Your FREE essential entertainment guide for the Midlands

KATHERINE RYAN RETURNS TO THE MIDLANDS



Wolverhampton & Black Country

What's On

ISSUE 422 MARCH 2022

FILM I COMEDY I THEATRE I GIGS I VISUAL ARTS I EVENTS I FOOD wolverhamptonwhatson.co.uk



inside:

HAVING A PARTY
brand new Osmonds musical stops off at the Grand Theatre



GEORDIE BOY
Chris Ramsey brings his latest stand-up show to Dudley



WONDROUS STORIES
outdoor spectacle launches Birmingham 2022 Festival



A SEASON OF SPARKLING SHOWS



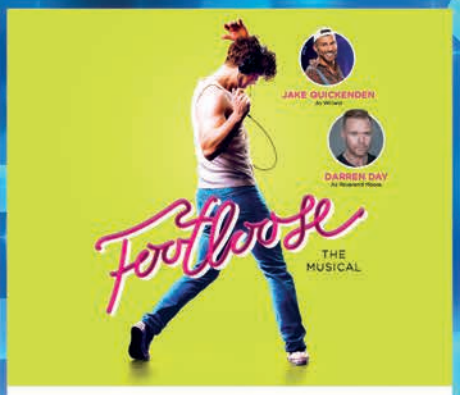
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MON 21 – SAT 26 MAR



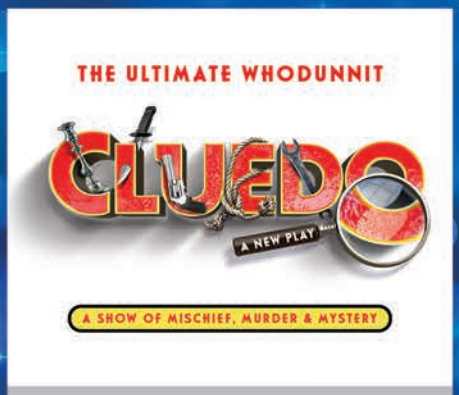
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MON 13 & TUE 14 JUN



TUE 19 – SAT 23 APR
THU 21 APR 7.30PM



MON 25 – SAT 30 APR



MON 2 – SAT 7 MAY



MON 16 – SAT 21 MAY



THU 16 – SUN 19 JUN



TUE 21 – SAT 25 JUN

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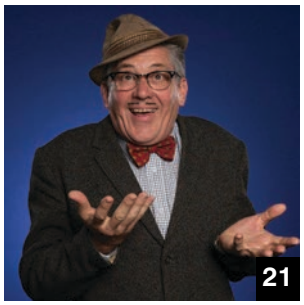
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Chinese dance stars to visit ICC this month

The world's premier classical Chinese dance company is heading to Birmingham this month.

Appearing at the city's International Convention Centre (ICC), Shen Yun is inviting its audiences to 'travel back to the magical world of ancient China, experience a lost culture through the incredible art of classical Chinese dance, and see legends come to life'.

The company's latest touring production - boasting a blend of 'stunning costuming, high-tech backdrops, and an orchestra like no other' - stops off at the ICC from Thursday 31 March to Sunday 3 April.

For more information, visit shenyun.com

Family-run Ironbridge business hosts spring art exhibition

Family-run business Ironbridge Fine Arts & Framing is hosting a spring art exhibition. Available to view from 1 March until 28 May, the exhibition features a wide range of work, from pastel paintings and graphite drawings to monotype printmaking and reduction lino cuts. For more information about the show, visit ironbridgeframing.co.uk



Amy Jones to headline Shrewsbury's returning flower show



South African singer-songwriter Amy Jones will be the Saturday headline act when the Shrewsbury Flower Show returns to the town's Quarry Park for the first time in three years this summer (Friday 12 & Saturday 13 August). Commenting on the news, Amy, whose hits include Burn, Get A Little and I Think I'm In Love, said that the chance to perform her music to an international audience was a dream come true: "This is something I've been working for since I started out in 2016 and takes my career to a whole new level."

For more information about this year's show, head for @shrewsflowershw on Twitter.

Go behind the scenes at Wolverhampton theatre

Midlanders who're interested in finding out more about one of the region's biggest theatres, the Wolverhampton Grand, can book themselves a place on the next public tour of the venue, on Saturday 26 March.

The tour includes a chance to check out the stage, backstage areas, dressing rooms and front-of-house, along the way learning plenty about the history of the theatre.

The tour lasts approximately 90 minutes and can be booked online at grandtheatre.co.uk or by calling the box office on 01902 42 92 12.

Something Marvellous coming to Staffordshire



Staffordshire's New Vic Theatre is this month staging the much-anticipated Marvellous, a world premiere production based on the extraordinary life of local hero, clown and Stoke City FC kit man Neil 'Nello' Baldwin. The show runs at the venue from Friday 11 March to Saturday 9 April.

For more information and to book tickets, visit newvictheatre.org.uk

Harry Potter installation coming to the Midlands

An installation consisting of nine 15ft-tall wands - representing nine much-loved characters from the Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts films - is heading for the Midlands this month.

The Wizarding World Wand installation will visit Birmingham (Bullring, 11 - 17 March) and Stoke-on-Trent (Smithfield, 21 - 27 March) to celebrate the 8 April cinematic release of Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets Of Dumbledore. The installation will illuminate each evening and present a light show accompanied by music from the films.



Scottish band Texas to play at Forest Live 2022

Scottish band Texas will play Cannock Chase Forest on Thursday 9 June as part of Forest Live, the annual outdoor music series taking place in natural woodland arenas at venues around the country. Commenting on the news, Texas' Sharleen Spiteri said: "We last played a Forest Live show in 2011, so for us it's a welcome opportunity to perform our hits in a beautiful setting. We hope to see you there."

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit forestryengland.uk/music

Lifestyle ideas at Telford venue

Telford International Centre is this spring playing host to a brand-new three-day show focusing on all things lifestyle. Taking place from 6 to 8 May and covering interests as wide-ranging as holidays, gardening, health & fitness and food & drink, Lifestyle 2022 features an array of exhibits, presentations from industry experts and appearances by television personalities.
For more information and to book tickets, visit thelifestyleshow.co.uk



Present Laughter at Cannock's Prince of Wales

The always-impressive Ambient Night Productions next month make a welcome return to Cannock's Prince of Wales Theatre with a new version of Noel Coward's Present Laughter.
The play focuses on the character of womaniser, idol and suavely sophisticated theatrical Gary Essendine, who lives in a world of hopeful actors, star-struck teenagers and adoring fans. His antics and casual love affairs require the most delicate handling by his manager and secretary. But things are about to spiral out of control...
Present Laughter shows at the Prince of Wales on Wednesday 13 & Thursday 14 April.
For more information, visit ambientnightproductions.com



Ex-Sugababe to star in new musical heading for the region

Former Sugababe Amelle Berrabah will headline the cast when new musical Soul Sisters visits the Midlands this month and next.
Telling the story of three old friends for whom a reunion proves to be a revelatory experience, the show stops off at the following venues: Stafford Gatehouse, Sat 26 March; Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Fri 1 April and The Place, Telford, Wed 6 April. Find out more at soulsistersmusical.com

Claudia Winkleman tours Behind The Fringe show

TV personality and Strictly Come Dancing presenter Claudia Winkleman will appear at Birmingham Town Hall on 2 May in her brand-new touring show, Behind The Fringe. The evening features "some chatter", as Claudia describes it, a mass live fringe trim on stage and a section in which Claudia interviews members of the audience. The evening will finish with "a big sing-song".
For more information and to book tickets, visit Behindthefringe.live.





Classic Ibiza returns to Weston Park

Family-friendly concert Classic Ibiza is bringing its heady blend of Balearic beats back to Staffordshire's Weston Park on Saturday 16 July. The event will start with a chill-out set where people can enjoy their picnics and a drink. DJ Goldierocks will 'turn things up' in the interval, getting the crowd in the mood for the Urban Soul Orchestra and vocalists, who will then take to the stage 'to bring a vibrant atmosphere to the summer evening'. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit weston-park.com/event/classic-ibiza

Wolverhampton arts project programme coming to an end

Offsite9, a programme of arts projects created to complement British Art Show 9 in Wolverhampton, will conclude on Saturday 9 April with a show at the city's Newhampton Arts Centre.

Titled Origin Unknown, the show is being promoted as 'an inspiring night bubbling with eclectic musical influences, from UK rap and Asian underground, to dance classics'.

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

Light House to host city's annual film festival

Wolverhampton's Light House Media Centre will next month host the city's first annual film festival.

Taking place over the space of three days - from Friday 29 April to Sunday 1 May - the event aims to offer filmmakers a platform on which to showcase their potential.

For more information, visit light-house.co.uk

Countryside theme for Staffordshire Day 2022

'The great outdoors' has been chosen as the theme for this year's Staffordshire Day (Sunday 1 May).

The seventh such day of its kind, the 2022 celebration will feature a host of entertainments and activities aimed at promoting Staffordshire's natural assets.

The event sees the return of The Staffordshire Day Film Competition for a second year. The contest is open to all filmmakers, with entries needing to be submitted by Sunday 3 April.

Visit filmfreeway.com for more details.

New outdoor film festival at Wolves Racecourse



A new outdoor event featuring blockbuster movies and live bands is coming to Wolverhampton Racecourse this spring.

Picnic In The Park Film Festival runs from Friday 29 April until Sunday 1 May and features five movies across the weekend: Bohemian Rhapsody, The Greatest Showman, Mamma Mia!, Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban and Grease. For more information, visit cinemaoutdoor.co.uk



BRB announces new spring residency at The Rep

Birmingham Royal Ballet has announced a week-long residency at Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Taking place from Sunday 8 to Saturday 14 May, the residency will see the company present a number of performances. Featured shows include New Dance Now - a showcase of work by young choreographers from the UK's leading ballet companies - and An Evening Of Music And Dance, which sees BRB's dancers perform a ballet repertoire hand-picked by Director Carlos Acosta.

Commenting on the residency, Sean Foley, Artistic Director of Birmingham Rep, said: "We are delighted to have forged such an exciting and dynamic new artistic relationship with Birmingham Royal Ballet over the last year, and we now look forward to welcoming our city partners back to our epic and intimate main stage for a season that celebrates some of the very best new work from this magnificent company."

An Inspector Calls at Theatre Severn

Stephen Daldry's multi-award-winning National Theatre production of JB Priestley's classic thriller, An Inspector Calls, will make an autumn stop-off at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn.

Hailed as one of the theatrical events of its generation and having won more awards than any other production in history, the show runs at the venue from Tuesday 20 to Saturday 24 September.

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



Severn Valley steam train gets a makeover for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee



To celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Birmingham's Commonwealth Games, Severn Valley Railway will be renaming and repainting one of its home-based steam locomotives.

34027 Taw Valley will not only carry a different name later this year, but will also appear in a brand-new purple livery, to commemorate The Queen's Jubilee.

The name change and repaint will be strictly temporary measures - later in the year, the locomotive will be restored to its original name and livery.

B:Music

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Town Hall



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Symphony Hall





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Town Hall



Marti Pellow
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Town Hall



Strictly Come Dancing: The Professionals 2022
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Brum Craic

Brum Craic: Live Comedy
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Symphony Hall



Lea Salonga
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REGENT THEATRE



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FOOTLOOSE

MON 21 – SAT 26 MAR

REGENT THEATRE

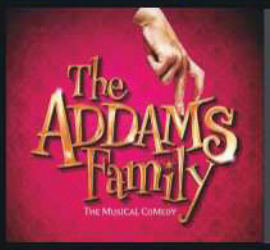


ALL ABOARD FOR LAUGHTER

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 – CRUISING THROUGH MENOPAUSE

SUN 27 MAR

REGENT THEATRE



EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE KOOKY FAMILY COME TO STOKE-ON-TRENT

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

TUE 29 MAR – SAT 2 APR

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JUSTIN LIVE!

SAT 23 APR

REGENT THEATRE



FEATURING THE GREATEST HITS OF JIM STEINMAN & MEAT LOAF

BAT OUT OF HELL

TUE 26 – SAT 30 APR

REGENT THEATRE



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ELLEN KENT'S CARMEN

THU 5 MAY

REGENT THEATRE

DICK & ANGEL
THU 3 MAR VH

DARA O'BRIAIN: SO, WHERE WERE WE?
FRI 4 MAR VH

CIRCUS OF HORRORS
FRI 11 MAR VH

COME WHAT MAY
THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO MOULIN ROUGE
SAT 12 FEB VH

TONY HADLEY
SUN 13 MAR VH

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SAT 19 MAR VH

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MADE Festival to make its Wolves debut in July

Wolverhampton's Dunstall Park will this summer host MADE music festival for the first time.

Taking place on Saturday 30 July, the eighth edition of the event will boast more stages than ever before and feature its usual mix of established and up-and-coming performers.

For more information and to book tickets, visit made-festival.co.uk

As You Like It on tour this summer

Ever-popular all-male theatre company The Lord Chamberlain's Men are hitting the road this summer with a brand-new touring production of Shakespeare's As You Like It. To check out the ensemble's Midlands stop-offs, visit tlcm.co.uk

Fairground fun at Albert & Co

Telford bar and live-music venue Albert's Shed is expanding its hospitality provision by opening a second premises at Southwater.

The new lakeside venue, called Albert & Co Fairground, will take a vintage fairground theme and offer both an eat-in and takeaway menu.

Entertainment will be provided by acoustic acts, pianists and 'potentially vinyl DJs playing background music'.





RSC teams up with global brand TikTok and launches new initiative to support young theatre-goers

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has partnered with social networking service TikTok to open access to high-quality theatre for young people.

Developed in consultation with the RSC's Youth Advisory Board, the new TikTok Tickets initiative will see the Company and TikTok provide subsidised travel, information and support for people aged between 14 and 25, to help them access RSC productions.

From June, young people and full-time students can see an RSC show in Stratford-upon-Avon or London for £10 (£5 for reduced-price previews), while state schools can also book £10 TikTok Tickets for group visits in Stratford.

Although open to all within the stated age range, the partnership will particularly engage those communities most in need. Work with the RSC's Associate Schools network will deepen young people's engagement with theatre and live performance, ensuring state schools are encouraging students to book tickets independently as well as organising group visits.

Merrythought unveils its Jubilee bear

Historic Ironbridge Gorge-based teddy bear maker Merrythought is marking Queen Elizabeth II's 70-year reign by launching a limited-edition bear.

The highly collectable teddy, which wears a detailed coronation robe and crown made from 'the finest materials', is presented in a premium gold drum box, with an individually numbered certificate, and is available from merrythought.com priced at £339.

Cantata choir to perform Jenkins' choral work

A Saturday 2 April concert at Shrewsbury's St Chad's Church will see the town's much-admired Cantata Choir present a modern choral work by Karl Jenkins.

Jenkins' The Peacemakers fuses texts with diverse musical influences and instruments from around the world.

Conducted by Anthony Coupe, the concert will feature a children's chorus and soprano soloist Imogen Russell. To find out more, visit shrewsburycantatachoir.org.uk

Color Purple returns to the Hippodrome

Birmingham Hippodrome will tour its award-winning production of The Color Purple this autumn.

A creative collaboration with Leicester's Curve theatre, the show will visit six cities across England and Wales.

The tour starts at the Hippodrome itself, where the production runs from 13 to 17 September.



ONE HELL OF A SHOW!



iconic musical Bat Out Of Hell returns to the Midlands..

The perfect tribute to dearly departed music legends Meat Loaf and Jim Steinman, award-winning musical Bat Out Of Hell continues to electrify audiences with its 'wild child' narrative and powerhouse ballads. Vicky Edwards recently caught up with leads Martha Kirby (Raven) and Glenn Adamson (Strat) to find out more...

If you didn't already know that legendary 1970s album Bat Out Of Hell started life as a musical, it's a fact that probably comes as no surprise - the songs are so theatrical and anthemic.

Written by Jim Steinman in 1974 and titled Neverland, the show was a futuristic rock version of Peter Pan. But producers didn't bite, so in 1977 the album was recorded instead, claiming an eight-year tenancy in the UK charts and turning Meat Loaf into a global superstar.

And when Steinman's original show (retitled, of course) finally hit the stage in 2017, it, too, proved a major hit - as evidenced by two sell-out West End seasons and a packed-to the-rafters run in Manchester.

Now, in the wake of Steinman's death last year and, more recently, that of Meat Loaf, it certainly feels like a fitting time for their theatrical legacy to be embarking on a national tour.

"The show has always paid tribute to both Meat and Jim's work," says Martha Kirby, who plays Raven in the new touring production. "It is now our place to continue sharing their legacy and greatness.

"Meat was a true inspiration of mine," adds Glenn Adamson, who plays the forever-young Strat. "I always hoped that when he was well enough to perform again, he would join us for a song or two. He was famous for never performing a song the same way twice. I hope we can carry that with us. He was my type of performer."

You don't have to know anything about the album to appreciate the show - both Martha and Glenn are adamant on this count.

"It's just a great night out; high octane, high energy and like a party," says Glenn. "Yes, it's nostalgia for people who grew up with the album, but it's also a really great story that resonates with younger audiences."

Martha nods her agreement. "The music was what initially drew me to the show. I'd never heard it, but I listened to it before I auditioned and just loved it. Singing and being engulfed by such incredible music every night is something I will never take for granted."

Pure musical brilliance allied to a modern reworking of JM Barrie's Edwardian classic has certainly proved to be a winning formula. As well as garnering plenty of critical acclaim, bagging BBC Radio Two's Audience Award for Best Musical and receiving eight nominations in the What's On Stage Awards, Bat Out Of Hell The Musical has wowed audiences in Canada, Germany and New York.

As for the album of the same name, it remains one of the most successful of all time, selling more than 50 million copies worldwide. Furthermore, its sequel (Bat Out Of Hell ll: Back Into Hell) - which included the monster hit, I Would Do Anything For Love (But I Won't Do That) - didn't do too shabbily either.

"Great music is timeless and ageless," says Glenn. "Queen, Bon Jovi, Tina Turner - this album is in the same bracket as albums by these classic artists. New audiences are coming to older music all the time. And nobody wrote rock anthems that are essentially musical theatre numbers like Jim. I think this was his finest work, and I'm so glad he got to make the show before he died."

"You can hear the theatricality of the songs," says Martha. "You really feel the fact that they were written as musical numbers."

Martha points out that while some younger people discover the music first and then come to the show, others do it the other way around: "We get a lot of younger people coming to the show and discovering Jim's music for the first time. It's labelled as being suitable from age 13 upwards, which I think is about right."

She smiles at the memory of her teenage brother experiencing the show for the first time: "He's a typical teenage boy, and so when he said that he really liked it, I knew for certain that it had broad appeal. Everyone falls in love with this show."

As for the tour, the cast will have to think of it as a marathon rather than a sprint. The show is already booked until the end of October, with new dates still being added.

"It's so exciting to see all these places around the country and to visit all these wonderful theatres," sighs Martha.

Glenn adds: "This will be our first visit to the Regent. We've heard great things about the theatre and its audiences, so we can't wait to bring the show to Stoke."

The perfect post-pandemic pick-me-up, Bat Out Of Hell The Musical is a fitting tribute to the memory of two brilliant musicians. Grab your tickets asap. Paying your respects will be a total pleasure.

Jim Steinman's Bat Out Of Hell The Musical shows at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tues 26 to Sat 30 April



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Leek coffee shop under new ownership

Chef Chris Embery and his partner, Dani Bennett, have taken over Leek coffee shop Kéik.
Chris, whose CV includes stints at The Grosvenor in Chester and Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir in Oxford, makes homemade sourdough sandwiches - including parma ham, pesto mayo and tomato; homemade houmous, Japanese pickled carrot and tomato; and cream cheese with Mediterranean veg.
Kéik also sells a range of homemade cakes and artisan coffee.

G&T picnic, anyone?

Wolverhampton's The Grain Store is running Afternoon G&Tea Picnic events - and tickets are available to buy *now*.
Available Monday to Sunday from 12pm to 5pm, the picnics feature a selection of sandwiches, scones with Cornish clotted cream & preserves, crisps, nibbles, cakes and biscuits, plus any one Gin Signature each.
Tickets cost £15 per person.

Ginger & Spice Fest announces 2022 date

Ginger & Spice Festival will return to the Shropshire town of Market Drayton on Saturday 24 September.
The annual celebration, which takes place during British Food Fortnight, explores the town's culinary heritage and social history via an eclectic mix of fringe events. Visitors can enjoy a Spicy Street Market, a family Heritage Town Trail and a Floating Market featuring local artisan traders selling food, drink and crafts - many with a spicy twist.





Shropshire Festival's Tasty Trail 2022 location revealed

Shropshire Festivals has joined forces with Ellesmere's Oteley Estate for this year's Shropshire Tasty Trail.
Walkers will follow a route through the estate, which is not usually open to the public, on 9 & 10 April.
Beth Heath, Director of Fun at Shropshire Festivals, said: "This event is about getting people out into the countryside, getting active, being social, and supporting local food & drink businesses. This is about leaving muddy footprints not carbon footprints. All the food & drink that will be served is from the local area.
Our trail walkers will be enjoying pork and beef raised on the farmland they will be walking through. It doesn't get more local than that!
"There will be exclusive access through the estate plus along part of the Shropshire Way. In total, the walk will be 7.5 miles, with a course served every few miles. Parking is free and dogs on leads are welcome. Plus, we plan to put on live music at some of the stops, to provide a fun atmosphere. Walkers will enjoy a starter, main and dessert, all washed down with some of the region's finest ales and ciders."
To buy tickets, visit: shropshiretastytrails.co.uk

Dining in the dark experience pops up at Lichfield hotel

For one month only, Dans Le Noir?, the renowned 'dine in the dark' restaurant experience, is hosting a pop-up restaurant at Lichfield's Swinfen Hall Hotel, offering Midlanders a brand-new dining experience.
The pop-up - Dans Le Noir?'s first - provides diners with the opportunity to taste gourmet, creative and seasonal cuisine in complete darkness, accompanied and served by unexpected guides.
Chefs will make the dishes using the finest seasonal organic fruit and vegetables and free range and outdoor-reared meats, all accompanied by a refined and specially curated wine menu.
Dining In The Dark takes place at Swinfen Hall Hotel from Tuesday 1 to Thursday 31 March.
The price is £95pp for a three-course meal, plus wine. To buy tickets, visit: swinfenhallhotel.co.uk/dining-in-the-dark



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APRIL	Saturday 9th	Gordon Giltrap
	Wednesday 20th	Jazz at The Cathedral Hotel TBA
	Saturday 30th	Rosie Tee (Sandfields Pumping Station)
MAY	Friday 11th	Jazz at The Cathedral Hotel TBA
	Saturday 30th	Karen Pfeiffer & Paul Walker (Sandfields Pumping Station)
	Friday 27th	Introducing Night (The Hub at St Mary's)
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See website for full details.

Organised and run by independent charity Lichfield Arts. Charity no: 1156217

www.lichfieldarts.org.uk 01543 262223

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Tickets: £16-18



8 March, 7pm
ARC Stockton & Daniel Bye: These Hills are Ours
Tickets: £12



27 March, 7.30pm
Jim Ghedi + Cinder Well
Tickets: £12-14



29 March, 2pm
Neil Sands: Happy & Glorious
Tickets: £11-13



8 April, 7.30pm
Through the Decades with Roy Orbison & Buddy Holly
Tickets: £18



10 April, 2pm
Comedy Club 4 Kids
Tickets: £5-10



11 - 13 April, 11am, 1pm, 3.30pm
The Smartest Giant In Town
Tickets: £14



19 - 23 April, 7.30pm
LTC: The Hunchback of Notre Dame
Tickets: £13-14



26 April, 7.30pm
India Electric Company
Tickets: £14



30 April, 20pm
The Bubble Show
Tickets: £10 (£35 family)

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Sheku Kanneh-Mason

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 16 March

The exceptionally gifted Sheku Kanneh-Mason MBE makes a welcome return to Symphony Hall to perform Shostakovich's powerful Second Cello Concert.
Twenty-two-year-old Sheku came to prominence back in 2016 when he was named BBC Young Musician, becoming the first Black entrant to win the competition since its launch in 1978.

Sheku's contribution to this City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra concert is sandwiched between two gripping symphonies by Shostakovich's friend, Mieczysław Weinberg.
Weinberg was an under-appreciated Polish-Jewish composer whose work was largely ignored by the Soviet establishment during his lifetime.

Di Xiao Piano Concert

St Laurence Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire, Sat 19 March

Celebrated Chinese pianist Di Xiao is in no doubt about the professional ambition which she holds closest to her heart...
"I want to become an international ambassador for the piano," she explains, "combining Chinese and Western repertoire in the programming of my concerts, thereby creating a bridge between two cultures."
Di Xiao's Ludlow programme is built around the theme of Spring and features, amongst other works, Mozart's Fantasia In D minor and Yi Qiang Sun's Spring Dance.



Karl Jenkins In Concert

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 20 March



"Karl Jenkins produces always impeccable writing for a multitude of voices and instruments," says opera and concert star Bryn Terfel. "I wish I had his talent for composing tunes but am proud to consider myself one who adores singing them."
Terfel is far from alone in his admiration for his fellow Welshman, who conducts this Symphony Hall concert. A recent exhaustive survey revealed that Sir Karl is the most-performed living composer in the world.
Indeed, his best-known work, The Armed Man: A Mass For Peace (which features in the concert alongside excerpts from Symphonic Adiemus and Palladio), has been performed more than 1,500 times in 20 different countries.

Halesowen Orchestra

Cornbow Hall, Halesowen, Sat 26 March

The Halesowen Orchestra was once described by James Morris MP as 'one of the town's hidden jewels'. It's a description with which the long-established ensemble's many enthusiastic supporters would no doubt wholeheartedly agree.
Founded in 1986, the amateur group of musicians meets regularly to practise a wide and varied repertoire of works by some of the world's greatest classical composers...
The orchestra is here presenting a family concert focusing on 'the tuneful and exhilarating world of dance music'.
Featured works include Strauss' The Blue Danube, Offenbach's Orpheus In The Underworld and Saint-Saens' Danse Macabre.

BBC Philharmonic

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 25 March

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke-on-Trent, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concert-goers with works from its impressive repertoire.
This latest visit to the Potteries sees conductor Clemens Schuldt (pictured) leading the orchestra in a programme that features Schubert's Rosamunde Overture, Mozart's Piano Concert No27 and Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony.



Image credit: © Marco Borggreve

A tale of seduction

Diane Parkes chats to sopranos Harriet Eyley and Isabelle Peters about starring in Welsh National Opera's Don Giovanni at Birmingham Hippodrome next month...



Sopranos Harriet Eyley and Isabelle Peters will share the role of Zerlina in Mozart's Don Giovanni when Welsh National Opera tour the production this spring. And the two women have something else in common - both have benefited from the Cardiff-based opera company's Associate Artist programme, which supports emerging performers.

Both Harriet and Isabelle knew from a young age they wanted to be musical performers. They trained in the profession before joining WNO.

Harriet, who comes from South Derbyshire, loved opera from her primary school days but also had her sights set on becoming a competitive swimmer.

"There weren't enough hours in the day to do both, so I had to choose," she recalls. "When I began to think of my life outside of music, I couldn't, so I realised that was what I had to do, I had to pursue that career. I spoke to my singing teacher at the time, Coral Gould MBE, who had taken me from the age of 10, and I asked her at 17 whether she thought I had the talent to succeed as a singer, and she said yes."

Those words were prophetic. After winning a David Clover Competition for Singers prize, Harriet was offered a place at the Royal Academy of Music, where she gained BMus and MMus degrees before studying for a second masters degree in opera at the Royal College of Music. In 2019 she was offered a place as an associate artist with WNO.

"The Associate Artist scheme is a young artists' programme. It's a stepping stone between college and the huge world of music which is out there. My college prepared me very well, but not everyone has the same experience, so to go straight into a scheme where you are employed and can learn so much is a real benefit. It's a safe place in which you can explore your ideas and your musicianship, and you're working with a plethora of different people, including directors, designers and the company. You're treated like a principal and can learn so much."

Thirty-year-old Harriet held the post of associate artist for 18 months. During that

by Diane Parkes

time she played some very different roles, from the cheeky Norina in Donizetti's Don Pasquale to the gypsy Frasquita in Bizet's Carmen and the page Oscar in Verdi's Un ballo in Maschera.

"Oscar was my UK debut. It was at Birmingham Hippodrome, the closest venue on the tour to my home town, and it was amazing. I was prepared so well for that outing, and I really enjoyed it. I'm such a fan of women in travesti roles - women in trousers and playing men or boys. That's my passion, and I loved that role.

"My second highlight was venturing into the Cunning Little Vixen. I did that at the Royal College of Music, sung in English and was Vixen - my absolute dream role. WNO allowed me to be their cover Vixen while I was doing Frasquita in Carmen, and we did it in Czech, which was a huge learning curve for me. I didn't get to do the role on stage, but it was amazing learning it."

Current WNO Associate Artist Isabelle, aged 29, developed her love for performing as a child, initially favouring musical theatre until she discovered opera.

"At senior school my teacher was a former opera singer, and she asked if I sang in any other styles than musical theatre. I didn't really know opera before then, but I realised I could combine my love for theatre with singing classically and in other languages. I went to my first opera, which was actually a WNO performance of Verdi's Il Trovatore at Bristol Hippodrome, and that was it."

Isabelle, who is from Bristol, studied at Royal Northern College of Music and then took a masters at Guildhall School of Music & Drama. She was a Fellow at English National Opera for their 2019/20 season before being offered an associate artist role by WNO. She began the post during the Covid-19 lockdown but says the company did everything in their power to guide and encourage her: "WNO supported us throughout the year and gave us coaching, sometimes as many as three coaching sessions a week. I studied multiple roles and art song with their language coaches and music staff - it was such a gift. I finally started doing live opera with the company in the past autumn season, with my first time on stage with WNO being in October. I'm very thankful to the company for going above and beyond under such turbulent circumstances.

"Rehearsals for The Barber Of Seville were so much fun. A highlight was performing with WNO for the first time at Wales Millennium Centre, as Berta - it felt like a special moment after having grown up watching WNO productions. Berta is a brilliant part to play because she's amusing and real."

In December Isabelle travelled with the company to Dubai for the world premiere of Al Wasl, by Emirati composer Mohammed Fairouz, as part of the rescheduled Expo 2020 programme. And this spring she takes to the stage not only as Zerlina in Don Giovanni but also as Jano in Jenůfa.

Janáček's Jenůfa is one of three shows which WNO will be presenting at Birmingham Hippodrome. Performed on 20 April, it's accompanied by Puccini's Madam Butterfly on the 23rd and, of course, by Don Giovanni, on the 21st & 22nd.

Premiered in 1787, Don Giovanni tells the story of the title character - a famous womaniser, better known as Don Juan, who finally receives his due reward when he faces damnation for his wicked life. In the opera, Don Giovanni attempts to seduce three women, Donna Anna, Donna Elvira and Zerlina, a country girl who nearly falls for his lies.

Isabelle believes the women in the opera are stronger than they may at first appear: "I see Don Giovanni as an opera which really empowers women. They start as victims of sexual assault, rape and general oppression, but by the end of the opera they are a united front of female empowerment. That arc was quite radical for the time.

"Zerlina is noticeably different from the other women in the opera because of her peasantry status. You can hear that in her music - she appears to be quite a simple, virginal character on the surface, with an undeniably flirtatious and fun side."

Isabelle and Harriet play Zerlina on different dates throughout the tour.

"We need to stay true to the direction and the fundamental nature of the character," says Isabelle, "so we will have a general feeling of being united in what we are trying to achieve with Zerlina. But there will inevitably be slight differences in how we play the role - due to differences in our voices, for example."

Harriet, who returns to WNO as a guest principal for the production, says the female characters have a pivotal role to play in Don Giovanni's fate: "I think Zerlina is quite a strong character. In fact all the women in Don Giovanni are strong characters. They all have their separate challenges, but it's as if they're knocked back for them to rise to the challenges and come back stronger. Donna Anna is pressurised into marrying Don Ottavio, Donna Elvira is depicted as insane by Don Giovanni, and Zerlina seems to be unfaithful because of Don Giovanni. But by the end, they all survive when Don Giovanni doesn't.

"The fact that Don Giovanni is dragged to the depths of hell inadvertently demonstrates the strength of the women. It's partly his behaviour towards the women, and the fact that he won't repent for it, that takes him into hell. Mozart was really good at addressing cultural issues in the guise of opera, and I think he's raising some interesting points about male/female relationships in Don Giovanni."

Harriet is now keen to take on other roles and perform in opera houses across Europe. She is also commencing doctoral studies at the Royal College of Music, exploring the roles of travesti in the 21st century.

"It really fascinates me," she says. "There's so much in society today about gender and how people want to dress and act. Opera is such a fine field to try and grab the 21st century and incorporate that into the work we do on stage. It's so difficult being a character on stage with the music and the characterisation, but when you then add in another level - when that character is pretending to be someone of another gender - it's a further challenge.

"I love performing, but I also enjoy the academic side - that's a definite passion of mine. It would be nice to perform some of the roles which I'm exploring academically, so I would love to play Cherubino in Mozart's The Marriage Of Figaro or play Oscar again."

Isabelle also has her sights set on other Mozart operas: "Zerlina, Susanna or Barbarina in The Marriage Of Figaro, and Despina in Così fan tutte are perfect roles for me at the moment. I enjoy Mozart's writing so much and find so much interest in his characters, as they seem quite real to me. When I sit down to look at the libretti, I often see such multi-layered, flawed and complex characters. These roles are also extremely fulfilling for me vocally, as Mozart is certainly not easy!

"And there are so many different ways a director could steer a show. It's exciting to think that I could hone a particular role and see a character in so many different lights. That's really interesting to me."

Welsh National Opera perform at Birmingham Hippodrome from 20 to 23 April. Visit birminghamhippodrome.com for more details and to purchase tickets.

DUDLEY BOROUGH HALLS



NATURALLY 7
As seen supporting Michael Bublé and Coldplay
Wednesday 2 March



PSYCHIC SALLY
'10 Years and Counting' show
Friday 4 March



GOOD OLD DAYS OF VARIETY
Starring Duggie Brown and Tammy Jones
Tuesday 8 March



GLENN WOOL
'The Tiny Kings of Winter' comedy tour show
Thursday 10 March



JIMMY CARR
'Terribly Funny 2.0' comedy tour show
Saturday 12 March



BILL MURRAY SCREENING
'Bill Murray's New Worlds' cinema screening
Tuesday 22 March



THE DUBLIN LEGENDS
Formerly of iconic folk group The Dubliners
Thursday 24 March



THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN
Featuring 40 back-to-back classic Motown hits
Friday 25 March



ED BYRNE
'If I'm Honest...' comedy tour show
Friday 1 April



A BLACK COUNTRY NIGHT OUT
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HUE AND CRY
Sunday 20 March • 7.30pm • £24.00



AN EVENING WITHOUT KATE BUSH
Friday 25 March • 7.30pm • £18.00



THE AMERICAN FOUR TOPS
Saturday 26 March • 7.30pm • £25.00



GUYS AND DOLLS
Thursday 31 March – Saturday 2 April • 7.30pm • £16.00

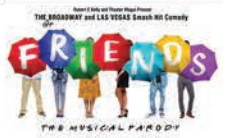


APRIL

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FRIENDS – THE MUSICAL PARODY
Sunday 10 April • 7.30pm • £30.00



PRESENT LAUGHTER
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Blair Dunlop

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 25 March

"I finally feel established enough not to need to talk about 'folk references' or 'Americana references' but just to write beautiful songs," says award-winning singer-songwriter and guitarist Blair Dunlop.

The son of Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span founder Ashley Hutchings, Blair is one of British music's most talented artists, a fact which was ably supported back in 2013 by his winning of the BBC Radio Two Horizon Award.

With four albums to his name and a legion of admirers here in the Midlands, Blair's Shrewsbury concert sees him appearing as his fans love him best: on his own, with his guitar.



Texas

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 5 March; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 20 March

Formed in Glasgow in 1986 by singer Sharleen Spiteri and bassist Johnny McElhone, Texas caught the world's attention with the release of global hit I Don't Want A Lover.

Over 40 million record sales, 13 top-10 UK singles and three number one albums later, their journey continues following the release of 2021's top-three album, Hi.

Expect a setlist featuring songs both old and new when they visit the Midlands this month.





The Magpies

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Thurs 31 March

Showcasing a unique blend of transatlantic folk, talented three-piece The Magpies features award-winning guitarist, banjo player & singer Bella Gaffney, clawhammer banjo player & singer Kate Griffin and acclaimed fiddle player & tunesmith Holly Brandon.

Their debut album, Tidings - released in June 2020 to considerable critical acclaim - features material deeply rooted in the traditions of their native Yorkshire and draws on the trio's experiences as women living in the 21st century.

Hugh Cornwell

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury, Sat 26 March

Hugh Cornwell is best known as the vocalist and guitarist for punk rock/new wave band The Stranglers, with whom he played from 1974 to 1990.

One of the most celebrated songwriters of his generation, Cornwell boasts a back-catalogue that includes Peaches, No More Heroes, Golden Brown, Always The Sun and Duchess.

This Shrewsbury concert will see him performing songs off his most recent album, 2018's Monster, as well as numerous Stranglers classics.

Remi Harris

Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield, Wed 16 March

Remi Harris fans attending his Lichfield gig this month can expect an eclectic show featuring music ranging from the acoustic jazz and swing of the 1930s and '40s, to the electric blues of the 1960s and '70s.

Remi, who is here joined by Tom Moore on double and electric bass and Shane Dixon on drums, boasts a truly unique style and draws inspiration from artists including Django Reinhardt, Jimi Hendrix, Wes Montgomery and Led Zeppelin.

Pedler & Russell

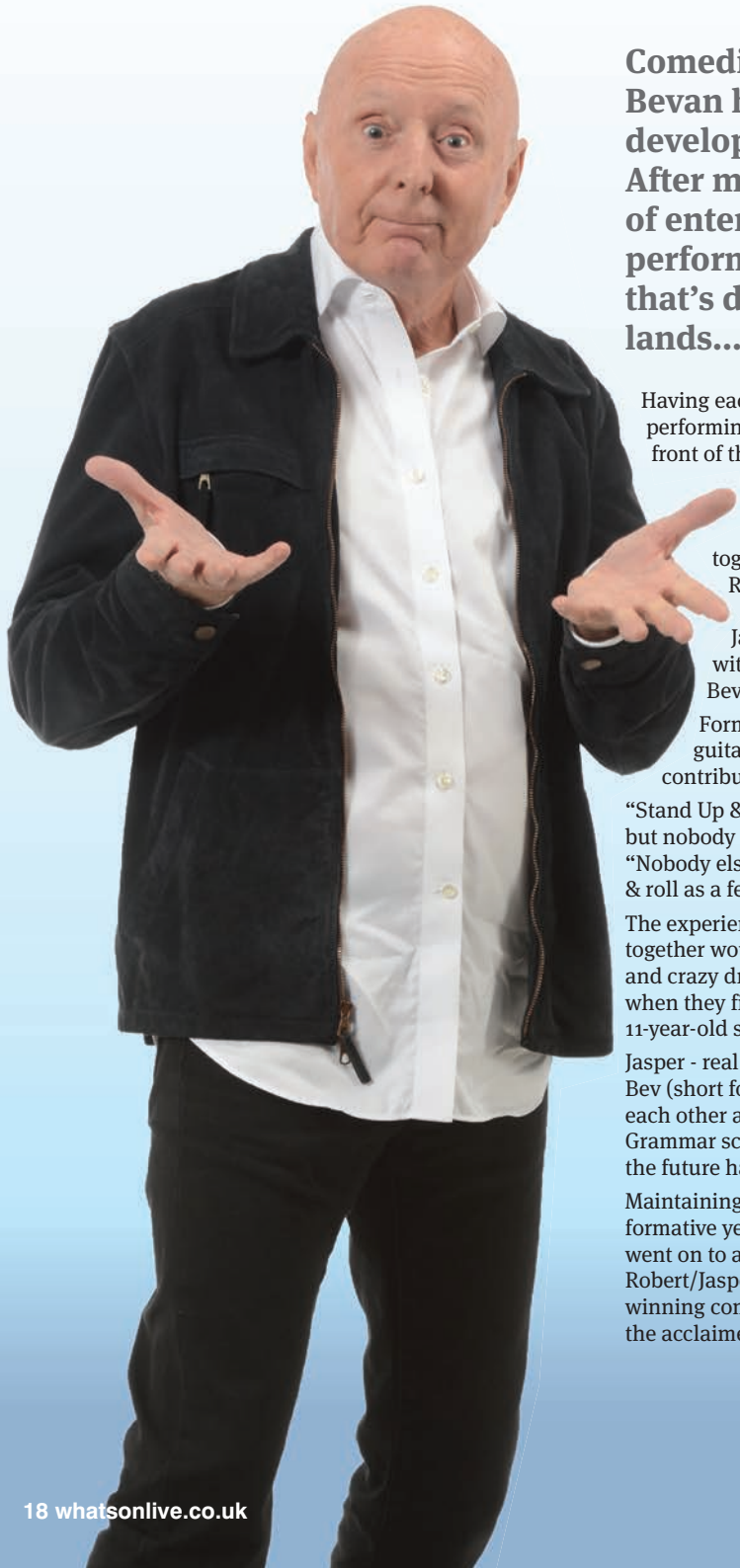
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 19 March

Pedler & Russell is a collaboration between historian and musician Danny Pedler and BBC Radio Two Folk Award winner Greg Russell. Boasting a distinct sound, the duo make music in unusual ways, incorporating vocal samples of Danny's history interviews into their compositions and writing music to the rhythms of local factory machines.

Their self-released debut album, Field And Dyke (2019), showcased music inspired by real stories from real people living in South Lincolnshire.



FOREVER



Comedian Jasper Carrott and musician Bev Bevan have been great pals for 66 years, having developed a friendship while at senior school. After making their mark in their respective fields of entertainment, the Brummie chums are now performing together in Stand Up & Rock - a show that's delighting their legions of fans wherever it lands...

Having each spent decades performing in sold-out arenas in front of thousands of fans, comedian Jasper Carrott and musician Bev Bevan are now touring the UK together with Stand Up & Rock - an evening of entertainment that fuses Jasper's timeless comedy with the iconic music of The Bev Bevan Band.

Former Ocean Colour Scene guitarist Andy Bennett also contributes as a special guest.

"Stand Up & Rock isn't a unique show, but nobody else does it," says Jasper. "Nobody else mixes comedy and rock & roll as a featured evening."

The experience of touring the country together would've seemed like a wild and crazy dream to Jasper and Bev when they first met one another - as 11-year-old schoolboys!

Jasper - real name Robert Davis - and Bev (short for Beverley) sat next to each other at Birmingham's Moseley Grammar school, little knowing what the future had in store for them.

Maintaining a friendship through their formative years and beyond, each went on to achieve enormous success - Robert/Jasper as a BAFTA Award-winning comedian, and Beverley as the acclaimed drummer of legendary bands The Move, Electric Light Orchestra (ELO) and Black Sabbath.

After finishing school, the two friends went to work at the same Birmingham department store, The Beehive, as trainee buyers.

"We swept the floor and made the tea," says Bev, who was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2017. "I ended up in carpets but only stayed one year. I only got the job because it paid for the HP payments on my drums."

Jasper, who stayed at The Beehive for three years, didn't share Bev's showbiz ambitions at that time: "I was going to be an entrepreneur. I started a folk club - The Boggery - in 1969 and was always going to be a promoter and run clubs and manage people.

"I was just compering at the club and singing silly, funny songs, then one thing led to another and people started asking me to do their clubs.

"I was getting £12 a gig and petrol. The equivalent today would probably be £500 or £600. So it was very lucrative to the point where I realised my future lay in entertaining and not in promoting."

Despite the pals not seeing much of each other in the years that followed, they still managed to be best man at each other's wedding - Bev in 1970 and Jasper in '72.

FRIENDS

Bev's music career had really taken off by that point. Leaving Denny Laine And The Diplomats to form The Move in 1966, he went on to play in ELO with Jeff Lynne and Roy Wood in 1970.

"I was always going to be a drummer," says Bev, "and I think I could've made a living as a drummer too, but luckily I got into The Move, ELO and Black Sabbath - and to be in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is pretty special."

Jasper's career took off a considerable time after Bev's, in 1975, with chart-topping comedy record Funky Moped. Numerous TV shows followed, including the BAFTA-winning Carrott's Lib and BBC comedy series The Detectives with Robert Powell.

When he brought his 24 Carrott Gold live show to Birmingham National Indoor Arena in 2004, he broke box office records, attracting a staggering 72,000 people across several performances.

"I have to keep pinching myself really," says Jasper. "I haven't done TV for about 10 years, and it's great because I don't get the hassle of being recognised. I've got the best of both worlds in the fact that I can still draw a crowd and yet I can be fairly anonymous.

"One of my greatest pleasures was when my grandchildren came to see me and were really knocked out. For weeks they were doing the routines."

The pandemic prevented the two old pals from working together, but with the tour now once again on the road, Jasper and Bev are thoroughly enjoying getting back to doing what they do best.

"There was a bit of trepidation at first," reveals Jasper, "not having worked for that long, but the minute we were on stage it disappeared.

"We were playing to sold-out houses from the moment the tour began, and it's been fantastic to see audiences coming back to the theatre, having a great laugh, rocking the house and just remembering what life's all about."

Bev agrees: "Rehearsals are just a means to an end, but as soon as you get on a stage and get that crowd reaction, it's fantastic - it's a real buzz. There's nothing to replace it."

Alongside larger theatres, Stand Up & Rock is also visiting smaller venues - so is that more enjoyable for the performers?

"I generally love a small theatre, where you can actually see the audience and they can see you." says Bev.

Jasper agrees: "Doing the 500, 600 seaters is going back in a way to those folk club days. For me personally one of the joys is getting back to the basic roots of stand-up comedy, eyeball to eyeball with the audience."

So what does the future hold?

"Staying alive is probably one of our main ambitions," jokes Jasper. "We'll just take it tour by tour. Ken Dodd was 90 and still getting up on stage. I don't know how long I can continue, but I will do so until I know I can't do it as well as I should be doing it. But hopefully that's a way off.

"And I can always become a drummer!"

Stand Up & Rock stops off at The Albany Theatre, Coventry, from 24 to 26 March; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, 14 April; Lichfield Garrick, 27 to 30 April & 4 to 7 May; and Palace Theatre, Redditch, 18 to 21 May.





Katherine Ryan

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Fri 4 March

Having experienced motherhood, divorce and MTV, the award-winning Katherine Ryan is well placed indeed to take a wry look at those aspects of life that can make people feel angry and bitter. But while she often writes and performs material which proves that even the darkest subject matter can have a funny side, she's also got plenty in her life to feel happy about - not least the fact that she's now married to her high-school sweetheart.

This latest tour by the Canadian star of hit Netflix series The Duchess sees her brand-new life as a wife taking centre-stage. "Magically my high-school boyfriend walked back into my life, and I did everything possible not to marry him," Katherine told The Sun. "I really was against partnership at that point. I was looking forward to ageing alone with many dogs. And then I just loved him too much. It's funny that fate has a way of finding you, and what's meant for you won't pass you."

Seann Walsh

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, 31 March



Even though Seann Walsh is a hugely popular comedian, he still has to write his own blurb - which, as he points out, is something that he finds 'absolutely insane': "What am I meant to say? 'I'm fantastic, come and look at me talk'? I don't know. It's me. I do stand-up.

"I guess I can start with the fact I renamed the tour. Sticking with Same Again? felt a bit triggering after the period we've had. So it's now called Back From The Bed. Some of the material will be the same as I'd always planned, but some of it will be new, because it will be difficult to avoid mentioning the last couple of years, in which millions of decent people tragically lost their lives to TikTok."

Al Murray

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 18 March; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Fri 10 June; Bedworth Civic Hall, Fri 23 September

"I love being a pub landlord," says Al Murray. "It's a truly great calling. You're there to soothe troubled souls, pour balm on troubled waters, make people's important moments in their lives extra special and provide a range of snacks. What's not to like?"

Brand-new show Gig For Victory sees Al going all out to furnish the great British public with answers - sometimes to questions they never knew existed...



Chris Ramsey

Dudley Town Hall, Thurs 17 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 1 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 1 May; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 23 June

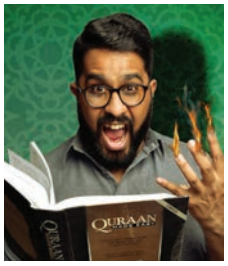
As well as being a highly rated stand-up, Geordie boy Chris has developed an impressive telly career, appearing on shows including 8 Out Of 10 Cats and Strictly Come Dancing (reaching the semi-finals in 2019). He's scored a big hit in the podcast world, too, with Sh*gged. Married. Annoyed, which he co-hosts with his wife - singer & actress Rosie Winter.

Chris' gags include: "My venue for the Edinburgh Festival is a portacabin; it's literally a portacabin! I'm a Geordie, in a portacabin. I was going to call the show Auf Wiedersehen Pet Live."



Eshaan Akbar

Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 18 March



"There were lots of reasons why I went into comedy," says Muslim funnyman Eshaan Akbar. "Alongside a desperate desire to be loved and the chance to bring joy to hundreds and thousands of people(!), I also love the way that comedy offers an opportunity to comment on the most ridiculous facets of our society."

Eshaan has no qualms about sailing close to the wind with his material. A couple of years back, he was threatened with reprisals when he included jokes about the Koran in his touring show, Prophet Like It's Hot.

He visits the Glee Club this month with new stand-up offering The Pretender.

Dylan Moran

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sat 19 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 28 April; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 19 May;

Once labelled 'the Oscar Wilde of comedy', it's fair to say that Dylan Moran is a fella with a style of humour all his own. A star of numerous films, including Simon Pegg classics Shaun Of The Dead and Run Fat Boy Run, the hugely entertaining Dylan specialises in stand-up rants which are often bizarre and always unpredictable. Jokes include: "I don't do drugs. If I want a rush, I just stand up when I'm not expecting it" and "I can't swim. I can't drive either. I was going to learn to drive, but then I thought, well, what if I crash into a lake?"

Rachel Parris

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 17 March

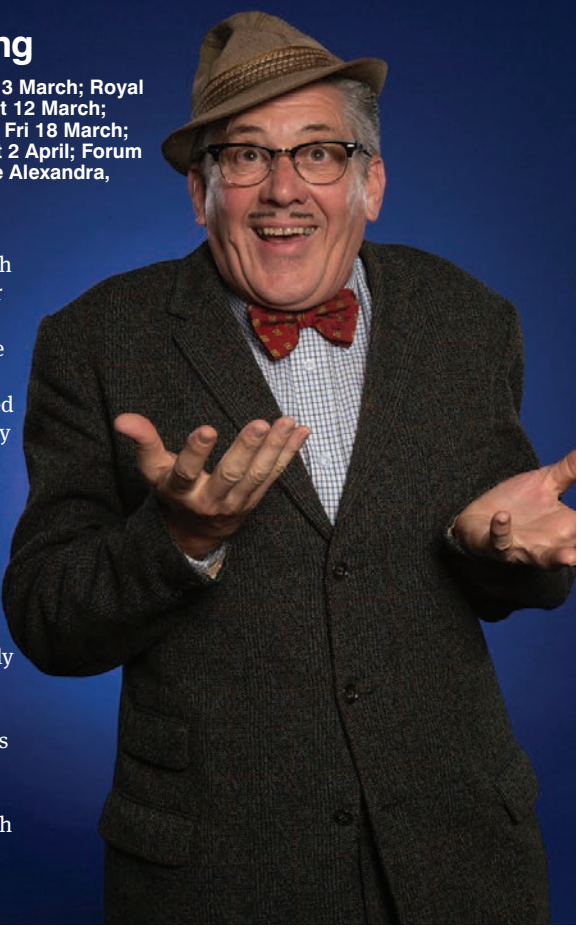
Rachel Parris has passed this way before, as a founder cast member of smash-hit improv show Austentatious, a comedy play presented in the style of Jane Austen.
An award-winning musical comic whose name has appeared on the BBC's Hot Talent List, Rachel has starred in numerous TV shows, including Murder In Successville, Plebs, The IT Crowd and the satirical Mash Report.
This latest touring show sees her bringing together stand-up with character and musical comedy, as she explores subjects including families, weddings, kids, sudden love, the highs and lows of relationships, going viral, going mental, and the baffling state of play in society right now.



Count Arthur Strong

Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 3 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 12 March; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Fri 18 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 2 April; Forum Theatre, Malvern, Sat 7 May; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 12 June

After years of success on BBC Radio Four and at the Edinburgh Fringe, Count Arthur Strong - or 'the Count', as he's otherwise known - finally made it onto the nation's television screens in 2013, starring in a sitcom (named after him) that was co-written by the man behind Father Ted, Graham Linehan, and the man behind Arthur himself, Steve Delaney.
"With each live show I've done, I've found out a little bit more about Arthur," explains Steve. "If I watch footage from the early days, he looks like the bones of something, but he's definitely continued to develop, and that's very important. Simply reproducing what I've done before would neither be as much fun nor as interesting."



Lost Voice Guy

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Thurs 17 March; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 25 March

"Disabled people are demonised in the media," explains Lee Ridley, "so it's important that the general public get to see that we're not scroungers and benefit cheats, that we can contribute an awful lot to society, and that we have a sense of humour just like anyone else."
For those who haven't heard of him before, 41-year-old Lee won Britain's Got Talent in 2018 and is this year celebrating a decade as a comedian.
When he was a baby, Lee was diagnosed with a neurological form of cerebral palsy, which rendered him unable to speak.
"I'm no different from lots of other comedians," he says. "Basically I tell jokes about my life. The difference with me is that I'm disabled, so that gives me a lot of material."

Gary Powndland & Friends

Walsall Arena, Sat 12 March; HMV Empire, Coventry, Sat 2 April

"Life was tough growing up," says online sensation Gary Powndland, the alter-ego of Wolverhampton laughter merchant Jack Kirwan. "My mom and dad popped out for a loaf when I was younger, which is quite an ordinary thing, but I realised as they were leaving that they were carrying suitcases. Straight away I thought to myself, 'How much bread do they think we can eat?'"
Jack is very much enjoying his creation Gary's moment in the sun, but his own career in comedy hasn't always been plain sailing. "I've done my share of driving up to Newcastle for a 20 quid gig, getting back at 1am and needing to be up for work at five," says Jack. "And then there was the time I played Edinburgh and basically died on my arse every night for a month!"

Having a party



brand-new musical brings The Osmonds' greatest hits to the stage

by Ellie Hutchings

The Osmonds: A New Musical tells the remarkable story of five brothers who became one of the world's most famous boybands. Jay Osmond and choreographer Bill Deamer reveal what audiences can expect from the brand-new show when it tours to the Midlands...



"I wrote it from the heart," says Jay Osmond of his touring stage show, The Osmonds: A New Musical, which he calls 'a living memoir'. "It was hard. I had to play my drums a lot to get my emotions out, but it all boiled down to this: why did we do what we did? It was because we wanted to help people.

"I wanted to put that purpose into the show. I think you can do almost anything in life if you have a purpose."

The Osmonds were Mormon brothers from Utah who started off in the 1960s as a barbershop quartet. They went on to become one of the most famous pop groups in history, earning more than 50 gold and platinum records, winning dozens of awards and selling millions of albums worldwide. Hit singles included One Bad Apple, Crazy Horses and Love Me For A Reason.

The Osmonds: A New Musical is choreographed by Bill Deamer, who's been working hard to recreate the group's famous dance moves. The Osmonds were renowned for their slick performances and have previously revealed that the karate moves in their routines were learned first-hand from Chuck Norris. Bill wants to make sure the new show pays homage to the brothers' unique style.

"The Osmonds are of a particular time," he says. "I've done so much research on them, and the '70s and '80s really was a time of change in music. It was such a fun period, and The Osmonds have a few trademark dance steps and their own specific style of movement, which I've incorporated into fresh choreography."

Although the group's heyday was way back in the 1970s, Bill promises the new musical will have a broad appeal: "I'm paying homage to The Osmonds' style while making it accessible to a new audience. The numbers are very dynamic and very strong, and that's going to appeal to younger people. It's so important that we introduce this story to a new generation."

The musical begins with the group's 50th anniversary, before going right back to their days as children in Utah. The four original members of the barbershop quartet - Jay, Alan, Wayne and Merrill - started singing for local audiences to fund hearing aids for their two older brothers, Virl and Tom.

In 1962, the brothers performed on television's The Andy Williams Show for the first time. Their regular appearances on the programme earned them global fame. In the years that followed, four became five with the addition of youngest brother and teen heartthrob Donny. The Osmonds enjoyed smash hit after smash hit, performed sell-out arena concerts and made record-breaking TV shows. But one bad decision cost them millions.

Jay was just seven years old when the group made their first appearance.

"Each of us has a different perspective, and this show is very much from my own," he says. "Hard times, fun times, why we did what we did and how we did it as a family."

The Osmonds have been pop royalty for over 50 years, and Bill explains that while condensing the story into a couple of hours has been no mean feat, the production stays faithful to the lives of the brothers.

"It's a feelgood show and pure fun, but it has a serious story and is magnificently moving at points. From being millionaires, they lost almost everything, but because of their faith and their love for each other, they paid off their debts and they carried on.

"I want our audiences to come away thinking what a fun period that was, what great music, and what lives those boys have led and are still leading."

And let's not forget the '70s fashion, which Jay promises will be much in evidence in the show: "When I look back at some of the things we wore - wow! But hey, it was the 1970s and we *all* wore crazy stuff. I can't wait for people to see the costumes in this show."

Despite the exclusively Osmond brothers soundtrack, Bill maintains that the show is no jukebox musical: "This is a musical story with fantastic musical numbers, but at the same time, you're following the incredible achievements of the boys.

"The songs link in, so as each number finishes, you carry on the movement into the next scene and the dialogue. That's what makes it work for me."

Featuring more than 30 of The Osmonds' greatest hits and a 15-minute singing and dancing finale, The Osmonds: A New Musical is a singalong affair full of energy and rich in spectacle.

"Now is the perfect time to go and see a feelgood show," says Bill. "We want people to be able to get up, dance and enjoy it.

"We've got children in the musical who play the young Osmonds, and when we're in rehearsals, the chaperones look on in amazement. It's quite emotional for those of an age who can remember watching The Osmonds, so we're touching hearts already. That's what The Osmonds did; they touched people's hearts with their songs and their total sincerity."

And touching people's hearts is all that Jay is asking of his new musical: "I want people to walk out of the theatre feeling lifted and excited about life. That's my goal. We've been blessed with people who've loved our music, and I want them to know how much they've helped me and my family. It will feel like a high school reunion when they come to the show!"

The Osmonds: A New Musical shows at: Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tues 15 - Sat 19 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 5 - Sat 9 April; and The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 25 - Sat 29 October



Disney's Beauty And The Beast

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 3 - Sat 26 March

Most people will be familiar with the story of Disney's Beauty And The Beast. Village girl Belle is imprisoned by a cruel and arrogant prince who's been turned into a grotesque-looking creature by an enchantress disguised as a beggar woman. The prince must learn to love another, and be loved in return, if he's ever to break the spell and return to his original form...

Disney's 1991 animated movie proved to be a huge global hit, so it was no surprise when a theatrical adaptation followed three years later. The stage show has been doing fantastic business ever since. It visits Birmingham this month complete with state-of-the-art technology and the latest theatrical innovations.

One-time X Factor winner Sam Bailey takes the part of lovable teapot Mrs Potts.

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

We Will Rock You

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 7 - Sat 12 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 23 - Sat 28 May; Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 4 - Sat 30 July

A pulsating homage to the music of Queen, We Will Rock You is short on storyline but boasts bags of energy and just about as brilliant a soundtrack as any musical's ever likely to have. The show's frontline performers give it their all to excellent effect, while the sets and choreography ensure a visual spectacle to remember.

For those who care about the plot, the story is set in a future where originality has been quashed, musical instruments banned, and a hero is needed to bring back rock music...

Yes, it's all a bit contrived, but how else are you going to glue together all of Queen's greatest hits in a single show?

A fantastic evening's entertainment for fans of Freddie & Co, so catch it while you can...



Dreamboats & Petticoats: Bringing On Back The Good Times

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 21 - Sat 26 March

This is the latest production in the Dreamboats And Petticoats musical series, which was originally inspired by the bestselling album of the same title.

Set in 1961, the first show followed the fortunes of young musicians Norman and Bobby as they competed with one another to win the hearts of their adoring female fans...

This latest stage musical sees the original characters making a welcome return and features songs by, among others, Elvis, Roy Orbison and the Walker Brothers.

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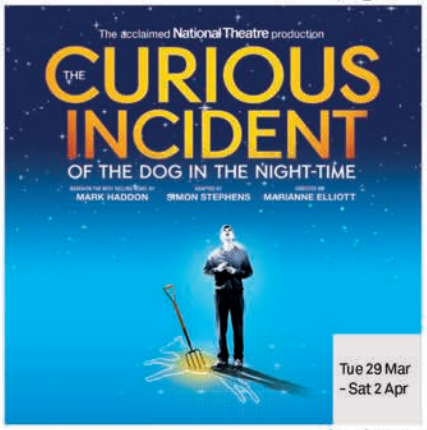
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Fri 18 Mar



Sun 20 Mar



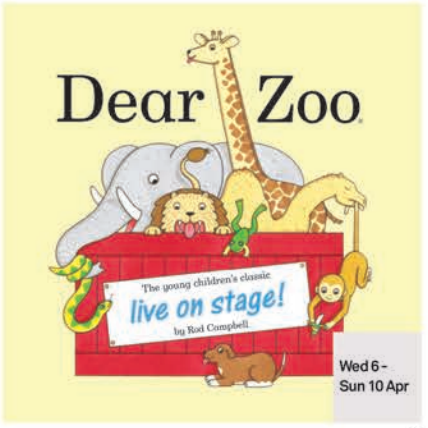
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Wed 6 - Sun 10 Apr

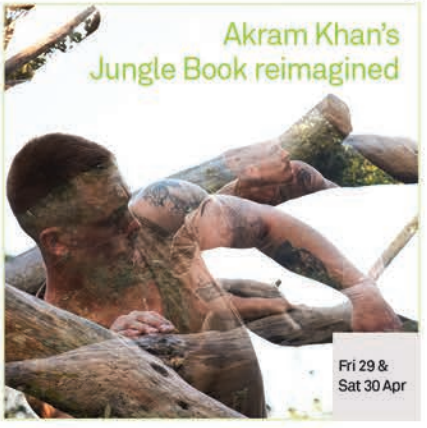
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Sun 17 Apr



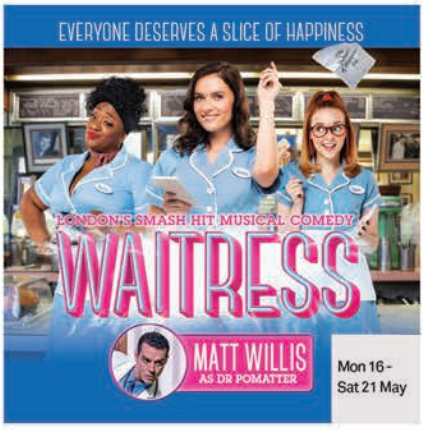
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Sat 12 Mar 7.30pm

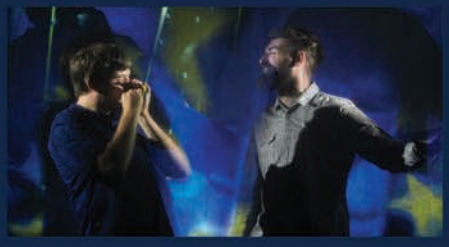
Max Richter gives the only British performance this year of his acclaimed new work VOICES and his classic piece INFRA.



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The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 8 - Sat 12 March

EastEnders favourite Samantha Womack is starring as the White Witch in this Leeds Playhouse production of CS Lewis' classic story - and she's thoroughly enjoying the experience.

"The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe has always been a magical read," says Samantha, "and having watched incredible actors interpret this role in the past, I'm delighted to be playing the White Witch. This production is so beautifully conceived, with thrilling sets and costumes and an amazingly talented cast and creative team. I'm having great fun seducing, plotting and terrifying Narnia into a permanent winter!"

Yours Sincerely

The Rep, Birmingham, Wed 2 - Sat 5 March



A queer contemplation on the complications of 21st-century communication, Yours Sincerely blends storytelling and lipsync cabaret to tell the tale of a man named Will. Accidentally stealing 300 second-class stamps from a Birmingham post office, Will decides to put them to good use by writing all manner of letters to all manner of recipients - from old chums and ex-boyfriends, right through to the marketing department at John Lewis...

This hour-long coming-of-age comedy, based on real-life correspondence, is a little thin on the ground storywise but nevertheless makes for an entertaining enough evening of theatre.

YES YES UCS!

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 13 March; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Tues 15 March

In 1971, just-out-of-school Aggy McGraw gets an office job at Fairfields shipyard in Govan. A week later, the new Tory government in London declares it's pulling the plug on shipbuilding on the Clyde.

With nothing to lose but her job, Aggy gets involved in the shipbuilders' 'occupation and work-in', an initiative designed to prove to the Westminster powers-that-be that the industry still has a future...

This brand-new play, based on real-life events, is presented by Townsend Theatre Productions. A professional community-interest company, Townsend majors in producing socially relevant live theatre 'for new audiences in areas of low cultural engagement'.

Bleach

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 25 March

Sex, violence and city living combine in this critically acclaimed show about a young man for whom it turns out the streets of London are far from paved with gold.

Tyler Everett has high hopes for life in the Big Smoke but soon finds himself earning a living by selling his body...

Writer Dan Ireland-Reeves also directs and stars in this one-man production, which is visiting the Midlands on the back of a highly successful European tour.



The Bone Sparrow

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 22 - Sat 26 March



"The Bone Sparrow is a classic coming-of-age story and yet so much more too," says playwright S Shakthidharan, who has here adapted Zana Fraillon's award-winning novel for the stage. "By turns it's a wondrous tale of mythical adventure, a realistic appraisal of what it means to grow up without freedom, and a vision of renewed solidarity across our supposed divisions."

Telling the story of a Rohingya refugee boy who's spent the whole of his life in an Australian detention centre, The Bone Sparrow is being co-presented by Pilot Theatre, whose previous productions include Noughts & Crosses and Crongton Knights.

"Pilot always take on projects that aim to open the power, possibility and complexity of the world for audiences," says Esther Richardson, the company's artistic director. "We're aiming not only to set free this sublimely imaginative, moving and urgent tale, but also to raise awareness, most especially in young people, about the current situation with child detention and the plight of the Rohingya. I simply can't imagine a more timely or theatrically prescient project than this one."


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The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 29 March - Sat 2 April

This National Theatre stage adaptation of Mark Haddon's award-winning novel bagged an impressive seven Olivier Awards in 2013 and has met with almost universal acclaim. At its centre is the character of 15-year-old Christopher, a boy who describes himself as "a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties". Initially coming under suspicion after discovering the lifeless body of his neighbour's dog, Christopher decides to investigate the crime - and so embarks on a journey that will change his world forever...

The Da Vinci Code

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 8 - Sat 12 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 7 - Sat 11 June; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 21 - Sat 25 June; Malvern Theatres, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Sept

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, Danny John-Jules and Hannah Rose Caton star.



Bean Spillers: An Improvised Musical

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 18 & Sat 19 March

Gigglemug Theatre make a welcome return to the Old Joint Stock with another evening of high-quality improvisation and music. Hailed for presenting shows that are slick, fun, frivolous and gloriously silly, the boys will be basing their on-stage shenanigans on gossip gleaned from the audience - so be sure to take along some suitably juicy titbits to share with them!

Love For Love

Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 16 - Sat 19 March

William Congreve's Restoration comedy scored a significant success when it debuted in 1695. Indeed, during the playwright's lifetime, it was actually viewed more favourably than The Way Of The World, the play for which Congreve has since become best known.

Love For Love follows the adventures of the dissolute Valentine, who finds himself taking drastic action to retain what's rightfully his, after being persuaded by his father to sign away his inheritance.

Revenge

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Thurs 24 March

An MP with a charmed life, a journalist with an axe to grind, and a dead body that brings the two protagonists into close and incendiary contact with one another... Robert Hawdon's Revenge is here presented by Crime And Comedy Theatre and directed by Louise Jameson. Louise's acting CV features high-profile television shows including Tenko and Dr Who, but she's perhaps best remembered from Bergerac, in which she played the titular character's long-suffering girlfriend, Susan Young.

Much Ado About Nothing

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until 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.



THE CORE
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March Theatre & Film Highlights




4/3 **Henry's Blueshouse**
Chick Wren's Rollin' River Band

8/3 **Malcolm Stent in the Afternoon**

8/3 **The Father** 12A
Anthony Hopkins & Olivia Colman




9/3 **The King Elvis Presley Lives On**

15/3 **Pepper and Honey**
Warm and gentle drama show about missing home

16/3 **Nomadland** *Frances McDormand* 12A

17/3 **Lost Voice Guy: Cerebral LOL-sy**




18/3 **The Manfreds**

19/3 **Holi - Festival of Colour** *Spring events and workshops celebrating love and vibrant colour*

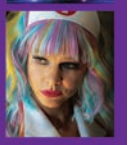
19/3 **Crooners**
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23/3 **Judas and the Black Messiah** 15
Daniel Kaluuya, Jesse Plemons

24/3 **Revenge** *Suspenseful crime drama*

25/3 **Bohemian Rhapsody** 12A
Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton, Gwilym Lee

29/3 **Jimmy Buckley Live**

30/3 **Herman's Hermits**

31/3 **Promising Young Woman** 15
Carey Mulligan & Bo Burnham

This is not a full list - see website for full listings.

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Cluedo

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 14 - Sat 19 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 11 - Sat 16 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 2 - Sat 7 May; Malvern Festival Theatre, Mon 20 - Sat 25 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 11 - Sat 16 July

This new stage play is based on the classic detective board game of the same name and the hit 1985 movie, Clue.
Featuring all of the game's famous characters - Miss Scarlett, Professor Plum, Mrs Peacock, Reverend Green, Mrs White and Colonel Mustard - the show is being helmed by Mark Bell, director of the award-winning The Play That Goes Wrong and A Comedy About A Bank Robbery.
Coronation Street and EastEnders favourite Michelle Collins stars as Miss Scarlett, with Daniel Casey - who played Detective Sergeant Gavin Troy in Midsummer Murders - taking on the role of Professor Plum.

Catch Me If You Can

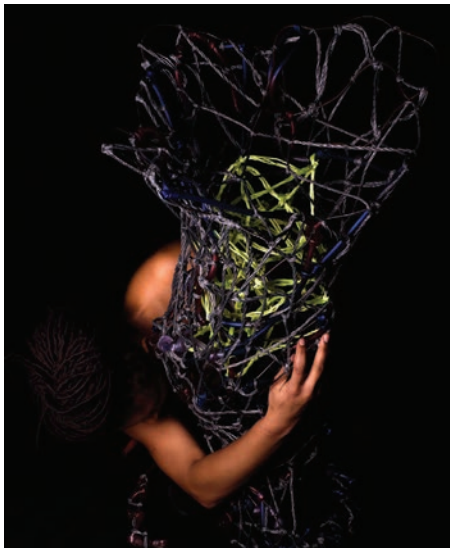
Malvern Theatres, Mon 21 - Sat 26 March; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 25 - Sat 30 April

Audience members of a certain vintage will be wowed by the presence of Patrick Duffy in this clever adaptation of French writer Robert Thomas' Trap For A Lonely Man.
Duffy's heyday was the late 1970s and early 1980s, when he starred as Bobby Ewing in the hit television series, Dallas.
And he's not the only Hollywood actor gracing the Malvern stage in Catch Me If You Can. Homeland and Happy Days star Linda Purl - Patrick's real-life partner - is also putting in a shift.
A psychological thriller set in the remote Catskill mountains, the play sees Inspector Levine called to a house to investigate the disappearance of the recently married Elizabeth Corban.
Then, out of the blue, a woman arrives at the house claiming to be the missing newly-wed... but there's the distinct possibility that not everything is quite as it seems...
One-time Coronation Street bad boy Gray O'Brien co-stars.

Invisible Threads

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 16 - Fri 18 March

A collaborative and experimental piece based on writing-development workshops with migrant women living in Coventry, Invisible Threads is presented by Maokwo, a local company which supports marginalised minorities groups and seeks to engage with communities via the arts.
"When going through life, at various points, many of us feel like we are on our own," explains Maokwo. "When our everyday labour and love is taken for granted, or when we suffer at the hands of our loved ones, our sense of 'being alone' is intensified...
"In writing our individual journeys and sharing our experiences with each other and the wider community, it gradually became obvious to us that we have, in fact, always been bound by invisible threads.
"This resulting show is all about the journeys we've taken - and about the growth, loss and strength that came about as a result of them."



Mary Rose

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 March

Mary Rose tells the story of the eponymous 12-year-old who goes missing on a small island in the Outer Hebrides, reappearing three weeks later but unaware that she's been away for any length of time.
Growing up, Mary marries, becomes a mother and returns to the island, only to go missing yet again - on this occasion for a period of 23 years.
When she finally returns, she isn't a single day older - and as with the previous time, she has no awareness of how long she's been away...
This enthralling ghost story - here presented by Worthing-based company Conn Artists - was written by JM Barrie more than a decade after he published his most famous work, Peter Pan.

Crimes Camera Action

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 19 March



The award-winning New Old Friends here present a madcap mystery set in Golden Age Hollywood.
When a screen starlet is stabbed as a result of an on-set prop mix-up, it falls to Humphrey Bogart-style private eye Stan Shakespeare to bring order to the chaos.
But Stan has definitely got his work cut out...

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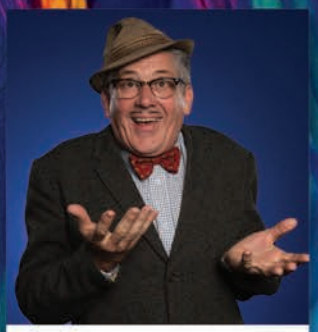
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Sat 5 Mar 7.30pm



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Watson: The Final Problem

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 5 March

"Dr John Watson is often overlooked but is more than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's alter-ego," observes Bert Coules.

Bert, the BBC's head writer on The Further Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes, has collaborated with Smokescreen Productions on this brand-new play. "Deeply affected by the war in Afghanistan and appalled by dishonesty and falsehood, Watson is a remarkably contemporary character to bring to life on stage," continues Bert.

The Final Problem sees Brittas Empire star and Smokescreen founder Tim Marriott reenacting the last Sherlock Holmes adventure from the perspective of unsung hero Watson.

The show has been positively received on its current tour, with Marriott widely praised for his portrayal of Holmes' faithful companion.

Paul Zerdin: Hands Free

The Place, Telford, Wed 30 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 8 April; Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 9 April; Rialto Plaza, Coventry, Thurs 21 April; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 4 May

"As a ventriloquist, I can get away with jokes that other comedians can't," Paul Zerdin explains. "I've got the luxury of taking the p*ss out of myself, but doing so through the characters, rather than me just being relentlessly self-deprecating. I can get away with having a go at the audience much more too; you get to be cheekier. Mocking the front row is a trademark of my characters, but I'm evolving my audience interaction beyond that."

Comedian and ventriloquist Zerdin, a three-times contributor to the Royal Variety Performance, here returns to the Midlands with a show that's definitely not suitable for children. "They might be cute little puppets," Paul says of his numerous characters, "but leave the kids at home!"



Baker & Harris: Back Stage Pass

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 29 March

This rescheduled tour features radio legends 'Whispering' Bob Harris and Danny Baker, two fellas who, between them, have far more years of broadcasting experiencing than either of them probably cares to remember. Danny's certainly looking forward to hitting the road with their pandemic-delayed touring show, though: "After decades of freewheeling access to all of the major names and noises of popular culture," he says, "Bob & I will be cutting loose about our extraordinary time in and around the music industry."

Coming To England

The Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 31 March - Sat 16 April

"I was 10 years old," recalls television personality Floella Benjamin in talking about her arrival in the UK in 1960. "When we got to England, we lived in one room in London. There were *eight* people in that one room, but my mum said, 'Don't cry, because this room is full of love'."

The story of Floella's journey from her home in Trinidad to begin a new life in the UK is here being told on stage for the very first time.

"This show will be so joyful," she says, "the music, the sets, the colour; it will be like a cauldron of excitement. It's a rich tapestry of sadness, frustration, laughter and joy, all coming together as the big H - hope."

Bumper Blyton: The Improvised Adventure

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 27 March; Meole Brace Village Hall, Shrewsbury, Sat 7 May; The Swan Theatre, Worcester, Fri 17 June

Described as utterly unique and spontaneous, Bumper Blyton The Improvised Adventure puts an adult spin on stories penned by one of the 20th century's most famous children's authors - Enid Blyton.

The show is made up on the hoof and garnering rave reviews wherever it lands.

"We imagine Enid would've hate us!" say The Make 'Em Ups, the company behind the production. "We're a bunch of soft, southern, lefty liberal comedians! We think she resented the idea that there was ever any intended innuendo in her books, but we reckon there's more than enough Dick and Fanny for everyone to share!"

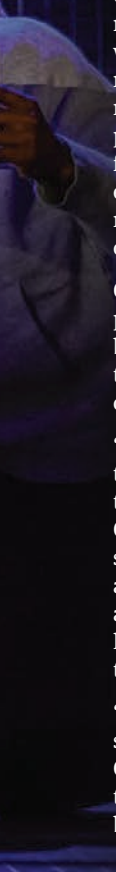




by Diane Parkes

A CURIOUS INCIDENT...

What's On chats to Connor Curren, who plays Christopher in The National Theatre production, A Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time, which returns to Birmingham Hippodrome this month



The National Theatre's stage adaptation of the bestselling book, The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time, is celebrating 10 years since its premiere. A huge hit in London and across the UK, the show is back on tour, coming to Birmingham in late March.

When he discovers his neighbour's dog has been killed with a garden fork, 15-year-old Christopher turns detective to discover who is responsible. But in doing so, he uncovers a web of lies, confusions and miscommunications which brings the drama much closer to home. A boy with his own perspective on life who has never been further afield than his school, Christopher embarks on a journey to discover the truth, not just about his family but also about his own capabilities.

Connor Curren, who is one of two actors playing Christopher on the current tour, believes one of the reasons for the success of the show is the special nature of its lead character.

"Christopher is such an iconic character in theatre," says 26-year-old Connor, who trained at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. "I think a lot of people might see a lot of themselves in Christopher. He has a sort of naivety about how the world works around him in a social sense, and I think a lot of people relate to that and will have been through that.

"I also think Christopher's honesty and his straightforwardness appeals to people. Often Christopher acts in ways we wish we could. I think he speaks in ways we wish we could because he's so blunt and direct. He's not inhibited by politeness. There's also a sense of wonder in Christopher, which a lot of people wish they had. A lot of times society knocks that out of you when you're growing up, and I think people latch onto that in him."

In both Mark Haddon's novel and the stage show, which is adapted by Simon Stephens, Christopher is never labelled, but he shows many characteristics which could be deemed to be along the autistic spectrum. For this 10th anniversary tour, the National Theatre put out a casting call asking actors with lived experience of neurodiversity and autism to apply for the role.

Connor, who is an actor with autism, says having some understanding of Christopher's neurodivergent characteristics does help with portraying the role - but only so far.

"It's less of a challenge in that I don't have to play having autism, but I think Christopher is a very different person from me. I approach it from the point of thinking, 'I don't want to play someone who is a diagnosis of something, and I don't need to play up to what people think an autistic person is'.

"Christopher does have some similarities to me, but he also has lots of differences from me in what his interests are and how he behaves, what he likes and what he dislikes. I think focusing on that is better for an actor than just focusing on the similarities. Those similarities build a bridge into the character, but then you've got to focus on those differences as well and make them your own. That's the best way of approaching Christopher."

Connor believes the story helps achieve wider understanding of neurodivergency.

"I hope that people are now recognising what autism is and how it manifests itself, and how different everyone is on the spectrum. I think that is manifested in the actors who they've cast to play this role as well. It's about celebrating the wide variety of the spectrum. That's why I love it when schoolkids come to the show because it's a massively entertaining and beautiful play, and it's more educational than a textbook could be.

"There was never any label attached to Christopher in the book or the play, but I think the way his behaviour is manifested, he would fall somewhere on the spectrum. But you approach him as an individual not as a diagnostic, as you should with all autistic individuals.

"Even I don't understand the full variety of the spectrum. I don't think anyone does, even the experts. I'm still learning more and more about it, and we're coming to the idea as a society that autism isn't as cut and dried and black and white as we thought it was initially; it has many different variations. If we've taught people to see this, then we've done a lot of good."

The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from 29 March to 2 April. For further information, visit birminghamhippodrome.com



Justin Live!

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 13 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 23 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 30 October

'Well-known songs, lots of dancing, hilarious comedy and plenty of slapstick fun' is the order of the day when CBeebies favourite Justin Fletcher MBE hits town with his very own show.

Justin's previous children's entertainment endeavours have included hit programmes Justin's House, Gigglebiz and Gigglequiz, as well as voiceover work as Harold from Thomas The Tank Engine and numerous Christmas seasons spent in pantoland.

One of his most successful undertakings is Something Special, a children's television show specifically aimed at youngsters with delayed learning and communication difficulties.

The Tiger Who Came To Tea

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 5 & Sun 6 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 26 - Sat 27 August

The tea-guzzling tiger once again drops in on Sophie and her mum just as they're settling down for an afternoon cuppa...

Adapted by David Wood OBE from the late Judith Kerr's 1968 book, this 55-minute show comes without an interval, features singalong songs and boasts plenty of magic - not to mention a big stripy tiger, of course!



Art With Heart: Stan

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 19 & Sun 20 March

Eight-year-old Sam's world is turned on its head when his parents decide to separate. Struggling to deal with the upset caused by the situation, the dinosaur-loving youngster finds himself bonding with Alex, a deaf girl with a vivid imagination who whisks him away to meet the almighty Stan, the gigantic T-Rex at Manchester Museum...

Sarah Emmott's poignant play is followed by a free half-hour workshop aimed at helping young audiences understand and explore the show's key themes.

Both the play and the workshop will also be presented in British Sign Language.

Gangsta Granny

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 17 - 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..



Treasure Island

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 18 & Sat 19 March

Multi-award-winning Devon-based physical-comedy company Le Navet Bete stop off in Lichfield this month to present their smash-hit version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic seafaring yarn.

The show is being produced in association with Barbican Theatre and features 'dastardly pirates, tropical islands, and a mermaid you'll never forget'.



The Smartest Giant In Town

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

Julia 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 attire - George soon realises that it isn't clothes that maketh the giant but rather a gargantuan sense of generosity and a colossal, warm heart...

Presented by Fierylight and Little Angel Theatre.

Flying high

Julia Donaldson talks about her children's book, Zog And The Flying Doctors, and the joy of seeing it adapted for the stage...

Best known for her popular rhyming stories for children, especially those illustrated by Axel Scheffler, Julia Donaldson is the multi-award-winning author of some of the world's best-loved children's books, most notably the modern classic, The Gruffalo, which has sold over 18 million copies worldwide.

Many of Julia and Axel's books have made the journey from page to stage, and this year the bestselling Zog And The Flying Doctors joins them. A follow-up to Freckle Productions' smash-hit adaptation of Zog - the origin story about the eponymous dragon - the sequel follows Zog and his 'flying doctor' crew, Princess Pearl and Sir Gadabout, as they tend to a sunburnt mermaid, a unicorn with one too many horns and a lion with the flu.

Zog And The Flying Doctors flies into the Midlands this month as part of its world-premiere tour. But where did the idea for Zog come from? "Well that one was quite unusual, in that the initial idea didn't come from me," explains Julia. "My editor said it would be lovely to have a story about a dragon, so I started thinking about it and the name 'Madam Dragon' came into my head, which I thought had a nice sound.

"And then I asked myself what Madame Dragon could do, who could she be? I came up with various ideas and a schoolteacher was one of them, so I took it from there. Originally it was going to be about a knight and a dragon, but it ended up being about a princess and a dragon - the story came to me bit by bit.

"My husband, Malcolm, who's a doctor, also had some input here. When I was planning the story, I knew that Zog would keep meeting the princess, and originally I was going to have them play together and toast marshmallows. But Malcolm said that was a bit soppy, and couldn't it be something with a bit more oomph? So then I came up with the doctor angle."

Zog isn't the first animal to star in one of Julia's stories. From a cat in Tabby McTat, to a fish in Tiddler, to the now-iconic Gruffalo, animals are often Julia's most memorable creations. "It's often used as a convention - like in Aesop's Fables, where the animals aren't really animals, they represent a quality



or a characteristic. I also think it would be far more boring for the reader if Mouse in The Gruffalo was just a small but clever person, or The Gruffalo itself was a big, scary but rather stupid person. Or in The Snail And The Whale, the Whale was just a big person and the snail a little person. I think you need animals to represent the qualities."

One facet of the enduring success of Julia's stories is her partnership with illustrator Axel Scheffler, who has brought to life so many of her characters. So how does their collaboration work? "It's always through the editor," Julia explains. "I never exchange a word with Axel about the pictures until my editor shows him the book - and then I have a



nail-biting moment wondering if he likes it and wants to do it. Then he'll do some character sketches, which I'll look at. Sometimes, after he's created sketches for every picture, I'll think, 'Oh, hang on, I'm going to change that little bit of text, because I like what he's done with that'."

Having had the characters in her head for so long, what's it like if the illustrations are different to what she's imagined? "I always say it's like going on holiday - you've got an idea in your head of how it's going to be, and then it's always totally different. But once you're there and enjoying it, you just forget what was in your head before. Also, I usually know when I'm writing something whether I want Axel to work on it - in which case I've got his style in my head as I'm working. It doesn't influence the storyline, but it *will* influence how I picture the characters - so I'm usually not surprised when I see Axel's interpretation."

Many of Julia's books have now been adapted for film or theatre, where they are reimagined all over again. "For me, it's like an extension of working with an illustrator. Handing it over to a theatre company or film company, you know it's going to change a bit; the end product will be a blend of my words and their artistic vision. And they do usually consult me and tell me what they've got in mind."

For many children, the stage adaptations of Julia and Axel's books, from Zog to Stick Man, are often their first experience of live theatre - something in which Julia takes great pleasure: "I remember going to see The Nutcracker when I was a child, and I found the whole thing completely magical. I can still remember how I felt when the curtain went up. I suppose in a way it's the same thing that a book gives you, in that while you're reading or watching, you believe in a different reality. And if it's a good show, parents love to see that their children - even very young ones - can just be transfixed by it."

Zog And The Flying Doctors shows at The Place, Telford, on Wed 8 & Thurs 9 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 25 & Thurs 26 May; and Birmingham Town Hall, from Tues 23 to Sun 28 August.

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NATHAN CARTER
Sat 26 March @ 7.30pm

comedy



PAUL ZERDIN: HANDS FREE
Wed 30 March @ 7.30pm

music



GORDON HENDRICKS: SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE G-HOUSE
Fri 1 April @ 7.30pm

musicals



SOUL SISTERS THE MUSICAL
Wed 6 April @ 7.30pm

comedy



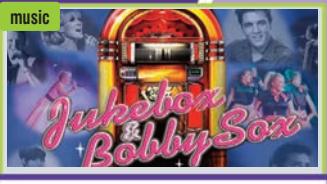
FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY
Thurs 7 April @ 7.30pm

music



THE QUO EXPERIENCE
Fri 8 April @ 7.30pm

music



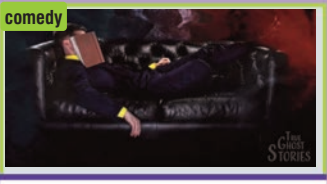
JUKEBOX AND BOBBYSOX
Sat 9 April @ 7.30pm

music



POP DIVAS LIVE!
Sun 10 April @ 3.00pm

comedy



TERRY DEARY'S TRUE GHOST STORIES
Tues 12 April @ 7.30pm

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2Faced Dance Company:
EVERYTHING (but the girl)
Fri 11 – Sat 12 Mar
From £10 | Ages 11+



Srishti: SEVENS
Wed 30 Mar | 7.30pm
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2Faced Dance Company: EVERYTHING (but the girl)

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 11 & Sat 12 March; Walsall Arena, Wed 6 April

As part of the journey towards their stated aim of becoming 'a worldwide leader in the production of breathtaking, physical and inspirational dance', Herefordshire-based 2Faced Dance Company here present a high-energy triple bill...

The Qualies brings to life writer David Foster Wallace's ground-breaking study of American tennis player Michael Joyce...
Hollow In A World Too Full is a solo work featuring a score from Cannes award-winning composer Alex Baranowski...
7.0 explores how people respond when everything they thought they knew is taken away from them. A highly physical, heart-in-the-mouth presentation, the piece is one of 2Faced Dance's most popular productions.



40 Years of Phoenix Dance

The Rep, Birmingham, Sat 12 March

Leeds-based dance ensemble Phoenix is this month celebrating its 40th birthday with a 'special anniversary' programme of entertainment, bringing together a range of work from across the company's history. Featured shows include Pave Up Paradise - a 'sensual and confrontational duet' revisiting Adam & Eve after their fall from grace - and Family, a satirical fly-on-the-wall dance work exploring the complexity of human interaction.

U.Dance WM 2022

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Sun 27 March

Providing a regional youth dance showcase, the organisers of U.Dance WM are promising an evening 'full of vibrant and exciting dance genres and themes, performed by some of the best young talents from across the West Midlands'.
U.Dance WM is the regional platform for One Dance UK's national U.Dance Festival, which is being held in Glasgow this summer (22 - 24 July).



Wondrous Fun & Games!

Produced in association with the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and launching this month with Wondrous Stories in the city's Centenary Square, Birmingham 2022 Festival celebrates the West Midlands' wealth of artistic talent...



March sees the launch of a six-month festival celebrating creative talent across the West Midlands.

Sitting alongside the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, **Birmingham 2022 Festival** will shine a spotlight on the region's cultural sector via a programme that promises to 'entertain, engage and embrace audiences, whilst positively disrupting and inspiring lasting change'.

Wondrous Stories - a large-scale outdoor event in Birmingham's Centenary Square (17 - 20 March) - marks the start of the festival...

The free-to-attend event is the creation of Kevin Finnan MBE, artistic director of Leamington-based and internationally renowned dance-circus company Motionhouse.

As well as masterminding a plethora of large-scale events for Motionhouse down the years, Kevin's impressive CV includes working as choreographer and movement director for the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

He also created The Voyage, a large-scale performance art piece - commissioned to open the Midlands edition of the London 2012 Festival - which was presented onboard a lifesize cruise liner in Birmingham's Victoria Square.

Speaking about Wondrous Stories, Kevin says: "It's a huge honour to be making the opening event of the Birmingham 2022 Festival, working with a wide range of people from the West Midlands to create a truly inclusive performance by casts of all abilities, identities and backgrounds."

Featuring a sure-to-be-breathtaking combination of acrobatics and contemporary dance, Wondrous Stories sees Kevin joined by a team of artistic collaborators, including Birmingham-based choreographers Sonia Sabri and Jamaal Burkmar.

The production will feature a cast of over 250 performers. These include: The Choir With No Name - comprising people who have been touched by homelessness or social and other challenges; Critical Mass dance collective, which gives people from varying backgrounds the opportunity to work with leading artists and choreographers to learn, enjoy and perform dance; Motionhouse's professional dancers and members from its youth and community adult groups; Freewheelin Inclusive Wheelchair Dance Group; and dancers from DanceXchange and Sampad's West Midlands Centre for Advanced Training.

Birmingham 2022 Festival Executive Producer Raidene Carter said: "It's incredibly exciting to be approaching our opening night. We've been working hard with the region's exceptional talent for almost two years to build a programme that truly shines a global spotlight on creativity right here in the West Midlands. I can't wait to share all that the festival has to offer as a part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games."

Birmingham 2022 Festival's full programme will be announced shortly. Details will be available at birmingham2022.com/festival

Wondrous Stories shows at Centenary Square, Birmingham, from Thursday 17 to Sunday 20 March

Individuals and organisations involved in Birmingham 2022 Festival

Birmingham 2022 Festival is supported by numerous funders. The aim of the event is to animate the entire West Midlands with ambitious, creative works. Major supporters of the festival are: Arts Council England, the National Lottery Fund, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund and Canada Council For The Arts.
Additional projects have been supported by Spirit Of 2012, Birmingham City Council and the British Council.

Leamington-based **Motionhouse** has been creating work both in the Midlands and across the globe for more than 30 years. Renowned for its spectacular large-scale performances, the company has entertained audiences in many unusual spaces, including beaches, stately homes and inner-city wasteland. Commissions to date have featured pyrotechnics, giant sandcastles, hot-air balloons, huge fairytale ball gowns and a lifesize liner.

Sonia Sabri is a Kathak dance artist, teacher, choreographer and movement director. Considered to be one of the 21st century's brightest and most inspirational British-born dance choreographers, her commissions to date include works for the BBC, Channel Four, Tanzhaus, ARTE, Birmingham Hippodrome, South Bank Centre and the London Olympics 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Sonia is the artistic director of Sonia Sabri Company, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022.

Jamaal Burkmar is an award-winning choreographer whose first creation was as a second-year student at the Northern School for Contemporary Dance. He has since been commissioned by and received support from, among other organisations, the Dance Hub in Birmingham, Leeds Dance Partnership, Phoenix Dance Theatre and Mobius Dance. Jamaal's work has a strong relationship to music and sits in many spaces, including outdoors and online.

Critical Mass is an inclusive dance-participation project funded by Spirit Of 2012 and supported by the Birmingham 2022 Festival.
More than 300 people from across the region - with and without disabilities - will take centre stage at a number of high-profile events during the 2022 programme, including the opening and closing ceremonies of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and this month's Wondrous Stories presentation in the city's Centenary Square.

Freewheelin are a Birmingham-based inclusive community dance group run by Helen Mason (a Para Dance UK instructor). The group have gone from strength to strength since launching in 2017, performing at a variety of different events, including Birmingham Inclusive Sports Festival (2017) and the European Wheelchair Basketball Finals in 2019. Freewheelin are currently the National Para Dance Freestyle group champions, winning gold in 2018 and 2019.



The Batman CERT 15 (176 mins)

Starring **Robert Pattinson, Zoë Kravitz, Barry Keoghan, Peter Sarsgaard, Colin Farrell, Paul Dano** Directed by **Matt Reeves**

Gotham's vigilante detective here makes a welcome return to the city's mean streets to battle against a sadistic killer - and suddenly finds himself in a criminal underworld inhabited by some familiar adversaries...

Robert Pattinson is the latest actor to don the cape & cowl, replacing Ben Affleck, who left the project in 2019 having previously made four film appearances as the Dark Knight (Affleck also plays the character in the upcoming Flash movie).

By and large, Batman movies down the decades have pretty much held their own in the quality stakes - although 1997's Batman & Robin *did* get a super-severe slamming - so this latest offering is eagerly anticipated by critics and moviegoers alike.

Planet Of The Apes director Matt Reeves is the man at the helm, with Paul Dano, Zoë Kravitz and Colin Farrell playing the Riddler, Catwoman and the Penguin respectively.

Released Fri 4 March

The Adam Project

Starring **Ryan Reynolds, Zoe Saldana, Jennifer Garner, Mark Ruffalo, Catherine Keener, Lucie Guest** Directed by **Shawn Levy**

The wounded pilot who 13-year-old Adam Reed finds hiding in the garage turns out to be the older version of himself.

Adam Senior is visiting from the future - where time travel is in its infancy - to fulfill a secret mission and save the world.

The two Adams then team up for an adventure into their past to find their father. Adding to the challenge of the mission, they discover that they really don't like each other very much. It soon becomes apparent that if they're going to save the world, they'll first have to figure out how to get along...

The Adam Project is the second movie that Shawn Levy has directed with Ryan Reynolds in the lead role. The pair previously worked together on video-game spoof Free Guy, which was released in 2020.

Released on Netflix on Fri 11 March





Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre CERT tbc

Starring **Jason Statham, Aubrey Plaza, Josh Hartnett, Hugh Grant, Cary Elwes, Eddie Marsan** Directed by **Guy Ritchie**

Super-spy Orson Fortune must track down and stop the sale of a deadly new weapons technology wielded by billionaire arms broker Greg Simmonds.

Reluctantly teamed with some of the world's best operatives, Fortune recruits Hollywood's biggest movie star, Danny Francesco, to help out with his globe-trotting undercover mission to save the world...

The alpha-male macho-movie 'dream team' of Guy Ritchie and Jason Statham come together for a fifth time in this action spy comedy thriller co-starring Hugh Grant.

Just for the record, Ritchie and Statham previously worked together - to excellent effect, it should be added - on: Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels; Snatch; Revolver; and last year's Wrath Of Man.

Released Fri 18 March

Alice CERT tbc (100 mins)

Starring **Keke Palmer, Common, Alicia Witt, Jonny Lee Miller, Gaius Charles, Katie Gill** Directed by **Krystin Ver Linden**

Alice finds the titular character yearning for freedom from enslavement on a rural Georgia plantation run by a brutal and disturbed owner. After a violent clash with him, she flees through the neighbouring woods and discovers the world to be a very different place from the one that she's known. It's 1973, and plantation slavery is definitely not the order of the day.
Rescued on the roadside by a disillusioned political activist - and quickly comprehending the lies that have kept her in bondage - Alice embarks on a journey that teaches her plenty about the promise of Black liberation...
Apparently inspired by true accounts and being promoted as a modern empowerment fable, the film stirred a considerable reaction at this year's Sundance Festival.

Released Fri 18 March



The Unbreakable Boy CERT tbc

Starring **Jacob Laval, Zachary Levi, Amy Acker, Peter Facinelli, Patricia Heaton, Meghann Fahy** Directed by **Jon Gunn**



With a rare brittle-bone disease and a one-of-a-kind brain, autistic Austin is no ordinary kid. But although life can be challenging in the extreme for him, he nevertheless meets every problem with a joyous, funny and refreshingly life-affirming worldview.
His positive approach is positively contagious, uniting and transforming everybody around him - especially his dad, Scott, who comes to see his son not as a symbol of something broken but rather as the epitome of an indestructible spirit.
Based on the 2014 book by Scott M LeRette with Susy Flory.

Released Fri 18 March

X CERT tbc

Starring **Jenna Ortega, Mia Goth, Brittany Snow, Martin Henderson, Kid Cudi, Owen Campbell** Directed by **Ti West**

In rural Texas in 1979 a group of young filmmakers set out to make an adult movie called The Farmer's Daughter. But when their reclusive, elderly hosts catch them in the act, the young creatives suddenly find themselves fighting for their lives...
Inevitably, given its 'slasher pic' genre, this retro offering is not for the fainthearted. Expect bloody violence and gore, strong sexual content, graphic nudity, scenes of drug use, and the kind of language that would probably have seen Texan grannies of the era suggesting that the characters washed out their mouths with soap and water.

Released Fri 18 March





Turning Red

With the voices of **Rosalie Chiang, Sandra Oh, James Hong, Sasha Roiz, Jordan Fisher, Maitreyi Ramakrishnan** Directed by **Domee Shin**

Adolescence can be tricky at the best of times - but for confident and dorky Mei Lee, it's got the potential to become an absolute nightmare. For starters, she's got a protective and somewhat overbearing mother, whose close proximity is making being a teenager even tougher than it might otherwise be. And then there's the fact that whenever Mei Lee gets too excited - which is practically *always* - she turns into a giant red panda!...
Killing Eve star Sandra Oh voices the character of Mei Lee's mom, Ming, in a movie which Disney has decided to premiere via its streaming service. The company has cited the increase in Covid cases, due to the Omicron variant, and the sluggish recovery of the cinema box-office as its reasons for debuting the film on Disney Plus.

Released on Disney+ on Fri 11 March



Action Stations!

Steve Adams talks to Jamie Anderson about the indestructible appeal of his late father Gerry Anderson's pioneering puppet-based TV shows, whose iconic music will be celebrated in a one-off concert in Birmingham next month.

by Steve Adams

Gerry Anderson's FAB-ulous sci-fi TV series first captured the imaginations of children and their parents in the 1950s and '60s, gaining cult status as they grew bigger and more elaborate, before he graduated from the 'supermarionation' of the likes of Stingray and Captain Scarlet to live action shows such as UFO and Space: 1999 in the 1970s.

The series all featured heroic characters, fabulous vehicles and ground-breaking special effects, but they're equally remembered for their iconic theme tunes, from the marching band splendour of Thunderbirds to the funky Northern Soul of Joe 90.

The bulk of the shows' themes and incidental music was created by celebrated composer Barry Gray, but Stand By For Action!, a one-off concert taking place at Birmingham's Symphony Hall next month, will feature compositions that span Anderson's near 50-year career, from The Adventures Of Twizzle (1957) to New Captain Scarlet (2005) and all points inbetween. It's an event that his son, Jamie - managing director of Anderson Entertainment as well as a producer, writer and director in his own right - is clearly thrilled about.

"It's a world first and I couldn't be more excited!" he gushes. "For one night only, we're bringing together a 55-piece orchestra to play every theme from every Gerry Anderson show from 1957 to 2005, with a few iconic incidental pieces, suites and surprises along the way. Richard Harvey (Terrahawks) is conducting, and Crispin Merrell (Space Precinct, Lavender Castle, New Captain Scarlet) will be our pianist for the night. So we're not only celebrating the work of the fabulous Barry Gray, but all the composers who worked with Dad across the decades. Having two of them on stage is a really lovely thing, and I'm honoured that Richard and Crispin have agreed to join us."

Barry Gray's iconic themes and distinctive incidental music were a key ingredient in most of the shows, but his team-up with Gerry was little more than a glorious fluke, according to Jamie.

"As with many of these things, the successful partnership was born out of chance really, scoring the earliest puppet show in the late 1950s. But they clearly enjoyed working together and it ended up being the perfect match - where Barry was able to create huge soundscapes for 'small' shows with increasingly large budgets. It was a match made in heaven but forged by chance."

The concert at Symphony Hall pays tribute to that partnership and has been a labour of love for Anderson junior, who admits he's wanted to put together a celebration of all of his father's shows for a long time.

"It's one of Anderson Entertainment's missions - to bring together all of the shows under the Anderson name. So often they're treated separately, but for me they all live together."

The show will be hosted by comedian and impressionist Jon Culshaw, who has voiced characters - including Lady Penelope's legendary butler, Parker - for Thunderbirds' audio books and is a huge fan of the Anderson world.

"He's incredibly enthusiastic about the concert and is getting very involved in how the night runs," says Jamie. "I know he'll do a wonderful job."

Alongside the music, the show will feature new and restored film footage that Jamie hopes will appeal to new and casual fans as much as Anderson obsessives.

"It's sure to be a nostalgic treat for everyone, but may well introduce fans to shows they're less familiar with, or even possibly don't know yet. It'll be a journey of discovery for us all.

"We also intend to show newly colourised material, recently discovered archive, as well as material from the upcoming documentary about Dad's life - Gerry Anderson: A Life Uncharted - which premieres on Britbox on 14 April, Gerry Anderson Day, a couple of days before the concert."

Although Jamie is far too young to have enjoyed the shows in their heyday, he's clearly a proud son and huge fan of his father's work. But despite being so close to it all, he has no problem, or hesitation, in picking favourites.

"Virgil and Thunderbird 2 are my clear stand-outs. Virgil was cool, heroic, an artist and musician, and he did all of the heavy lifting with TB2, which had the best gadgets! But Terrahawks was my first Anderson love. It was quirky and cool with great visual effects, and I watched it until my VHS tapes wore out in the early 1990s."

That latter series tends to be derided by some Anderson fans, but all the shows have an enduring appeal that Jamie puts down to his father's stories of hope and belief in heroes - as well as how many of the apparently fanciful ideas have subsequently come to pass.

"So much of the sci-fi we see today is dystopian, but Anderson series tended to be utopian - looking forward to a better future. Yes, there were negative influences - you can't have drama without it - but the outlook was positive.

"And so much of what they created on those shows has become real. Just look at Elon Musk's latest rockets - they bear a striking resemblance to Fireball XL5, don't they? Add to that video conferencing, orbital satellites, travelling to Mars, facial recognition and so much more - Dad and his teams created things that inspired people to change the world, and while doing so created heroic characters using amazing vehicles and tools to make the world a better place. Those are values that have stuck around and continue to resonate."

Those values are something Jamie tries to keep in mind as curator of his father's incredible legacy, admitting that there's always pressure to do it justice.

"He worked incredibly hard to create things which millions grew up on and continue to love today, so I don't want to damage that reputation or mess it up! Everything we do is with fans in mind, trying to feed their enjoyment and love of these timeless shows. We see the positive effect of this every day, and the feedback on our recent publications and projects suggests we're doing the right thing. I hope Dad would be proud."

And the most exciting thing is that new content is still being created, from 50th anniversary episodes of Thunderbirds in 2020 and a Space: 1999 audio show (starring Mark Bonnar), to the upcoming CGI-meets-puppet series Firestorm.

"Obviously it's fantastic to see legacy extension projects like the Space: 1999 audios and the Thunderbirds anniversary episodes, but I've always got an eye on the future - that's what Dad did after all. For me it all comes from the same place - an 'Anderson spirit' if you will - but if we really want to keep it alive for the next century - and I do - then we need to find ways to bring new audiences into the Anderson fold. We've got a fantastic slate of projects in various stages of commissioning and financing right now that will do just that. I can't wait to share those with the world."

Stand By For Action indeed...

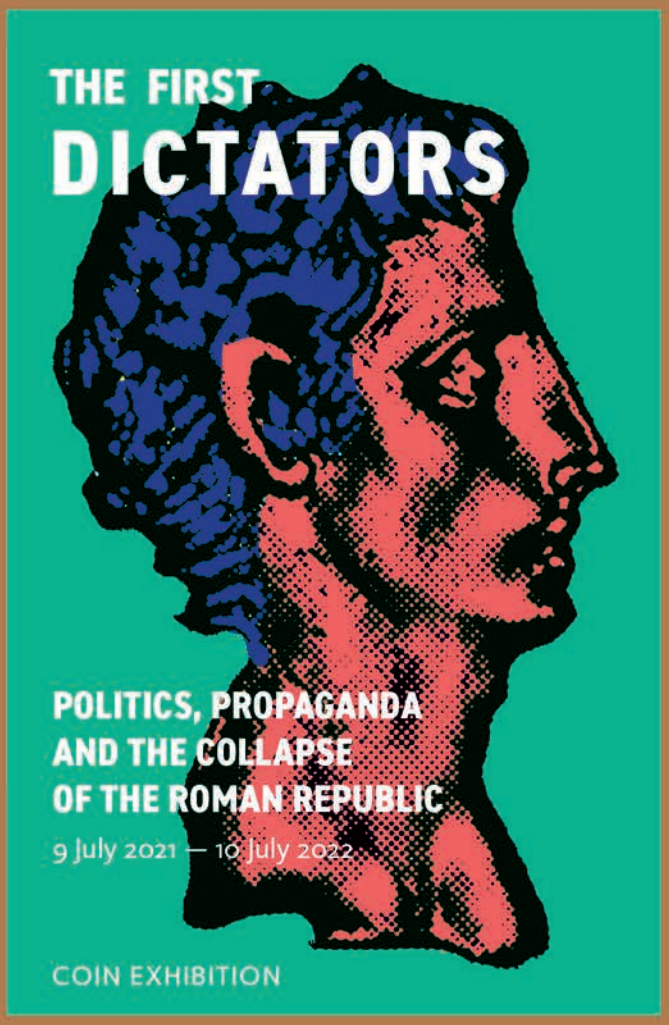
Stand By For Action! shows at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday 16 April



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'A sort of miniature National Gallery for the Midlands...'

Alastair Sooke, The Telegraph



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From Tate –
Until 20 March





From the Holburne Museum, Bath – Until 3 April

On loan at the Barber

Three Birmingham Museums Trust masterpieces are currently available to view at the city's prestigious Barber Institute of Fine Arts - the University of Birmingham venue which is often referred to as 'the mini National Gallery of the Midlands'...

Birmingham's Barber Institute of Fine Arts is currently the go-to place to enjoy iconic paintings from other collections.

Three internationally significant masterpieces have recently been lent to the venue for a two-year period by Birmingham Museums Trust.

The artworks have been loaned while Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is completely rewired - a project that is expected to continue through to 2023/24.

The most famous of the three loans is Ford Madox Brown's The Last Of England (below, left). The Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece is one of the city's most important cultural treasures.

Petrus Christus' The Man Of Sorrows (below) and Guercino's Erminia And The Shepherd (below, right) will also hang alongside the Barber's own outstanding collection.

The arrival of the three Birmingham Museums Trust paintings follows on from other recent high-profile loans to the Barber (see bottom of the page). These include the Allan Ramsay painting of Rosamund Sargent (from Holburne Museum), and two artworks from Tate - a major George Stubbs horse painting titled Mares And Foals In A River Landscape and a Thomas Jones view of Naples called The Capella Nuova Outside The Porta di Chiar.



The Last Of England by Ford Maddox Brown is one of Birmingham's most iconic cultural treasures. A masterwork of Victorian painting, it depicts a young family huddled together on an open boat as they depart English shores for a new life abroad.
The work is circular in format and painted with hallucinatory attention to detail, creating an effect which has been likened to staring through a telescope into a vividly observed moment of reality.



Flemish painter Petrus Christus' visionary **The Man Of Sorrows** is a tiny panel, measuring just 11.2cm x 8.5cm. The work is thought to have been painted around 1450 and was intended to be used as a personal aid to prayer. This was in keeping with the religious teachings of the day, which encouraged close contemplation of the physicality of Christ.



Guercino's monumental **Erminia And The Shepherd** imagines a dramatic encounter between a young pagan princess, who is being pursued by the Christian army, and a ragged old shepherd.
Painted around 1620, the artwork is inspired by a scene from Italian poet Tasso's epic composition, Jerusalem Delivered.

The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, B15 2TS barber.org.uk

Other loans currently available to view at the Barber Institute...

Scottish artist Allan Ramsay painted **Portrait Of Rosamund Sargent, Née Chambers** in 1749. The portrait was created to celebrate his friend Rosamund's marriage to another of his friends, John Sargent, for whom he also painted a portrait. The painting is unusual for the bold directness of the sitter's gaze...

Eminent English animal artist George Stubbs painted the widely acclaimed **Mares And Foals In A River Landscape** in the 1760s. The painting, which shows a group of glossy horses presented in a finely balanced composition, has been voted one of the top 10 most popular paintings in Britain...

The Capella Nuova Outside The Porta di Chiara (1782) is the work of Thomas Jones - best known as a painter of Welsh and Italian landscapes. The exquisite little picture, completed from Jones' painting room overlooking Naples, has in recent times been reappraised as a precursor to the Impressionists.



Image: Masterji, Kokila with Umbrella, Ramaben Patel, Kok ila with Umbrella, 1973. © The Masterji Estate

Through The Lens Of Masterji

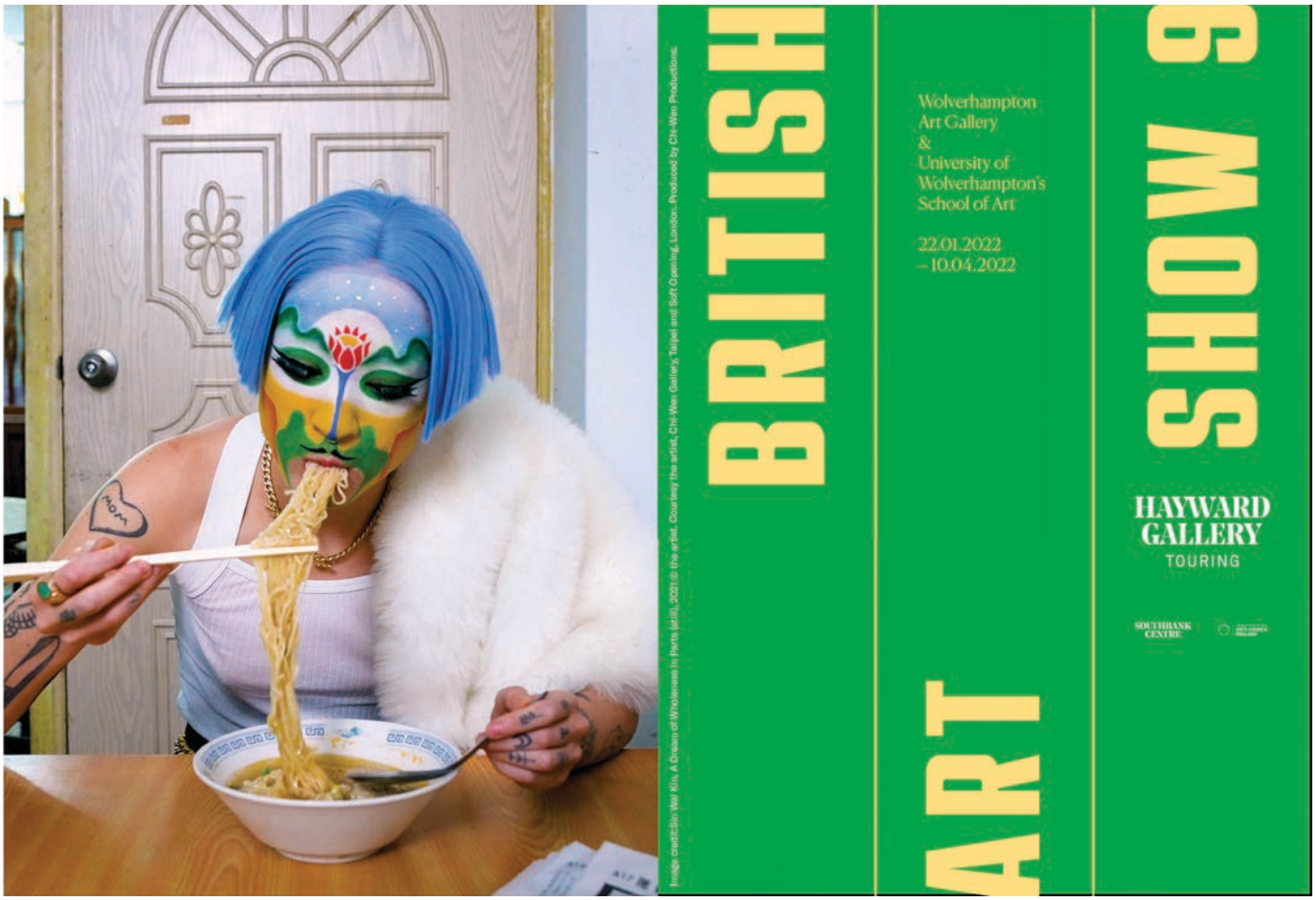
Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 22 May

Taken over the course of more than 50 years, the photographs of the late Maganbhai Patel - more widely known as Masterji - provide a unique and evocative record of the people who migrated to the Midlands and made the region their home.

Masterji arrived in Coventry in 1951 and became known as the city's first Indian photographer. Two years before his death - in 2016 and at the grand old age of 94 - he received his first solo exhibition as part of Coventry's bid to become UK City of Culture.

This follow-up show, presenting the most comprehensive survey of Masterji's work to date, features portraits taken across his long and distinguished career.

Oral-history interviews with members of the pioneering generation of South Asians in Coventry are also included. Presented alongside Masterji's images, the interviews provide an insight into the experiences and challenges faced by many migrants coming to the UK.





Epiphania Visuals: When Speech is Forced Down, Art Must Speak

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Sun 3 April

The topical subject of gender identities is explored in this thought-provoking group exhibition by artists and activists from Bangladesh.
The show also contemplates queer experiences through art, film, painting and craft.
The featured artists have chosen to remain anonymous in order to protect their identities - same-sex relationships are illegal in Bangladesh, and the British colonial Sodomy Law can still be applied, meaning that sexual and gender diversity are punishable under the criminal code.
The exhibition has been curated by Dipa Mahbuba Yasmin, the founder of Epiphania Visuals Gallery & Archive, Bangladesh's first-ever queer art gallery.

Titanic: Honour And Glory

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, until Sun 1 May



Visitors to this national touring exhibition will find themselves coming face-to-face with one of the most famous and tragic events in 20th-century British history.
The Titanic was a passenger liner that sank in the North Atlantic Ocean on 15 April 1912 during its maiden voyage.
Honour & Glory features a diverse range of very rare artefacts from the vessel, as well as examples of the liner's luxurious interior fittings.
Props and costumes from the 1997 James Cameron film, Titanic, are also included.

Karen McLean: Ar'n't I A Woman!

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 5 June

Birmingham-based Trinidadian artist Karen McLean's artwork explores themes including displacement, identity, capitalism, ethics, ideologies, modernism and globalisation.
Her brand-new show focuses on and reflects her interest in the roles of women in the folklore and material cultures of Caribbean colonial history and its close relationship with slavery.
"Women in the Caribbean are doing far better than men when it comes to educational achievements and careers," Karen explained recently. "A large percentage of these women are the descendants of slaves, and I wanted to celebrate them and their success in overcoming years of oppression. The achievements of slave women have been neglected, so it's important to give them a voice."

Be Yourself; Everyone Else Is Already Taken

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Sun 26 June



Dubbed 'England's most eccentric dresser' by Vogue, Daniel Lismore is a walking, 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 that includes 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.
"Come to the show with an open mind," says Daniel. "You might be surprised. You might hate it, but, equally, you might love it.
"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!"



FREE FOR ALL

A three-day online festival will this month celebrate hundreds of artists who have come together to create a kaleidoscope of work through groundbreaking international project Transforming Narratives...

by Diane Parkes

Established in 2018, the Transforming Narratives project sees art practitioners from Birmingham, Pakistan and Bangladesh come together to collaborate, research and develop new work. Managed by Birmingham-based Culture Central, the initiative aims to create and build relationships which can continue into the future.

After four years of commissioning, encouraging and programming conversations and art projects, Transforming Narratives is this month holding a celebratory Mela and Symposium (from the 19th to the 21st), which is free to attend and open to all.

The Mela will live-stream performance through Transforming Narratives' Facebook and YouTube channels and the Facebook page of the British Council.

The Symposium will feature exploration and debates highlighting artistic practice and its development over the past four years thanks to the input of Transforming Narratives.

A third strand, Alaap, will see an online discussion carried on through relay, with each speaker 'passing the baton' to the next participant to ensure a continuous conversation.

In addition, Transforming Narratives will be commissioning new work as part of the festival - some of which will be showcased to audiences.

"The festival will be looking back over four years," says Creative Producer Sadia Rahman. "In this time, Transforming Narratives has been able to work with more than 500 people. We are hoping to have a really good representative sample from across the board, not just in terms of locational perspective but also from a gender perspective and different economic classes.

"There is so much variation in Birmingham, as well as in Pakistan and Bangladesh. We are hoping to get as much of a spread and variety as we can, to represent the reality of the places and the lived experiences of the artists, as well as the work that Transforming Narratives has done and the influence it has."

Supported by Arts Council England and delivered in collaboration with the British Council and 10 Birmingham-based organisations, Transforming Narratives was initially envisaged as a three-year project but was then extended by a year. It has brought together artists in a huge range of productions, including music, film, photography, poetry, written word, performance, spoken word, theatre, dance, visual art, digital and song. It has also encouraged discussion around the similarities and the differences between art forms and practice across diverse countries and heritage backgrounds.

Transforming Narratives Project Director Sophina Jagot explains: "The vision for Transforming Narratives was about creative and cultural exchange between Birmingham, Bangladesh and Pakistan for the mutual benefit of all those places, looking at contemporary narratives through a variety of art forms. What we were doing was completely new - the idea of connecting all of those places and doing international work in this way, and particularly focusing on Pakistan, Bangladesh and Birmingham, hadn't been done before."

The project has sown many seeds in terms of collaboration and new ways of working which are expected to continue to bear fruit in the coming years.

"What we have achieved is really the beginning of those creative and cultural connections," says Sophina. "During the launch in 2019 we had some incredible events, including the Sigh Of The Musafir theatre production, delivered by Kalaboration Arts, which featured artists in Pakistan and Birmingham, including acclaimed Pakistani folk singer Arif Lohar. There was also Bangladesh To Birmingham, an immersive dining experience run by Soul City Arts that brought the sights, smells and flavours of Bangladesh to the Birmingham Rep, where guests enjoyed a three-course meal surrounded by film projections and live music.

"The pandemic completely shifted everything away from artists visiting each other to create work, but we then enabled 17 projects to take place through our digital collaborative grants. They were small-scale projects with grants of £4,000, and what came out of that was so incredible. More than 100 artists took part, and the variety of the work and collaborations that happened were fantastic. These included Baasi News, which looked at newspapers that are used for wrapping food and the movement of news during that time. And then there was I Don't Know You, You Don't Know Me, in which Shehzad Chowdhury, artist and independent curator in Bangladesh, and Birmingham-based Mahtab Hussain, a British social commentary artist, were writing to each other about their experiences at that time. They hadn't met but they created some really beautiful personal letters and artistic responses between each other."

An important facet of Transforming Narratives has been its Cultural Leadership Programme, which invited 24 creative and cultural practitioners from Birmingham, Pakistan and Bangladesh to participate in a tailor-made online leadership initiative. Their ongoing work will be part of the legacy of the project.

The networking goes far beyond the initial programmes, as Sadia explains: "There are also projects that have been supported by Transforming Narratives which have subsequently been seen by other arts organisations in the UK and elsewhere who have then invited further expansion of those projects.

"We may not be able to map everything in the festival because so much work has been created and has developed in these four years. But it's exciting to work on a project which reflects back so much fascinating work."

The Transforming Narratives team are currently exploring ways for the project to continue. In the meantime they are keen to invite as many people as possible to take part in or view the celebration.

"The Mela and Symposium will be a culmination of all of the different elements of Transforming Narratives," says Sophina. "We started with a moment at the launch in 2019, and this is our reveal moment at the culmination of the project. This is our chance to showcase some of the learning, some of the partnerships and some of the artistic work that has been created to a wider audience."

Transforming Narratives Mela and Symposium takes place online from Sat 19 to Mon 21 March. Although free to attend, places for the full festival need to be booked in advance.
For more information and to secure your place, visit transformingnarratives.com

Image from Dhaka Say Karachi, led by Ahsan Bari of Pakistan in collaboration with Sheikh Dina of Bangladesh.

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YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships 2022

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Wed 16 - Sun 20 March

With 155 matches and more than 50 hours of badminton to enjoy, the 2022 YONEX All England Open Championship is serving up five days of top-class action this month.

The greatest badminton players in the world are taking part in the tournament, including Spain's Carolina Marin. An Olympic and three-time world champion, Carolina is also a former All England title holder and will be making her comeback after injury.

Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen (Denmark) and Kento Momota (Japan) both return in the men's singles, whilst in the mixed doubles, top-ranked Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai (Thailand) will be looking to add to their ever-growing list of titles.



PJ Masks

National SEA LIFE Birmingham, until Sun 13 March

SEA LIFE Birmingham has been thrown into chaos, with the Night-Time Baddies from kids' TV series PJ Masks causing all manner of overnight marine mayhem.

Thankfully the series' resident superheroes, Catboy, Owlette and Gekko, are on hand to help restore a sense of peace and tranquility to the aquarium - but they need your help!... Once the adventure is over, visitors will be presented with a special sticker to thank them for their heroic efforts.

Practical Classics Classic Car & Restoration Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 18 - Sun 20 March

Opening the classic car season for 2022, the Practical Classics Classic Car & Restoration Show brings together all aspects of classic motoring. The event is expected to attract somewhere in the region of 30,000 visitors across its three days.

Highlights include live restoration projects, pristine classics, and the chance for enthusiasts to check out 150 car clubs.



MegaCon Live & Kidtropolis

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 26 & Sun 27 March

MegaCon Live is a brand-new show from the co-founder of the well-established MCM Comic Con.

Blending pop culture with a wide range of feature zones - including a steampunk emporium and a cosplay masquerade - the show also boasts special guest appearances by, among others, Pokemon's Sarah Natochenny and Harry Potter's David Bradley.

Young children (ages four to 10) are catered for by Kidtropolis - a 'mega zone' featuring a 200ft-long inflatable assault course and a synthetic ice skating rink.



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National Homebuilding & Renovating Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 March

Those looking to make improvements to their home in 2022 can gain plenty of inspiration at this month's National Homebuilding & Renovating Show.

The four-day event's attractions include an array of theatre presentations, masterclasses and seminars, an advice centre in which to pick the brains of industry experts, and the chance to find out more about the design, planning & construction process via an Ask the Architect consultation.

Contributing experts this year include: Michael Holmes and Jason Orme (property); David Hilton (renewables); Allan Corfield (design); Bob Branscombe (building); and Sally Tagg (planning).



Shakespeare Week Celebrations

Shakespeare Family Homes, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 26 & Sun 27 March

Celebrating Shakespeare's life, work and times, Shakespeare Family Homes is hosting a weekend of family fun in Stratford-upon-Avon this month.

Pick up a sword and hone your stage-combat skills at Shakespeare's Birthplace, play your part in an interactive retelling of The Tempest at Shakespeare's New Place, or learn how to juggle and plate-spin by joining the circus at Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

Mini Museum Engineers Special: British Science Week

Coventry Transport Museum, Tues 15 - Thurs 17 March

Designed for children aged between two and five (but all ages are welcome), Mini Museum Engineers sessions encourage little ones not only to use their imagination but also to develop early engineering and problem-solving skills.

This three-day special provides an open-ended play environment and celebrates British Science Week's theme of Growth.



Young Driver: Fire Engine Experience

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Sat 19 March

The British Motor Museum has here teamed up with the UK's largest under-17 driving school, Young Driver, to provide youngsters with the chance to enjoy a 20-minute driving experience in a real Dennis fire engine, complete with lights and sirens.

In their heyday, the bright red Dennis trucks were used by more than 50% of all UK fire services. They are often hailed by those who drove them as 'the finest fire-fighting appliances ever produced'.



International Living History Festival

9 & 10 April 2022

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Avoncroft Museum





Crufts

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 March

Organised by The Kennel Club, the world's biggest dog show attracts 160,000 people across its four days and celebrates every aspect of the role that dogs play in our lives.

With more than 20,000 dogs competing for the world class title of Crufts Best In Show, the long-established event also features displays, competitions, a Discover Dogs area and 550-plus trade stands selling all manner of new products for you and your four-legged friend(s) to enjoy.



Thomas & Friends Weekends

Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire, weekends between Sat 5 - Sun 20 March

Take a trip to the Island of Sodor this month to meet Thomas and his locomotive pals. As well as featuring more than 25 rides and attractions, Drayton Manor's Thomas Land also provides youngsters with the chance to meet & greet Sodor residents and take part in interactive singalong shows throughout the day.

Despite the park's thrill rides being closed during these weekends, visitors can still explore the 15-acre zoo and enjoy the 4D cinema, featuring Thomas & Friends Bubbling Boilers.

The Creative Craft Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 March

The Creative Craft Show is back - and not a moment too soon as far as its legion of fans is concerned!

Enthusiasts can stock up on supplies for their next craft project, access advice from industry experts and try something new in the Creative Den workshops.

A ticket for Creative Craft will also provide entry into sister shows Fashion & Embroidery and Sewing For Pleasure, both of which are running at the venue across the same dates.



Planet Earth II Live in Concert

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Sat 26 March

Hosted by science & natural history TV presenter Liz Bonnin, Planet Earth II Live features specially selected footage shown in 4K ultra high-definition on a gigantic LED screen. The footage is accompanied by behind-the-scenes insights from Mike Gunton, the executive producer of the award-winning BBC television series.

The show also features the City Of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra performing Planet Earth II's remarkable music, composed by the Oscar-winning Hans Zimmer.



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thelist

Your week-by-week listings guide
March 2022



Chicago The Musical at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent - Mon 14 - Sat 19 March

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

What's On

Tues 1 - Sun 6 March



Larry Dean at Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
Wed 2 March

Mon 7 to Sun 13 March



Aled Jones at Lichfield Cathedral
Tues 8 March

Mon 14 to Sun 20 March



Revenge at Tamworth Assembly Rooms
Thurs 17 - Fri 18 March

Mon 21 to Thurs 31 March



Nothing Happens (Twice) at Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton
Sat 26 March



Elkie Brooks - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Gigs

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Tues 1 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

ADAM ANT Tues 1 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NATURALLY 7 Wed 2 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

TOM OLLENDORFF QUARTET FEATURING BEN WENDEL Wed 2 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

KNIGHT & SPIERS Wed 2 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TONY VISCONTI & WOODY WOODMANSEY PRESENT THE BEST OF BOWIE Wed 2 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

SMITH/KOTZEN + THE DUST CODA Thurs 3 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT - TINA TURNER TRIBUTE Thurs 3 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CURVED AIR + GARY HOPKINS + WOLF APPLE Thurs 3 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

GET CAPE. WEAR CAPE. FLY + OLI NG + DOM MORGAN + BLAB Thurs 3 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DAVE KELLY & BOB HALL WITH HILARY BLYTHE Thurs 3 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

MICHAEL ENGLISH Thurs 3 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BAD TOUCH Fri 4 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE JAM'D Fri 4 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

BIG 'O' AND THE TRAVELLING WILBURYS Fri 4 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THE TAKE THAT EXPERIENCE Fri 4 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

GLAM 45 + SWEET 45 Fri 4 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SOUL TRAIN Fri 4 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE BOB DYLAN STORY Fri 4 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ELKIE BROOKS Fri 4 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DIRTY ROCKIN' SCOUNDRELS Fri 4 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

PENNY FAMOUS + LF Fri 4 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK - THE ROD STEWART STORY Fri 4 Mar, The Place, Telford

PSYCHO DOLLZ + NAKED SUNDAY Fri 4 Mar, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

CLOUDBUSTING - KATE BUSH TRIBUTE Fri 4 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

GEORGE MICHAEL + WHITNEY HOUSTON TRIBUTES Fri 4 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

RISE-UP SHOWCASE Fri 4 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SATINDER SARTAAJ Fri 4 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TOMMY EMMANUEL Fri 4 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Fri 4 - Sat 5 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

BOOTLEG ABBA + BEE GEES FEVER Sat 5 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

MAET LIVE + THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS Sat 5 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

ROBB JOHNSON + JESS SILK Sat 5 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

FOLK THE SYSTEM Sat 5 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

EGO FRIENDLY Sat 5 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

TREE HOUSE FIRE Sat 5 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

EXTC Sat 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

VICKY JACKSON & BAND - PINK TRIBUTE Sat 5 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

TEXAS Sat 5 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LOVE DISTRACTION - HUMAN LEAGUE TRIBUTE Sun 6 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

JACQUI DANKWORTH Sun 6 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

STATUS QUO Sun 6 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Classical Music

CBSO 2021/22: TCHAIKOVSKY & STRAVINSKY Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) and Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, Wed 2 - Thurs 3 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

Comedy

TOM HOUGHTON Tues 1 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LARRY DEAN Wed 2 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMICS TBC Thurs 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SCUMMY MUMMIES Thurs 3 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

JASON MANFORD Thurs 3 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MICHAEL FABBRI, IVO GRAHAM, ERIC RUSHTON & ANDY WHITE Thurs 3 Mar, The George Hotel, Lichfield

SAM AVERY, PETER BRUSH, PATRICK DRAPER & SULLY O'SULLIVAN Thurs 3 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

AURIE STYLA Fri 4 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DARA Ó BRIAIN Fri 4 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

GAVIN WEBSTER, TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, AIDEEN MCQUEEN & ALUN COCHRANE Fri 4 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-on-Trent

MATT PRICE, MARTIN MOR, MAISE ADAM & COMIC TBC Fri 4 - Sat 5 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CLINTON BAPTISTE, THE GOOD KIDS, STEVE HUGHES & JO ENRIGHT Sat 5 Mar, Bilston Town Hall

SORIN PÂRCĂLAB, CRISTI POPESCO AND SERGIU MIRICĂ Sun 6 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BOBBY DAVRO Sun 6 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

DOM JOLY Sun 6 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JOEL DOMMETT Sun 6 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



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

DEAD GOOD Vamos Theatre celebrate friendship and the importance of living every day to the full... Mon 28 Feb - Tues 1 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FATAL ATTRACTION Kym Marsh takes on the lead role of 'bunny boiler' Alex Forrest in a brand-new stage version of the award-winning film, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Mar, The Alexandra, B'ham

RENT Unity Productions present an amateur staging of Jonathan Larson's award-winning musical, Wed 2 - Fri 4 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall Theatre

YOURS SINCERELY Storytelling and lipsync cabaret collide in this queer coming-of-age comedy about the complications of 21st-century communication, Wed 2 - Sat 5 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

DISNEY'S BEAUTY & THE BEAST X Factor winner Sam Bailey stars as Mrs Potts in a reimagined production of Disney's 'tale as old as time', Thurs 3 - Sat 26 March, Birmingham Hippodrome

CARMEN Russian State Opera present Bizet's tale of passion, jealousy and violence, Fri 4 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PSYCHIC SALLY: 10 YEARS AND COUNTING New show promising to bring mediumship into the 21st century, Fri 4 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

BUZZING Warm and witty solo play which made a sparkling Edinburgh Festival debut in 2019 and now tours with a specially extended version, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

PHONEY FOOLS AND HORSES Tribute to the legendary TV series, starring

award-winning comedy impressionist & Britain's Got Talent star Drew Cameron, Sat 5 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

WATSON: THE FINAL PROBLEM Tim Marriott (TV's Brittas Empire) stars in a tale of long-buried secrets, betrayal and death... Sat 5 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Russian State Opera presents its version of Puccini's compelling tale of an innocent love crushed between two cultures, Sat 5 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



DEAD GOOD Vamos Theatre celebrate friendship and the importance of living every day to the full... Sat 5 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY Good-hearted romp through select moments of the hit TV show, Sun 6 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Kids Shows

THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN Musical adaptation of the bestselling children's book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, Sat 5 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS Immersion Theatre present an interactive show for children, based on Graham Greene's much-loved riverside tale, Sat 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA Family show packed with magic, singalong songs and clumsy chaos. Based on Judith Kerr's much-loved book, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

JURASSIC LIVE Featuring pyrotechnic effects, strobe lighting and fully functioning puppetry, Sat 5 Mar - Sun 3 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

DICK & ANGEL: DARE TO DO IT The stars of Channel Four hit Escape To The Chateau share their story, Thurs 3 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

ROMEO & JULIET Presented by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Tues 1 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE NUTCRACKER Presented by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Wed 2 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ANTON & ERIN SHOWTIME 'Ballroom's favourite couple' pay tribute to some of the greatest entertainment icons of all time, Sat 5 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

GIOVANNI PERNICE: THIS IS ME Show paying homage to the music and dances that have inspired Giovanni's career, Sat 5 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ANTON & ERIN SHOWTIME 'Ballroom's favourite couple' pay tribute to some of the greatest entertainment icons of all time, Sun 6 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



Events

PJ MASKS The PJ Masks are diving into National SEA LIFE Birmingham for an aquarium-wide adventure, until Sun 13 March, National SEA LIFE Birmingham

FREDDO'S CIRCUS STAGE SHOW Freddo the Frog and Richie Ringmaster keep families entertained in the big top, until Sun 27 March, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

EXPLORE SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill at your leisure, without a guided tour, Sat 5 March, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

IRONBRIDGE EARLY BIRDS Once a month Enginuity opens early for families who would benefit from visiting at a quieter time, Sat 5 March, Enginuity, Ironbridge, Shropshire

THOMAS & FRIENDS WEEKENDS Jam-packed family day out at Thomasland, Sat 5 - Sun 6 March, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffs



Dead Good

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, until 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.





Tony Hadley - Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Gigs

SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR Mon 7 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TRASH BOAT Tues 8 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

DREAM EVIL Wed 9 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

EDDIE & THE WOLVES + ALEXA DE STRANGE Wed 9 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

NASHVILLE SOUNDS IN THE ROUND Wed 9 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GUN Thurs 10 Mar, KK Steel Mill, W'hampton

COULD IT BE BEEGEES Thurs 10 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

ROMEO'S DAUGHTER + SWEET CRISIS + BLACK ROZE Thurs 10 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THE PAT MCMANUS BAND Thurs 10 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

YOU WIN AGAIN - BEE GEES TRIBUTE Thurs 10 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

BLACK HEART ANGELS Fri 11 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SKABURST Fri 11 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR Fri 11 Mar, The Place, Telford

SVALBARD + MOUNTAIN CALLER Fri 11 Mar, KK Steel Mill, W'hampton

SICK JOY Fri 11 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

LINDISFARNE Fri 11 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

STARS OF THE WEST END - KERRY ELLIS & LOUISE DEARMAN Fri 11 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

HISTORY OF ROCK Fri 11 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

NIVARNA UK Fri 11 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DIRTY DC Fri 11 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE BILLY JOEL ALBUMS SHOW Fri 11 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

TOM MORGAN + MAGNALIUM + HOLLY ROLFE + PLASTIC FICTION + CERYS CURTIS Fri 11 Mar, The Hub at St Marys, Lichfield

THE EASTCOAST BOYS - FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS TRIBUTE Fri 11 Mar, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

GABRIELLA LIANDU Fri 11 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PAUL CARRACK Fri 11 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Fri 11 - Sat 12 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

THE DARKSIDE OF PINK FLOYD Sat 12 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

ROMEOS DAUGHTER + SWEET CRISIS Sat 12 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ABSOLUTE BOWIE Sat 12 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DARK SIDE OF THE WALL - PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE Sat 12 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

SUPREME QUEEN Sat 12 Mar, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

ULTIMATE R'N'B Sat 12 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BRANDON ALLEN - THE STANLEY TURRENTINE PROJECT Sat 12 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

TOUCH TOO MUCH Sat 12 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

WAYNE MARTIN Sat 12 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

MICHAEL STARRING BEN - MICHAEL JACKSON TRIBUTE Sat 12 Mar, The Place, Telford

THE CARPENTERS STORY Sun 13 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FAUSTUS Sun 13 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

KRIS BARRAS BAND Sun 13 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

FRANK CARDUCCI'S FANTASTIC SQUAD + THE EMERALD DAWN Sun 13 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

SUNSCREAM Sun 13 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TONY HADLEY Sun 13 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

TANGERINE DREAM Sun 13 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

Classical Music

ALED JONES Tues 8 Mar, Lichfield Cathedral



CBSO 2021/22: GRIEG & SIBELIUS Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) and Clare Hammond (piano). Programme includes works by Nielsen, Grieg and Sibelius, Wed 9 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TENORS UNLIMITED: THAT'S AMORE! Fri 11 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE MERMES EXPERIMENT Featuring Anne Denholm (harp), Oliver Pashley (clarinet), Marianne Schofield (double bass) & Heloise Werner (soprano), Fri 11 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

CBSO 2021/22: NOTELETS: JAZZ IN THE JUNGLE TRILOGY Featuring Amy Thomas (presenter), CBSO mixed ensemble and Sarah Butt (BSL interpreter), Fri 11 - Sat 12 March, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

Comedy

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Mon 7 Mar, The Place, Telford

LARRY DEAN Tues 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SUKH OJLA Tues 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FLO & JOAN Tues 8 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall & Wed 9 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, TOM LUCY & ROSIE JONES Thurs 10 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

GLENN WOOL Thurs 10 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

ANDY ZALTZMAN Fri 11 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT FORDE Fri 11 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RICH HALL Fri 11 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TROY HAWKE Fri 11 Mar, Whitchurch Civic Hall, North Shropshire

ABELARD GIZA Fri 11 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

PAUL THORNE, TOM LUCY, ROSIE JONES & COMIC TBC Fri 11 - Sat 12 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

IAIN STIRLING Sat 12 Mar, Bilston Town Hall

GARY POWNDLAND & FRIENDS Sat 12 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JIMMY CARR Sat 12 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

MICK MILLER, NIPPER THOMAS & WAYNE BEESE Sat 12 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

Theatre

WE WILL ROCK YOU Smash-hit musical extravaganza featuring Queen's greatest hits, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE LION, THE WITCH & THE WARDROBE Step into the magical land of Narnia in this critically acclaimed production starring Samantha Womack as the White Witch, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE DA VINCI CODE Nigel Harman and Danny John-Jules star in the stage adaptation of Dan Brown's bestselling novel, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HAIRSPRAY Amateur staging presented by Curtain Call Theatre, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MACBETH All & Sundry present Shakespeare's bloody tale, Wed 9 - Sat 12 Mar, Crescent Theatre, B'ham

BADASS MEDUSA #METOO Bold



Troy Hawke - Whitchurch Civic Hall

retelling of Medusa's story 'through collective rage and a feminist queer gaze', Thurs 10 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

NO ENTRY! Lorna Meehan's one-woman show, incorporating 'verbatim stories, poetry, and a little vagi-oke', Thurs 10 - Fri 11 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

FROZEN LIGHT PRESENTS 2065 A futuristic sensory extravaganza for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities, Thurs 10 - Fri 11 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

FORGET ME NOT: THE ALZHEIMER'S WHODUNNIT Multi-award-winning murder-mystery, with one performer playing all 15 characters, Fri 11 Mar, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

MARVELLOUS Brand-new play celebrating the life and adventures of Staffordshire hero Neil Baldwin, Fri 11 Mar - Sat 9 Apr, New Vic Theatre, Staffordshire

JABS Three-actor show blending 'affectionate laughs, a few gentle moments of poignancy, a smattering of songs and a touch of audience participation', Fri 11 Mar, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

BUMPER BLYTON Improvised parody chock full of innuendo and lashings of puns, presented in the style of famous children's author Enid Blyton... Sat 12 Mar, Chapel Lawn Village Hall, South Shropshire

FRIENDS - THE MUSICAL PARODY Good-hearted romp through select moments of the hit TV show, Sat 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JABS Three-actor show blending 'affectionate laughs, a few gentle moments of poignancy, a smattering of songs and a touch of audience participation', Sat 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



YES YES UCS! Townsend Theatre Productions present a new play celebrating solidarity and collective resistance, Sun 13 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Entertainment

TONY STOCKWELL: PSYCHIC MEDIUM Mon 7 Mar, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF VARIETY Starring comedian Duggie Brown, with live music from Tammy Jones, Tues 8 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

JAMES MARTIN: LIVE Featuring live demonstrations, cooking tasks and special guest spots, Tues 8 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING OF MEDIUMSHIP WITH TONY STOCKWELL Wed 9 Mar, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic fusion of music and comedy, taking audiences on a rollercoaster ride through the golden age of rock'n'roll, Thurs 10 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CIRCUS OF HORRORS An immersive rollercoaster ride of 'unbelievable, bizarre and beautiful acts', Fri 11 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Kids Shows

ZOG AND THE FLYING DOCTORS Theatre for younger audiences based on Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's bestselling children's book, Tues 8 - Wed 9 Mar, The Place, Telford

JABALA & THE JINN The story of a little girl's encounter with a very cheeky Jinn, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

JUSTIN LIVE All-singing, all-dancing, slapstick-filled extravaganza for children, hosted by Cbeebies star Justin Fletcher, Sun 13 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TOP SECRET - THE MAGIC OF SCIENCE! A show aiming to inspire, educate and entertain, Sun 13 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE HUG Long Nose Puppets present an interactive theatre experience for younger audiences, based on Eoin McLaughlin and Polly Dunbar's book, Sat 13 Mar, The Hub, Lichfield

Dance

GIOVANNI PERNICE: THIS IS ME Show paying homage to the music and dances that have inspired Giovanni's career, Mon 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring an all-star cast of singers and performers, accompanied by the Keltic Storm band and the world champion Shevlin Twins Irish dancers, Thurs 10 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Events

CRUFTS Famous annual dog show organised by the Kennel Club, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 March, NEC, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME LECTURE: FINDING THE WAY - BOMBER COMMAND'S USE OF RADIO NAVIGATIONS AIDS, 1941-1945 RAF Museum Curator Ewen Cameron discusses Bomber Command's use of radio navigations aids during the Second World War, Fri 11 March, RAF Museum, Cosford

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 views that inspired JRR Tolkien, Fri 11 - Sat 12 March, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

THOMAS & FRIENDS WEEKENDS Jam-packed family day out at Thomasland, Sat 12 - Sun 13 March, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffs



James Martin: Live - Symphony Hall, Birmingham





Gin Annie - The Robin, Bilston

Gigs

M HUNCHO Mon 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BBNO$ + LENTRA Mon 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CAMILLA GEORGE Tues 15 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ORLANDO WEEKS Tues 15 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

REMI HARRIS Wed 16 Mar, Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield



DEMI MARRINER Wed 16 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AMBER MARK Wed 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DE LA SOUL Wed 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BROS LANDRETH + LEITH ROSS Wed 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PAT MCMANUS BAND Thurs 17 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

GUN Thurs 17 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE EASTCOAST BOYS - FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS TRIBUTE Thurs 17 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BARBARA DICKSON Thurs 17 Mar, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS + WOUNDEDSPIRIT Thurs 17 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

DAMN THE WEATHER Thurs 17 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE SHAMROCK TENORS Thurs 17 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE SKINNER BROTHERS + THE GULPS + JUPITER'S BEARD Fri 18 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

GIN ANNIE Fri 18 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

ROCK FOR HEROES Fri 18 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

CRYBABY & THE HOOCHIE COOCHIE BOYS + GOODFELLAS Fri 18 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS Fri 18 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SHOWADDYWADDY Fri 18 Mar, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

FOUR CROOKS Fri 18 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

CANTALOOP Fri 18 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HARLEY KIMBRO LEWIS Fri 18 Mar, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

PHIL BEER BAND Fri 18 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN Fri 18 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

CHVRCHES Fri 18 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

ALABAMA 3 Fri 18 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

GENESIS VISIBLE TOUCH Fri 18 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Fri 18 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE MOOCHERS + ULTIMATE MADNEZZ Sat 19 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

SOUZA + VALEUR Sat 19 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SEX PISTOLS EXPOSE Sat 19 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

JAMES MORRISON Sat 19 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

UK BJORN - ABBA TRIBUTE Sat 19 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

PEDLER & RUSSELL Sat 19 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE WORDS Sat 19 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE ENDINGS Sat 19 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

GO WEST Sat 19 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JAMES ARTHUR Sat 19 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

UNTO OTHERS + ZETRA Sat 19 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE ALARM Sat 19 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

PEGGY SEEGER & CALUM MACCOLL Sun 20 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE BLOW MONKYS Sun 20 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

ENOLA GRAY Sun 20 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

TEXAS Sun 20 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

HUE AND CRY Sun 20 Mar, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

BLACK VOICES PRESENT ARETHA'S ANTHEMS Sun 20 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE ACES Sun 20 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by J.S.Bach, Whitlock, S.Karg-Elert and Durufle, Mon 14 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON PLAYS SHOSTAKOVICH Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) and Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello). Programme includes works by Weinberg and Shostakovich, Wed 16 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PHOENIX SINGERS: BACH'S ST MATTHEW PASSION Sat 19 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

DI XIAO PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Clementi, Mozart, Grieg, William Mason, Yi Qiang Sun, Christian Sinding, Josef Suk, Tchaikovsky, Medtner, Mendelssohn & John Ireland, Sat 19 Mar, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

KARL JENKINS IN CONCERT Sir Karl Jenkins conducts a selection of his most popular works, Sun 20 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

NATHAN CATON Wed 16 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, SARAH KEYWORTH & COMICS TBC Thurs 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY Thurs 17 Mar, The Place, Telford

CHRIS RAMSEY Thurs 17 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

ESHAAN AKBAR Fri 18 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAT BOYCE Fri 18 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH KEYWORTH, MARC JENNINGS & ELLY SHAW Fri 18 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH KEYWORTH, MARC JENNINGS & COMIC TBC Sat 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM ROWE Sat 19 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DYLAN MORAN Sat 19 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

TROY HAWKE Sat 19 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ALAN CARR Sun 20 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Theatre

CHICAGO THE MUSICAL Russell Watson, Faye Brookes, Sheila Ferguson & Djalenga Scott star in Kander & Ebb's tale of murder, greed, corruption, adultery and treachery, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

YES YES UCS! Townsend Theatre Productions presents a new play celebrating solidarity and collective resistance, Tues 15 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Rebecca Wheatley, Nicki French & Susie Fenwick star in a musical focusing on the 'joys' of the menopause, Tues 15 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NAUGHTY BOY (& THE COMEDIAN) Hard-hitting one-man play tackling the subjects of politics, mental health, nature nurture, loyalty and love, Tues 15 - Wed 16 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE OSMONDS MUSICAL The official true story of the five brothers from Utah who were pushed into the spotlight as children and went on to become a global pop sensation, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ELLEN KENT'S TOSCA Puccini's explosion of love & treachery. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Wed 16 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

PLATFORM 4: TRIFFIDS! A gig theatre adventure in music, sound and pictures that takes the audience deep into John Wyndham's classic cold war novel, The Day Of The Triffids, Wed 16 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham



Chicago The Musical - Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WOMEN OF TROY Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Theatre Company present a violent and radical new version of Euripides' classic tragedy, Wed 16 - Sat 19 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

ALL OF ME Caroline Horton's intimate and absurd exploration of the experiences of wanting to live, wanting to die and what can happen if we sit together with the dark, Thurs 17 Mar, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

ELLEN KENT'S CARMEN Bizet's opera of passion, sexual jealousy, death and unforgettable arias, Thurs 17 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

REVENGE Robin Hawdon's cat-and-mouse thriller concerning an ambitious MP and business tycoon... Thurs 17 - Fri 18 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms



AFTER BIRTH A dark new comedy rooted in the recovery stories of women who experienced psychosis after the birth of their babies, Fri 18 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

BEAN SPILLERS: AN IMPROVISED MUSICAL Brand-new improvised musical based on gossip from the audience, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SLEEPING WITH BEAUTY Adult panto starring Ben Ryan-Davies (Hollyoaks & Waterloo Road) as the prince and comic Liam Mellor as Jangles, Sat 19 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

CRIMES CAMERA ACTION New Old Friends present a fast-paced madcap mystery set in Golden Age Hollywood, Sat 19 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DISNEY'S HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL Amateur staging presented by Burton High School, Sat 19 Mar, The Brewhouse, Burton-upon-Trent

Entertainment

DITA VON TEESE: GLAMONATRIX Join the 'International Queen of Burlesque' for an evening of comedy and sophisticated strip tease, Mon 14 - Tues 15 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

TOM BRACE: EMBRACE THE IMPOSSIBLE Fusion of comedy and magic, Fri 18 Mar, The Place, Telford

Kids Shows

GANGSTA GRANNY David Walliams' much-loved children's story, presented by Birmingham Stage Company, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TREASURE ISLAND Le Navet Bete and Barbican Theatre present a swashbuckling comedy for all the family, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ART WITH HEART: STAN 'Powerful and poignant' new theatre piece for younger audiences, celebrating the power of play, the joy of communication and the positive force of friendship, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Dance

SQUIDGE Interactive dance performance that takes a lighthearted look at our sense of touch and how it influences our everyday lives, Sat 19 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Events

PLANETARIUM LATES: EQUINOX 360 PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE Live one-man performance projected in 360 degrees, Thurs 17 Mar, Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW Featuring knitting, cross stitch, paper crafting, jewellery & dressmaking, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

FASHION & EMBROIDERY Including exclusive, never-before-seen features, and contributions from industry experts, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

SEWING FOR PLEASURE Featuring the latest stitching supplies and plenty of ideas to inspire, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 Mar, 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 views that inspired JRR Tolkien, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Mar, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

PRACTICAL CLASSICS CLASSIC CAR & RESTORATION SHOW Featuring live restoration projects, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

MINIATURA - THE DOLLS HOUSE SHOW One of the largest and best-loved events of its kind in the world, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

THE NATIONAL OUTDOOR EXPO A 'utopia for outdoor enthusiasts', providing 'all the inspiration, kit, tech, nutrition and advice needed to get outside and get active'. Ben Fogle, James Cracknell & Julia Bradbury feature amongst the event's guest speakers, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Mar, NEC, Birmingham



Ben Fogle at The National Outdoor Expo - NEC, Birmingham

THOMAS & FRIENDS WEEKENDS Jam-packed family day out at Thomasland, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffs

ORIGINS OF MIDDLE-EARTH: J.R.R. 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 Mar, Sarehole Mill, B'ham

AGBO STAGES RALLY Featuring 75 cars, Sun 20 Mar, Weston Park, Shropshire





Jade Bird - O2 Institute, Birmingham

Gigs

THE VINTAGE CARAVAN Mon 21 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

BISHOP NEHRU Mon 21 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

IN FLAMES + VEXED + DEFECTS Mon 21 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Mon 21 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

JADE BIRD Mon 21 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

IN FLAMES Tues 22 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

PEGGY SEEGER AND CALUM MACCOLL Tues 22 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FATHERSON Tues 22 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

NITIN SAWHNEY Tues 22 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

CATE LE BON Wed 23 Mar, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

ASWAD Wed 23 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

SIMON MCBRIDE TRIO Thurs 24 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

PASADENA ROOF ORCHESTRA Thurs 24 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

FOO FIGHTERS GB Thurs 24 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Thurs 24 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

CLOSE TO YOU - TRIBUTE TO THE CARPENTERS Thurs 24 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THE MOUSE OUTFIT Thurs 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHARLIE SIMPSON Thurs 24 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Thurs 24 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

JOE JACKSON Thurs 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THERAPY? Fri 25 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

STILLMARILLION Fri 25 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

WAYWARD SONS & ANCHOR LANE Fri 25 Mar, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

MADE IN TENNESSEE Fri 25 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

MAGIC OF MOTOWN Fri 25 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Fri 25 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

JEFF WAYNE'S THE WAR OF THE WORLDS Thurs 24 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE GUNS N ROSES EXPERIENCE Fri 25 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

GLENN TILBROOK Fri 25 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

NORTHERN ECHOES Fri 25 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

JIMMY BUCKLEY Fri 25 Mar, The Place, Telford

BLAIR DUNLOP Fri 25 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY Fri 25 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RHODA DAKAR LIVE Fri 25 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HARRIET - THE PIANO SESSIONS Fri 25 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

NOT THE ROLLING STONES Sat 26 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

BUZZCOCKS Sat 26 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

SCOPYONS & HELLBENT FOREVER (JUDAS PRIEST TRIBUTE) Sat 26 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE CLONE ROSES + OASISH + THE SMITHS LTD Sat 26 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE AMERICAN FOUR TOPS Sat 26 Mar, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

HOTROX Sat 26 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BLACK BEAR KISS Sat 26 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

JAX JONES Sat 26 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

MACKA B & THE ROOTS RAGGA BAND Sat 26 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

JOHN ANGUS BLUESBAND + BLUES WITH A FEELING Sun 27 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA Sun 27 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

JIM GHEDI + CINDER WELL Sun 27 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

BARENAKED LADIES Sun 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JAKE BUGG + VISTAS Sun 27 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FOY VANCE Sun 27 Mar, The Alexandra, B'ham

Classical & Easy Listening

ECHO RISING STARS: SIMPLY QUARTET Programme includes works by Webern, Julia Lacherstorfer and Beethoven, Tues 22 Mar, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO STRING QUINTET Programme includes works by Purcell, Vaughan Williams, Handel, Trad, Elgar, Warlock, Lennon, Nott, Dudley & Holst, Tues 22 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

TIPPETT QUARTET Featuring John Mills & Jeremy Isaac (violins), Lydia Lowndes-Northcott (viola), Bozidar Vukotic (cello) & Emma Abbate (piano). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Schumann & Elgar, Wed 23 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

THE OPERA BOYS: A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS Fri 25 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



BBC PHILHARMONIC Featuring Clemens Schuldt (conductor), Steven Osborne (piano). Programme includes works by Schubert, Mozart & Tchaikovsky, Fri 25 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

HALESOWEN ORCHESTRA Programme includes works by Dvorak, Tchaikivsky, Saint-Saens, Khachaturian, Strauss & Offenbach, Sat 26 Mar, Cornbow Hall, Halesowen

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND STRING ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina & Curtis Vetter (conductors), Patrick Sharman (string orchestra conductor) & Eloise Yates - joint winner of the Music Society Soloist Competition. Programme includes works by Arutunian, Grieg, Bartók, Weinberg, Warlock, Bruch & Anderson, Sun 27 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

Comedy

LAURA LEX, MIKE GUNN, GLENN WOOL & STEPHANIE LONG Wed 23 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING, NINIA BENJAMIN & JAMIE FINN Thurs 24 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TROY HAWKE, MC HAMMERSMITH & DAN NIGHTINGALE Thurs 24 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

LOST VOICE GUY Fri 25 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

LUKE KEMPNER Fri 25 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING, NINIA BENJAMIN, ELLIOT STEEL & CHRISTOPER MACARTHUR-BOYD Fri 25 - Sat 26 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT CHORLEY Sat 26 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DOM JOLY Sat 26 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

LUNCHTIME FAMILY COMEDY SHOW Sun 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

WHITE YARDIE Sun 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROUGH WORKS: NEW MATERIAL NIGHT Sun 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH MILLICAN Sun 27 Mar, The Place, Telford

Theatre

MENTAL Play telling the story of a girl trapped in a mental-health institution, Mon 21 - Tues 22 Mar, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

DREAMCOATS AND PETTICOATS Feelgood musical inspired by the smash-hit album of the same name, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham



FOOTLOOSE THE MUSICAL Jake Quickenden stars alongside Darren Day in this foot-tapping musical based on the hit 1980s' movie, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE STRANGE CASE OF DOCTOR JEKYLL & MR HYDE Adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's dark psychological fantasy, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

CALENDAR GIRLS THE MUSICAL West Bromwich Operatic Society present an amateur staging of Gary Barlow & Tim Firth's musical, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE WIZARD OF OZ Amateur staging presented by Shrewsbury Musical Theatre Company, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FREEDOM ROAD - A REIMAGINING

Immersive performance fusing music, photography and monologues to honour the civil rights movement, Thurs 24 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

FAUSTUS The Crescent Youth Theatre present Christopher Marlowe's famous tale of vanity, greed and damnation, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

HMS PINAFORE Birmingham Savoyards present Gilbert & Sullivan's satirical tale, which memorably pokes fun at the British class system, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 Mar, The Old Rep, B'ham

BLEACH Sex, violence and city living combine in a critically acclaimed show about a young man for whom it turns out the streets of London are far from paved with gold, Fri 25 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

NOTHING HAPPENS (TWICE) Little Soldiers Productions present an 'anarchic, touching and honest show' which delves into the real meaning of success, Sat 26 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton



SOUL SISTERS: THE MUSICAL Funky feel-good musical taking audiences on a journey of 'success, survival and sisterhood', Sat 26 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BUMPER BLYTON Improvised parody chock full of innuendo and lashings of puns, presented in the style of famous children's author Enid Blyton... Sun 27 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Rebecca Wheatley, Nicki French & Susie Fenwick star in a musical focusing on the 'joys' of the menopause, Sun 27 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Kids Shows

THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN Musical adaptation of the bestselling children's book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Dance

GIOVANNI PERNICE: THIS IS ME Show paying homage to the music and dances that have inspired Giovanni's career, Sat 26 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

U.DANCE WM 2022 Dance showcase featuring some of the best young talents from across the West Midlands, Sun 27 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Entertainment

SNOOKER GREATS Steve Davis & Dennis Taylor recreate the 1985 World Snooker Final, Wed 23 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RAY MEARS: WE ARE NATURE Join Ray as he demonstrates and explains techniques that will help people improve their senses and highlights the problems which nature faces nowadays, Wed 23 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITHOUT KATE BUSH A Cabaret Cult inspired by the music and fans of Kate Bush, Fri 25 Mar, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

RU PAUL'S DRAG RACE UK: SEASON 2 TOUR Featuring UK season two finalists Tayce, Bimini Bon Boulash, Ellie Diamond and Laurence Chaney, Sat 26 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Events

NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING Annual show for visitors looking to improve, extend, renovate or build their homes, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Mar, 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 views that inspired JRR Tolkien, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Mar, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Meet a wide range of local wedding suppliers from Birmingham and the surrounding areas, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

PUBLIC THEATRE TOUR Theatre tour taking in the backstage areas, dressing rooms and front-of-house, Sat 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MEGACON LIVE & KIDTROPOLIS Culture show from the co-founder of MCM Comic Con, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

LICHFIELD LITERATURE FESTIVAL Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Mar, various locations, Lichfield

SUTTON COLDFIELD VINTAGE & ARTS FAIR Featuring 70 stalls of vintage fashion, homewares & crafts, as well as live entertainment throughout the day, Sun 27 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall



A Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll & Mr Hyde - Lichfield Garrick





Jack Savoretti - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Gigs

JACK SAVORETTI Mon 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

UNTO OTHERS + ZETRA Tues 29 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

MATTHEW E WHITE Mon 28 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

YUNG GRAVY Mon 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JAMES MORRISON Tues 29 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JP SAXE Wed 30 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

BC CAMPLIGHT Wed 30 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BLOODYWOOD Wed 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE LINDISFARNE STORY Wed 30 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MIRANDA SYKES Wed 30 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

ERIC GALES Wed 30 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

YAANG + SPECIAL GUESTS Wed 30 Mar, Deadwax, Digbeth, Birmingham

MAGNUM Thurs 31 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RICK WAKEMAN & THE ENGLISH ROCK ENSEMBLE Thurs 31 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

YOUNG CULTURE BAND Thurs 31 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE MYSTERINES Thurs 31 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

CELESTE Thurs 31 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE MAGPIES Thurs 31 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

S1MBA Thurs 31 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

SHAKKA Thurs 31 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

AN EVENING WITH SPIKE Thurs 31 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

HAWKLORDS Thurs 31 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

BEST OF TAKE THAT Thurs 31 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Staffs



Shakka - O2 Academy, Birmingham

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER AND ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE CHAMBER CHOIR Featuring Paul Spicer (conductor). Programme includes works by W.Walton, J.Joubert and M Durufle Requiem, Mon 28 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

Comedy

JOSH BERRY & RAFE HUBRIS Tues 29 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

REGINALD D HUNTER Wed 30 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, DANA ALEXANDER & PHIL ELLIS Thurs 31 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

GEOFF NORCOTT Thurs 31 Mar, Bilston Town Hall

NISH KUMAR Thurs 31 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Russian State Opera presents its version of Puccini's compelling tale about an innocent love crushed between two cultures, Mon 28 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play follows a successful singer and civil rights activist as she seeks redemption after the untimely death of her father, Mon 28 - Tues 29 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME The National Theatre's award-winning production, based on Mark Haddon's bestselling novel, Tues 29 March - Sat 2 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Joanne Clifton and Andrew Lippa star in this 'frightfully funny' feelgood family show, Tues 29 Mar - Sat 2 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

WANDER Based on true stories, Wander follows the travels of four characters who each make very different journeys to Wolverhampton during different eras, Thurs 31 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

GUYS AND DOLLS Backstreet Theatre Company present an amateur staging of Frank Loesser's classic musical, Thurs 31 Mar - Sat 2 Apr, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

COMING TO ENGLAND Music & storytelling combine in a world premiere based on Floella Benjamin's award-winning book of the same name, Thurs 31 Mar - Sat 16 Apr, The Rep, Birmingham

Dance

GIOVANNI PERNICE: THIS IS ME Show paying homage to the music and dances that have inspired Giovanni's career, Mon 28 Mar, The Place, Telford



SEVENS New triple bill of Bharatanatyam and Kathak dance, choreographed by Nina Rajarani, Wed 30 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Entertainment

STEPHEN VENABLES: LIFE AFTER EVEREST Join Stephen as he shares stories about his adventures, Mon 28 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BAKER & HARRIS: BACK STAGE PASS Two of the nation's finest broadcasters share their experiences, Tues 29 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall



AN AUDIENCE WITH WAYNE SLEEP Join Wayne as he reflects on a glittering career spanning five decades, Wed 30 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

PAUL ZERDIN: HANDS FREE Join the America's Got Talent winner as he offers a glimpse into his world, Wed 30 Mar, The Place, Telford

SHEN YUN Epic production that takes audiences on 'a multi-dimensional, inspiring journey through five millennia of traditional Chinese culture', Thurs 31 Mar - Sat 3 Apr, ICC, Birmingham

TWO PINTS PODCAST Will Mellor & Ralf Little bring their unique brand of chat - and some surprises - to the stage... Thurs 31 Mar, Walsall Arena

AN AUDIENCE WITH WAYNE SLEEP Join Wayne as he reflects on a glittering career spanning five decades, Thurs 31 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

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