Sat 21 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

MIKE BUBBINS. KEITH FARNAN & COMICS TBC Sat 21 Mar, The Glee Club Birmingham

SUKH OJLA Sat 21 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

ANDREW BIRD, JACK GLEADOW, BREN-NAN REECE & DAMION LARKIN Sat 21 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SHAZIA MIRZA. MAUREEN YOUNGER & ANNETTE FAGON Sun 22 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM KAY Sun 22 Mar, The Glee Club. Birmingham

TOMMY SANDHU, EMILY LLOYD SAINI, SLIM & OMAR HAMDI Sun 22 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

## Theatre

STRANGERS ON A TRAINSET But this is no ordinary train - each passenger is reading a book and each book is a portal into a parallel universe of train-related crime fiction. Mon 16 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastleunder-Lyme

MY MOTHER SAID I NEVER SHOULD A moving and funny exploration of the lives of four generations of women in one family, Mon 16 - Wed 18 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE** Lavton Williams, Shobna Gulati & Shane Richie star in this 'funny, fabulous and feelgood' musical sensation, Mon 16 - Sat 21 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE MARISHA WALLACE TOUR An evening with one of the West End and Broadway's most highly acclaimed leading ladies, Tues 17 Mar. Lichfield Garrick

ON YOUR FEET! Smash-hit musical inspired by the true love story of Emilio and Gloria Estefan... Tues 17 -Sat 21 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT

North Staffs Operatic Society present an amateur staging of the iconic musical, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-

**BLOOD BROTHERS** Lyn Paul stars as Mrs Johnstone in Willy Russell's iconic play, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ONCE 'Ravishing love story with a bittersweet difference', Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WHITE PLAGUE Interactive experi-

# Monday 16 - Sun 22 March

ence set in a city in which an epidemic has left people with every sense but their sight, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE LAST QUIZ NIGHT ON EARTH New comedy from Box Of Tricks theatre company, Wed 18 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

PEPPER & HONEY A play about love, loss, culture, heritage, new beginnings... and making pepper biscuits live on stage, Wed 18 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE UNREMARKABLE DEATH OF MARILYN MONROE Dyad Productions reveal a never-before-seen Marilyn Monroe - alone in her bedroom on the eve of her death, Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**Z0G** Smash-hit stage version of Julia Donaldson's much-loved book, Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RENT Stourbridge Town Hall Theatre present an amateur staging of Jonathan Larson's iconic play, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

THE LAST QUIZ NIGHT ON EARTH New comedy from Box Of Tricks theatre company, Thurs 19 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

MAN ON THE MOON - KEISHA THOMPSON A journey through space and time, fuelled by love, fear and Afro-futurism, Fri 20 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

THE UNREMARKABLE DEATH OF MARILYN MONROE Dyad Productions reveal a never-before-seen Marilyn Monroe, alone in her bedroom on the eve of her death, Fri 20 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

QUEER LADY M Queer Lady M brings together devised performance, Shakespeare and drag while exploring the real-life experiences of working-class gender-fluid artist Shane Gabriel, Fri 20 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**TARTUFFE** Brummie comedy of faith, family & #fakingit, Fri 20 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, Birmingham Repertory Theatre

LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR Step back in time to the golden era of music, Sat 21 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatro

HOLD ON LET GO Poignant and personal meditation on the gaps in our memories... Sat 21 Mar, Lichfield Garriols

IMAGINATION A performance by KRYPT's Junior Group in two halves, featuring Ernie's Incredible Illucinations by Alan Ayckbourn and a devised piece exploring the way the world looks through the eyes of imagination, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

BLEAK HOUSE Dickens' darkly comic

tale is retold by The Pantaloons in their own inimitable style, Sun 22 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

# **Cabaret**

CIRCUS OF HORRORS A 'rock'n'roll rollercoaster of amazing and bizarre acts', Thurs 19 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

MAGIC ATTACK Luke Baker's one-man show featuring magic, comedy and mind-reading, Sat 21 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

COME WHAT MAY - THE ULTIMATE TRIB-UTE TO MOULIN ROUGE Sat 21 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

### **Dance**

SKIN REIMAGINED Ace Dance present a powerful double bill exploring what lies beneath the skin, Wed 18 Mar, Walsall Arena

BOTIS SEVA: BLKDOG Genre-defying blend of hip-hop dance and free-form antics, Thurs 19 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

VERVE: MIXED BILL Featuring new works by Olivier Award-winning dance theatre maker Botis Seva, dancer-turned-choreographer Lali Ayguadé, rising star in Scandinavian contemporary dance Mari Carrasco and maverick choreographer Douglas Thorpe, Thurs 19 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

GIOVANNI PERNICE: THIS IS ME New show paying homage to the music and dances that have inspired the Strictly star's career to date, Sat 21 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## **Talks**

ALEXIS CHABALA AND LORAYNE CRAW-FORD: ARTIST CURATOR TALK AND TOUR Join Alexis & Lorayne as they share their experiences of working with some of music's most influential artists, Wed 18 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

BEN FOGLE: TALES FROM THE WILDER-NESS Join the intrepid adventurer as he recounts his stories from a career spent globetrotting, Thurs 19 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BEN FOGLE: TALES FROM THE WILDER-NESS Join the intrepid adventurer as he recounts his stories from a career spent globetrotting, Fri 20 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FRANCIS ROSSI: I TALK TOO MUCH The legendary Status Quo frontman shares secrets from his 50-plus years in the business, Sun 22 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

# FIIM INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

#### OFFICIAL SECRETS (15)

Biography/Crime. Starring Keira Knightley, Matt Smith. Stourbridge

Town Hall, Mon 16 Mar
THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON (12a) Ad-

venture/Comedy. Starring Zack Gottsagen, Ann Owens. The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 16 Mar

JUST MERCY (15) Drama. Starring Michael B. Jordan, Jamie Foxx. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Mon 16 Mar; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 17 & Thurs 19 Mar

#### HONEYLAND (12a)

Documentary/Drama. Starring Hatidze Muratova, Nazife Muratova. Foreign language, subtitled. Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 17 Mar

TOP HAT (U) Comedy/Musical. Starring Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers. Sparc Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire, Tues 17 Mar

**SORRY WE MISSED YOU (15)** Drama. Starring Kris Hitchen, Debbie Honeywood. Sparc Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire, Thurs 19 Mar

EVERYBODY KNOWS (15) Crime/Mystery. Starring Penélope Cruz, Javier Bardem. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 Mar

DARK WATERS (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Mark Ruffalo, Anne Hathaway. Wellington Orbit, Telford, Fri 20

**DOLITTLE (PG)** Action/Adventure. Starring Robert Downey Jr., Antonio Banderas. Lichfield Garrick, Fri 20 Mar

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COP-PERFIELD (PG) Comedy/Drama. Starring Dev Patel, Hugh Laurie. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Sat 21 Mar

END OF THE CENTURY (15) Drama. Starring Juan Barberini, Ramon Pujol. Foreign language, subtitled. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sun 22 Mar

## **Events**

BELLA: BOOK LAUNCH University of Wolverhampton Lecturer in Creative & Professional Writing, RM Francis, launches his debut novel and love song to the Black Country... Tues 17 Mar. Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

CURATOR'S CHOICE: DRESSED TO THE NINES Join Dr Rebecca Unsworth, Research Assistant (Decorative Art) and curator of the Dressed To The Nines exhibition, for an informal gallery talk, Wed 18 Mar, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

FLOWER ARRANGING WORKSHOP Learn how to form a stunning arrangement under the guidance of a professional florist, Thurs 19 Mar, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Stafford

SEWING FOR PLEASURE INCLUDING FASHION & EMBROIDERY Featuring all the latest supplies and ideas, including fabrics, yarns, patterns and threads, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW Whatever your passion, be it knitting, cross stitch, paper crafting, jewellery, dressmaking, felting or new craft trends, there's sure to be something to your liking, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

MINDFUL MUSEUM-YOGA FOR UNDER 5S Stories and rhymes linked to the museum's collections encourage children to perform stretching and moving sequences, Fri 20 Mar, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Han-

SHIRE HORSE SOCIETY NATIONAL SHOW 2020 The world's largest gathering of shire horses, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Mar, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford

lev. Stoke-on-Trent

GUIDED BIRD WALK – EARLY SPRING Identify and listen for the songs and calls of resident and incoming migrant birds, Sat 21 Mar, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR 2020 New collection of short films, Sat 21 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

FLOWER CROWN WORKSHOP Harness some flower power and learn how to make a gorgeous crown, Sat 21 Mar, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Stafford

**SINGALONG 80S** Sat 21 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

MINIATURA - THE DOLLS HOUSE SHOW Specialist modelling show dedicated to model houses and all that goes in them, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

MCM COMIC CON Whether you're a fan of comic books, cosplay, video games, anime, movies or books, MCM Birmingham 'has it all', Sat 21 -Sun 22 Mar, NEC, Birmingham



ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS FAIR Sun 22 Mar, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

VINTAGE AND VINYL FAIR Featuring a large selection of records, vintage accessories, clothing and homewares, Sun 22 Mar, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

# thelist



The Jack Fletcher Band - The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

# **Gigs**

FRIENDSHIP Mon 23 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

BRASS AGAINST Mon 23 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

HUMANIST + SPECIAL GUESTS Mon 23 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

I PREVAIL Tues 24 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**DIGDAT** Tues 24 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PICTISH TRAIL Tues 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NIMMO Tues 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds B'ham

CIGARETTES AFTER SEX Wed 25 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WHITNEY QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Wed 25 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

DANCING ON TABLES + SPECIAL GUESTS Wed 25 Mar, The Sunflower

Lounge, Birmingham SOUL ACOUSTIC FEAT. RICARDO WILLIAMS, MANGA SAINT HILARE &

MORE... Wed 25 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**HAGGARD CAT** Wed 25 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**COLIN THACKERY** Wed 25 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

FISH Wed 25 Mar, KK Steele Mill, W'hampton KERR FAGAN PLUS JOHN HOARE Wed 25 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

SAMBROSO ALLSTARS PERFORM THE BUENA VISTA Wed 25 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

RAT BOY Thurs 26 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

CASSELS + SPECIAL GUESTS Thurs 26 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**DANKO JONES** Thurs 26 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

WILL DOWNING Thurs 26 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DEL CAMINO Thurs 26 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

QUILL FEATURING BEV BEVAN Thurs 26 Mar,

The Robin, Bilston
HERMANS HERMITS

Thurs 26 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**THE ODDFELLOWS** Thurs 26 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE SUBWAYS - YOUNG FOR ETERNITY Thurs 26 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SLOTFACE** Thurs 26 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

FLEETWOOD MAC - DON'T STOP Thurs 26 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FALSE HEADS + SPECIAL GUESTS Thurs 26 Mar, The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham MR SAM & THE DEDNUTZ Thurs 26 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DARCY OAKE Fri 27 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

RETRO VIDEO CLUB Fri 27 Mar, Dead Wax, Birmingham

CAFFEINE KILL Fri 27 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

LED ZEPPELIN - FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 27 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

LUCY WAINWRIGHT ROCHE Fri 27 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

POLICE SYNCHRONICITY Fri 27 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-

DARREN PAGE - THE VOICE OF ROY ORBISON Fri 27 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

COCK SPARRER Fri 27 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THE ALARM Fri 27 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

CAPTAIN STINGRAY'S GROOVE MACHINE Fri 27 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

SHOP FRONT HEROES + LITTLE GHOST Fri 27 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**BLOSSOMS** Fri 27 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**THE D DAY DARLINGS** Fri 27 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms THE DUALERS Fri 27 Mar, KK Steele Mill, Wolverhampton

HENDRIX, CLAPTON & CREAM PERFORMED BY VOODOO ROOM Fri 27 Mar, The Place, Telford

**LIGHTNING SEEDS** Fri 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

APOLLO SOUL Fri 27 Mar - Sat 28 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE SLOW READERS CLUB Sat 28 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**0H! WHAT A NIGHT** Sat 28 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

**NOUGHTY NINETIES** Sat 28 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE JACK FLETCHER BAND Sat 28 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**SATINDER SARTAAJ** Sat 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AGE OF GLASS Sat 28 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

RUMOURS OF FLEET-WOOD MAC Sat 28 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

DAKESIS: FRACTURES ALBUM LAUNCH Sat 28 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

A LOVE FROM OUTER SPACE Sat 28 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MARTHAGUNN Sat 28 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

CRYBABY & THE HOOCHIE COOCHIE BOYS AND JIM KIRKPATRICK BAND Sat 28 Mar, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

LENNON RETROSPECTIVE + FULL BAND Sat 28 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Dudley

KOJEY RADICAL Sat 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE JONI MITCHELL CEL-EBRATION Sat 28 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

LOS PACAMINOS FEAT PAUL YOUNG Sat 28 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**G00D T0 G0** Sat 28 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**CABIN BOY JUMPED SHIP** Sat 28 Mar, The Asy-

lum, Birmingham

**DAVID GRAY** Sat 28 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

IAN PROWSE Sat 28 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

KRYSTHLA Sat 28 Mar, KK Steele Mill, Wolverhampton

MIDLAND Sat 28 Mar, O2 Institute. B'ham

PLUG AND PLAY Sat 28 Mar, Wade Street Church Hall, Lichfield

KEITH SWEAT AND MON-TELL JORDAN Sun 29 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**GHETTO FUNKULAR** Sun 29 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**GEORGIA RUTH** Sun 29 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**LOBSTER** Sun 29 Mar, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

JAY SOM+ SPECIAL GUESTS Sun 29 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE LONG GAME** Sun 29 Mar, Scruffy Murphys, Birmingham

**GREENTEA PENG** Sun 29 Mar, Hare & Hounds,

Birmingham

BREAST CANCER NOW WITH PETE BODDIS BAND Sun 29 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

M HUNCHO Mon 30 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

MAGNUM Mon 30 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

GZA - 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIQUID SWORDS Mon 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WILLIAM DUVALL (OF ALICE IN CHAINS) Tues 31 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BARENAKED LADIES Tues 31 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HUNTER AND THE BEAR + STRANDED ASTRONAUT Tues 31 Mar, The Castle

& Falcon, Birmingham
PEGGY SUE PLUS SUPPORT Tues 31 Mar, Hare

& Hounds, Birmingham AN AUDIENCE WITH JAKE THACKRAY Tues 31 Mar,

The Robin, Bilston **GOLDFRAPP** Tues 31 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NEON WALTZ Tues 31 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham



Georgia Ruth - The Hive, Shrewsbury

# Monday 23 - Tuesday 31 March

# Classical & Easy Listening

SIMON HÖFELE TRUMPET RECITAL Programme includes a new commission from Miroslav Srnka, Mon 23 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN RECITAL Also featuring Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir & Paul Spicer (conductor). Programme includes works by Howells, Elgar & Zoltan Kodály, Mon 23 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE AVEX ENSEMBLE: BLADE RUNNER
Thurs 26 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

CONCERT IN THE ROUND Featuring Nao Dickson & Christopher Seed (piano duet), Fri 27 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO: 100 YEARS OF MOVIE MAGIC Featuring Michael Seal (conductor), Tommy Pearson (presenter) & Jonathan Martindale (violin). Programme includes works by Newman, Bliss, Steiner, Barry, Shore, Bernstein, Coates, Zimmer & more... Fri 27 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BBC PHILHARMONIC: CZECH MATES Featuring Clemens Schuldt (conductor) & Simon Trpčeski (soloist). Programme includes works by Smetana, Shostakovich & Dvorak, Fri 27 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

LUDLOW CHORAL SOCIETY: CRUCIFIXUS
Featuring Nicola Starkie (conductor),
Rupert Jeffcoat (organ/piano) &
Lawrence White (baritone). Programme includes works by Mealor,
Vaughan Williams, Stanford, Bairstow
& Bainton, Sat 28 Mar, St Laurence's
Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

LUDLOW MUSIC SOCIETY: MY DEAREST HEDGEHOG A narrated recital, devised and written by Henrietta Bredin, exploring the relationship between Richard Strauss & his wife Pauline. Featuring Sarah Fox (soprano), Susie Allan (piano) & Michael Pennington (narrator), Sat 28 Mar, Henderson Hall, Moor Park, Ludlow, South Shropshire

PHOENIX SINGERS: HANDEL'S MESSIAH Sat 28 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM GAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: OTHER WORLDS Featuring Jack Lovell (conductor) & special guest mezzo-soprano. Programme includes works by Dvorak & Elgar, Sat 28 Mar, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

NORTH STAFFS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: SPRING CONCERT Featuring Jon Malaxetxebarria (conductor) & Graham Morris (cello soloist). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Tchaikovsky & Bruch, Sat 28 Mar, St Thomas More Catholic College, Stoke-on-Trent

SINGALONG WITH CBSO: VERDI'S RE-

**QUIEM** Featuring Simon Halsey (conductor), Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BACH @ BART'S 1 Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 29 Mar, St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton

**THE ROYAL AIR FORCE & FRIENDS** Mon 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE MARMEN QUARTET Featuring Johannes Marmen & Ricky Gore's (violins), Bryony Gibson-Cornish (viola) & Steffan Morris (cello), Programme includes works by Mozart, Sciarrino & Beethoven, Tues 31 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

# Comedy

**ED BYRNE** Tues 24 Mar, Walsall Arena and Arts Centre

**GEOFF NORCOTT** Wed 25 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ANDREW BIRD, JOHN MOLONEY & COM-EDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 26 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

MARK THOMAS Fri 27 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CATHERINE BOHART** Fri 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**STEPHEN BAILEY** Fri 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM BINNS - THE PSYCHIC COMEDIUM FEATURING IVAN BRACKENBURY Fri 27 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN Fri 27 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

ANDREW BIRD, JOHN MOLONEY, CHARLIE BAKER & COMIC TBC Fri 27 - Sat 28 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SCOTT BENNETT, JOSH PUGH, JENNY COLLIER & DAVE LONGLEY Sat 28 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

PATRICK MONAHAN Sat 28 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**JACK DEE** Sun 29 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RHOD GILBERT Mon 30 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JOSH WIDDICOMBE** Tues 31 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

## **Theatre**

MADAME OVARY Based on a real-life blog of a twentysomething creative and her battle to stay alive when diagnosed with cancer, Tues 24 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's story of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on opposite sides of the tracks, only to meet again with fateful consequences, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE GLEE CLUB 'Raucous' comedy



Ed Byrne - Walsall Arena

concerning five hard-working harddrinking miners and a church organist rehearsing for the local gala, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

JAN BLAKE - LIFE AND DEATH AND ALL THE BITS IN BETWEEN From the world being created from a drop of milk, to the appearance of death, join Jan Blake as she recounts African tales of creation, Wed 25 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**EX-BATTS AND BROILERS** Light-hearted and moving story of female friendship and industrial meat farming... Wed 25 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Cheryl Fergison, Nicole Barber-Lane, Rebecca Wheatley & Nicki French star in a 'heartfelt, reassuring and unflinching' look at the joys of menopause and friendship, Wed 25 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

TWISTED TALES VOL.2 Three brand new twisted thrillers, live on stage, Wed 25 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek. Staffs

BUCKETS & 100 A play with a unique perspective on a universal dilemna - how do you deal with the fact that time always runs out? Wed 25 - Sat 28 Mar, The Crescent Theatre. B'ham

THE HIGH TABLE Temi Wilkey's debut play - 'a heartbreaking family drama played out between the heavens and earth', Wed 25 Mar - Thurs 9 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

MEDICINE'S MONSTROUS DAUGHTERS
Two plays inspired by real-life events are woven together across time to expose unpalatable truths about the treatment of people deemed 'different' or 'damaged', Thurs 26 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

BOTTOM Story about bums, Beyoncé

and burnt fish fingers, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

URINETOWN Amateur staging by Birmingham Ormiston Academy Year 13
Musical Theatre, Thurs 26 - Sat 28
Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

THRILLER LIVE Theatrical extravaganza celebrating the music and career of Michael Jackson, Thurs 26 -Sat 28 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stokeon-Trent

AN EVENING OF ERIC & ERN Much acclaimed homage to one of comedy's most famous pairings, Fri 27 Mar, Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

WANTED Gazebo Theatre explores the stories of five ordinary yet extraordinary women who share a passion for standing up for what they feel is right, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

LORD OF THE FLIES The Young REP seniors present an amateur staging of William Golding's classic tale of isolation, power, identity and violence, Fri 27 Mar - Sat 28 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY Goodhearted romp through favourite moments from the hit TV show, Sat 28 March, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**OH! WHAT A NIGHT** A musical journey through the career of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, Sat 28 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

THE WINTER'S TALE A moving new production which imagines 'a world where the ghosts of fascist Europe collide with the horrors of The Handmaid's Tale, before washing up on a joyful seashore', Sat 28 Mar - Fri 2 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

# Monday 23 - Tuesday 31 March



Mi Flamenco - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SARTAAJ LIVE An evening with songwriter, singer, composer, poet and actor Satinder Sartaaj, Sun 29 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BEN HART: WONDER The Britain's Got Talent 2019 finalist shines a light on 'magic, life, the universe and the darkest corners of your imaginations', Mon 30 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**AVENUE Q JUNIOR** Amateur staging presented by Lollipop Theatre Arts, Mon 30 - Tues 31 Mar, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

**HEROES** The Nonentities present Gerald Sibleyras' French comedy, Mon 30 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

THE NAVY LARK A cast of three bring to life the classic days of radio comedy, Tues 31 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmincham

LADYKILLER Blood-soaked morality tale about victimhood... Tues 31 Mar - Thurs 2 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

CURTAINS Jason Manford stars in a 'hilarious whodunnit packed full of catchy songs, unforgettable characters and plot twists', Tues 31 Mar -Sat 4 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE WOMAN IN BLACK Stage adaptation of one of the world's most chilling tales, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, The Alexandra. Birmingham

**CHICAGO** An amateur production of the award-winning musical from Tab Operatic Society, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, Stourbridge Town Hall

CABARET John Partridge stars as Emcee in Kander & Ebb's landmark musical, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent MURDER, MARGARET AND ME 'Humour, thrills, sleuthing and pathos' combine in a unique play for lovers of crime fiction, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

HANGMAN Amateur staging of Martin McDonagh's dark drama, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, Stoke Repertory Theatre. Stoke-on-Trent

# **Kids Shows**

SARAH & DUCK Puppetry, storytelling & music combine in a stage show featuring characters from the BAFTAwinning CBeebies show, Tues 24 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

### **Dance**

BURN THE FLOOR Kevin & Joanne Clifton take to the stage to showcase skill and virtuosity while working their way through an extensive dance repertoire, Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GIOVANNI PERNICE: THIS IS ME New show paying homage to the music and dances that have inspired the Strictly star's career to date, Fri 27 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BALLROOM BOYS Brand new show featuring Strictly Come Dancing stars Ian Waite & Vincent Simone, Sat 28 Mar, Prince of Wales Centre, Can-

MI FLAMENCO Evocative choreographed production combining 'imagery, emotive flamenco dance and soul-stirring music', Sat 28 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AKAAR Evening of 'wonder & passion'

from Midlands-based Sonia Sabri Company, Sun 29 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

# **Talks**

MY NAME IS WHY: IN CONVERSATION WITH LEMN SISSAY A poet, playwright & broadcaster, this is Lemn's story of neglect and determination, misfortune and hope, cruelty and triumph, Mon 23 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

JAN BLAKE - LIFE AND DEATH AND ALL THE BITS IN BETWEEN African tales of creation and extinction - and the reasons behind both, Wed 25 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE HISTORY OF THE KITCHEN FIRE-PLACE Talk by David J Eveleigh, formerly of the Coalbrookdale Museum & the Black Country Living Museum, Wed 25 Mar, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Ironbridge

FRANCIS ROSSI: I TALK TOO MUCH The legendary Status Quo frontman shares secrets from his 50-plus years in the business, Thurs 26 Mar, The Place, Telford, Shropshire

SHAUN RYDER The Happy Mondays frontman discusses his life, career & the music industry, Sat 28 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

# **Podcasts**

TABLE MANNERS WITH JESSIE WARE

Jessie and her chef extraordinaire mum, Lennie, chat with a guest from the world of music, culture and politics over a three-course meal, Sat 28 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

RICHARD HERRING'S LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE PODCAST "The Podfather'

(The Guardian) brings his award-winning podcast to Birmingham, chatting with a surprise guest from the city, Sat 28 Mar. Birmingham Town Hall

DRUNK WOMEN SOLVING CRIME Join Hannah George, Catie Wilkins and Taylor Glenn as they welcome guests to test out their drunk detective skills, Sat 28 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

STANDARD ISSUE Comedian Sarah Millican joins the Standard Issue team as they bring their regular gigcast to Birmingham, Sun 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE TWO SHOT PODCAST Heart-breaking, hard-hitting and honest podcast about people's stories. Hosted by actor Craig Parkinson (Line Of Duty), Sun 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

FILMS TO BE BURIED WITH WITH BRETT GOLDSTEIN Join comedian, actor, writer and swimmer Brett Goldstein and an extra-special guest as they talk life & death by way of the movies, Sun 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

## **Events**

**BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL** Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Mar, The Town Hall, Burton-upon-Trent

THE NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENO-VATING SHOW Featuring practical tips, inspiring advice and the latest products for renovating your home, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

**GEORGIAN TASTE TOUR** Explore the 18th century through your tastebuds, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Mar, Soho House, Birmingham

PRACTICAL CLASSICS CLASSIC CAR & RESTORATION SHOW Kickstart your classic restoration, Fri 27 - Sun 29 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

BONGO'S BINGO Expect 'an insane mix of a live show, a rave and a headsdown game of bingo, complete with dance-offs, plenty of heckling and lots of audience participation', Sat 28 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GYMNASTICS WORLD CUP 2020 Top international gymnasts battle it out for a spot at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Sat 28 Mar, Arena Birmingham

**BUG HOTELS** Attract creepy crawlies into your garden by making a bug hotel for them, Sat 28 Mar, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley

BIRMINGHAM VEGAN FESTIVAL Featuring hot food stalls, cooking demos, talks and more, Sat 28 Mar, Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham

CELEBRATION TALK & TOUR: WOMEN'S WORK IN THE JEWELLERY QUARTER

Special costumed guided tour and talk celebrating the women of the Jewellery Quarter, Sat 28 Mar, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, B'ham

AUTISM EARLY BIRD Special early opening at Enginuity for families with children who would enjoy the museum at a quieter time, Sat 28 Mar, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge

BRITISH ALPACA SOCIETY NATIONAL SHOW For everyone with a genuine interest in alpacas, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, Telford International Centre

JAWSOME SHARKS... AND FRIENDS Find the missing Top Trumps cards to become a Jawsome Ranger, Sat 28 Mar - Sun 10 May, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

MIND RIDE Featuring live music, food and raffle/tombola prizes to be won, Sun 29 Mar, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

TAIL WAGGERS TRAIL Enjoy a 5K family-friendly walk, jog or run with your four-legged friend, Sun 29 Mar, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

DISCOVERY CLUB – WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND? Experiment with different ways to know when the wind is passing by, Sun 29 Mar, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire



4th & 5th April 2020

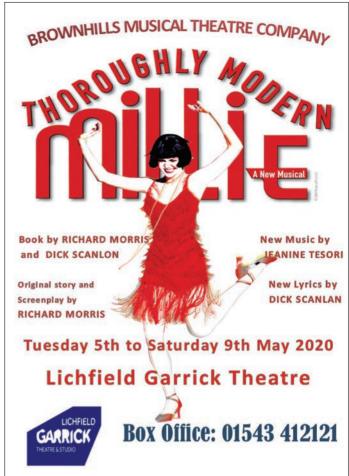
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MONDAY 2 - SATURDAY 7 MARCH 2020













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