

Coventry & Warwickshire

ISSUE 421 FEBRUARY 2022

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inside:

TALE OF TWO CITIES

reimagining of Dickens' historic
novel at Warwick Arts Centre



DRAPERS' HALL

curtain up at Coventry's latest
entertainment venue



BOWS AT THE READY

Festival of Archery comes to
Warwick Castle for half term...



BIRMINGHAM



Director Carlos Acosta

Don Quixote

18 – 26 February

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HIPPODROME

birminghamhippodrome.com

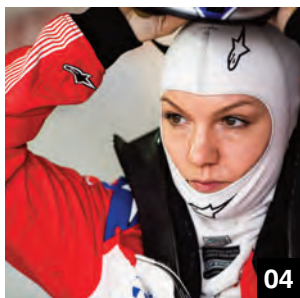
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ROYAL BALLET

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14



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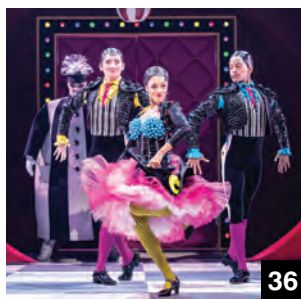
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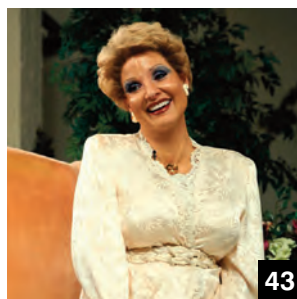
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27



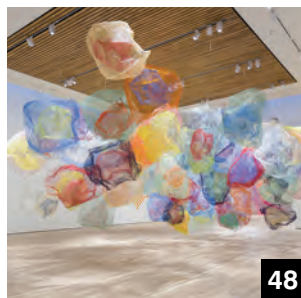
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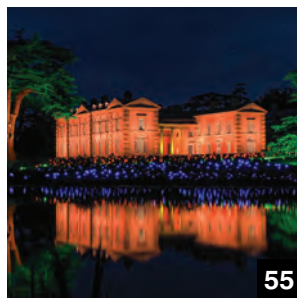
43



46



48



55

INSIDE:

First Word

4

Classical

13

Gigs

17

Comedy

20

Theatre

24

Dance

36

Film

43

Visual Arts

48

Events

51

What's On

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New exhibition explores women in motorsport

A brand-new exhibition celebrating female motorsport is currently available to view at Coventry Transport Museum.

Commenting on the installation, the venue's Francis Nielsen said: "We're hoping the show will inspire future generations to follow in these brilliant women's footsteps. We wanted to focus on the impact women had on all aspects of motorsports alongside current developments such as grass-roots racing. What better place to demonstrate our ability to innovate than in the home of the cycle industry and birthplace of the motor car in the UK."

Women In Motorsport shows at the museum until 31 May.

Yonex badminton championships back in Birmingham

Badminton England and the Championships return to Utilita Arena Birmingham next month (16 - 20 March), bringing the best players from around the world to compete in one of the sport's oldest and most prestigious tournaments.

For more information and to book tickets, visit: allenglandbadminton.com



Bach's choral Passion at Worcester Cathedral

One of the most significant classical choral works ever written is to be performed by 150 voices at a major concert in Worcester this spring.

Worcester Festival Choral Society is bringing JS Bach's Baroque masterwork, St John Passion, to Worcester Cathedral on Saturday 19 March. The concert marks the conclusion of the Society's 160th season.

Family rave at the cathedral

Coventry Cathedral is next month hosting a family rave in celebration of the life and work of the city's electronic music pioneer, Delia Derbyshire.

Presented by Big Fish Little Fish and Delia Phonics Festival, the event takes place on Saturday 5 March and features a multi-sensory dancefloor, craft and playdoh tables, a giant colouring-in mural, a baby chill area and a 'toddler town'. For more information and to book tickets, visit: eventbrite.co.uk



Call out for people to share stories about life in the West Midlands



Leamington Spa dance-circus company Motionhouse is calling on Midlanders to share their stories about life in the region. Motionhouse last month unveiled a special

post box in the city's Centenary Square and invited people to post their stories there. All the stories will be uploaded onto a digital platform via the Motionhouse website. Commenting on the initiative, Motionhouse Rehearsal Director Junior Cunningham said: "The stories will form a snapshot of life in the region as Birmingham and the West Midlands become the focus of international attention through the Commonwealth Games."

Lieutenant Pigeon and Mouldy Old Dough at Coventry Music Museum

A Coventry band's number-one single is being celebrated at the city's Music Museum - 50 years after it spent four weeks at the top of the charts.

Mouldy Old Dough was a smash-hit for Lieutenant Pigeon back in 1972, and now its chartbusting success is being explored in a brand-new exhibition at the museum. Highlights of the installation include a reconstruction of the front room of 25 Kingsway - the semi-detached house where the single was recorded - and a chance to have a selfie with Lieutenant Pigeon himself.



Sisters bring nature to young children at home

Two Coventry sisters have planted the seed for a new business that will help bring nature to the homes of young children all over the country. Louise Leng and Nicola Shingler have combined their skills to create My Nature Table, a seasonal nature-inspired gift box and gift bag business offering three to eight-year-olds a range of activities to enjoy, from growing food and flowers through to quizzes and crafts. Check out what's on offer at etsy.com/uk/shop/mynaturetable



Regeneration work begins in Leamington's Old Town

Work has begun on the regeneration of Leamington's Old Town, with the aim being to turn the area into 'a magnet for creative industries, building on the town's growing Silicon Spa reputation'. Regeneration specialist Complex Development Projects has started work on the restoration of the Grade II listed United Reformed Church, which will be converted to provide modern office space for creative and digital businesses.



Peaky Blinders dance show to premiere at the Hippodrome

Tickets are now on sale for Rambert Dance's Peaky Blinders: The Redemption Of Thomas Shelby.

The dance-theatre production will have its world premiere on 27 September at co-producing partner venue Birmingham Hippodrome, where it will run until 2 October. Commenting on the show, Chris Sudworth, director of artistic programme at Birmingham Hippodrome, said: "We are delighted to be partnering with Rambert

on the creation and world premiere of Peaky Blinders: The Redemption Of Thomas Shelby. The opportunity to collaborate on a production that is so synonymous with our city is incredibly exciting, and we can't wait for audiences to experience the thrill of seeing the well-known characters from the show come to life on our stage in this sensational adaptation." For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: birminghamhippodrome.com

Insomnia Gaming Festival is back



Insomnia Gaming Festival is making a return to Birmingham's NEC this Easter (Friday 15 to Monday 18 April). A diverse show 'for gamers of all backgrounds, identities and ethnicities', the four-day event features cosplay, brand-new and upcoming releases, indie and tabletop games, gaming content creators and plenty more. For further information and to book tickets, visit: insomniagamingfestival.com

Phoenix Dance celebrates its 40th anniversary with Midlands dates

A Leeds-based dance ensemble is this spring celebrating its 40th birthday by visiting the Midlands with a 'special anniversary' programme of entertainment.

Bringing together a range of work from across its history, Phoenix Dance Theatre visits Malvern Theatres on Tuesday 15 February and Birmingham Rep on Saturday 12 March. For more information and to book tickets, go to: phoenixdancetheatre.co.uk



Prize medal goes on display at Coventry art gallery & museum

A unique part of Coventry's past has been purchased by the city's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum.

The Great Exhibition Prize Medal is now on display in the Herbert's History Gallery. The medal was awarded to the Coventry Ribbon Committee for the Coventry Town Ribbon in the 1800s. The ribbon was woven especially for the 1851 Great Exhibition, and the bronze medal was awarded to recognise its quality.



Batonbearers needed for Brum 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games has launched a search to find 2,022 Batonbearers for the Queen's Baton Relay in England.

The relay traditionally builds anticipation for the Games 'by celebrating, connecting and exciting communities across the Commonwealth, and shining a light on untold stories and unsung local heroes from the places it visits'. To nominate and find out more, go to birmingham2022.com/qbr

New four-day festival set to celebrate the life and work of renowned poet

Solihull is this month hosting a brand-new festival in celebration of one of the town's most famous names.

British-American poet WH Auden (1907 - 1973) was a very young child when his family moved to Solihull.

The new festival - taking place at multiple venues from 18 to 21 February - will explore Auden's artistic output through interpretations of his work.

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



Monstrous beast on the loose at Coventry Belgrade

The Coventry Belgrade is this month presenting a brand-new version of *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* (Tuesday 8 to Sat 12 February). A co-production by Original Theatre Company and Octagon Theatre Bolton, the show combines 'an exhilarating

collision of farce, theatrical invention and wonderfully comic performances to offer a brand-new twist on the greatest detective story of all time'.

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

The UK's oldest working cinema reopens in Brum

The UK's oldest working cinema, The Electric Birmingham, has reopened under new management.

First opened in 1909, the cinema has shown everything from silent films and newsreels to adult movies. Regular filmgoers can become members of the Electric, with membership including complimentary film tickets, no booking fee, exclusive events and discounts. A new menu is also on offer at the venue.



Dick Whittington is the Albany's first in-house community panto, drawing performers from across the city, and has more than 80 children taking part.

Bumper year ahead for British Motor Museum

The British Motor Museum in Warwick has announced a schedule of over 30 motoring shows for 2022, including several brand-new events.

The line-up includes the ever-popular Gaydon Land Rover Show, National Metro & Mini Show, and Classic & Vintage Commercial. To check out the full programme, visit britishmotormuseum.co.uk

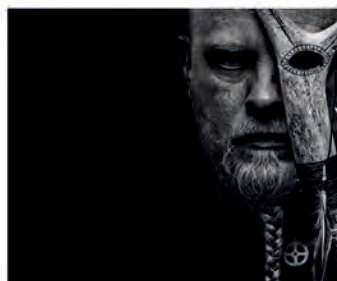


New half-term date for Dick at the Albany

Coventry's Albany Theatre is presenting its postponed Christmas pantomime production of *Dick Whittington* during February half-term.

The show fell victim to the pandemic in December but will now run at the venue from Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 February.

There's something for everyone at **Symphony Hall** and **Town Hall**



Wardruna
Mon 21 Mar
Symphony Hall



**Sandi Toksvig
Live!**
**The National
Trevor Tour**
Thu 19 May
Symphony Hall

**Fascinating
Aida**

Thu 24 Mar &
Fri 25 March
Town Hall



**The High
Kings**

Fri 10 Jun
Town Hall



**Midge Ure –
The Voice &
Visions Tour**
Fri 1 Apr
Symphony Hall



Jeff Garlin
Tue 21 Jun
Town Hall

Nick Lowe
Mon 11 Apr 2022
Town Hall



**A1:
The A Game**
Mon 19 Sep
Town Hall

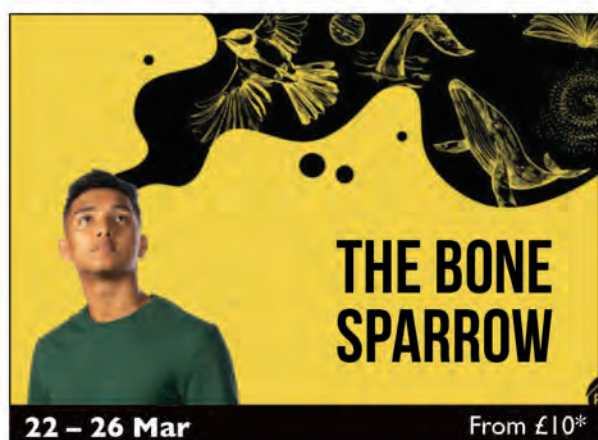


**Strictly Come
Dancing: The
Professionals
2022**
Sun 8 May
Symphony Hall



Howard Jones
Thu 20 Oct
Town Hall

Book Online: **bmusic.co.uk**



BOOK NOW www.belgrade.co.uk

*Ticket price includes a £1.50 booking fee. No fee applies if booking online.

The Masked Singer heads to Utilita Arena Birmingham

Hit Saturday night TV show The Masked Singer heads out on a live tour this spring and will be stopping off at Utilita Arena Birmingham on Tuesday 5 April. The show's producers are promising 'stunning set pieces, brand-new and fabulously elaborate character costumes, and a dazzling series of spectacular song & dance routines'. For further information and to book tickets, visit: utilitaarenabham.co.uk



Moira's Wet Fish Shop installation pays homage to local fishmonger

An award-winning installation celebrating a legendary Coventry business will be available to view in the city's Spon End next month. Set up on the pavement outside the Grapevine Shop on Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 March, Moira's Wet Fish Shop pays homage to local fishmonger Moira Holt. Moira ran her business from the premises until the early 1990s, when she died from cancer aged just 41. The installation includes art, music and crafts.



West End stars to perform in new musical theatre festival

Warwickshire's Ragley Hall is this spring hosting a brand-new musical theatre event. Taking place at the venue on Sunday 1 May, Gaiety Musical Theatre Festival will feature theatrical workshops, a fairground, a festival

village and 10 hours of entertainment on multiple stages. Performers at the event include West End stars Marisha Wallace, Kerry Ellis, Lee Mead and Cassidy Janson. For more information, visit gaietyfestival.co.uk



Nativity! The Musical returns to the Midlands

Nativity! The Musical is making a Christmas 2022 return to Birmingham Repertory Theatre, five years after receiving its world premiere at the venue.

Debbie Isitt's highly acclaimed show centres around the fictional St Bernadette's School, where every child has one Christmas wish - to star in a Nativity.

Commenting on the news, the Rep's Artistic

Director, Sean Foley, said: "Christmas is a special time for families to come together, and Nativity! The Musical provides the perfect theatre treat for all ages."

The show runs at the Rep from Saturday 19 November to Saturday 7 January.

For more information and to book tickets, visit birmingham-rep.co.uk

THE REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED



The latest project by dance theatre company Lost Dog is a unique reimagining of Charles Dickens' historical novel, A Tale Of Two Cities, complete with on-stage filming. Steve Adams caught up with Artistic Director Ben Duke to find out about the challenges of making something new from an old classic.

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.'

The first sentence of Charles Dickens' *A Tale Of Two Cities* is one of the best-known opening lines in all of literature. It also seems to conveniently sum up the mindset of Lost Dog's Artistic Director, Ben Duke (also its co-founder as well as a performer and choreographer), as he grapples with my question about what it's like to finally be back at work after the Covid pandemic forced the company to go on hiatus.

"It's mixed... it's great but also hard, I think - exciting and difficult at the same time. It's amazing to be back in the studio and doing stuff, but there's this endless uncertainty around everything which we all feel. It's just so precarious. It forces you to only exist in the short-term - a case of today everyone's here and that's good, so let's get on with it and try not to think too far ahead."

Ben sounds cheery now, but lockdown clearly wasn't an enjoyable time. The theatre company's key personnel met on Zoom every week, but the only work being done was practical or administrative, and Ben struggled for motivation.

"For me it didn't feel like a creatively fruitful time, it was just administration and logistical stuff. I found the emptiness quite difficult. There's something about the normal routine of making shows that relies on deadlines and a time pressure, and once all that's gone and I have no idea when I'm going to be in a theatre again, it felt hard to make work."

Fortunately, when the company returned full-time last year, there was creative work waiting for them, as Ben had started an adaptation of *A Tale Of Two Cities* before lockdown. But why try and put such a complicated novel on the stage?

"It's a book that's been on my mind for a while. I read it a long time ago - I think it was on the A Level syllabus or something - and it really struck me as a teenager. There's also something about Dickens in that I couldn't imagine how I was going to put it on the stage, and I'm always drawn to things like

that, things that initially feel like a challenge.

"I was also interested to see whether it was possible to create something that could impact people in the same way that my teenage self was impacted by it."

At this point it's probably prudent to acknowledge that Lost Dog is hardly a traditional theatre company. It was named for its 'mongrel' style of work that typically contains elements of theatre, dance, comedy, circus and storytelling. It's also safe to say that the company's take on Dickens' dramatic tale of love during the French Revolution won't be a period piece.

"It's definitely not a costume drama, no!" laughs Ben. "Our version is a reimagining, and the interesting thing for me is the characters and their relationships. I'm not trying to put Dickens down, but there's a kind of simplicity to his characters in that they are either good or bad, and no one is really like that. It's based in that Victorian Christian view of the world, but I'm interested in what those people would be like now, so we're reimagining them as people we'd recognise now."

Ben also believes Dickens was guilty of underwriting the character of Lucie, the daughter of main protagonist Doctor Manette, so his adaptation addresses the issue by putting her front and centre. He's also had to remove a number of subplots and minor characters to create a 90-minute show out of a novel that would probably take 12 hours to read in one sitting.

"If people love the book and are coming for a faithful rendition, then it won't be what they're expecting, but it's totally rooted in the book - that's very much the inspiration.

"People who know the book will recognise the events and the characters, but at the same time we've only got 90 minutes, so of course there's huge compression and simplification."

Ben also hopes the production stands on its own terms and makes sense to audience members who haven't read the novel.

"I've been inviting people in who don't know

the book to see if they follow the story, because once you get into something and know how it goes, you can slightly lose track of what it's like to come at it for the first time.

"I'm very aware that there's a lot of material that can be overwhelming, so it's trying to make the story clear."

The production also uses the device of filmed interviews. These are conducted by Lucie, speaking to characters 15 to 20 years after the events of the novel, not only to help her understand what happened but also to effectively recount the story for the audience.

"The filming felt like a good device for that, as well as a chance to show how we capture memories and record events to try to understand them. Film has this strange idea of truthfulness too - when we watch a documentary, we assume there's some kind of truth involved."

The technique means actors have to operate cameras while performing.

"It's a complicated process and the technical element adds a whole other level of unknown to it all, but the cast have been amazing. They're all performers with a background in dance, and a lot of it is choreography - 'you need to be here, and there's going to be a wire there' kind of thing - so in many ways they're used to it.

"But it's also interesting as a way of telling the story. Without wanting it to be another piece about lockdown, I have noticed how our relationship with live and filmed activity has changed. There's a strange intimacy or sense of privacy that we can experience with a camera that suggests you're having a conversation with just one person when it could potentially be viewed by thousands. The camera allows something personal to become very public, and I wonder how we feel about that - and if we even think about it."

A Tale Of Two Cities shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, from Wed 16 to Fri 18 February

THE COVENTRY MUSIC MUSEUM PRESENTS FOR 2022

This exhibition is fully endorsed by Nigel Fletcher & Rob Woodward of Lieutenant Pigeon. Lieutenant Pigeon were Coventry's first chart topping band, now you can experience just how "Mouldy Old Dough" was made and the legacies this unique song has created and even get your photo taken with Lieutenant Pigeon himself.

50 YEARS OF Mouldy Old Dough

WARWICK HALL
BHT

ORCHESTRA OF The Swan

Pastoral

Warwick Hall
Thur 17 March, 2022 7.30pm

Virtuoso Violinist **Thomas Gould** with **Orchestra of the Swan** perform Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* and Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*

Find out more and buy tickets...
orchestraoftheswan.org

THE COVENTRY MUSIC MUSEUM

Admission: Adults £4.00, Concessions (Students, Seniors and People of Determination) £2.00 Children* £1.00
* between 5 and 15

74-80 Walsgrave Rd
Coventry, CV2 4ED
WWW.COVMU.CO.UK

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74-80 Walsgrave Rd
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Liz Dilnot Johnson
When a Child is a Witness

EX CATHEDRA

Sat 26 Feb, 5pm
Coventry Cathedral

EX CATHEDRA Choir & Academy of Vocal Music
Jeffrey Skidmore conductor
Lucy Russell violin
Rupert Jeffcoat organ

with **European Youth Music Refugee Choir | Carriers of Hope**
Sharing Cultures - supported by Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre and Belgrade Theatre
Ravensdale Primary School | Kadialy Kouyate West African kora

This powerful, emotional piece brings communities and artforms together in response to the human tragedy of war and displacement. Within the framework of a Requiem, it features newly-created contributions from - and celebrates - those who offer and seek refuge and hope.

0344 581 4950 | www.excathedra.co.uk

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COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021

Classical music from across the region...



Chineke! Orchestra Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 23 February

"Chineke! is not only an exciting idea but a profoundly necessary one," says Sir Simon Rattle in talking about Europe's first orchestra to feature a majority of black and minority ethnic musicians. "It's the kind of idea which is so obvious that you wonder why it's not already in place; the kind of idea which could deepen and enrich classical music in the UK for generations. What a thrilling prospect!"
Chineke! here present a programme

featuring Coleridge-Taylor's dramatic and sweeping Othello Suite and Beethoven's joyful Symphony No6 in F. The concert bill is completed by Edvard Grieg's only Concerto. The piece was famously brought to wider public attention by a nowadays oft-repeated sketch from the 1971 Morecambe & Wise Christmas Show featuring composer/conductor Andre Previn (or Andrew Preview, as Eric & Ernie repeatedly referred to him throughout).



Ex Cathedra: When A Child Is A Witness

Coventry Cathedral, Sat 26 February

"When A Child Is A Witness is a full-concert piece by the Malvern-based composer Liz Johnson," explains Ex Cathedra's founder, Jeffrey Skidmore. "The work is a Requiem mass, here sung by Ex Cathedra, that has five meditations between movements of the Requiem that are deliberately left empty. These meditations - or 'windows' - are for

local groups to create and perform their own contributions, which are curated into the final performance by the composer. "The contributions are not necessarily musical - they may be spoken word, dance or even cookery that connect to the message of the piece. "It's a compelling, emotional work that conveys the suffering endured by refugees and carries a strong message of hope, shared ground and common aspiration."

Orchestra of the Swan: Loops And Verses

Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tues 8 February

A familiar face on the Midlands classical music scene, celebrated pianist Peter Donohoe (pictured), here makes a welcome appearance to perform Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major. And there's plenty more besides to enjoy in this Orchestra of the Swan concert, including Ralph Vaughan Williams' thrilling Wasps Overture - a piece written after the composer had spent three months studying orchestration in the company of the aforementioned Ravel. Thomas Adès' Three Studies From Couperin and John Adams' Shaker Loops complete the programme.



Pražák String Quartet

Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa, Fri 25 February

Pražák's scheduled Spring 2020 Leamington concert bit the dust as a result of the first Covid lockdown, so it's good to see them paying a visit to the town this month. Established way back in the mists of the mid-1970s and nowadays considered to be one of the Czech Republic's premiere chamber ensembles, the quartet are here presenting a programme that features: Suk's Meditation; Janáček's Quartet No1, The Kreutzer Sonata; the UK première of Karel Janovický's Quartet No4; and Dvořák's Quartet In G.





CURTAIN UP!

Coventry's latest live music venue, Drapers' Hall, was originally built to entertain the great and the good of the 19th century. Now, after a major refit, the venue is hosting entertainment for people from *all* walks of life - as Steve Adams discovers...

Coventry's newest live music venue is instantly also its oldest. The Grade II-listed Drapers' Hall, located adjacent to the city's cathedral, was originally built in 1832 by the Drapers' Guild as a place to entertain members of the local high society.

The newly reopened venue, housed in one of the finest Regency buildings in the area, aims to serve a similar purpose - but for people from *all* walks of life.

And as well as hosting a wide-ranging programme of live performances, Drapers' Hall is also the new home of Coventry Music, which provides music education for the city's children and young people.

After previously being used as a youth magistrate's court and then left to gather dust for more than three decades, the venue's new lease of life comes courtesy of Historic Coventry Trust. Having been given a 250-year lease of the building by Coventry City Council, the Trust spent £5million on a refurbishment to restore Drapers' Hall to its former glory.

The Trust's vice-chair, Dr Geoff Willcocks, said: "As a heritage development trust, the purpose of Historic Coventry Trust is to restore the city's historic buildings and put them back to work for the benefit of its people. Drapers' Hall is a perfect example of how we do this. Empty and without a purpose for over 30 years, this building now has a function that will see it making a positive impact on the lives of those living in the city."

The venue's first season of live shows, supported by Arts Council England, kicked off last November and contains an admirably varied selection of acts, all curated by general manager & programmer Hannah Pierce. Despite having wide-ranging experience in arts and events production and programming, Hannah admits the task of developing the venue's first season - especially under the cloud of the Covid pandemic - was a challenging one, and that the opening gig - featuring singer-songwriter and broadcasting stalwart Tom Robinson - was definitely viewed as a night of celebration.

"It was so exciting to open the doors after the extensive refurbishment and see people in the venue," she says. "All the while I've been going through a period of audience development, trying to programme an array of different shows that are very much 'Coventry' - risk-taking but high quality, and

reaching different audiences. That's been my aim for this first period of operation."

Judging by some of the acts Hannah's scheduled, it looks like she's meeting her objective - something she believes has been partly aided by the pandemic: "I think it was a perfect storm when I was booking shows. Partly people were impressed by the nature of the building, the sound system and the fact that there's a grand piano in the space, so it wasn't hard to convince people to want to play there. But it was also at a time when many shows at bigger venues were falling through because of Covid, and promoters needed fillers for their tour schedules. So it fell at a really good time for us to reach those bigger artists. Some artists who had international dates and couldn't go to Shanghai were suddenly able to come to Coventry!"

Upcoming highlights at Drapers' Hall include Talvin Singh and Cara Dillon. Hannah is especially excited about Dele Sosimi: "I think that'll be a fantastic show. He sometimes has a big nine-piece band but will be performing here as a four-piece, so it'll be quite intimate without being a solo show. And it's also a standing gig, so it'll be a bit more lively.

"We've got an amazing sound system in the space, and I really want to push that element. I don't think it's ever going to be a space for loud rock bands, but I don't see why we can't have a DJ night, for example, as we've got a 1am licence. So I want to push how lively we can go."

The variety of shows also reflects the versatility of Drapers' Hall. Although likely to primarily host seated performances - where the capacity is around 170 - the venue also has the scope to hold 250 people standing.

Hannah acknowledges that reducing the venue's capacity to aid social distancing in the wake of Covid proved to be a popular move with punters at the end of 2021: "I think that really encouraged our audience, who are all interested in our Covid policy and what we're doing about it all. I don't want anyone to be uncomfortable - we want it to be a great experience for everyone."

Growing the audience, as well as maintaining the variety and quality of acts - potentially without funding and certainly without the benefit of Coventry's current UK City of Culture status - will be a challenge. Hannah believes there's plenty of cause for optimism, though - not least because the venue has already hosted a number of well-known

artists: "When you've got those names behind you, other artists prick up their ears and go, 'Oh, maybe we should check out this new venue', and agents do as well. But what's really exciting from my perspective as a booker is that external promoters are putting together tours and will now book a Coventry venue, whereas before they might've missed Coventry off their touring network."

Drapers' Hall's arrival on the scene will certainly help Coventry re-establish itself on the UK's live music map - an aim which is also assisted by the opening of the HMV Empire, which launched last spring. Hannah says promoters are always keen to understand the reputation of a city and its audience, and believes that Coventry venues need to work together to strengthen the city's appeal: "I'm not just looking to elevate this venue - I think it's about the city working together. The Tin (Canal Basin) is an amazing venue, the Box (FarGo Village) is now an amazing venue. You've got all these brilliant spaces, and I hope more promoters start to come to Coventry. It all helps breed a culture of live music."

TAKE FIVE

Here's our pick of upcoming highlights at Drapers' Hall:

- Mammal Hands (3 Feb) - Contemporary jazz/electronica fusion trio that create hypnotic soundscapes using drums, saxophone and piano
- Dele Sosimi (4 Feb) - Potent mix of traditional Nigerian music, African percussion and funk from the international Afrobeat star and one-time cohort of Fela and Femi Kuti
- Rebel Rebel (24 Feb) - Beethoven meets Bowie as Orchestra of the Swan mix the former's Grosse Fuge with reimagined classics from the Thin White Duke
- Talvin Singh (26 Feb) - Take the chance to see the Mercury Prize-winning Asian Underground star perform in an intimate setting
- Cara Dillon (13 May) - Award-winning Northern Irish singer-songwriter with an indie-style take on Celtic folk music

For further information on upcoming events at Drapers' Hall, visit:
historicroventrytrust.org.uk/whats-on



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Live music from across the region...

Craig Charles

hmv Empire, Coventry, Fri 4 February

Popular actor, comedian, author, poet, television presenter and DJ Craig Charles has been touring The Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club since 2008, bringing live DJ sets to nightclubs, festivals and events throughout the UK.

"The Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club does exactly what it says on the tin," explains Craig. "It's high-octane good-time music. It's two pounds of funk in a one pound bag. I play funk and soul music and try to mix it up. I play a lot of psychedelic soul, like Sandie Shaw's version of Sympathy For The Devil and The Voices Of East Harlem's Run Shaker Run. I also play more heavy beats, afro beats and the like."



Simply Red

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Sun 13 February

Re-forming in 2015, with Mick Hucknall the only original member, British soul & pop band Simply Red have sold more than 50 million albums and racked up five UK Official Album Chart number ones since their inception in the mid-1980s.

Expect to hear such classics as Stars, Holding Back The Years, Fairground and Money's Too Tight To Mention, as well as songs from their latest album, 2019's Blue Eyed Soul, the second release since their reunion.



Mammal Hands

Drapers' Hall, Coventry, Thurs 3 February

Mammal Hands have scored a considerable hit with their hypnotic fusion of jazz and electronica. Comprising saxophonist Jordan Smart, pianist Nick Smart and drummer &

tabla player Jesse Barrett, the band are also much admired for their pulsating live performances.

They visit Coventry to play music from their latest album, 2020's Captured Spirits, alongside favourites from previous offerings.

Jessie Lloyd

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 18 February

"Islander rhythms, campfire country and defiant humour celebrate simple joys, while melancholy ballads chart a journey of blood, sweat and tears..." is how journalist Chris Lambie describes the music of Australian Aboriginal singer, social historian and cultural practitioner, Jessie Lloyd. Using intimate storytelling, moving harmonies and historical insights, Jessie takes audiences on a profoundly moving musical journey into the depths and diversity of Australia's history, culture and identity.

King King

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 22 February

King King's five studio albums have seen the band establish themselves as major movers and shakers on the UK blues rock scene. Boasting a live show replete with soul and swagger, the boys are led by charismatic man-in-a-kilt Alan Nimmo, whose brother Stevie joined the line-up just in time to contribute to King King's most recent album, Maverick.

Martyn Joseph

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 3 February

Dubbed the 'Welsh Springsteen', Martyn Joseph is a mesmerising performer who boasts the rare ability to speak to the soul with his expressive and poignant lyrics. With a career spanning 30 years, 32 albums, more than half a million record sales and thousands of live gigs, Martyn is a unique talent whose passion for his trade always guarantees his army of dedicated fans an exceptional evening of musicmaking.



Sister Act



Musical comedy sisters Nicola and Rosie Dempsey, better known as Flo & Joan, have been a big hit on TV shows including Live At The Apollo, The Royal Variety Performance and The Russell Howard Hour, as well as having their own one-hour comedy special on Amazon Prime.

The award-winning piano/percussion duo return to the stage this spring for their biggest-ever UK tour. We caught up with them to find out what to expect...

With a mammoth tour booked during an on-off pandemic, I assume you are optimists or at least 'hoppers'?

We've stopped looking at the date, and each morning we simply wake up, check to see what our diary says we should be doing, check the news for any dramatic events that might prevent us from fulfilling those obligations, and if we're in the clear, we get on with it. It's a terrifying and exhilarating way to live, but we're all used to that now, aren't we?

The tour is your biggest, and 60(!) dates long - how does that look written down? Intimidating? And how do you prepare for it - are there any changes to your routines due to Covid? Does the tour rider include vitamin C and LFTs?

If we're printing on paper in size 12, single spaced Arial font, 60 tour dates looks like just under two pages of A4. If you think about it that way, it's not especially intimidating because that's barely the length of a Year Six SATS essay. If you look at them on a map it's pretty exciting. We've been lucky to gig in the pockets of time where venues have been open over the last two years, so you'll be relieved to know we're not rusty. Our rider this year is 40 bottles of fresh champagne, to be replenished every show, and one dog each for us to pet between songs. We're staying humble.

Speaking of the shows, the new one is called Sweet Release. Can you give us an idea of what it's about?

The show is a collection of new songs that cover loads of different stuff, but it also touches on what you want to keep hold of in life and what you choose to let go of, which is where the title Sweet Release came from. Someone asked us if a 'sweet release' is a fart. That's not what the show is about, but if you want to view it through that lens then all power to you.

Do you have a favourite sweet (confectionery) release?

Nicola: Today I'll go for a fizzy bubblegum bottle, a scream and a vowel please, Carol.

Rosie: All sweets except Parma Violets. All releases except Parma Violets.

Should we read anything into the kitschy '60s album cover-style tour poster - were you going for the Sonny & Cher look? And

that keyboard looks a bit big...

Don't read anything into anything we do or say. Ever. We're very small people so naturally our instruments seem very large.

If you had to put together a job spec for your line of work, what skills would be essential and desirable?

A love of story and a playful nature. And despite how it seems, you really don't have to stress yourself out about being funny or clever to perform improv comedy. It's all about listening really carefully and responding instinctively - tapping into what makes all of us naturally funny and interesting.

The new show is set to cover 'topics of the day' - do you knock many songs or routines up on the fly or largely stick to a set list, albeit with scope to adlib and react to the audience?

By and large we stick to a set list because we've been honing the show to keep it as good and tight as we can. But of course we leave a little bit of room for ad-libbing, to keep it fun and so you know we're not robots.

Speaking of the setlist, when you're putting a show together, do you feel obliged to throw in a few greatest hits? There must be people who always want to hear I Drank Too Much or other favourites?

It's our biggest tour yet, so we'll be keeping in a few F&J bangers for the thirsty fans and people who've never seen us live before, but we might be giving them a little twist and freshen to keep everyone, and us, on our toes. We also have a lot of new stuff we're excited to pump into the canon as well, so it's a good mix.

This is your fifth full-length show - was it all conceived and written during lockdown? Was inspiration hard to come by during that time?

It's been written over the last two years, which included both periods of lockdown and freedoms. If anything it was easier for us to write because we had no idea if or when we'd be touring again, so we got to open our brains and come up with stuff with absolutely no pressure whatsoever. We're never short of inspiration, so even two years of uncertainty didn't hinder us there, you'll be pleased to know.

And who inspired you to become performers in the first place? Victoria Wood seems an obvious choice - in terms of wordplay/content as much as the musical element - but who else? Were the original Flo and Joan (your nan and her sister) in any way inspirational?

Nicola: I wouldn't say I was inspired to be a performer, but people like Victoria Wood and Tim Minchin made me want to write musical comedy. Eddie Izzard was probably the first stand-up whose brain and thinking really resonated with me. And I found Tina Fey and Amy Poehler right when my love for comedy was blooming too.

Rosie: I used to like watching Julie Walters run around a shoe shop saying 'We think we've got hens in the skirting board', and it's all gone on from there really. The OG Flo and Joan were a double act without realising, so we thank them for that inspiration.

Are there any contemporary comedians you particularly like or relate to?

Bridget Christie. Michelle Wolf. Rob Auton. Jenny Slate. Megan Stalter. We watch all of these people and come away feeling great and inspired. And Billy Connolly will always seem contemporary to us too.

Finally, the tour takes in quite a wide variety of venues - do you have a favourite or weirdest place you've performed? Birmingham Town Hall is a Grade-I listed building - is it the poshest?

We've got quite a few big posh venues on the tour, including Birmingham, so we're excited to shake the ghosts around in them. The actual poshest place was a private party where our dressing room was their indoor swimming pool. We expect nothing less than that now. The weirdest? When we lived in Toronto we played a gig in a weed room (it's legal there, don't worry) and we were basically hot boxed in there for an hour. Our performance style by the end of the set was very different to the beginning.

Flo & Joan bring their new Sweet Release show to Birmingham Town Hall on 8 March, Stafford Gatehouse on 9 March, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa on 6 May and Stourbridge Town Hall on 25 May



Nish Kumar

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 17 February; The Place, Telford, Sat 19 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 11 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 31 March; Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 15 April

"Once you get established as a comedian," explains Nish Kumar, who this month tours to the Midlands with new show *Your Power, Your Control*, "you have to start taking comedy seriously, which is obviously an oxymoron. When you're a nobody, you can just go up to the Edinburgh Fringe, get drunk and have fun."

Nish's days of anonymity - inebriated or otherwise - are now behind him. The

Croyden-born comedian has emphatically hit the big time and, even more impressively, has done so simply by being his usual affable self. "For years I thought comedians had to be confrontational or awkward," he recently told the Guardian. "But then I realised, if people basically like you and think you're an okay guy, they'll listen to you talk about absolutely anything."

Glenn Wool

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 5 February; Stourbridge Town Hall, Thurs 10 March

Glenn Wool manages to be smart, sophisticated and silly all in the space of a single evening. And it's perhaps this chameleon-like quality more than any other which has so endeared him to the great British public.

Canadian Glenn's act sees him cleverly putting his own unique spin on the big stories of the day. Touching base with a wide variety of political, religious and social subjects, he intelligently processes the material to create nuggets of pure comedy gold, quite often delivered in a style that's engagingly surreal.

Glenn this month visits the region with *The Tiny Kings Of Winter*, a show in which he reflects on 'the last four years of tumultuous change'.

Reginald D Hunter

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 17 February; Birmingham Town Hall, Wed 30 March; Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 23 April

American comedian Reginald D Hunter's no-nonsense style and hugely amusing perspectives on the differences between the US and the UK have struck a real chord with his audiences.

"I felt like an outsider in America when I was growing up," he says, "and I feel like an outsider in Britain now. The difference is that feeling like an outsider in Britain seems... normal. There are people who've lived here all their lives who feel like outsiders. But one of the things I love about Britain is that it makes room for what y'all like to call 'the eccentric'. I mean, hell, Britain makes a warm and comfortable space for mother****ers who just like staring at trains! I think that's very evolved."

Shaparak Khorsandi

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 20 February

Iranian-born comedian Shaparak found herself being moved to the UK some 40-plus years ago, after her father - the poet and satirist Hadi Khorsandi - wrote a poem that was perceived as being critical of Iran's revolutionary regime. "Obviously there's free speech in Iran," says Shaparak, "but little freedom after you've spoken."

A regular contributor to radio and television programmes, Shaparak describes herself as a 'spit and sawdust' stand-up comic, happily pulling on her wellies and trudging through muddy fields to perform at any and every music festival that boasts a comedy tent. She visits the Midlands this month with her new show, *It Was The 90s!*.



Alfie Brown

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Wed 16 February; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 25 February

"I refute that I'm saying things to plainly and wilfully disrupt social progress," explains Alfie Brown. "I am not. I might seem smug, I know - apologies - and I'm often misunderstood. So at this particular point in the unfolding history of meaning, intention, signs and signifiers, I am sometimes going to tell you what I f****ing mean!"

Thirty-four-year-old Alfie stops off in the region this month with well-reviewed touring show *Sensitive Man*, in which he candidly tackles issues including mental health - he's bipolar himself - white male privilege, *Formula One* racing, and the way in which young people get to "ostentatiously wave around" great "wads of time".

Jamali Maddix

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 9 February;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 11
February; Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury,
Sun 13 February

One-time Chortle 'student comedian of the year' Jamali Maddix has been hailed for his frank yet ironic take on everyday racism and his willingness to tackle the ever-topical subject of terrorism.

Citing influences that range from Gandhi to his Uncle Mark, the 30-year-old Londoner was recently at the centre of a racism row himself. Appearing on TV's Taskmaster, he held a stick over his shoulder, as if playing golf, explained he was pretending to be 'a white dude' and then added, "I have a very narrow view about what you people do."

Ross Noble

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 6 February

Geordie comic Ross Noble maybe hasn't quite hit the heights once expected of him, but he's undoubtedly one of the UK's most talented funnymen. He also has a nice line in surreal comedy, never gives an audience the same show twice, and boasts an impressive number of followers on Twitter. Heading for Birmingham this month with latest show Humournoid, Ross includes among his jokes, "If the Pope doesn't want to be knocked down, he shouldn't dress up as a skittle".



Shazia Mirza

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 19 February; The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 27 February

Muslim comedian Shazia Mirza's certainly not averse to treading a delicate line when it comes to her material. In the aftermath of 9/11, the Brummie comic joked, "My name is Shazia Mirza - at least that's what it says on my pilot's licence."

Other examples of Shazia balancing on the very precipice of acceptable humour include: "My parents really want me to get married.

But Muslim men don't want to marry me because... I speak", and, "My dad said if I went out with a black man, he'd burn me. Which would be good, because then I'd be black too".

Not to everybody's taste, obviously, but then which comedian ever could be?

Shazia stops off at two Midlands venues this month with her show, Coconut.

Daliso Chaponda

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Sat 12 February; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 4 May

Malawian Daliso has blended the slick North American style of comedy he learned while working in Canada with a real talent for brevity, ensuring that his gags, although not one-liners, nonetheless come thick and fast. Like all good comedians, he can adapt his act to suit his audience - on a previous trip to the Midlands, he performed a filthy set in Birmingham's Silhouettes Strip Club before heading off to regale family audiences at the Greenbelt Christian Festival!

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

Ed Byrne

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 10 February; Dudley Town Hall, Sat 12 February; Walsall Arena, Wed 16 February; The Core, Solihull, Wed 23 February; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Fri 29 April; The Place, Telford, Wed 15 June

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."

Ed visits the Midlands this month with latest show If I'm Honest..., in which he takes a long, hard look at himself and tries to decide whether he has *any* traits worth passing on to his children.

A tale as old as time...

**Disney's Beauty And The Beast The Musical
is set to delight Midlands audiences**



Disney's Beauty And The Beast The Musical visits Birmingham Hippodrome next month. What's On caught up with cast member and 2013 X Factor winner Sam Bailey to find out what audiences can expect from the show...

Sam Bailey shot to fame when she won The X Factor in 2013. Since then she's released a chart-topping debut album, appeared as a supporting artist on Beyoncé's The Mrs Carter Show world tour and starred in musicals Chicago and Fat Friends.

Now, she's playing the lovable teapot Mrs Potts in Disney's Beauty And The Beast The Musical. Twenty-seven years after the show's Broadway debut, members of the original creative team have come together to reimagine the beloved 'tale as old as time' for a new UK tour.

Most people will be familiar with the story in which village girl Belle is imprisoned by the Beast, before reversing the spell that was cast on the former prince. Disney turned the fairy tale into an animated movie in 1991, and Sam is thrilled to be part of a story that so many have grown up with.

"I pinch myself every day!" she says. "I'm so honoured to be working with such a talented cast and crew. Sometimes I can hardly concentrate because I get pulled in by someone doing an amazing bit of acting on the stage."

This new tour uses state-of-the-art technology and the latest theatrical innovations to enchant its audiences - although Sam is reluctant to give away the magic.

"Jim Steinmeyer designed the illusions for the show and he's incredible. He's put some great tricks together that will have people guessing when they leave. This whole show is so magical - it's got magic that even I can't work out, and I've been doing it for six months now!

"I've done Beauty And The Beast panto before, but this is the real thing. And the big difference with panto is that you can't sing any of the Disney songs."

Disney is renowned for singalong tunes that are enjoyed by all generations, and the Beauty soundtrack has got plenty of them.

Following the original film's release, Alan Menken and Howard Ashman's song, Beauty And The Beast, won the Academy Award for Best Original Song, with Belle and Be Our Guest also nominated for the award.

Understandably, Sam finds it difficult to pick her favourite number.

"Obviously I love singing Beauty And The Beast every night. I'm on stage for Be Our Guest too, and the audience goes crazy every time they hear the first few lines of that song. It's 12 minutes long, so we have an amazing group of ensemble dancers and cast members that dance flat out for 12 minutes.

"My favourite number that I'm not on stage for is Gaston. I'm usually in the wings waiting to go on, and my heart is in my mouth every night because the tricks they do on stage are insane. It's so clever. And it gets an amazing reaction from the audience, too. The cast have to wait to say the next line because everyone's cheering so loud."

Though audiences can look forward to a largely faithful retelling of the much-loved Disney film, there's one detail that may come as a surprise - and it's something that is very important to Sam...

"When I first started rehearsals for Beauty, I asked the bosses at Disney to make a film about a Disney princess who wears glasses. I got really choked up when I said it because my daughter wears glasses and she doesn't think she's a princess. She says princesses don't wear glasses.

"When I went back to rehearsals, the director, Matt West, pulled me to one side and said he'd spoken to Tom Schumacher, who's head of Disney Theatrical Group, and Tom said that Belle is to wear glasses in the musical. So in the first scene she comes out wearing glasses, and every time she reads a book in the show she wears them."

Sam hopes that this small detail will make a big difference for the children in the audience.

"My daughter came to see opening night and she was over the moon. I said to her, see, I told you princesses wear glasses! I think it will really make a difference to other little girls out there who want to be princesses."

Being a mother herself has helped Sam tackle her role as Mrs Potts, who is a maternal figure for Belle and mother to teacup Chip.

"When you're playing a character for any show, you can't just step into it straight away; you have to find it first. I definitely see myself in Mrs Potts because I'm very mumsy and I do mother most of the characters.

"Sometimes I get emotional because I can understand how my character feels. There's a moment at the end where Chip runs up to me, and I get emotional every time because I have a son and I miss him so much when I'm away working. I miss all my kids."

And with Birmingham just a 45-minute commute from her family home, Sam can't wait to bring the show to the Hippodrome.

"For the last six months I've only been home on Sundays and Mondays, so I'm really looking forward to being in Birmingham.

"Being away with the show has been tough, but we're putting smiles on people's faces up and down the country, and that feels amazing. I think it's important to understand how valuable musical theatre is to people, especially at the moment.

"The thing about Beauty And The Beast is that it resonates with people because it has the message to never judge a book by its cover. I think a lot of people tend to judge by what someone looks like, when they should get to know them first. Beauty And The Beast is such a beautiful story because it proves that point."

.....
Disney's Beauty And The Beast The Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Thurs 3 to Sat 26 March



9 To 5 The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 22 - Sat 26 February

Taking its Broadway bow back in 2009, Dolly Parton's 9 To 5 The Musical is a well-established show that hits the ground running and provides exactly the kind of frothy entertainment you might expect. As with the original 1980 movie and subsequent spin-off TV series, the stage production centres around the story of three office workers who

turn the tables on their sexist bigot of a boss.

The show is awash with Dolly's music, as you might expect, and there's no getting away from her overall influence on the production - she even takes on the role of narrator, appearing in a huge clock face to move the story forward!

9 To 5's Potteries stop-off sees former Brookside favourite and long-time West End star Claire Sweeney heading the cast.

Vampire's Rock: Ghost Train

The Place, Telford, Thurs 3 February;
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 15 February

Steve Steinman's cult rock show focuses on the exceedingly evil doings of undead creature of the night Baron Von Rockula, malevolent owner of the Live And Let Die club. When the ill-fated venue burns to the ground, the baron and his band of blood-sucking vampires take refuge in the Ghost Train - an old, abandoned fairground ride - and hatch a dastardly plan to lure victims into a world of rock'n'roll hell... Expect classic anthems aplenty, including We Will Rock You, Bat Out Of Hell and Sweet Child Of Mine.



Jersey Boys

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 8 - Sat 19 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 7 - Sat 18 March 2023



Rockin' and rollin' New Jersey boys Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons scored some truly massive hits during the mid-1960s - and this award-winning jukebox musical tells their story.

Taking a documentary-style format, the show is structured as four 'seasons', each being narrated by a different member of the band. Featured hits include Walk Like A Man, Bye Bye Baby, Big Girls Don't Cry, Sherry, Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Working My Way Back To You and December 1963 (Oh, What A Night).

Six The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 1 - Sat 5 February

From Tudor queens to battling boss-women, Six The Musical sees the wives of Henry VIII take to the stage to tell their own versions of their lives.

The one-act production, which premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017, was enjoying a runaway success until Covid put the brakes on - but being a show that sits somewhere between a Girls Aloud gig and a traditional musical, it's having no trouble whatsoever re-finding its momentum.

A loud and colourful celebration of girl power, the production sees the cast being ably supported by all-female band The Ladies In Waiting.





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Performance



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Performance



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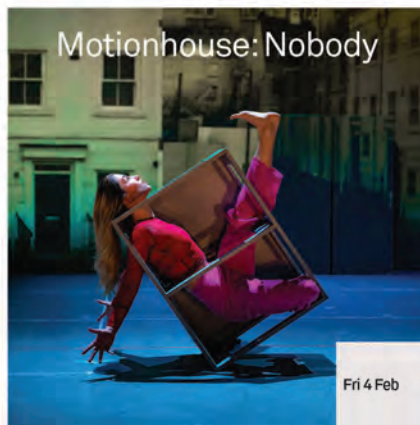
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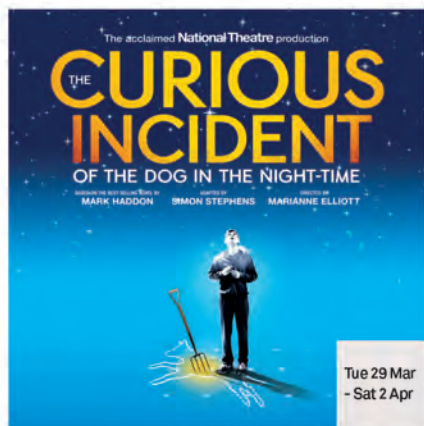
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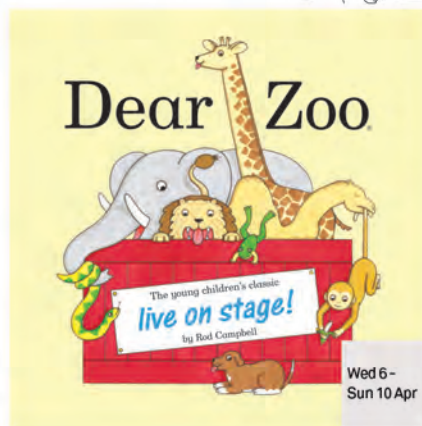
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Freckle Productions and Rose Theatre

ZOG AND THE FLYING DOCTORS

Thu 24 – Sun 25 Feb

Julia Donaldson's fiery adventure.

All ages

Zog and the Flying Doctors © 2016 Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.
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Fun family shows



CLUB ORIGAMI

Sun 30 Jan

An immersive and interactive dance show for under 5s.

0-5 years



PUSS IN BOOTS

Sat 5 – Sun 6 Feb

This classic furry tale is the cat's whiskers.

4+ years



MMM AH WOOSH

Sat 19 Mar

A musical journey for under 5s.

0-5 years



UNDERWATER

Sat 23 Apr

A multi-sensory show for under 2s and babies.

0-2 years

LIVE ON STAGE

"TAIL-WAGGINGLY GOOD"
The Guardian

OH NO, GEORGE!

Sat 23 – Sun 24 Apr

The playful tale of a dog that wants to be good but can't resist temptation.

All ages

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FAMILY SUNDAYS

Sun 16 Jan - Sun 20 Mar

Free creative sessions, led by our Artists-in Residence and inspired by our exhibitions and family programme. Drop by and join in from 1.30pm-4pm.

WARWICK

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CENTRE

Theatre previews from around the region



Dead Good

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Thurs 3 - Fri 4 February; MAC Birmingham, Tues 8 February; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 15 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 28 February & Tues 1 March; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 5 March

Worcestershire-based full mask theatre company Vamos here tackle the thorny subject of death - the ultimate shared experience.

Witty and wordless, *Dead Good* focuses on the characters of Bob and Bernard, two men who have only a couple of things in common: one, that they're both dying; and two, that they're not going down without a fight. With a bottle of Bollinger in hand, they set out on one final death-defying adventure in Bernard's Bentley... Vamos have created the show in collaboration with palliative-care patients and specialists.

Dracula

Lichfield Garrick, Sun 20 February; Malvern Theatres, Sun 27 February

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is best known from its many and varied *cinematic* incarnations - but as stage productions like *The Woman In Black* have ably illustrated, a well-presented work of theatre can be every bit as spintangling as anything the big screen has to offer.

This brand-new one-man version of the famous gothic horror finds James Gaddas (*Bad Girls*, *Coronation Street*, *Medics*) coming across Stoker's original handwritten copy of the story while working on a satellite channel TV show. In reading the hair-raising tale, he finds pages which were never actually published, leading him to a terrifying discovery...

Better make sure you pack a few bulbs of garlic and a wooden stake for this one, just to be on the safe side...



Kerbs

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 26 February - Sat 5 March

Coventry-originated theatre company Graeae - the ensemble behind this brand-new play about sex, romance and disability - put features such as signing, captioning and audio description at the very heart of their productions.

"Every Graeae show is different," says the company's CEO and Artistic Director, Jenny Sealey. "We never add 'access' on. It comes from looking at the script, who the characters are, what we're trying to say, and then thinking about what access brings to that."

Kerbs, Michael Southan's debut offering, focuses on the characters of Lucy and David, a couple whose desperate desire to enjoy some quality time alone together sees them heading off for a weekend break at a caravan holiday park.

But not everything goes according to plan...

Looking Good Dead

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 7 - Sat 12 February; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 21 - Sat 26 February; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 7 - Sat 12 March

Bestselling crime writer Peter James has scored major successes on stage as well as in print, with adaptations of his novels having played to appreciative audiences at venues across the UK.

This latest offering features Detective Superintendent Roy Grace, the Brighton-based policeman who's headed up murder

investigations in a number of James' most popular works. On this occasion, Grace is called in when a man who finds a



USB memory stick on a train inadvertently becomes a witness to a vicious murder... *EastEnders* stalwart Adam Woodyatt (Ian Beale) takes top billing. Laurie Brett, who played Ian's wife, Jane, in the long-running BBC One soap, also stars.

Menopause The Musical 2

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 15 & Wed 16 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 15 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 27 March; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 24 April

Female stars 'of a certain age' are much in evidence in this highly anticipated sequel. In the first show, four women met in a department store, with conversation quickly turning to the one thing they all had in common - the menopause. Cue innumerable one-liners on subjects including forgetfulness, mood swings, wrinkles, night sweats and uncontrollable chocolate binges... This follow-up offering - subtitled *Cruising The Menopause* - catches up with the ladies five years later, this time as they set off on the high seas.

Crissy Rock, Nicole Barber-Lane, Rebecca Wheatley and Nicki French star.

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Theatre previews from around the region



Saving Britney

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 18 February

Presented in the aftermath of the Britney Spears conservatorship controversy, this one-woman show feels like a suddenly more topical work of theatre than might otherwise have been the case.

On the face of it, it's a homage to the noughties' pop princess, but scratch beneath the surface and you'll find that it's actually a vehicle for telling the story of her devoted British super-fan, Jean...

Britney's music is the soundtrack to Jean's unfolding life, accompanying her through the trials and tribulations of her parents' divorce, her sexual awakening, various relationships and her mother's death...

The production lands in Lichfield on the back of plenty of positive feedback.

The Covid 19 Variations

The Rep, Birmingham,
Tues 8 & Wed 9 February

Having had coronavirus twice, Olivier Award-winning composer Richard Thomas got creative and composed The Covid-19 Variations.

BAFTA-winning artist Alison Jackson then created 19 short films, one for each of the Variations, drawing her inspiration from the world of fake news, alternative facts and celebrity lookalikes. The end result is 'a unique and outrageously funny film and concert' starring a host of well-known names (well, people who look like them anyway). Helmed by Rep Artistic Director Sean Foley, each performance will be followed by an 'in conversation' session featuring Sean, Richard, Alison and pianist Philip Edward Fisher, who performs the work.

told," says Ian. "The volunteers travelled thousands of miles, were often malnourished and worked in incredibly dangerous conditions - and all to help out in a war that they knew little about. Their contribution has been largely forgotten, and yet by the end of the war, as many as 20,000 of them had died."



The Ballad Of Maria Marten

Malvern Theatres, Tues 22 & Wed 23 February

In Suffolk in the summer of 1827, Maria Marten was the victim of what would become known as The Red Barn Murder.

In the near two centuries which have followed, the story of her tragic demise has provided inspiration for songwriters, playwrights and filmmakers across the globe. But what about the woman at the centre of the tragedy? What was Maria's story?...

This 'spinetling' new appraisal of events in the red barn nearly 200 years ago aims to find out...

Frankenstein

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
Thurs 17 - Sat 19 February

Mary Shelley's classic gothic horror story has inspired plenty of films across the years, but theatrical versions of the spinetingling tale are rare indeed - so this revival of Blackeyed Theatre's 2016 production is well worth an evening of your time.

Shelley's 1818 novel finds Victor Frankenstein giving life to a creature who so horrifies him that the scientist flees into the night. Suddenly abandoned, lost and confused, the creature must make his own way in the world. But although Frankenstein can run from his ghoulish creation, he cannot hide. Soon enough he finds himself face to face not only with the 'monster' but also with the chance to play God for a second and final time...

The Chinese Labour Corps

Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham,
Mon 1 - Fri 5 February

Black Country playwright Ian Henery's new work recognises the contribution of the 100,000 Chinese volunteers who offered their services during World War One, supporting the frontline Allied troops by digging trenches, repairing railways and roads, and unloading ships.

The play is here being premiered to coincide with the Chinese New Year.

"This is one of the great untold stories of the First World War, and one that needed to be

Black Is The Colour Of My Voice

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa,
Tues 8 February; The REP, Birmingham, Mon
28 - Tues 29 March

Following the untimely death of her father, Mena Bordeaux goes into self-imposed isolation for three days. Alone with her thoughts, she reflects on a journey that's seen her become a renowned jazz vocalist at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement...

Based on the life of Nina Simone but not an actual biography, Apphia Campbell's one-woman show has enjoyed sell-out success in Shanghai, New York, Edinburgh and the London West End.





Children & Family Theatre

mac
Midlands Arts Centre



Little Murmur
Sun 20 Feb | 11am & 2pm
Ages 7+



Jabala & The Jinn
Sat 26 – Sun 27 Feb | 2pm
Ages from 5 to 12 | BSL



Art with Heart: Stan
Sat 19 – Sun 20 Mar
Ages 7+ | BSL, Subtitled

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Theatre previews from around the region



The Da Vinci Code

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 22 - Sat 26 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 8 - Sat 12 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 7 - Sat 11 June; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 21 - Sat 25 June

Dan Brown's bestselling novel - written in 2003 and made into a blockbuster movie starring Tom Hanks in 2006 - sees cryptologists Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu grappling with a series of baffling codes found alongside the body of the brutally murdered curator of the Louvre... "I'm thrilled that The Da Vinci Code has been adapted for the stage," says Dan. "The team who've made the production have been faithful to the book, but they're also bringing something new for the audience, in what's certain to be a gripping, fast-paced stage thriller and a thoroughly entertaining show." Nigel Harman and Danny John-Jules and Hannah Rose Caton star.

Eng-er-land

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 February



Playwright Hannah Kumari stars in her own 45-minute show as Coventry City supporter Lizzie, a young woman for whom football offers a way of belonging somewhere. Although quite *where* that 'somewhere' actually is, she's really not too sure... Lizzie considers herself to be English, but her mother is Indian and her father says he's Scottish. And then there's the fact that there are very few black or brown faces among either the footballers she pays to watch or the tens of thousands of fans who, like her, go to the games to support the Sky Blues... Described as an energetic play about who's really on your team, Eng-er-land is backed by the Football Supporters' Association and directed at an impressive pace by Rikki Beadle-Blair.

Much Ado About Nothing

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 4 February - Sat 12 March

The Royal Shakespeare Theatre's first Shakespeare production since before the pandemic sees Roy Alexander Weise (joint artistic director of the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester) making his directorial debut for the RSC. Here set in a futuristic world, *Much Ado About Nothing* is the story of two pairs of lovers. The first, Beatrice and Benedick, are older though not necessarily wiser, and

conduct their courtship through sarcasm and verbal sparring.

The second and much younger couple is Claudio and Hero. The course of *their* love is cruelly interrupted by the villainous Don John, who falsely accuses Hero of infidelity and wantonness, timing his accusation to coincide with their wedding day...

This brand-new production features an original score by Nigerian-born British guitarist and MOBO award-nominated musician Femi Temowo, whose past collaborators include Amy Winehouse and The Roots.



Photography by Askō

THE ROSES

Tewkesbury's Theatre

More online: www.rosestheatre.org



**Vamos Theatre:
Dead Good**

Tue 15 Feb 7.30pm



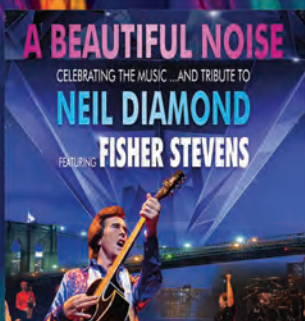
The Elvis Years

Sat 19 Feb 7.30pm



**Strong Enough
(Tribute to Cher)**

Fri 25 Feb 7.30pm



A Beautiful Noise

Sat 26 Feb 7.30pm



**LipService:
Chateau Ghoul**

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**Arrival: The Hits
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18-21/2 **W.H. Auden Festival at The Core**

20/2 **Four Weddings and a Funeral** 🎬

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25/2 **Botown The Soul of Bollywood**

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Nina Conti: The Dating Show

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 28 February

Could there be anything more contemporary than a comedy show with masks which looks to bring people together?

That's what Nina Conti is aiming to achieve with *The Dating Show*, her new touring extravaganza featuring a gallery of latex masks, a cheeky monkey called, er, Monkey, and a handful of willing audience members who're up for a laugh and maybe, just maybe, a little bit of romance.

"First and foremost, it's a funny show," says Nina. "I'm not actually trying to match-make. And I'm putting songs in. I'm really bad at singing, but it's funny when the date breaks into song. And it turns out that a bad song is better than no song!"

RuPaul's Drag Race UK: Season 2 Tour

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 18 February & Sat 26 March



Now here's an evening of entertainment that no self-respecting RuPaul enthusiast will want to miss.

The stars of *Drag Race UK* series two - including finalists Tayce, Bimini Bon Boulash, Ellie Diamond and Laurence Chaney - stop off in Birmingham to present an evening of cabaret that's sure to be seriously outrageous.

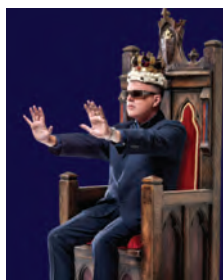
The 2019 tour by the stars of the first *Drag Race UK* series went down a storm. There's every reason to imagine the queens who're hitting the road for this follow-up endeavour will be equally adored by the BBC Three show's legion of fans.

Suggs: King Cnut

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Wed 16 February

After selling out his previous touring production, Madness frontman Suggs here takes a lighthearted look at a career that's featured plenty of memorable moments -

from experiencing vertigo on the roof of Buckingham Palace, to nearly blowing the closing ceremony of the London Olympics. Oh, and watching his underpants fall to earth on David Bowie's driveway...



Eric & Ern

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 7 February; Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock, Thurs 17 & Fri 18 February; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 27 February



This homage to the UK's best-loved comedy double-act features some of the duo's most famous routines, songs and sketches, not to mention the compulsory musical guest. So if you're of a certain vintage and would like to be reminded of nostalgic 1970s' family Christmases spent gathered around the goggle-box while Eric & Ernie made you laugh, this is definitely the show for you.

My Dad Wrote A Porno

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 24 February



From small acorns, big podcasts grow. At Jamie Morton's sister's birthday party, Jamie's dad handed him the manuscript of a story he'd been writing - a story which, it turned out, was a work of erotic fiction.

Scribed under the pseudonym of Rocky Flintstone, the book was one of four which followed the adventures of Belinda Blumenthal, a fictional character who works in the sales & marketing department of the also fictional company, Steeles Pots & Pans. Inspired by his dad's literary effort, Jamie developed a podcast in which he reads chapters of the Belinda stories (there are six now) to his two old Leeds University pals, James Cooper and Alice Levine.

The podcast has been downloaded over 180 million times, proving to be so popular that it's also toured live and been the subject of a HBO special.

This brand-new show comes complete with 'interactive elements, numerous surprises and a massive party atmosphere'.

The Smartest Giant In Town

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 22 & Wed 23 February; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 5 March; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 26 & Sun 27 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 April; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Mon 11 - Wed 13 April

The wise old owls at Fierylight & Little Angel Theatre know a smart move when they come across one - and with regard to attracting a

young audience, presenting a stage adaptation of a Julia Donaldson book is just about as smart a move as a theatre company can make.

Donaldson's giant, George, decides his scruffy days are a thing of the past and buys himself some oversized clothes. But when he encounters various animals needing his assistance - and more particularly his newly purchased items of clothing - George soon realises that it isn't clothes that maketh the giant but rather a gargantuan sense of generosity and a colossal, warm heart... Suitable for children aged between three and eight.



promises plenty of 'wiz, bang, pop and splurt', as the show's scientists carry out all manner of fun and fact-filled live experiments... So if you think your kids would enjoy seeing some enthusiastic boffins create a volcanic eruption, turn a vacuum cleaner into a missile launcher and take aim with a smoke blaster, then this is definitely the show to check out.

Jabala & The Jinn

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 26 & Sun 27 February; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sat 12 & Sun 13 March

"I want to share my culture and experiences," says Jabala & The Jinn writer Asif Khan. "We don't see much theatre about British Muslims, particularly for this age group - children between five and 12. I know that growing up I didn't have that, and we underestimate how important that is to children."

This 50-minute show tells the story of a little girl named Jabala who, with the help of a 'refugee boy' at school, summons a Jinn. But this is no ordinary Jinn, not like the ones in Grandma's stories, and Jabala is in for a big surprise....



Puss In Boots

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 5 & Sun 6 February

A show which producers Lyngo Theatre are confident will be 'the cat's whiskers', Puss In Boots tells the



tail, sorry, tale, of a fabulous furry feline who outwits both a king and an ogre to make his master the top, er, dog... Expect smoke, mirrors, hidden trapdoors, a working windmill, an avalanche of fruit & nuts and a host of puppets.

The Wind In The Willows

Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 23 February; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sun 20 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 5 March; Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 3 April; The Old Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 14 April

Kenneth Grahame's famous children's book tells a classic story of how one life can command the full attention of three others. Mole, Badger and Ratty simply don't have time for any of their own interests - they're way too busy having to look after their reckless and irrepressible friend, Toad... The multi-award-nominated Immersion Theatre is the ensemble behind this new version of one of the 20th century's best loved and most delightful yarns.

Exciting Science

Stourbridge Town Hall, Fri 25 February; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Sat 16 April

Designed to enlighten, educate and entertain children aged four and older, Exciting Science



Zog And The Flying Doctors

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 February; The Place, Telford, Tues 8 & Wed 9 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 25 & Thurs 26 May; Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 23 - Sun 28 August

With previous shows including Tiddler And Other Terrific Tales, Tabby McTat and the first Zog story, it's fair to say that Freckle Productions know a thing or two about presenting stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler stories...

This brand-new show finds Zog providing an air-ambulance service with the assistance of his 'flying doctor' crew, Princess Pearl and Sir Gadabout. But Pearl's uncle, the king, doesn't believe that princesses should be doctors, and before too long she finds herself locked up in the castle and once again forced to wear a crown and a 'silly frilly dress'.



Fireman Sam

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 6 February; The Place, Telford, Thurs 14 April; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 22 May

Now an impressive 35 years into his firefighting career, Fireman Sam is still putting out blazes in Pontypandy and lighting up children's eyes the length and breadth of the UK.

In this latest adventure, perpetual troublemaker Norman Price decides to become the star of the circus. But with a tiger on the loose and faulty lights threatening everybody's safety, it's soon time for Fireman Sam to reach for his trusty hose and come to the rescue.

Dear Zoo

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 5 & Sun 6 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 9 - Fri 11 February; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 6 - Sun 10 April; Stafford Gatehouse, Wed 13 April

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

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



Milkshake! Live

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 25 February; Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Wed 13 April; Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock, Mon 30 May; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 30 October

Milkshake Monkey's putting on a musical - and he's inviting little ones to come along and join in the fun with Paddington, Daisy & Ollie, Milo, Noddy, Pip & Posy and Blue's Clues...

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.

Billionaire Boy

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 1 - Sun 5 June

Birmingham Stage Company has impressive form when it comes to adaptations of David Walliams' work (see Gangsta Granny, next column), so anybody wondering whether or not to check out this show should definitely grasp the nettle.

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

Hurrah! For The Pirate King

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 23 February

Get set for some serious swashing of bucklers as the Pirate King heads out on a quest for 'treasure beyond gold and jewels' in this 'operatic singing adventure'. Along the way he encounters all manner of mysterious creatures, from the Queen of Cats to the beautiful and bedazzling Singing Mermaid. The show is presented by the highly regarded Absolute Children's Opera.

I Spy With My Little Eye

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Tues 22 February; The Place, Telford, Wed 23 February; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 24 - Fri 25 February; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Sat 28 March

If you're familiar with Steven Lee's previous work - including Don't Dribble On The Dragon and How The Koala Learnt To Hug - you'll surely want to take your little ones to see this

brand-new stage version of his latest picture book.

Presented by The People's Theatre Company, I Spy With My Little Eye sees Molly and Bingo the Puppy-Dog inviting youngsters and their families to Molly's sixth birthday party - a celebration that comes complete with 'a terrific treasure hunt, all your favourite singalong songs and lots of fantastic games to play'.

Gangsta Granny

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 23 - Sat 26 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 14 - Sun 20 March

The ever-popular Birmingham Stage Company make a welcome return with their charming adaptation of David Walliams' best-selling book.

Ben's no lover of Friday nights - and why would he be? After all, Friday nights mean having to stay at Granny's house, where he's not only bored senseless but also has to eat an unholy trinity of cabbage dishes - cabbage soup, cabbage pie and cabbage cake.

But appearances can sometimes be deceptive, and Ben soon finds out that there's way more to his boring old Granny than meets the eye...



Oh, what a night...

An award-winning musical packed with chart-topping hits, Jersey Boys tells the story of Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons, and is this month landing in The Potteries. Here, the stars of the show - Michael Pickering (Frankie Valli), Dalton Wood (Tommy Devito), Lewis Griffiths (Nick Massi) and Blair Gibson (Bob Gaudio) - talk about what it's like to be part of a huge production that always leaves audiences Beggin' for more...

What can audiences expect when they come to see the show?

Dalton: They're in for a fun-filled night with amazing music, on top of which there's a true and gritty story. It's all-round entertainment.

Michael: It's one of those shows where if someone says, 'My husband won't come see a musical', this is the one you bring them to because they're going to love musicals after seeing it. Sometimes men get dragged along to it and they leave going, 'Oh my God, that was amazing'. It's a wonderful night out. I don't think I've ever worked with a more talented cast and crew, so audiences can expect one of the most wonderful performances from one of the most talented teams I've ever worked with.

Is it just what audiences are craving right now, after all the lockdowns and restrictions?

Michael: Absolutely. It's got such a great story, everyone loves the music, and it kind of relates to the world we're living in at the moment because the Four Seasons went through such hard times yet kept going. It's an inspiring story, and we all need that at the moment.

Lewis: With the greatest respect to Jersey Boys, I think faithful theatre audiences are craving anything they can get their hands on. But Jersey Boys just happens to be one of those shows that puts life into perspective and makes you smile at the same time.

Why do you think there's still such nostalgia for the music?

Michael: No-one has come close to touching it since. They had the four-part harmonies and Frankie's unique falsetto, and they were a group - they were a team and a family, not some manufactured band. They loved what they did and they worked hard to get to the top.

Dalton: Frankie is still out there and still going strong, which helps keep the music alive, as does the show. Beggin' is a hit all over again, which is amazing, and all their music is just incredible. That's why it keeps coming back round again and again.

Blair: The songs are classics. As Dalton says, Beggin' is now one of the bestselling songs around the world, and it originally came out in 1967. Their music is timeless.

How would you describe your respective characters in the show?

Michael: Frankie Valli has the biggest heart and a wonderful talent. What he lacks in stature he makes up for in heart, and I think he falls on hard times because of how much he gives to his family and friends.

Lewis: Nick is the band's bassist and arranger, a musical genius and the strong, silent type. He's incredibly enigmatic, with his quirks and his isms, and he's dealing with his demons - which really resonates in this day and age where there's more awareness of mental health.

Blair: Bob is the composer who wrote all the songs for the Four Seasons as well as for other artists. He also had a role in the production side of things, especially later on in their careers. He's very pragmatic and very logic-driven, which is what the group needed at the time, and it's part of the reason they're still big and still successful today.

Dalton: Tommy is the one who started the band. He has his issues; he's a big gambler and gets into money troubles. But he's the one who brought them all together. He's such a big character to play.

There are so many great songs in the show. Do you have any favourites to perform?

Dalton: I love the big three, so that's Sherry, Big Girls Don't Cry and Walk Like A Man. Those were the group's first big hits. We perform them one after another. The dance moves and the harmonies come out - they're such fun to perform.

Michael: For me, it's Cry For Me, which comes quite early in the show. It shows the boys coming together one by one, and it's the first time they hit their harmonies and go, 'This is it!'.

Lewis: Beggin' is so infectious. It's groovy, but it's dark and gritty. It's an uplifting pop song but with a deep meaning to it in terms of the lyrics and where it falls in the story. I also love Stay because it comes after a really intense, explosive scene, and it shows them lacing up their shoes, straightening their ties



and stepping out in front of a crowd. It's like, 'We're still here, we're thriving, and we love what we do', and that's kind of a metaphor for myself and people who are striving to work in the theatre industry at the moment. Kudos to anyone who's doing it.

Blair: I love Let's Hang On because it's when they've come out of a period of darkness and angst and it's all about the music again. We're dancing around. The good old thigh slap!

It's not just a jukebox musical, is it?

Lewis: Absolutely not. It can mistakenly be labelled a jukebox musical by people who aren't familiar with the terminology, but it's actually a play. Jersey Boys has always been a play, where this incredible back catalogue of music is chronologically interwoven with the story.

Dalton: It's a play with songs because it tells their story. You get all the music everyone still loves and wants, but you also get a gripping true story.

Blair: People come expecting the songs they know and love, but they go away having learned something because not everyone knows the ins and outs of the plot. It's almost like a documentary told by the band themselves. You get different points of view on the same story from these four people who are four very different guys. It's a very dramatic narrative but also has that feelgood element. I feel good just doing it.

How does it feel to be back on the road?

Dalton: It's amazing! The UK is such an amazing place, so getting to spend time in different towns, in so many beautiful theatres, is great. And we have such an incredible company, so we're in good hands.

Blair: It's been really nice to perform again, especially in a show like this. It still has its trials and tribulations, of course. Touring in general does, but even more so in a pandemic. But you figure it out as you go along, and it's a joy to be out there again. No matter what the size of the audience, they're always attentive. They care as much about the story as they do the songs.

Michael: Just being able to get on a train or drive a car somewhere is great in itself, given the fact we weren't able to go anywhere for so long, but for me it's more about the team I travel with, and I couldn't have hoped for a better team. It honestly feels like nothing can stop us. Obviously Covid is still out there, but there's nothing we can't conquer. That feeling makes touring a delight.

Blair: I've done the show before but only on cruise ships, so it's so nice touring the country and seeing different places and different theatres. Plus, on the ships, it was a trimmed-down version, whereas this is the full show with more script, more songs, more everything, really.

How have audiences been so far?

Lewis: It's been such a pleasant surprise. Theatre has been a long-suffering victim of

the pandemic, and there's some apprehension, but they're coming back to theatres in droves and loving it. They're showing their approval by having a great time.

Dalton: We've had standing ovations every night so far and fingers crossed that carries on. The reaction has been so positive, and for us as performers it's just nice to be back out there again after so long.

What do you hope people will feel when they leave the theatre?

Dalton: We end the show with joyous numbers that everyone knows, even if they weren't around at the time they first came out. They'll leave upbeat and happy. They'll have had a fun, energising evening whilst learning a bit more about the Four Seasons' story along the way.

Blair: It has peaks and valleys, with fun moments and some really dramatic ones. It gives you feelgood moments, then brings you back down to earth before ending with Who Loves You - a song that everyone knows and which has everyone on their feet. I think people will leave the theatre feeling ecstatic but also surprised by what they've learned. We've had so many people say, 'We had no idea about the story, we just came for the music'. There's a lot of appreciation, which is always nice to hear.

The Jersey Boys shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tues 8 to Sat 19 February

Dance previews from across the region



Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker!

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 8 - Sat 12 February

"The funny thing about this piece," explains Sir Matthew Bourne in talking about Nutcracker!, "is that because Christmas is quite low-key in the production, we can tour it through to April, as it works on other levels."

The show is visiting Birmingham this month as part of its 30th anniversary celebrations. "Nutcracker! was a commission from Opera North," Matthew continues. "The commission came out of the blue, and I quickly thought, 'What a wonderful idea'. I was able to expand the company and work with a full orchestra. It was an amazing experience."

"I don't think we would be here now if it wasn't for that Nutcracker. Swan Lake followed about three years later as a direct result of that, so I owe so much to it."



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BRB: Don Quixote

Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 18 - Sat 26 February

More than 400 years after the death of Don Quixote's maverick author, Miguel de Cervantes, the classic story continues to find an enthusiastic audience.

Birmingham Royal Ballet's Director, Carlos Acosta, is the man behind this explosive new work, which sees the Don - accompanied by his loyal friend and servant, Sancho Panza - setting out on a quest to track down his true love.

"Don Quixote is the best ballet to attend if you are not a ballet connoisseur," says Carlos. "If you don't know anything about ballet,

this is a great chance to learn something about it. Don Quixote appeals to family audiences and is great for children because the story is easy to follow.

"It's very sunny and people will laugh a lot. The world of ballet is so full of tragedies - Swan Lake, Romeo & Juliet etcetera, they are all tragedies - but in Don Quixote, nobody dies. It's a happy tale, and very exotic, too. It provides escapism into this amazing world of colour, and the music has an incredible Spanish flavour. When it's raining and cold, it's then that you want to come and see Don Quixote, because it's a sunshine ballet. It's a great show. When you've seen it, you leave on a high."



Pinocchio

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 20 February

Leeds-based Northern Ballet has developed a reputation for producing work that's as much about storytelling as it is about dancing - a fact very much in evidence in its latest production for little ones.

Pinocchio has been specially designed to provide an enjoyable and absorbing experience for young children who are sampling live ballet, music and theatre for the very first time.

The production is approximately 40 minutes in length.



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Motionhouse: Nobody

Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 4 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 27 - Sat 30 April

"This show is a real use of spectacle, combining dynamic and thrilling dancing with digital film," says Motionhouse Artistic Director Kevin

Finnan in talking about Nobody. "The show is about the relationship with ourselves, and what the voice in our head means. I've created two sets of characters in Nobody. There are the everyday characters - ourselves in the normal world - and then there are the crows, who are the voices in our head."

Pasión de Buena Vista

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 12 February

'Red-hot rhythms, breathtaking dance and incredible singing', all presented 'in a stage spectacle like no other', is the promise being made by the promoters of this well-reviewed show.

Expect salsa, rumba, danzón, bolero, the cha-cha-cha - and no shortage of colourful costumes - as the 12-piece Buena Vista Band team up with some of Cuba's finest singers and the celebrated El Grupo de Bailar dance company.



DONUTS

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 9 February

Co-commissioned by Warwick Arts Centre, DanceXchange and The Place, choreographer Jamaal Burkmar's high-energy jazz & funk groove-along follows three friends as they prepare for a night out...

DONUTS is the first ever full-length dance piece from Extended Play, the company behind Jukebox, the breakthrough Instagram series combining popular music with a distinctive and dynamic style of dance.



Starving Dingoes

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 10 February

Is consciousness the beginning of madness? Critically acclaimed choreographer Léa Tirabassohe explores the question in a contemporary work featuring five dancers who find themselves under threat from a group of huge, obsessive, primitive beasts. "We are all a bit like hungry souls," says Léa, "for art, for love, for life, for death... like the dingoes I saw in Australia; skinny and desperate to eat. They are like humans, in search of heavenly and terrestrial food."



COMING TOGETHER

Groundbreaking dance project Critical Mass brings together some of the region's top dance practitioners to develop inclusive opportunities for young people. What's On chatted to Critical Mass Senior Producer Tara Lopez to find out more...



A ground-breaking inclusive dance project in Birmingham will see 300 young people performing at events across the city, including the Birmingham 2022 Festival Opening Show and the Commonwealth Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Launched last year, Critical Mass gives people aged 16 to 30 from all backgrounds opportunities to work with leading artists and choreographers to learn, enjoy and perform dance.

Many of the young people have never participated in dance events before and yet this year they will be watched by millions worldwide in the high-profile Birmingham shows.

Critical Mass brings together the skills of DanceXchange, Arts Connect, the Dance Development Leaders Group and community choreographers in creating weekly workshops across the region. And the project isn't just about encouraging young people to dance, it's also about developing opportunities which are inclusive for all young people, irrespective of their ability or disability, ethnic background and economic circumstances.

Critical Mass Senior Producer Tara Lopez explains: "This is really important because with previous large-scale mass performances it has been recognised they were really great opportunities for some people, but quite often anyone who might have had more access needs may not have been able to participate. This is not just thinking of physical access but also financial, such as the ability to give up work to do something unpaid. So it was felt that with Critical Mass we wanted to try and find a way of really making this accessible and inclusive to everyone."

The project set itself ambitious inclusivity targets, aiming for one-third of participants to be disabled people and 40 per cent to come from Asian, black or minority ethnic backgrounds. The team worked hard to achieve these targets - liaising with community groups, networking, holding taster sessions and inviting young people to have a go - and are pleased with the results.

"There has been a real concerted effort to make sure that these 300 young people are really representative of Birmingham and the West Midlands in terms of access needs, ethnicity and geographical location," says Tara.

Starting last September, the young people have been taking weekly classes with 15 dance artists to learn about different styles of dance and movement.

"Traditionally there is quite a short and intensive build-up to getting ready for large-scale events like these, but our model is regular weekly sessions to prepare gradually over a period of time. We have quite a lot of people who aren't from a dance background and have never done something like this before, so this gives them time to build up their confidence to be comfortable and able to follow direction from a choreographer.

"All of their weekly sessions are delivered by dance artists, and a support worker is there with them. The sessions range from hip-hop, breaking, modern, ballet, contemporary, Afro-fusion - there's a real range of styles within those dance artists and a huge amount of expertise. They are really fantastic community dance artists."

The first public event to bring the group together is Wondrous Stories, the opening show of the Birmingham 2022 Festival in the city's Centenary Square (17 - 20 March), which will be livestreamed around the globe. The work is conceived and directed by Kevin Finnan - co-founder and artistic director of Midlands dance-circus company Motionhouse - collaborating with choreographers Sonia Sabri and Jamaal Burkmar. It will see the Critical Mass dancers performing alongside other artists, including professional dancers, poets, actors and singers.

The 300 young people will also take part in the Commonwealth Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies, when the eyes of the world will be on Birmingham. And in-between, there will be other opportunities for them to participate in events.

"All the performances are a bit different. Everyone has the opportunity to be part of the Festival Opening Shows, and then all of them will flow through to doing the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony. So those are the two initial big ones.

"Then sprinkled in-between these and the Commonwealth Games Closing Ceremony are performances for Birmingham International Dance Festival and a series of Live Sites shows throughout the Games. With these shows, the young people can put themselves forward for what really interests them. This

enables people to do as much or as little as they feel they can do."

Supported by Spirit of 2012, Critical Mass is aiming to have benefits not just for the participants but for the city, the Commonwealth Games and the future of inclusivity in dance.

"Above anything I hope the young people will have fun. To see them move together and for all of them to be able to have a great time no matter what life looks like outside of that dance studio, is the most important element. And for them to feel a really integral part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival and the Commonwealth Games - because this is about them.

"If we're thinking about benefits for the city, the training and development of those 15 dance artists is really crucial. They've all brought a lot of expertise to the process, but they are also going to learn from it. We've always had this ambition that we leave the sector with more dance artists equipped to run inclusive dance sessions. That way, there will be more places that people can go to, and the dance artist will be able to embrace whatever they bring with them. So I think the dance sector will be strengthened by that.

"On the Commonwealth Games perspective, within the ambition of this project there was always an idea that we would develop a blueprint; something that can be passed on to the organisers of the next Games so that they can learn and build on our experiences.

"Ultimately I think what Critical Mass does is shine a specific light on really pushing what we think people can do. That's not just about Critical Mass, it's about the whole sporting calendar of the Games, which is aiming to be the most inclusive Commonwealth Games, full stop. Critical Mass is a really exciting way of encapsulating all of that - what the Games represents and what Birmingham represents."

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Wondrous Stories will be performed in Centenary Square, Birmingham, from Thurs 17 to Sun 20 March.
For further information, visit:
birmingham2022.com/festival/wondrous-stories



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Films released in February...

The Eyes Of Tammy Faye

CERT 12a (126 mins)

Starring **Jessica Chastain, Andrew Garfield, Cherry Jones, Vincent D'Onofrio, Mark Wystrach, Sam Jaeger** Directed by **Michael Showalter**

Well known for her indelible eyelashes, idiosyncratic singing and eagerness to embrace people from all walks of life, Tammy Faye Bakker became a legend in her own lifetime. Along with husband Jim, she rose from humble beginnings to create the world's largest religious broadcasting network and theme park, spreading a message of love, acceptance and prosperity along the way. The continued success of the couple nicknamed 'the Ken and Barbie of televangelists' seemed a certainty until the 1980s, when financial improprieties, scheming rivals and no shortage of scandal saw their carefully constructed empire come crashing down around their heads...

This intimate portrayal sees Jessica Chastain in exceptional form as Tammy Faye, giving a compelling performance that beautifully illuminates an otherwise unremarkable movie.

Released Fri 4 February

**Moonfall** CERT tbc (120 mins)

Starring **Halle Berry, Patrick Wilson, John Bradley, Michael Peña, Donald Sutherland, Charlie Plummer** Directed by **Roland Emmerich**

What's a girl to do when a mysterious force knocks the Moon from its orbit around Earth and sends it hurtling on a collision course with life as we know it?

Well, if the girl in question happens to be NASA executive and former astronaut Jo Fowler (Halle Berry), she mounts a last-ditch mission into space, convinced that she has the key to saving the world - even though only one other astronaut and a conspiracy theorist believe her...

Director Roland Emmerich's CV includes Independence Day, The Day After Tomorrow and 2012, so it's fair to say the man knows a thing or two about sci-fi disaster movies. Here's hoping he manages to bring some much-needed credibility to what seems like an utterly bonkers premise.

Released Fri 4 February

**A Violent Man** CERT tbc

Starring **Craig Fairbrass, Stephen Odubola, Jason Flemyng, Ross McCall, Ulrich Thomsen, Zoë Tapper** Directed by **Ross McCall**

Former EastEnders Craig Fairbrass once again dons his familiar ne'er-do-well alpha-male persona to play the role of Steve Mackleson.

A dangerous prisoner incarcerated for double murder in a maximum security jail, Steve's road to redemption is strewn with hazards, not least among which is his own previously unquenchable thirst for blood, gore and carnage.

Life doesn't get any easier for him either. Stepping in to save new cellmate Marcus from a revenge attack, he suddenly finds himself a wanted man And he's also grappling with the not-inconsiderable issue of his daughter, a woman he's never met before but who's finally decided she'd like a face-to-face chat with her estranged father...

Ross McCall (White Collar, 24, Band Of Brothers) here makes his feature-directing debut, helming the film from his very own script.

Released Fri 4 February

Marry Me CERT tbc (112 mins)

Starring **Owen Wilson, Jennifer Lopez, Utkarsh Ambudkar, Sarah Silverman, Jimmy Fallon, John Bradley** Directed by **Kat Coiro**

Fans of television's Married At First Sight should certainly warm to this modern love story, which sees musical superstar Kat Valdez (Jennifer Lopez) deciding to marry a total stranger - maths teacher Charlie Gilbert (Owen Wilson)...

Marry Me may well prove to be the go-to movie for the romantic-at-heart this Valentine's Day, even though Wilson and Lopez are slightly strange choices for the leads, with neither actor having set off any big-screen fireworks in recent times. Still, a romcom's a romcom, and if a big dollop of schmaltz with a side-order of cheese is your favourite movie meal, then you will no doubt leave the cinema feeling splendidly replete.

Released Fri 11 February



Films released in February...



Death On The Nile CERT tbc

Starring **Kenneth Branagh, Gal Gadot, Tom Bateman, Sophie Okonedo, Rose Leslie, Armie Hammer** Directed by **Kenneth Branagh**

Sweeping desert vistas, unbridled passions and a final, shocking denouement, are very much the order of the day in a film which sees Sir Kenneth Branagh starring as Agatha Christie's marvellously moustachioed

Hercule Poirot for a second time. Having solved the Murder On The Orient Express (2017), the legendary Belgian sleuth now finds himself investigating another case of murder most foul, this time aboard a glamorous river steamer where a picture-perfect couple's idyllic honeymoon is tragically cut short...

Released Fri 11 February



Fireheart CERT U (92 mins)

With the voices of **Laurie Holden, Kenneth Branagh, Olivia Cooke, William Shatner, Mara Junot, Maya Misaljevic** Directed by **Theodore Ty and Laurent Zeitoun**

Fireheart tells the story of a 16-year-old girl named Georgia who's desperate to become a firefighter just like her dad.

When her father is brought out of retirement by the Mayor of New York to battle against a mysterious arsonist who's burning down

Broadway, Georgia disguises herself as a young man named Joe and joins a small group of misfit firefighters trying to stop the arsonist...

Described as 'a heartfelt comedy about teamwork, family, and having the courage to pursue your dreams', Fireheart boasts a voice-cast featuring heavyweight veterans Sir Kenneth Branagh and the new 'oldest man in space', William Shatner.

Released Fri 11 February

The Amazing Maurice

CERT tbc (84 mins)

With the voices of **Hugh Laurie, Emilia Clarke, David Thewlis, Himesh Patel, Gemma Arterton, Joe Sugg** Directed by **Toby Genkel and Florian Westermann**

Maurice is a streetwise ginger cat who has a money-making scam that involves a pipe-playing kid and some talking rodents. But even the best-laid plans of cats 'n' rats can come a calamitous cropper...

This lively animation feature is based on Sir Terry Pratchett's book, The Amazing Maurice And His Educated Rodents, a fantasy story which has sold nearly 90 million copies worldwide and is the 28th novel in the Discworld series (but the first written for children).

Released Wed 16 February



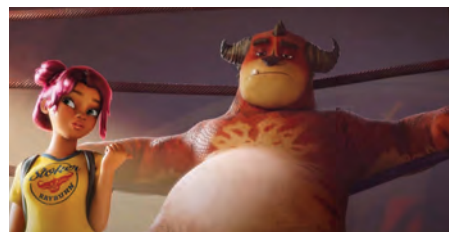
Rumble CERT U (104 mins)

With the voices of **Geraldine Viswanathan, Will Arnett, Stephen A Smith, Terry Crews, Jimmy Tatro, Tony Shalhoub** Directed by **Hamish Grieve**

In a world where monster wrestling is a global sport and monsters are superstar athletes, teenager Winnie seeks to follow in her father's footsteps by coaching a loveable underdog monster and turning him into a champion...

Grumbles about Rumble from across the pond, where it was released in December, have not been thin on the ground, with critics putting the animated sports comedy's script, pacing and characters in a headlock from which there seems to be little chance of escape. There's been widespread praise for the movie's animation, though, which at least offers something positive for the producers to hold onto as they, er, 'wrestle' with the bad publicity.

Released Fri 18 February





Uncharted CERT tbc

Starring Tom Holland, Mark Wahlberg, Antonio Banderas, Tati Gabrielle, Sophia Ali, Patricia Meeden Directed by Ruben Fleischer

Street-smart Nathan Drake (Tom Holland) here teams up with the wisecracking Victor 'Sully' Sullivan (Mark Wahlberg) and heads off on his first treasure-hunting escapade... An action-adventure epic inspired by the acclaimed video game series, *Uncharted* not only sees the pair in pursuit of 'the greatest treasure never found' but also tracking clues that may lead them to Nate's long-lost brother. Although film adaptations of computer games don't have a great track record at the box-office, the genre *has* enjoyed some recent success with *Assassin's Creed*, *Detective Pikachu* and *Sonic The Hedgehog*. *Uncharted's* producers will be hoping that *their* movie makes a similar splash.

Released Fri 18 February

The Duke CERT 12a (96 mins)

Starring Jim Broadbent, Helen Mirren, Fionn Whitehead, Matthew Goode, Anna Maxwell Martin, Jack Bandeira Directed by Roger Michell

Even by his own remarkable standards, Jim Broadbent is in exceptional form in this five-star offering based on an amazing true story. Broadbent plays Newcastle resident Kempton Bunton, a man who, in the early 1960s, allegedly popped down south to the National Gallery and half-inched a £140,000 painting of the Duke of Wellington by Spanish artist Francisco Goya... Helen Mirren as Mrs Bunton rises beautifully to the challenge of matching Broadbent's brilliance.

Released Fri 25 February



Ambulance CERT tbc

Starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Eiza González, Garret Dillahunt, Devan Long, A Martinez Directed by Michael Bay

When decorated veteran Will Sharp, needing cash to cover his wife's medical bills, asks for help from his charismatic career-criminal adoptive brother Danny, he sets in motion a chain of events that will see the lives of three people changed forever...

Director Michael Bay is well versed in the business of providing action-movie audiences with some seriously breathtaking rollercoaster rides, so it's little wonder this story of a \$32million bank heist gone wrong is so eagerly anticipated.

Bay hardly ever gets a resounding thumbs-up from the critics, but if you're a fan of his work, you're unlikely to leave the cinema disappointed.

Released Fri 18 February



Dog CERT tbc (90 mins)

Starring Channing Tatum, Aqueela Zoll, Q'orianka Kilcher, Jane Adams, Kevin Nash, Cayden Boyd Directed by Reid Carolin and Channing Tatum



'Buddy' films come in many forms - from the 'Road To' movies of the Hollywood Golden Age (showcasing the lighthearted sparring of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby), through to hard-hitting entries like 1991's *Thelma And Louise*. And then there are the team-ups which bring together human-being and 'man's best friend'. Although not exactly ten a penny, man-and-mutt movies are hardly in short supply either, so this latest entry in the genre will need to hit the ground running if it wants its bark to be heard.

The story sees two former Army Rangers - Briggs (Channing Tatum) and Lulu (a Belgian Malinois dog) - paired together against their will on 'the road trip of a lifetime'. Expect plenty of canine comedy capers along the way.

Released Fri 18 February

Mrs Harris Goes To Paris CERT tbc

Starring Jason Isaacs, Lambert Wilson, Isabelle Huppert, Lesley Manville, Alba Baptista, Lucas Bravo Directed by Anthony Fabian

Mrs Harris Goes To Paris tells the story of a widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London who, falling madly in love with a couture Dior dress, decides she must have one of her very own.

After scrimping and saving to raise the funds to pursue her dream, she embarks on an adventure to Paris - one which will change not only her own outlook on life but also the very future of the House of Dior...

This isn't the first time Paul Gallico's 1958 novella has been made into a film; most notably there was a 1992 television-movie version which starred Angela Lansbury, Diana Rigg and Omar Sharif.

Gallico's *Mrs Harris* character reappeared in three later books by the author - *Mrs 'Arris Goes To New York* (1960), *Mrs 'Arris Goes To Parliament* (1965) and *Mrs 'Arris Goes To Moscow* (1974).

Released Fri 25 February



WELCOME HOME

Living sculpture Daniel Lismore talks about bringing his exhibition, *Be Yourself: Everyone Else Is Already Taken*, to his home town of Coventry



Dubbed 'England's most eccentric dresser' by Vogue, Daniel Lismore is a walking and talking sculpture. From haute couture to thrifted finds and vintage fabrics, body adornment using fashion and all kinds of curiosities are at the heart of his art.

Coventry-born Daniel is bringing his work home with *Be Yourself; Everyone Else Is Already Taken*, an exhibition including a major installation of 50 3D sculptures inspired by the Terracotta Army. Joining his artworks are archives and other personal items, which fully explore his journey from budding child artist to living as his true self today.

Daniel is celebrating 20 years as a living sculpture.

"I don't think there's a better canvas than your own body," he says. "We might choose pieces of wood, old walls or even fabric to make art, but I do all that work on my own body. It's a bit of a mix between painting a portrait and sculpting. A look for that day is kind of like a self-portrait - and I can do them day after day throughout the year. I mean, I take a day off sometimes... But that's the best way I can explain what I do."

Be Yourself; Everyone Else Is Already Taken is a love letter to our sense of self and individuality.

"As much as the show has my name and my image, it's about everyone else I've met while I've travelled the world. It's about the people I've encountered in my life, the people I've worked with and humanity as a whole. It's a look at us as a species and what we adorn ourselves with."

Daniel is delighted to be making his UK debut in his home town: "I'm honoured that Coventry is welcoming me back for this. I was thinking about trying to do it in London, but it's better to bring it home where everything started. In the show, we're going to tell the whole story of me and my work, which I've never really told before. So even my house, my archives and everything will be moving



into the museum. The space itself is important too, as the first art gallery I ever came to as a kid. I think art galleries are so important for young people to come to, even if their parents are sceptical. Leave the parents at home if they're going to moan about it! I was very lucky to be surrounded by beautiful art at home because my dad was an antiques dealer, but I didn't really understand concepts of art. At school I was always told I was a bad painter by teachers, but then I saw sculptures and thought, 'Wow'. That really sparked something in me and was the start of my journey.

"I'm going to tell the story of what happened to me: a young person from Coventry who had a terrible time before moving away and then coming home. It's about being able to be accepted finally. I think it's sadly part of us Brits that great designers and artists had to go away and then come back, which is something I think we should still be talking about. Things have changed for the better. Whereas museums were very particular on what they'd exhibit, now things are really progressing."

While part of that progress is down to initiatives like Coventry City of Culture 2021, Daniel believes activism must also inform art itself: "I've spent most of the last two years in Coventry. I've seen what they've done, and they've really changed the conversations around culture. As a nation, I think we're very divided. But I've seen people criticise things and then go into these cultural spaces, shows or exhibitions and be completely blown away. Art is very powerful and everyone has their own opinion on it, but when you're not ignorant and actually go and see it, rather than just sitting on Facebook moaning about it, you see things very differently.

"In the same way, I have the responsibility as an artist to make sure my work says something. It can't just stand there and look pretty. It also, strangely, gives me access to some really important people, just by



existing in the space. I'm able to speak to activists, politicians and, on the odd occasion, end up in a room with a pretty powerful person; not on purpose, but things happen from that."

As well as being a living sculpture himself, Daniel has designed costumes for English National Opera and dressed the likes of Nicki Minaj, Cara Delevingne and Boy George.

"I made three coats for Mariah Carey, of which she kept two and I've got one. I turned that into part of a sculpture because I wore it afterwards, so it's not being shown here just as the coat itself. I always repurpose things to give them a new life and a new existence."

So what message does Daniel want to pass on to people who're thinking about checking out his show?

"Come with an open mind because you might be surprised. You might hate it. But, equally, you might love it. What I like about this show travelling the world is that at least 100,000 people must've gone through it; from that, I've had about three really negative comments. But they were the ones I found fascinating, so I started conversations with those people and we became friends! Who knew..."

"Even if you don't believe in art and think it's all rubbish, give yourself the day to try it out. It's those people who need to experience it the most. Art lovers might be freedom-fighters, but you can't always preach to the converted. You never know what you'll see or be affected by. You might just get inspired!

"My show isn't for me anymore. I've had my time with it already, so it's for the public now. I've been offered a fortune from museums and private collectors all over the world for my sculptures, but I won't sell them. I've kept this for the people."

Be Yourself; Everyone Else Is Already Taken shows at Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, from Friday 18 February to Sunday 26 June.

Visual Arts previews from around the region



Rana Begum: Dappled Light

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
until Sun 13 March

“My work is a little like life,” says Bangladesh-born artist Rana Begum. “You don’t have full control over the balance of chaos and calm, and the art I produce reflects this. It has a dual experience - its strong colour and form gives it a loud aspect, but if it’s a good piece it can also provide a moment of calmness and a reflective experience.” Elected as a Royal Academician last year, Rana is known for her geometric abstraction and uses her vibrant paintings, sculptures and installations to explore the perception of light and colour.

This latest exhibition features a series of new, large-scale works which respond specifically to the Mead Gallery’s architecture, investigating the shifting perceptual effects of light as it interacts with her work and the gallery space.



Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum
SKYSCAPE
29th January - 26th March 2022
Featuring Turner, Constable, Rembrandt, Dürer and many more.
FREE ENTRY
Exhibition organised by the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford
www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk

Image: John Ruskin, Study of Down: The First Scarlet on the Clouds, 1868
© Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

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The British Art Show 9 Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sat 10 April

Taking place every five years, The British Art Show (BAS) encourages artists to reflect upon and respond to issues of identity, while also bringing matters concerning social, racial and environmental justice to the forefront of public consciousness. For BAS9, 34 selected artists have responded to three main themes: Healing, Care & Reparative History; Tactics For

Together; and Imagining New Futures.

Wolverhampton's rich and varied community provides the narrative, with artists exploring identities based around class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The artists also investigate the way in which the city's cultural history has been shaped by the post-war arrival of Commonwealth migrants.

Maryam Wahid: Zaibunnisa

**Midlands Arts Centre (MAC),
Sat 5 Feb - Mon 18 April**

Birmingham-raised artist Maryam Wahid here presents a new work telling the story of her mother as a young woman who moved to England in the 1980s. The exhibition also documents Maryam's first-ever visit to her motherland of Pakistan.

"I called the project Zaibunnisa because that was my mother's name before she emigrated to the UK," explains Maryam. "The exhibition reflects on what my alternate life would have looked like if my grandfather hadn't emigrated to Britain."



The Wonderful World of the Ladybird Book Artists

**Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery,
Sat 19 February - Sun 5 June**

Curated by Shropshire-born Helen Day, this colourful and nostalgic exhibition pays homage to the group of talented artists who drew the hugely popular Ladybird books in the mid-20th century.

By tracing the interconnected work of the illustrators, the display recounts the Ladybird story during the publishing company's 'golden years' - the period from 1940 to 1975. "I started collecting the books to share with my son," explains Helen, "but the more of them I acquired, the more I realised what fascinating 20th-century time capsules they were. The exhibition will provide a real trip down memory lane for visitors."

Portrait Artist Of The Year

**Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
Sat 19 February - Sun 5 June**

Fans of Sky Arts' long-running television series, Portrait Artist Of The Year, will surely want to check out this new exhibition.

Curated by one of the programme's guest judges, Kathleen Soriano, the display features a selection of artwork produced across the years by professional and amateur painters who've taken part in the series.

As well as providing a showcase for more than 120 portraits, the exhibition also highlights the many and varied approaches taken by the artists to the programme's broad range of celebrity sitters, included among whom have been Kim Cattrall, Stanley Tucci, Rick Wakeman, Melvyn Bragg and Graham Norton.

Beyond Representation: Re-defining Perception in the Twentieth Century

**The Barber Institute, Birmingham,
until Sunday 22 May**

Drawings, prints and sculpture from the Barber collection are featured in this thought-provoking new exhibition, which reflects the ways in which 20th-century artists constructed new perceptions of the world.

Technological and scientific advancements, political revolutions and the devastating socio-economic consequences of two world wars brought about intense and often turbulent changes that called into question the purpose of art. Indeed, it was a century in which many artists concluded that traditional illusionistic representation was a wholly inadequate way to express the modern experience.

Artists whose work features in the exhibition include Christopher Nevinson, Kurt Schwitters, Max Beckman, Max Ernst, Naum Gabo and Tess Jaray.





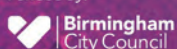
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Events previews from around the region



Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show

NEC, Birmingham,
Tues 22 - Sun 27 February

The UK's biggest leisure vehicle show returns to the NEC this month.

Event highlights include 350-plus exhibitor stands, expert help and advice, and the industry's latest model and product launches.

More than 750 vehicles will be on site, including the new-for-2022 touring caravans, motorhomes, campervans and caravan holiday homes, plus tents of all shapes and sizes, all pitched under one roof.

Free activities include campervan test-driving sessions, towing tuition and motorhome manoeuvring.

TV's Matt Baker and BBC Coast's Miranda Krestovnikoff will be making appearances on the event's Inspiration Theatre stage across the six days.

Pirate fun at Alton Towers

Alton Towers, Staffordshire,
Fri 18 - Sun 27 February

Well shiver those timbers and splice that mainbrace if Alton Towers Resort isn't the perfect place to take your little pirates this half-term holiday!

The popular visitor attraction is being taken over by the infamous pirates of Mutiny Bay,

who'll be taking families on their very own pirate adventures - complete with favourite rides and sea shanties aplenty!

Away from the pirate theme, visitors can check out Sharkbait Reef to see a variety of amazing fish, splash around in the tropical surroundings of the Alton Towers Waterpark, and enjoy a round of what's being termed 'extraordinary' golf.



Bunkered LIVE

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 18 - Sun 20 February

Here being held in England for the very first time, Europe's premier golf show offers visitors the chance to take advantage of free lessons, find out about the latest golf gear and peruse the stalls of more than 150 exhibitors, including big brands like Titleist, Callaway and Taylormade.

Enthusiasts can also test the latest equipment for free in the purpose-built indoor driving ranges.

Top golf and celebrity guests, a giant golf shop and a 19th-hole bar also feature.

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*Ticket offer expires 3pm 23rd March 2022. Saving based on one day full price tickets for two people. Children under 16 go free.

Events previews from around the region



Festival of Archery

Warwick Castle, Sat 12 - Sun 27 February

Visitors to Warwick Castle this February half term can find out all about the centuries-old art of archery.

Expert archers will be demonstrating their

top-notch skills and uncovering the secrets of the sport - and there's even the chance to have a go yourself!

Other attractions at the venue include winter bird of prey displays, the Horrible Histories Maze, the Castle Dungeon and the Princess Tower.



Formula One Fun

British Motor Museum, Gaydon,
Sat 19 - Sun 27 February

There's a range of racing-themed activities to enjoy at the British Motor Museum this half-term holiday, as the high-speed sport of Formula One takes centre stage.

Attractions include: a brand-new 'road map' family trail, allowing visitors to navigate their

way through the museum's car collection; the chance for little ones to try their hand at designing their very own Lego racing car in the Learning Space; and special weekend tours hosted by resident racing driver Jackie Demon.

Professor Pickle and Doctor Pumpkin will be on hand too, hosting a fast-paced Formula One-themed science show on a daily basis.

Enchanted Castle Crafts

County Museum at Hartlebury Castle,
Worcestershire, Tues 22 - Fri 25 February

Children are invited to arrive dressed in their favourite fairytale outfit as Hartlebury hosts some 'enchancing' craft activities this half term. The drop-in sessions will see little ones designing and decorating their very own fairytale door to take home.

Once they've finished their crafts, families can pick up a trail map and hunt for the pixie doors hidden around the castle and grounds.



Elizabethan Spy

Tudor World, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Sat 12 - Sun 27 February

Mention of spying calls to mind James Bond and the British Secret Service, but undercover operatives have been around for centuries, as this fascinating half-term event makes clear. It's the spying secrets of the Elizabethan age which come under the spotlight at Tudor World, as the techniques of some of the 16th century's 'oo7s' are revealed. Learn how the spies worked with secret codes and invisible ink, busily but covertly going about the business of breaking seals and forging signatures.

And that's not all. Young spies visiting Tudor World will be asked to discover whether Mary Queen of Scots is plotting against Queen Elizabeth, and if so, to do their level best to stop the dastardly traitor in her tracks. If successful, the spies will receive a secret prize and certificate to take home with them.





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Events previews from around the region



Spectacle of Light

Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
Fri 11 February - Sun 6 March

See Compton Verney transformed into a spectacle of light and sound, courtesy of this brand-new after-dark experience. A dazzling illuminated trail will light up the

woodland and parkland of the estate. Light installations include the changing Light Curve, the Carpet of Colour on the main lawn, and sparkling light beams across the lake. Hot food and drinks will also be available to purchase and enjoy as you make your way along the trail.



New Life On The Farm

National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent, Sat 19 - Sun 27 February

National Forest Adventure Farm is gearing up for the arrival of spring. Visitors can pay a

visit to the sheep maternity ward and witness lambing live, whilst also having a go at bottle feeding some of the new arrivals. Other activities to enjoy include scarecrow making, tractor fixing, and taking a trailer ride around the farm.

Tattoo Freeze

Telford International Centre,
Sat 5 & Sun 6 February

Following on from the success of the previous 11 shows, the 2022 edition of this specialist event offers members of the general public the chance to get themselves tattooed by one (or more!) of the 200-plus talented tattooists who'll be in attendance. The two-day get-together also features fire and pyro performances, body painting, circus workshops and numerous trade stands selling everything from clothing to cupcakes.



Wonderful Weaving

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry,
Sat 19 - Sat 26 February

These drop-in craft sessions celebrate the weaving history of Coventry. From 19 to 22 February, children will learn the craft of weaving while making their very own drinks coasters. Then, on the 23rd & 24th, there's the chance to make desk pen pots. The final two days provide participants with the opportunity to make a woven bracelet or magic dreamcatcher.



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Events previews from around the region



PALAUVER Party Takeover!

Aston Hall, Birmingham, Wed 23 February

Aston Hall's celebration of LGBTQ+ History Month sees some of the Midlands' most popular drag and cabaret performers host a

glittering and colourful children's party. Suitable for youngsters aged three to eight, the event features music, stories, performances, DIY costume-making, party games and, as a grand finale, a rainbow disco in the Long Gallery.

L.O.L. Surprise! Live VIP Party

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Fri 4 & Sat 5 February

Mallory is getting ready for a VIP party - but she's struggling to find an outfit. What's a girl to do in such a dire circumstance but turn to the L.O.L. Surprise! characters for some much-needed style advice...

The hugely popular L.O.L. Surprise! dolls are brought to life in this brand-new immersive concert show. Incorporating holograms, music, singing and dancing, the production combines 'the vibes of a club, concert and dance party with Instagrammable sets, flawless costumes and elaborate dance moves'.

The dolls have become a global phenomenon in recent years, with numerous celebrities, including Kim Kardashian, known to collect them.



Müller Indoor Grand Prix Birmingham

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Sat 19 February

World-class athletes make their long-awaited return to Birmingham this month as part of the World Indoor Tour Gold series.

First held in the city back in 2006, the Müller Indoor Grand Prix Birmingham is one of seven Gold standard meetings that regularly attract a whole host of champions, including world record holders and Olympic medallists.



Shropshire Kids Festival

Telford International Centre, Shropshire, Sat 26 & Sun 27 February

Catering for youngsters up to 14 years of age, Shropshire Kids Festival boasts hundreds of activities, all under one roof.

Giant inflatables, bouncy castles and sports-related fun all feature, whilst visitors looking to broaden their cultural experiences can join in with drama performances, choreographed dance routines or arts & crafts workshops.



Bear Grylls Adventure

Birmingham International Railway Station, Exhibition Way, Marston Green, B40 1PA
Website: beargryllsadventure.com Tel: 0121 725 2616

Celebrity adventurer Bear Grylls has certainly pulled out all the stops with this popular visitor attraction.

Activities include high ropes, indoor archery, indoor climbing, escape rooms and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course. For the 'more courageous' (as if some of the above didn't require courage!), The Fear Zone challenges you to 'sharpen your mind and find your inner strength' by navigating the area in complete darkness.

Alternatively, try venturing to the depths of the deep blue sea with Shark Drive. The site's tropical tank allows adventurers to get up-close and personal with black tip reef sharks and cownose rays... Fancy experiencing the thrill of free-falling at 12,000ft without having to jump out of a plane? Then iFly is for you. The weightless adventure takes place in a wind tunnel and comprises two one-minute flights to get the adrenaline pumping.

PRICES: Activities start from £20pp with online advance tickets.

NEWS: A brand-new eight-lane axe-throwing activity will be available from March 2022.

LEGOLAND Discovery Centre

Utilita Arena Birmingham, King Edwards Road, Birmingham, B1 2AA
Website: legolanddiscoverycentre.com/birmingham

Legoland Discovery Centre is a great place to share creative play time with your little ones.

The venue houses a city builder area, a duplo farm, two rides - Kingdom's Quest and Merlin's Apprentice Ride - and a 4D cinema. Perhaps the most impressive attraction at the centre, though, is Lego Miniland. Built from more than 1.5 million Lego bricks, Miniland is a replica of Birmingham. The model includes Lego constructions of the Library of Birmingham, Bullring, the BT Tower, The Mailbox and the world's largest Primark store. It also features interactive elements, with children able to entertain themselves by racing boats along the canal. Alternatively, they can get stuck into a game of football at the 'mish-mash' of Aston Villa's and Birmingham City's stadiums.

PRICES: £20.65 online off-peak, £22.95 online peak, parent & toddler £15 (online only).

HALF-TERM EVENTS: LEGO@MYTHICA - JOURNEY TO MYTHICA arrives at LEGOLAND for half term. In addition to a screening of the all-new 4D movie, visitors will be able to partake in a number of themed events, including hunting for mythical creatures in Miniland, creating their very own hero, Alicorn, and joining in with the venue's trading card game.

Photo opportunities in the world of LEGO@MYTHICA are also available, as is a special workshop to create and bring to life your very own creatures and fly them over the enchanted forest.



National Sea Life Centre Birmingham

The Water's Edge, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HL
Website: visitsealife.com/birmingham



As well as featuring more than 2,000 creatures - including a colony of gentoo penguins, black-tip reef sharks and a giant green sea turtle - National Sea Life Centre Birmingham is now also home to a world-class rescue facility. As part of a pioneering education & conservation project, the centre welcomed the UK's first-ever sea otters, Ozzy and Olain, back in 2020.

Other Sea Life Centre highlights include the 4D cinema, the zebra shark in Shark Lagoon and the Clownfish Kingdom tunnel. The centre also boasts the UK's only 360° Ocean Tunnel, in which visitors can marvel at hundreds of underwater creatures swimming both overhead and underneath, as they enjoy the truly unique experience of 'walking through the sea'!

PRICES: £20.65 advanced booking, £18 student ticket.

SAVE: UP TO 33% when purchasing tickets to Sea Life Centre Birmingham and one other Merlin attraction. Choose from Legoland Discovery Centre or Warwick Castle.

*Your week-
by-week
listings guide*
February 2022

the list



The Da Vinci Code - Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

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

What's On

Tues 1 - Sun 6 February



Joanna MacGregor -
Great Malvern Priory
Thurs 3 February

Mon 7 to Sun 13 February



The Strange Cast of Dr Jekyll
And Mr Hyde - Albany Theatre
Mon 7 February

Mon 14 to Sun 20 February



The Play What I Wrote -
Malvern Theatres
Mon 14 - Sat 19 February

Mon 21 to Mon 28 February



Talvin Singh - Drapers' Hall,
Coventry
Sat 26 February



Jesus Jones - Queens Hall, Nuneaton

Gigs

PORRIDGE RADIO Tues 1 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PEARL CHARLES Tues 1 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SIMON KEMPSTON Tues 1 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

THE CUGINIS Tues 1 Feb, Drummonds, Worcester

MOSHI MOSHI Wed 2 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LUCAS D & THE GROOVE GHETTO Wed 2 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Wed 2 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

RADIO GAGA - QUEEN TRIBUTE Thurs 3 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

THE SURFING MAGAZINES Thurs 3 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SHEZ RAJA FT TONY KOFI Thurs 3 Feb, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

THE HOUSE & GARAGE ORCHESTRA Thurs 3 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JOSH ROUSE + VETIVER Thurs 3 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE KOOKS Thurs 3 - Fri 4 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM - THE MUSIC OF DOLLY PARTON & KENNY RODGERS Fri 4 Feb, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

RONNIE SCOTT'S ALL STARS Fri 4 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN - HOW SWEET IT IS Fri 4 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

THE UTOPIA STRONG + GUNTHER PRAGUE + CRISTIANA ILIE Fri 4 Feb, The Tin Music and Arts, The Canal Basin, Coventry

DELE SOSIMI Fri 4 Feb, Drapers' Hall, Coventry

STONE BROKEN Fri 4 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DEEP TAN/PRIESTGATE/DEADLETTER Fri 4 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

QUILL Fri 4 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

NOVA TWINS Fri 4 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

KREWZ CTRL Fri 4 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHASING MALLORY Fri 4 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BROCKHAMPTON Sat 5 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

INJURY RESERVE Sat 5 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE VIBRATORS, YEAR ZERO + THE SPITTING FEATHERS Sat 5 Feb, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

MILES KANE Sat 5 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

SAD CAFE Sat 5 Feb, The Asylum, B'ham

MERCURY Sat 5 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

JESUS JONES Sat 5 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS Sat 5 Feb, HMV Empire, Coventry

JAZ DELOREAN Sat 5 Feb, Drapers' Hall, Coventry

CARNIFEX/CHELSEA GRIN Sun 6 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SONS OF PITCHES Sun 6 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ARIEL POSEN Sun 6 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ANDY CUTTING Sun 6 Feb, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

AMY WADGE Sun 6 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester



Amy Wadge - Marrs Bar, Worcester

Classical Music

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Programme includes Beethoven's Violin Concerto, 42 & Berlioz Symphonie fantastique, 59. Fabien Gabel conducts, Wed 2 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO CENTRE STAGE Featuring Mark Philips (horn), Philip Brett & Charlotte Skinner (violins), Christopher Yates & Catherine Bower (viola) & Arthur Boutillier (cello). Programme includes Mozart's Horn Quintet & Brahms' String Quintet No.1, Thurs 3 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

THE ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHAMBER PLAYERS Featuring Joanna MacGregor CBE. Programme includes works by Bach, Piazzolla & Vaughan-Williams, Thurs 3 Feb, Great Malvern Priory



CBSO BENEVOLENT FUND CONCERT Featuring Fabien Gabel (conductor) & Lucy Crowe (soprano). Programme includes works by Wagner, Strauss & Brahms, Fri 4 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ARMONICO CONSORT Featuring Rachel Podger (violin). Programme includes works by Scarlatti & J.S. Bach. Directed by Christopher Monks, Sat 5 Feb, Malvern Theatres

ENSEMBLE 360 Featuring Benjamin Nabarro & Claudia Ajmone-Marsan (violins), Rachel Roberts (viola), Gemma Rosefield (cello) & Tim Horton (piano). Programme includes works by Mozart, Dvorak & Schubert, Sun 5 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

Comedy

BRING YOUR OWN BABY COMEDY Tues 1 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JASON MANFORD, ADAM BLOOM, MICKY P KERR & JO ENRIGHT Thurs 3 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, LINDSEY SANTORO & JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Thurs 3 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ED GAMBLE Fri 4 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

LUKE KEMPNER Fri 4 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LINDSEY SANTORO & JUSTIN MOORHOUSE, THOMAS GREEN & FIN TAYLOR Fri 4 - Sat 5 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JACK DEE Sat 5 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome



JUMPROV! Sat 5 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

TERRY ALDERTON, KATE MARTIN, TOM LITTLE & ROGER MONKHOUSE Sat 5 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

GRZEGORZA DOLNIAKA Sat 5 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JAYDE ADAMS Sat 5 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

TOM STADE, TEZ ILYAS, LOST VOICE GUY & COMIC TBC Sat 5 Feb, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Sun 6 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ROSS NOBLE Sun 6 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Theatre

HI-DE-HI Harlequinade present an amateur production based on the TV show of the same name, until Wed 2 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

ANIMAL FARM Brand-new production based on George Orwell's world-famous fable and featuring puppetry by Toby Olié, whose credits include War Horse and Goodnight Mr Tom, until Sat 5 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

THE LOVELY BONES Bryony Lavery's adaptation of Alice Seabold's coming-of-age tale about life after loss, until Sat 5 Feb, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE GIFT Janice Okoh's outrageous play about imperialism, cross-racial adoption, cultural appropriation - and tea... until Sat 5 Feb, Criterion Theatre, Coventry

SCHOOL OF ROCK Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit musical, based on the iconic movie starring Jack Black, Mon 31 Jan - Sat 5 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

(LE) PAIN A story about breadmaking, physical heroics, growing up queer in a boulangerie in the South of France, endings and new beginnings, Tues 1 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE CHINESE LABOUR CORPS The surprising story of the Chinese Labour Corps, who volunteered to travel thousands of miles to help in a war they knew little about, Tues 1 -



Motionhouse: Nobody - Birmingham Hippodrome

Sat 5 Feb, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

SIX THE MUSICAL From Tudor queens to pop princesses, the six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their tales - remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak into an 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PIAF - CHRISTINE BOVILL A theatrical homage to one of France's most endearing icons, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Roy Alexander Weise makes his RSC debut with a story featuring matchmaking and manipulation, dastardly plots, hilarious slapstick and some of Shakespeare's wittiest dialogue, Fri 4 Feb - Sat 12 Mar, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

LA VOIX: THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD Brand-new show featuring 'tongue-in-cheek comedy, huge vocals, mesmerising diva impressions and buckets of energy', Sat 5 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE MASTERS OF THE HOUSE Featuring former stars of Les Misérables, Phantom Of The Opera, The Producers and other hit West End musicals, Sat 5 Feb, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

SING-A-LONG THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Sat 5 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

SOLVE-ALONG-A-MURDER-SHE-WROTE

Unique evening's entertainment featuring games, prizes and audience participation, Sun 6 Feb, Malvern Theatres

Spoken Word

HIGH PERFORMANCE PODCAST: LIVE

Join sports broadcaster Jake Humphrey and psychologist Professor Damian Hughes as they reveal the secrets used by the world's most remarkable athletes, coaches and entrepreneurs, Tues 1 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH RICKY HATTON Ricky will be interviewed by Gary Newbon MBE, Wed 2 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

Kids Shows

DEAR ZOO LIVE ON STAGE Show based on Rod Campbell's much-loved children's book, Sat 5 Feb, Albany Theatre, Coventry

PUSS IN BOOTS Using smoke & mirrors and hidden trapdoors, Patrick Lynch (Cbeebies) shows how a sure-footed feline fools both the king and the ogre to take his master all the way to the top, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

FIREMAN SAM Join Sam, Penny, Elvis, Station Officer Steele and Norman in an all-singing, all-dancing, action-packed show, Sun 6 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

Dance

MOTIONHOUSE: NOBODY This latest production from the Leamington Spa-based dance practitioners explores the tension between our inner lives and how we make sense of the world around us, Fri 4 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

Events

ENGINUIITY EXPLORERS AT BRIGHT SPARKS

Take part in art & crafts, construction play and story time, all linked to an exploration of the museum and Mr Darby's Box of Magical Science Secrets, Fri 4 Feb, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th-century water mill, learn about the life of a miller and the check out the views that inspired writer JRR Tolkien, Fri 4 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

L.O.L. SURPRISE! LIVE VIP PARTY The hugely popular L.O.L. Surprise! dolls

are brought to life in this brand-new immersive concert show, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Feb, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

GO DIVING Interactive, trade and consumer scuba-diving exhibition, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Feb, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire



FAMILY MUSEUM ENGINEERS An open-ended play environment using unique resources that encourage engineering skills, problem solving and imagination, Sat 5 Feb, Coventry Transport Museum

EXPLORE SAREHOLE MILL Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th-century water mill, learn about the life of a miller and the check out the views that inspired writer JRR Tolkien, Sat 5 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

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James Blunt - Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

Gigs

KIEFER SUTHERLAND
Mon 7 Feb, O2
Institute, Birmingham

GLASVEGAS Mon 7 Feb,
The Asylum, B'ham

CJ PANDIT Mon 7 Feb,
Hare & Hounds,
Birmingham

**THE LEGENDS OF
AMERICAN COUNTRY**
Mon 7 Feb, The Core
Theatre, Solihull

THE SECRET CABARET
Tues 8 Feb,
Drummonds,
Worcester

KURUPT FM Tues 8 Feb,
O2 Institute, B'ham

KEITH BUCKLEY Tues 8
Feb, Castle & Falcon,
Birmingham

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Tues 8 Feb, The Core
Theatre, Solihull

DAVID LANCE CALLAHAN
Tues 8 Feb, Hare &
Hounds, Birmingham

NOISY Tues 8 Feb, O2
Institute, Birmingham

ELLA EYRE Wed 9 Feb,
O2 Institute, B'ham

SMOKE FAIRES Wed 9
Feb, Castle & Falcon,
Birmingham

ONEACHORD Wed 9
Feb, Red Lion Folk
Club, Birmingham

**UK PINK FLOYD
EXPERIENCE** Wed 9
Feb, Royal Spa
Centre, Leamington
Spa

**HOW SWEET IT IS -
MOTOWN HITS** Thurs 10
Feb, Wolverhampton

Grand Theatre

**TRANSATLANTIC
SESSIONS** Thurs 10
Feb, Symphony Hall,
Birmingham

WAKENING THE HOLLOW
Thurs 10 Feb, Hare &
Hounds, Birmingham

JAMES BLUNT Thurs 10
Feb, Resorts World
Arena, Birmingham

KENNYHOOLA Thurs
10 Feb, Hare &
Hounds, Birmingham

**GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!
THE HITS OF JERRY LEE
LEWIS** Thurs 10 Feb,
The Core Theatre,
Solihull

**DON'T STOP -
FLEETWOOD MAC
TRIBUTE** Fri 11 Feb,
The River Rooms,
Stourbridge

SUZANNE VEGA Fri 11
Feb, Birmingham
Town Hall

TEDDY SWIMS Fri 11
Feb, O2 Institute,
Birmingham

MOTORHEADACHE Fri 11
Feb, Hare & Hounds,
Birmingham

SCOTT STAPP Fri 11
Feb, The Mill, Digbeth,
Birmingham

EXAMPLE Fri 11 Feb,
O2 Academy, B'ham

**UK PINK FLOYD
EXPERIENCE** Fri 11 Feb,
Malvern Theatres

THE KILLERZ Fri 11 Feb,
Queens Hall,
Nuneaton

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 11
Feb, Arches Venue,
Coventry

ABBA WONDERLAND Fri
11 Feb, The Assembly,
Leamington Spa

LADY NADE Sat 12 Feb,
MAC, Birmingham

HAMMERFEST 13 Sat 12
Feb, O2 Academy,
Birmingham

FRANCIS OF DELIRIUM
Sat 12 Feb, The
Sunflower Lounge,
Birmingham

TOOL SHED Sat 12 Feb,
Marrs Bar, Worcester

HEY PIXIES Sat 12 Feb,
Arches Venue,
Coventry

**THE BON JOVI
EXPERIENCE** Sat 12
Feb, The River Rooms,
Stourbridge

**BRUCE JUICE -
SPRINGSTEEN TRIBUTE**
Sat 12 Feb, Queens
Hall, Nuneaton

**WOMAN LIKE ME -
LITTLE MIX TRIBUTE** Sat
12 Feb, Royal Spa
Centre, Leamington
Spa

**NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE
SHOW** Sun 13 Feb, The
Alexandra, B'ham

**FRANK TURNER & THE
SLEEPING SOULS** Sun
13 Feb, O2 Institute,
Birmingham

ABSTRACT ORCHESTRA
Sun 13 Feb, Hare &
Hounds, Birmingham

BLAKE Sun 13 Feb,
The Old Rep, B'ham

SIMPLY RED Sun 13
Feb, Resorts World
Arena, Birmingham

JOHN BRAMWELL Sun
13 Feb, Marrs Bar,
Worcester

Classical Music Theatre

CBSO RUSH HOUR CONCERT Featuring
Michael Seal (conductor) & Tom
Redmond (presenter). Programme
includes works by Stravinsky,
Smetana, Boulanger, Dvorak,
Scherzo & Sibelius, Wed 9 Feb,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SCHUBERT STRING QUINTET Featuring
Kate Suthers & Bryony Morrison
(violins), Amy Thomas (viola), Miguel
Fernandes and Helen Edgar (cellos),
Thurs 10 Feb, CBSO Centre Stage,
Birmingham

GONZAGO BAND Fri 11 Feb, The Barber
Institute, University of Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: MONTEVERDI VESPERS
Featuring His Majestys Sagbutts &
Cornets. Jeffrey Skidmore conducts,
Sun 13 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**MALVERN CONCERT CLUB: LLŶR
WILLIAMS** Programme includes works
by Haydn, Schumann, Rachmaninov
& Liszt, Sun 13 Feb, Malvern
Theatres

Comedy

AHIR SHAH Wed 9 Feb, Royal Spa
Centre, Leamington Spa

JAMALI MADDIX Wed 9 Feb, The Glee
Club, Birmingham

ED BYRNE Thurs 10 Feb, Royal Spa
Centre, Leamington Spa

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY
ROBINSON, JAY LAFFERTY & COMIC TBC**
Thurs 10 Feb, The Glee Club,
Birmingham

STEWART LEE Fri 11 Feb, Warwick Arts
Centre, Coventry

JAMALI MADDIX Fri 11 Feb, Warwick
Arts Centre, Coventry



HAYLEY ELLIS Fri 11 Feb, The Albany
Theatre, Coventry

**MATT REED, DAISY EARL, JAY LAFFERTY
& COMIC TBC** Fri 11 - Sat 12 Feb, The
Glee Club, Birmingham

STEWART LEE Sat 12 Feb, Malvern
Theatres

**LOST VOICE GUY, JO ENRIGHT, ROB
ROUSE & TOM TOAL** Sat 12 Feb, Rosies
Nightclub, Birmingham

STEWART LEE Sun 13 Feb,
Birmingham Hippodrome

KANE BROWN & COMIC TBC Sun 13
Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Roy
Alexander Weise makes his RSC
debut with a story featuring
matchmaking and manipulation,
dastardly plots, hilarious slapstick
and some of Shakespeare's wittiest
dialogue, until Sat 12 Mar, Royal
Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-
upon-Avon

ERIC & ERN Nostalgic show packed
with Morecambe & Wise's best-loved
routines, songs and sketches, Mon 7
Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND
MR HYDE** Blackeyed Theatre present
Robert Louis Stevenson's dark
psychological fantasy, Mon 7 Feb,
Albany Theatre, Coventry



THE DEEP BLUE SEA Amateur staging
of Terrence Rattigan's tragic love
story, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Feb, Talisman
Theatre, Coventry

FRIENDS - THE MUSICAL PARODY A
show that celebrates and pokes fun
at the wacky misadventures of Ross,
Chandler, Monica, Phoebe, Joey and
Rachel from the hit TV show of the
same name, Tues 8 Feb,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BLACK IS THE COLOUR OF MY VOICE
Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play,
inspired by the life of Nina Simone
and featuring many of her most
iconic songs performed live, Tues 8
Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington
Spa

**THE COVID 19 VARIATIONS: A PIANO
DRAMA** A film and concert in one,
starring everybody from Donald
Trump and Elton John to Kanye West
and the royal family... Tues 8 - Wed 9
Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

DEAD GOOD Vamos Theatre celebrate
friendship and the importance of
living every day to the full... Tues 8 -
Wed 9 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre
(mac), Birmingham

BULL Sonderous Theatre Company
present Mike Bartlett's play about
workplace politics, Tues 8 - Sat 12
Feb, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES
Sherlock Holmes' most celebrated
adventure gets a farcical overhaul in
Lotte Wakeham's acclaimed
production, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Feb,
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

JERSEY BOYS Smash-hit musical

Monday 7 - Sunday 13 February



Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker - Birmingham Hippodrome

telling the story of Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons, Tues 8 - Sat 19 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

I AIN'T DUMB Sex secrets, hip-hop and hope fight for centre stage in Tom Wright's 'vibrant, loud & proud, real talk rollercoaster', Wed 9 - Sat 12 Feb, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry



INTO THE WOODS Dynamik Theatre present Stephen Sondheim's dark and comic twist on classic fairytales, Wed 9 - Sat 12 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

SHELL SUIT CHER Imagine if Cher left showbiz behind, swapped leather for leisure wear and became a shell suit wearing, chain smoking bingo host... Thurs 10 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



RICHARD JONES: ESCAPE Join the only magician ever to have won Britain's Got Talent as he debuts his latest 'awe-inspiring' magic, Thurs 10 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

RUSH A JOYOUS JAMAICAN JOURNEY Comedian John Simmit narrates the story of Reggae, the Windrush Generation and how the music took the world by storm, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

BLINK Off-beat romantic comedy from award-winning playwright Phil Porter, Fri 11 - Sat 19 Feb, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

MIDLIFE CRISIS (FOR BETTER NOT WORSE) New comic drama looking at love, life, marriage, parenthood and growing old gracefully, Sun 13 Feb, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Spoken Word

MADE IN THE MIDLANDS: JESS PHILLIPS MP Adrian Goldberg interviews the outspoken shadow minister about how her Midlands upbringing shaped her politics and unique style... Fri 11 Feb, Drapers' Hall, Coventry



AN EVENING WITH GEOFF HURST The England hat-trick hero and World Cup winner reminisces about his illustrious career, Sat 12 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

Kids Shows

PEPPA PIG'S BEST DAY EVER 'Packed full of songs, games and laughter', Sat 12 - Sun 13 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

MATTHEW BOURNE'S NUTCRACKER! Tchaikovsky's glorious score and Anthony Ward's delectable sets and costumes combine with Bourne's dazzling choreography to create a fresh and charmingly irreverent interpretation of this classic tale, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

DONUTS Full-length dance exploration of the way in which relationships evolve over time, along the way celebrating the times when a night in is so much better than a night out, Wed 9 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

STARVING DINGOES Five dancers embrace the desire to live furiously and passionately, exploring the vital and sometimes brutal necessity to

stay together to survive when facing the threat of a group of huge, obsessive, primitive beasts, Thurs 10 Feb, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Events

BRITISH MOTOR MUSEUM QUIZ NIGHT - FEBRUARY Put together a team, test your knowledge and explore the museum, Tues 8 Feb, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th-century water mill, learn about the life of a miller and the check out the views that inspired writer JRR Tolkien, Fri 11 - Sat 12 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

YOUNG DRIVER CLASSIC CAR EXPERIENCES - FEBRUARY Enjoy classic car and fire engine driving experiences, Sat 12 Feb, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

FESTIVAL OF ARCHERY Featuring expert archers, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Feb, Warwick Castle

Monteverdi Vespers (1610)

EX CATHEDRA Choir & Baroque Ensemble
HIS MAJESTYS SAGBUTTS & CORNETTS
Jeffrey Skidmore conductor

Sun 13 Feb, 4pm
Town Hall, Birmingham

A masterpiece of dazzling vocal and instrumental virtuosity, interspersed with sensual, intimate solos and duets – a perfect Valentine's treat.

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Dave - Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

Gigs

PALE WAVES Mon 14 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BLIND LEMON Tues 15 Feb, Drummonds, Worcester

DECAPITATED + BLACK TONGUE Tues 15 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

BEDOUINE Tues 15 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MELANIE C Tues 15 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

STONE Tues 15 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

COVET Tues 15 Feb, Mama Roux's, B'ham

MOONCHILD Wed 16 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SHARON SHANNON Wed 16 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ENSLAVED Wed 16 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE MUSICAL BOX: LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY Wed 16 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AP DHILLON & GURINDER GILL Thurs 17 Feb, Forum, B'ham

LEE 'MEMPHIS' KING Thurs 17 Feb, The Alexandra, B'ham

BOSTON MANOR Thurs 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE ADELE SONGBOOK Thurs 17 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

RED HOT RIOT Thurs 17 Feb, The Sunflower

Lounge, Birmingham

STEVE NORMAN & THE SLEEVS Thurs 17 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JON WILKS Thurs 17 Feb, MAC, B'ham

BELLE & SEBASTIAN Thurs 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DAVE Thurs 17 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

HOME COUNTIES Thurs 17 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

80S LIVE Fri 18 Feb, Albany Theatre, Coventry

RUDESIX + LOBSTER Fri 18 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE ROCKET MAN Fri 18 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

BEARTOOTH Fri 18 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

WHITE TYGËR Fri 18 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CARPENTERS GOLD Fri 18 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE NEIL DIAMOND STORY Fri 18 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

RUBY TURNER Fri 18 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MUSED Fri 18 Feb, Marris Bar, Worcester

SONS OF LIBERTY Fri 18 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

JESSIE LLOYD Fri 18 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ROY ORBISON & THE TRAVELLING WILBURYS EXPERIENCE Fri 18 Feb,

Malvern Theatres

NIRVANA UK Sat 19 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE STRANGLERS Sat 19 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE ELVIS YEARS Sat 19 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

OH! WHAT A NIGHT - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS Sat 19 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

OAS-IS Sat 19 Feb, HMV Empire, Coventry

ULTIMATE LEPPARD Sat 19 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

BEARS IN TREES Sat 19 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FOXES Sat 19 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RECALL THE REMAINS + BLACK WATER FIEND + OLD SELVES + RITUALS Sat 19 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE JOURNEY SO FAR - ADELE TRIBUTE Sun 20 Feb, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

DEATHCRASH Sun 20 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JAMES VINCENT MCMORROW Sun 20 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MOTORAMA Sun 20 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SAM SWEENEY Sun 20 Feb, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, Vierne, Lemare & Bizet, Mon 14 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

PHOENIX CLARINET QUARTET Mon 14 Feb (1pm), Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KOSMOS Featuring Harriet Mackenzie (violin), Meg Hamilton (viola), Rupert Gillet (cello) & Milo Milivojevic (accordion), Tues 15 Feb, The Dream Factory, Warwick

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: LOOPS AND VERSES Featuring Michael Collins (conductor) & Peter Donohoe (piano). Programme includes works by Vaughan Williams, Adams, Adès & Ravel, Wed 16 Feb, Cheltenham Town Hall

CBSO: THE FIREBIRD Featuring Lionel Bringuier (conductor), Sunwook Kim (piano) & the CBSO Youth Chorus. Programme includes works by Kodály, Rachmaninov, Debussy & Stravinsky, Thurs 17 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: ULTIMO TANGO Featuring Eduardo Vassallo (cello), Nicholas Bricht (flute), Mark O'Brien (saxophone), John Turville (piano) & Mark Goodchild (double bass). Programme includes JS Bach arr. Mark Goodchild Goldberg Variations & Piazzolla arr. Mark Goodchild Selected Works, Fri 18 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Richard Laing (conductor). Programme includes works by Humperdinck, Wagner & Sibelius, Sun 20 Feb, University of Birmingham

CBSO FAMILY CONCERT: MYTHS & LEGENDS Featuring Delyana Lazarova (conductor), Tom Redmond (presenter) & Sarah Butt (BSL Interpreter). Programme includes John Williams' Raiders of the Lost Ark: Raiders March; Sibelius' Lemminkäinen's Return; Grace Williams' Sea Sketches: Channel Sirens and Copland's Billy the Kid: Open Prairie, Sun 20 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

FERN BRADY Wed 16 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NISH KUMAR Thurs 17 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

OMID DJALILI Thurs 17 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, DARREN HARRIOT & LOUISE

YOUNG Thurs 17 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MARK STEEL Fri 18 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

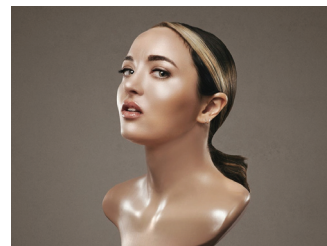
SUKH OJLA Fri 18 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

SIMON BRODKIN Fri 18 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

ANDREW BIRD, JOHN FOTHERGILL, DARREN HARRIOT & LOUISE YOUNG Fri 18 - Sat 19 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

ADAM ROWE Fri 18 - Sat 19 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FERN BRADY Sat 19 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



SHAZIA MIRZA Sat 19 Feb, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

ROBERT WHITE, AARON SIMMONS, PAUL TONKINSON & DARIUS DAVIES Sat 19 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT AND FRIENDS Sun 20 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

ROUGH WORKS NIGHT Sun 20 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SHAPARAK KHORSANDI Sun 20 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Theatre

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Roy Alexander Weise makes his RSC debut with a story featuring matchmaking and manipulation, dastardly plots, hilarious slapstick and some of Shakespeare's wittiest dialogue, until Sat 12 Mar, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

TOY STORY IN CONCERT A screening of the groundbreaking complete film, with composer Randy Newman's musical score performed by the Novello Orchestra, Mon 14 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SING-A-LONG-A DIRTY DANCING Join Baby and Johnny in a fun-filled screening of the 1987 dance classic... Mon 14 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE PLAY WHAT I WROTE Critically acclaimed homage to Morecambe & Wise, featuring a mystery guest at every performance, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Feb, Malvern Theatres

STEVE STEINMAN'S VAMPIRE'S ROCK - GHOST TRAIN A tongue-in-cheek, laugh-out-loud storyline combines

Monday 14 - Sunday 20 February



The Play What I Wrote - Malvern Theatres

with a soundtrack featuring over 30 of the greatest classic rock anthems of all time by legends including Queen, AC/DC, Bonnie Tyler, Meat Loaf, Bon Jovi, Journey, Guns N' Roses and many more, Tues 15 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE MAN WHO THOUGHT HE KNEW TOO MUCH An intercontinental, inter-genre, cinematic caper of accusations, accidents and accents... Tues 15 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

DEAD GOOD Vamos Theatre celebrates friendship and the importance of living every day to the full... Tues 15 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

ENG-ER-LAND Playwright Hannah Kumari stars in her own 45-minute show as Coventry City supporter Lizzie, a young woman for whom football offers a way of belonging somewhere, Wed 16 - Thurs 17 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BIRTHDAY SUITE 'A riotous comedy of chaos and confusion', Wed 16 - Sat 26 Feb, Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

WITH ONE LOOK Join Vivienne de Vil, Broadway veteran and confidant to the stars, as she celebrates some of the most iconic women of musical theatre, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE UK: SEASON 2 TOUR Featuring UK Season 2 finalists Tayce, Bimini Bon Boulash, Ellie Diamond and Laurence Chaney, along with stars from Drag Race UK,

Fri 18 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE UNDOING OF POLLY BUTTON - A FOLK OPERA A performance based on the tragic but true events of a horrific murder in the town of Nuneaton almost 200 years ago... Sat 19 - Sun 20 Feb, Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton

WIND IN THE WILLOWS Immersion Theatre present a family 'musical extravaganza' based on Kenneth Grahame's riverbank tales, Sun 20 Feb, Albany Theatre, Coventry

Talks

JASON FOX: LIFE AT THE LIMITS TOUR 2022 Listen to the remarkable story of Jason's daring exploits in a distinguished career as an elite operator in the UK Special Forces (SBS), Wed 16 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

SUGGS: WHAT A KING CNUT With help from his trusty pianist, Deano, the Madness frontman tells his story in words and music, including some Madness classics and a couple more what he wrote all on himself, Wed 16 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

GORDON BUCHANAN: 30 YEARS IN THE WILD Join the wildlife presenter and filmmaker as he looks back on his time both behind and in front of the camera, Thurs 17 Feb, Albany

Theatre, Coventry

AN EVENING WITH DEBBIE HARRY & CHRIS STEIN IN CONVERSATION Centred around Chris and Debbie's recent acclaimed books... Fri 18 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

AN AUDIENCE WITH HARRY REDKNAPP Join Harry as he recounts stories from his football and TV career, including tales of his time in the jungle, Fri 18 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ONE TRACK MINDS A live storytelling show all about the life-changing power of music, Sat 19 Feb, Drapers' Hall, Coventry

WHERE THERE IS LIGHT An immersive sound & light installation sharing the voices and stories of sanctuary-seeking communities from across the country, Sat 19 - Sat 26 Feb, Coventry Cathedral Ruins

Kids Shows

BILLIONAIRE BOY New production based on David Walliams' bestselling children's book, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Feb, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT DINOSAURS Interactive show for younger audiences, hosted by TV presenter, author and all-round dinosaur expert Dr Ben Garrod, Sat 19 Feb, Albany Theatre, Coventry

Dance

40 YEARS OF PHOENIX DANCE Special birthday performance featuring an eclectic selection of work, Tues 15 Feb, Malvern Theatres

A TALE OF TWO CITIES Lost Dog Dance present a part-fictionalised documentary based on Dickens' classic novel, Wed 16 - Fri 18 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

COME WHAT MAY Travel back in time as the children of the revolution take you on a non-stop journey into the sexy, disreputable and glamorous underworld of Paris. Starring Strictly's Robin Windsor and a cast of West End performers, Thurs 17 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: DON QUIXOTE This brand-new production, created especially for BRB, introduces us to Cervantes' famous knight, lovers Kitri and Basilio, and a host of supporting characters, Fri 18 - Sat 26 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

PINOCCHIO Northern Ballet present a retelling of Carlo Collodi's classic tale using live ballet, music & theatre, Sun 20 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LITTLE MURMUR Aakash Odedra

Company and The Spark Arts For Children explore the exaggerated realities of living in a world you can struggle to process, Sun 20 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham

Events

PLANETARIUM LATES: PARTICLE/WAVE Poets, musicians, sound and video artists have collaborated with scientists to present the incredible story of gravitational wave, Thurs 17 Feb, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham



BOATLIFE LIVE Featuring over 100 boats, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th-century water mill, learn about the life of a miller and the check out the views that inspired writer JRR Tolkien, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

BUNKERED LIVE Featuring free golf lessons, top tips on the latest gear, the chance to test your golf skills and an opportunity to relax at the 19th hole, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

MÜLLER INDOOR GRAND PRIX BIRMINGHAM World-class athletes make their long-awaited return to Birmingham as part of the World Indoor Tour Gold series, Sat 19 Feb, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

F1 FEBRUARY HALF-TERM ACTIVITIES Formula One racing-themed activities for the whole family to enjoy, Sat 19 - Sun 27 Feb, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

SPY SPRING HALF TERM Learn about the techniques of Elizabethan spies, Sat 19 - Sun 27 Feb, Tudor World Museum, Stratford-upon-Avon

ORIGINS OF MIDDLE-EARTH: JRR TOLKIEN AND SAREHOLE GUIDED WALK Guided walk introducing the scenery that inspired JRR Tolkien when he lived near Sarehole Mill as a child, Sun 20 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

EXPLORE BLAKESLEY Check out this fine Tudor house and beautiful gardens, built in 1590 by Richard Smalbroke, a member of one of Birmingham's leading merchant families, Sun 20 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham



Talvin Singh - Drapers' Hall, Coventry

Gigs

VAN DER GRAAF

GENERATOR Mon 21 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

TRIPPIE REDD Mon 21 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KING KING Tues 22 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

SET IT OFF Tues 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DRY CLEANING Tues 22 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

SIMONE FELICE Tues 22 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SAMM HENSHAW Tues 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PENELOPE ISLES Tues 22 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EMMA-JEAN THACKRAY Wed 23 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JAM BAXTER Wed 23 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

JEZ LOWE Wed 23 Feb, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

BLACK SABBITCH Wed 23 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

AP DHILLON & GURINDER GILL Wed 23 Feb, Forum, B'ham

KIT SEBASTIAN Wed 23 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE TYNE Thurs 24 Feb, O2 Academy,

Birmingham

LOS BITCHOS Thurs 24 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ALY & AJ Thurs 24 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

CHINA BEARS Thurs 24 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DEL CAMINO Thurs 24 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

BOTH SIDES OF PHIL COLLINS Thurs 24 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE LEYLINES Fri 25 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

HYBIRD MINDS Fri 25 Feb, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

STONE FOUNDATION Fri 25 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

TOTAL 90S Fri 25 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

STRONG ENOUGH - CHER TRIBUTE Fri 25 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

CHARLES DEXTER WARD Fri 25 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

GZA Fri 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TOUCH OF TOTO Fri 25 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

MICROWAVE Fri 25 Feb, The Asylum, B'ham

THE WAILERS Fri 25 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BOTOWN THE SOUL OF

BOLLYWOOD Fri 25 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

SHADER Fri 25 Feb, HMV Empire, Coventry

HENRY ROLLINS Sat 26 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW & THE LOW RIDERS Sat 26 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

CAPTAIN ACCIDENT Sat 26 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

FLEETINGWOOD MAC Sat 26 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

TALVIN SINGH Sat 26 Feb, Drapers' Hall, Coventry

SONS OF LIBERTY Sat 26 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

DNB ALLSTARS BIRMINGHAM WITH CHASE & STATUS, DIMENSION, BOU Sat 26 Feb, Forum, Birmingham

SINEAD HARNETT Sat 26 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GORILLA RIOT + DOOMSDAY OUTLAW Sat 26 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN Sat 26 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DR HOOK Sat 26 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

HUNDRED REASONS Sat 26 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

A BEAUTIFUL NOISE Sat 26 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

FAUX FIGHTERS Sat 26 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

SARTAJ Sun 27 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

STAND ATLANTIC Sun 27 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BOB LOG III Sun 27 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BLACKBERRY SMOKE Sun 27 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CRYSTAL LAKE + CURRENTS + KINGDOM OF GIANTS Mon 28 Feb, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

Classical Music

THE GESUALDO SIX English music from a golden age performed by Owain Park (director), Guy James

(countertenor), Joseph Wicks and Josh Cooter (tenors), Michael Craddock (baritone) and Sam Mitchell (bass), Tues 22 Feb, St Mary's Church, Warwick

CBSO: THE ORDERING OF MOSES Featuring Joshua Weilerstein (conductor), Chrystal E Williams (mezzo soprano), Rodrick Dixon (tenor) and the CBSO Chorus. Programme includes works by Ives, Bernstein & Dett, Wed 23 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA Programme includes works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Grieg & Beethoven, Wed 23 Feb, Butterworth Hall, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: REBEL Featuring Paul Morley (narrator) & David Le Page (Director). Programme includes works by Bowie arr. Le Page, Beethoven, Joe Cutler and Benoit Granier, Thurs 24 Feb, Drapers' Hall, Coventry

CBSO: 100 YEARS OF MOVIE MAGIC Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) & Tommy Pearson (presenter), Fri 25 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PRAŽAK STRING QUARTET Programme includes works by Suk, Janáček, Karel Janovický & Dvorak, Fri 25 Feb, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: EIGHT SEASONS In memory of Lady Jean Liggins. Programme comprises Vivaldi's Four Seasons & Piazzolla's The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires, Sat 26 Feb, Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick

CBSO YOUTH ORCHESTRA Featuring Joshua Weilerstein & Jeneba Kanneh-Mason. Programme includes works by Korngold, Price & Tchaikovsky, Sun 27 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by J.S Bach, T. Susato, N.Gade, R. Laurin & Saint-Saens, Mon 28 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

Comedy

ED BYRNE Wed 23 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

PAUL SMITH Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, SUSIE MCCABE & DAN NIGHTINGALE Thurs 24 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY ZALTZMAN Fri 25 Feb, Royal Spa

Centre, Leamington Spa

ALFIE BROWN Fri 25 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY ASKINS, SLIM, SUSIE MCCABE & DAN NIGHTINGALE Fri 25 - Sat 26 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SIMON EVANS Sat 26 Feb, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

ADAM BLOOM, MARK MAIER, ANDREA HUNT & ROBIN MORGAN Sat 26 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

SHAZIA MIRZA Sun 27 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

MATT FORDE Sun 27 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NINA CONTI Mon 28 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Theatre

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Roy Alexander Weise makes his RSC debut with a story featuring matchmaking and manipulation, dastardly plots, hilarious slapstick and some of Shakespeare's wittiest dialogue, until Sat 12 Mar, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

LOOKING GOOD DEAD Adam Woodyatt becomes a witness to a vicious murder in this stage adaptation of Peter James' novel. Laurie Brett also stars, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SEE HOW THEY RUN The Nonentities present an amateur staging of Philip King's comedy, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Feb, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Much-anticipated sequel starring Crissy Rock, Nicole Barber, Rebecca Wheatley and Nicki French, Tues 22 Feb, Malvern Theatres

MORGAN & WEST: UNBELIEVABLE SCIENCE Half-term fun for kids, featuring 'captivating chemistry, phenomenal physics & bonkers biology', Tues 22 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

THE BALLAD OF MARIA MARTEN Eastern Angles spinetling retelling of the story of Maria Marten, who met her demise in the summer of 1827, Tues 22 - Wed 23 Feb, Malvern Theatres

PLEASANT ISLAND Belgian artists Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere fuse technology and journalistic rigour to investigate the impact of world growth on Nauru, the world's smallest island nation, Tues 22 - Wed 23 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL Claire Sweeney stars in Dolly Parton's smash-hit musical, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

DICK WHITTINGTON Albany Theatre's first home-grown pantomime - originally planned for 2021, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Feb, Albany Theatre, Coventry

Monday 21 - Monday 28 February



The Da Vinci Code - Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THE DA VINCI CODE Nigel Harman and Danny John-Jules star in the stage adaptation of Dan Brown's best-selling novel, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Feb, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

WIND IN THE WILLOWS Immersion Theatre present a family 'musical extravaganza' based on Kenneth Grahame's riverbank tales, Wed 23 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

FROZEN LIGHT PRESENTS 2065 A futuristic sensory extravaganza for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Feb, Malvern Theatres

THE SEAFARER Supernatural story by acclaimed Irish playwright Conor McPherson, Wed 23 Feb - Sat 5 March, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

TESTAMENT OF YOOHA Caroline Burnes Cooke examines the life of glamorous sitcom legend Yootha Joyce. Mark Farrelly (Quentin Crisp - Naked Hope and Howerd's End) directs, Thurs 24 - Fri 25 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

WORD LOUNGE THEATRE COMPANY Co-created with young people, this newly devised production promises to be 'entertaining and enlightening - with a little of the unexpected!'... Sat 26 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham

TRIFFIDS! Music, text & imagery collide as the audience are transported deep into John Wyndham's classic cold war novel, The Day Of The Triffids, Sat 26 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KERBS Debut play from Michael Southan that explores taboos around sex, romance and disability, Sat 26 Feb - Sat 5 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

DRACULA James Gaddas (Bad Girls, Coronation Street, Medics) performs his adaptation of Bram Stoker's Gothic horror story... Sun 27 Feb, Malvern Theatres

GROAN UPS Mischief Theatre present a brand-new comedy about growing up, Mon 28 Feb - Sat 5 March, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

Podcasts & Talks

MY DAD WROTE A PORN WORLD TOUR 2020 Join Jamie Morton, along with best mates James Cooper and Alice Levine, as he delves deeper into his father's Belinda Blinkered erotic saga, Thurs 24 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

RAY MEARS: WE ARE NATURE Celebrate the importance of the wilderness as Ray demonstrates and explains techniques that will help us improve our senses and highlight the problems nature faces today, Fri 25 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



SIR RANULPH FIENNES: LIVING DANGEROUSLY Spend an evening in the company of the 'world's greatest living explorer' as he offers a personal journey through his life, Sun 27 Feb, The Alexandra, B'ham

NINA CONTI: THE DATING SHOW Described as Cilla Black with masks. Derailed. Not so much a Blind Date as a re-voiced one, Mon 28 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Kids Shows

ANIMAL ANTICS A show featuring animal effects, music, puppetry and special effects, designed both to entertain and educate, Mon 21 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE The People's Theatre Company present a new stage show for children, based on Steven Lee's latest picture book, Tues 22 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT DINOSAURS Interactive show for younger audiences, hosted by TV presenter, author and all-round dinosaur expert Dr Ben Garrod, Tues 22 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

HURRAH! FOR THE PIRATE KING Swash-buckling musical adventure for younger audiences, Wed 23 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

PINOCCHIO Norwich Puppet Theatre bring slapstick humour and illusion to Carlo Collodi's classic tale, Wed 23 Feb, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

GANGSTA GRANNY David Walliams' much-loved children's story, presented by Birmingham Stage Company, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DEAR ZOO LIVE ON STAGE Show based on Rod Campbell's much-loved children's book, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

ZOG AND THE FLYING DOCTORS Adventure for children, based on Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's bestselling story, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

EXCITING SCIENCE Brand-new show for kids - packed with fun and fact-filled experiments, Fri 25 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

MILKSHAKE LIVE: MONKEY'S MUSICAL Join Paddington, Daisy & Ollie, Milo, Noddy, Pip and Posy in a brand-new interactive stage show for children, Fri 25 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

JABALA & THE JINN The story of a little girl's encounter with a very cheeky Jinn, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham

Dance

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: DON QUIXOTE This brand-new production, created especially for BRB, introduces us to Cervantes' famous knight, lovers Kitri and Basilio, and a host of supporting characters, until Sat 26 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

BRB - FIRST STEPS: CINDERELLA'S STORYBOOK An hour-long interactive show, specially adapted for children

aged three-plus, in which a storyteller and Cinderella share highlights from some of BRB's favourite ballets, Fri 25 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

SWAN LAKE Presented by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Mon 28 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Events

CARAVAN, CAMPING AND MOTORHOME SHOW The UK's biggest showcase of motorhomes, campervans, caravans, caravan holiday homes and luxury lodges, Tues 22 - Sun 27 Feb, NEC, Birmingham



SMETHWICK ENGINE STEAMING DAY Experience at first hand the power of the oldest working steam engine in the world, Wed 23 Feb, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

PALAU PARTY TAKEOVER! Meet drag and cabaret performers as you make your way through the historic rooms of Aston Hall, Wed 23 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

TALL TALES: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST STORYTELLING TOUR Interactive telling of the much-loved fairytale, Thurs 24 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

SIX WEEK BEGINNERS JEWELLERY COURSE Learn a variety of jewellery-making techniques under the careful guidance of jeweller and teacher Vanessa Miller, Tues 22 Feb - Tues 29 March, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th-century water mill, learn about the life of a miller and the check out the views that inspired writer JRR Tolkien, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

JEWELLERY QUARTER GHOST WALK History, folklore and ghosts collide on a walking tour through Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter, Sat 26 Feb, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

MUSEUM OF THE JEWELLERY QUARTER 30TH BIRTHDAY A day of special tours to celebrate 30 years of the museum, Sat 26 Feb, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

MODEL MANIA Discover more than 50 large model aircraft, displayed across all hangars and in between the original aircraft, Sun 27 Feb, RAF Museum, Cosford

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