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ISSUE 425 JUNE 2022

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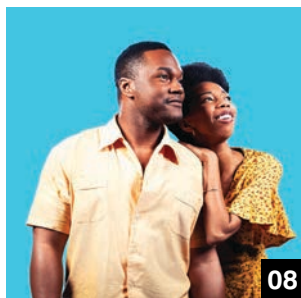
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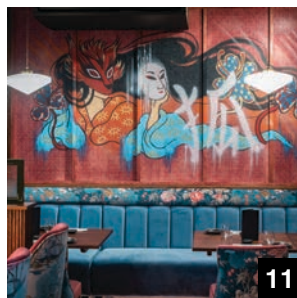




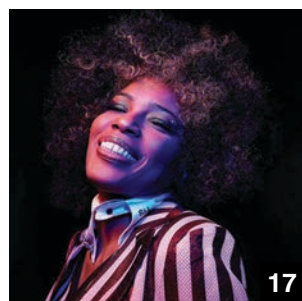
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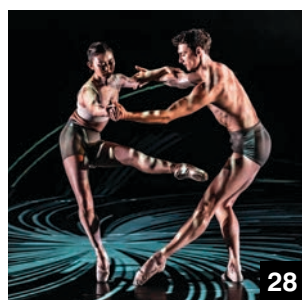
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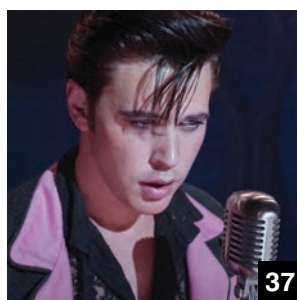
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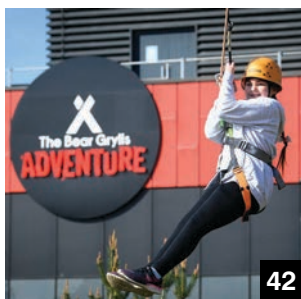
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What's On

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Sound, art and science merge in new exhibition

The worlds of sound, art and science are this month brought together in a new exhibition at Birmingham's Hive Gallery (7 - 24 June). SoundMuse: The Sound Of Nature And The Nature Of Sound is the debut exhibition from Birmingham-based classical musician, composer, artist and teacher Nick Chamberlain.

Featuring sounds from the natural world, and compositions inspired by them, the immersive exhibition also includes visual representations of sound, vintage and antique technology and various unusual sound-related scientific instruments and ephemera.

To find out more, visit soundmuse.co.uk

Kids' project 'in the Flow'

A programme of 'bold and imaginative' arts & culture, which has been made with, by and for children, is available for families to enjoy in Birmingham and Sandwell across the summer.

Produced and curated for Birmingham 2022 Festival by collaborative children's art studio The Parakeet, Flow comprises a multi-artform programme of events which places children at the centre of the action as designers, makers and artists. For more information, visit childrensbiennial.com



Craftspace showcase at Library of Birmingham

A selection of the items made during arts organisation Craftspace's 4600 Gifts mass-making workshops last month is being presented at Library of Birmingham from 30 June to 9 July.

The workshops saw participants join Craftspace in making 4,600 hand-embellished gifts, upcycling locally sourced materials into messages with which to welcome athletes to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Play-space project call-out to community groups

A Birmingham 2022 Festival project is bringing together artists, growers and makers with local communities to create 'a truly magical environment'.

Titled Abundance, the project's aim is to create a play space for all, with organisers eager to involve a wide array of groups local to Sandwell and West Birmingham.

For further information, get in touch with Heidi on hello@wearespectra.co.uk

Brass In The Blooms at the Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens is this month hosting performances by four concert bands from across the region. Presented on Sundays under the umbrella title of Brass In The Blooms, the concerts

feature the West Midlands Concert Band (on 5 June), Central England Concert Band (on the 12th), Alveley Village Concert Band (the 19th) and Kingswinford Concert Band (the 26th). For more information, visit birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk



Birmingham gets new kids' reading festival

A brand-new reading festival for children is taking place in Birmingham this month. Word Play has been created by, and will take place in, How Brave Is The Wren bookshop in King's Heath on Saturday 11 June. On the

same day, it will also pop up at Kings Heath Library and Hall Green Library.

The festival programme includes illustrator Al Murphy (Kitchen Disco, Bathroom Boogie) sharing his new book, A Duck Called Brian, and comic illustrator Laura Howell (Beano) providing an insight into how she keeps Minnie the Minx under control. For more information, visit: howbraveisthewren.com

Cricket play aiming to bowl over its audiences

Local theatre company Women & Theatre is aiming to 'bowl over' Birmingham audiences at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) next month with a brand-new community play to celebrate the inclusion of women's cricket in this summer's Commonwealth Games. Bringing together community performers from across the city and Sandwell, A Thousand Threads is set to a unique soundscape of words and music. Initially presented in a number of outdoor community spaces, the production will show at MAC from 15 to 17 July. To purchase tickets, visit macbirmingham.co.uk



Making friends in Harborne village

Friendship group Birmingham Oddfellows is holding a first Harborne get-together this month.

The meetup takes place on Monday 13 June at 10.30am at the Green Man pub, with people welcome to attend for a free taster of what to expect. The group offers table-top games and activities for older and/or retired people who would like to make new friends 'and enjoy a cuppa and a chat'.

To find out more, call Amy on 07360 631338.

One Giant Leap at Brum's New Street Station

Birmingham New Street Station's Eastern Plaza is providing a temporary home for a Commonwealth Games-inspired sculpture of a powerful and dynamic athlete. Jacob Chandler's One Giant Leap For Humankind is linked to the Commonwealth with a toposcope denoting the direction and distance to each Commonwealth country. A QR code and webpage allows interaction with augmented-reality artefacts. The sculpture is on show from 16 June to 5 September.



Major UK tour for acclaimed National Theatre adaptation

The National Theatre's critically acclaimed adaptation of Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* will visit The Alexandra in Birmingham from 23 to 27 May next year. The production then stops off at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent (12 - 16 September 2023) and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre (26 - 30

September 2023).

Described as 'a thrilling adventure of fantasy, myth and friendship', the show will visit the three Midlands venues as part of a 40-week tour... For more information and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com

Barber concert for sax star Soweto Kinch

Award-winning saxophonist Soweto Kinch will be joined by dancers and leading jazz musicians for a Barber Evening Concert on Saturday 11 June.

A politically and racially engaged production, *The Black Peril* reflects on the episodes of civil unrest which erupted across the western world in 1919 and celebrates the 100-plus years of 'black music' which followed. The concert is presented as part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival.



CBSO unveils new season

A celebration of the genius of composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, a first-ever video games concert, and performances of the remaining CBSO Centenary Commissions are among the highlights of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's recently announced 2022/23 season. Kazuki Yamada and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla continue their journeys with the orchestra as joint principal guest conductors, before new Chief Conductor & Artistic Advisor Kazuki Yamada is officially welcomed next April. To check out the whole 2022/23 season, visit cbso.co.uk



Birmingham Film Fusion Festival makes its debut

Birmingham's first-ever Film Fusion Festival comes to Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) this month.

Run by award-winning web publication DESIBlitz.com, the event focuses on Punjabi and Pakistani features and shorts.

In a nod to the city's forthcoming hosting of the Commonwealth Games, the line-up also includes a number of sports films. Check MAC's website for full details and to book tickets.

What's In Store at two-day Bearwood festival?

Bearwood Road in Smethwick will this month be the setting for two days of free pop-up performances. Taking place on Friday 17 & Saturday 18 June, the What's In Store festival will see poets, performers and musicians providing entertainment in local shops and cafes. All performances are free and will be repeated multiple times across the two days, so visitors will be able to take a leisurely walk between each event. For more information, visit bctouring.co.uk

Image: Auden Allen performs in What's in store?



Queen Victoria sculpture reimaged by artist

Birmingham's city-centre sculpture of Queen Victoria has been reimaged by acclaimed Guyanese-British artist Hew Locke for the Birmingham 2022 Festival. Originally unveiled in 1901, Sir Thomas Brock's marble figure of Queen Victoria was then recast in bronze by William Bloye and members of Birmingham School of Art in 1951. Locke's reimaging of the sculpture, which has been commissioned by Ikon, is available to view in Victoria Square for a limited period from 14 June.



Imagineer bringing Queen's Favourites to pageant

Coventry live-events production company Imagineer is working in collaboration with Midlands artists and participants to bring all The Queen's Favourites to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pageant on 5 June. Imagineer's 20-foot-high Godiva - dressed in a new frock - will lead a procession of corgis, horses, swans and boats, highlighting the

ingenuity and industry of the West Midlands. The Pageant will wind through the streets of Westminster and along The Mall past Buckingham Palace, telling the story of the Queen's record reign and highlighting how society has changed during the last 70 years. For more information, visit imagineer-productions.co.uk

A Supersized Christmas Elf at Birmingham venue

Elf: A Christmas Spectacular will make a two-day stop-off at Birmingham's Resorts World Arena this festive season (Thursday 22 & Friday 23 December). The hit Hollywood blockbuster movie has been supersized into a live arena spectacular, complete with a massive stage featuring film backdrops and a mobile stage which travels the auditorium, ensuring that everybody gets a close-up view of the action... You can bag yourself a seat for the show by visiting theticketfactory.com



Popular flower show to return in August

Shrewsbury Flower Show makes a welcome return late summer following a two year absence enforced by the pandemic. One of the world's longest independent flower shows, the prestigious event takes place in the town's Quarry Park on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 August. Attractions include stunning floral displays, show gardens, equestrian competitions and arena entertainment. A dedicated food hall, crafts marquee and large trade stands area also feature, as do Fleurs de Villes - delightful floral mannequins that take pride of place in the Dingle Marquee. For further information, and to purchase tickets, visit: shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk



Dream Big with Disney On Ice this winter

Disney On Ice makes a welcome return to Birmingham this winter with a show that's encouraging audiences to Dream Big. Featuring a host of the Mouse House's most popular characters, including numerous Disney princesses, the new production visits Resorts World Arena from 30 November to 4 December. For tickets, visit the venue's website.

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



**On record:
In Conversation
with Xhosa Cole**

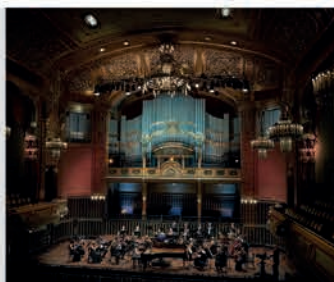
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Family Room &
Jane How Room**



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Orchestra,
Black Voices,
Casey Bailey, Sanity**

Fri 17 Jun
Symphony Hall

**Concerto
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Symphony
Orchestra**
Thu 9 Jun
Symphony Hall



ABC
Mon 20 Jun
Symphony Hall



**Elvis Costello
& the Imposters**

Mon 13 Jun
Symphony Hall



**George Benson
in Concert:
Special Guest
Sunny War**

Tue 28 Jun
Symphony Hall

Brum Craic
Tue 14 Jun
**Jennifer Blackwell
Performance Space**



**Adam Ant:
Special Guest
Laurie Black**
Wed 6 Jul
Symphony Hall



Macy Gray
Thu 16 Jun
Town Hall



**George
Thorogood &
The Destroyers
Good to be Bad Tour:
45 Years of Rock**
Tue 26 Jul
Symphony Hall

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

Sun, sand and calypso...

as a brand-new musical brings the sounds of the Caribbean to Birmingham..



A musical adaptation of Mustapha Matura's 1984 play, *Playboy Of The West Indies*, this month receives its world premiere at Birmingham Rep as part of Birmingham 2022 Festival. What's On recently caught up with the show's composers, Clement Ishmal and Dominique Le Gendre, to find out what audiences can expect...

Audiences who are ready for sun, sand and calypso should head over to Birmingham Repertory Theatre for new musical *Playboy Of The West Indies* and be carried to the Caribbean, say the team behind the show.

Adapted from Mustapha Matura's internationally acclaimed 1984 comedy-drama of the same name, which in turn was inspired by JM Synge's *The Playboy Of The Western World*, the musical is premiering in Birmingham.

And it will be a real treat, promises Clement Ishmael, who created the score with Dominique Le Gendre, working with Mustapha and director & producer Nicholas Kent, who commissioned the original play.

"Audiences should look forward to being transported into 1950s Trinidad, with the rhythms and the music, the light, the energy," says Clement. "The play is extremely funny, and I think the music communicates that."

The story takes place in the quiet seaside village of Mayaro, where the residents' sleepy existence is shaken by the arrival of a mysterious, charming but dangerous stranger. Those he meets are quickly drawn into his web.

Clement says the musical is very closely based on Mustapha's play.

"The one change from the play to the musical is the fact that he is now a singer. There was a boat race in the original play, but now it's a calypso contest - that's the major difference. But both Dominique and I tried to stick very closely to Mustapha's words. There are some songs in the show which are just taken right from out of the play. It's been a really interesting process because the four of us sat down for ages just looking at the places in the play which had emotional highs, where we could put in a song."

Work began on the musical more than four years ago but had to be halted due to Covid-19. Sadly Mustapha died suddenly in October 2019, before the show could be premiered, but the team were determined to continue

with the production as a theatrical memorial to the playwright.

"He was such a part of it," says Clement.

"This was one of his dreams, to make it into a musical, and so now it has become more of a tribute to him and for his family. That is why we are so keen to do it."

Playboy Of The West Indies forms part of Birmingham 2022 Festival, which runs across the summer to coincide with the Commonwealth Games taking place in the city. Dominique, who is Trinidadian, says the connection is ideal.

"Celebrating the Games in Birmingham is really important because Birmingham has always been a key city as far as the Caribbean community is concerned, and for a lot of Trinidadians who emigrated here in the 1940s and 1950s. It is significant that we are opening here in Birmingham. If we were going to open in a major city, it makes sense that it should be Birmingham."

"Back in the Caribbean, the Commonwealth Games have always been a milestone. It's something for people in the region to look forward to and to aspire to, so to be part of that celebration reminds us of the richness of the Caribbean."

The musical fuses calypso tunes with other influences that have played a part in creating Trinidad's rich heritage.

"Trinidad is a melting pot," says Dominique, who has previously worked with Shakespeare's Globe, Talawa Theatre and the Royal Opera House. "Indian is very important in Trinidad because about 40 to 45 per cent of the population is of Indian origin. There's also a very strong melting pot of religions and spiritual views, so Islam and Hinduism as well as Christianity and the Spiritual Baptists, and there are the African-influenced spiritual religions and belief systems."

"And it's not just the music which has a very different rhythm - the whole way in which you approach speech is different. The accents are placed differently, there's a lot more singing. People in Trinidad often speak in a very

colourful way to illustrate the point, and all of that is in Mustapha's language."

This desire for authenticity has influenced the choice of both the music and the casting.

"We've tried to make the instrumentation really traditional," says Clement, whose previous shows have included *The Lion King* and *Five Guys Named Moe*. "So it's all live music with instruments including the cuatro, guitar, flute and clarinet. We have some great musicians in the band, so the music is really vibrant."

"We also carefully chose the actors because, first of all, they had to be able to do a proper Trinidadian accent. A lot of times when you have plays from the Caribbean, you don't realise that the accents are very different, and they have to be Trinidadian for this show. The Trinidadian accent is different to the Jamaican or the Antiguan, for example. There's a music to the Trinidadian language."

Although the play is set in the Caribbean, everyone will be able to connect with its story, says Clement.

"This is a show for people of all ages. It's colourful, joyous and full of life. I'm really excited by it, and I'm sure audiences will love it."

"There are characters in the play who will easily be recognised, even if you're not from that culture, because it's a universal culture. There's a universality to the culture because Trinidad has so many influences."

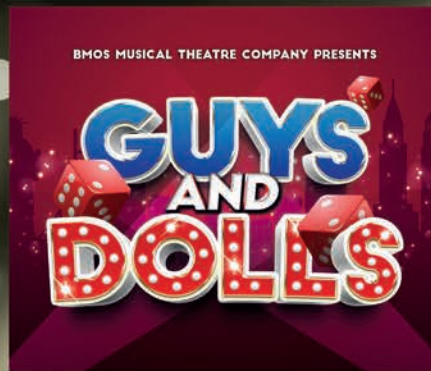
"I'm sure a show like *Playboy Of The West Indies* will have an appeal to people who don't normally come to the theatre. It is very theatrical, but the music is so accessible it will encourage new people to come and see it - and hopefully they will stick around for something else."

Playboy Of The West Indies shows at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from Fri 10 June to Sat 2 July

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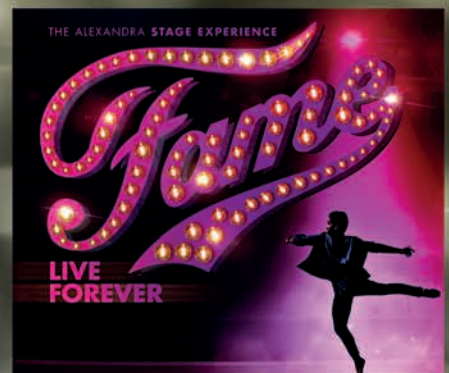
WED 6 JUL



FRI 8 JUL



TUE 19 – SAT 23 JUL



THU 25 – SAT 27 AUG
CAP SAT 27 AUG 2.30PM



TUE 6 – SAT 10 SEP



TUE 13 – SAT 17 SEP
AD THU 15 SEP 7.30PM



TUE 27 SEP – SAT 1 OCT
THU 29 SEP 7.30PM

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REVIEW: Kibou Japanese eatery proves a hit in Solihull

Solihull's culinary scene is saturated with big-name chains, but things have definitely started looking up in the past few months. Fine dining restaurant Toffs By Rob Palmer opened in March (Rob previously led Hampton Manor to its first Michelin star), followed by the multi-award-winning Japanese kitchen & bar, Kibou, in April.

Already operating in Cheltenham, London and Clifton (so granted, it is a chain - but a small one!), Kibou is known for its bold and beautiful interiors, handmade sushi and Japanese-inspired cocktails.

The restaurant looks welcoming. The exterior features a colourful and eye-catching installation of Japanese golden acers. The interior mixes opulent, lush fabrics with traditional Japanese block prints and geisha murals. It's been cleverly structured to create multiple areas: the cocktail bar, the spacious restaurant featuring a range of table and booth seating, and the open sushi bar. It also boasts a 25-cover outside terrace, perfect for alfresco dining on a hot summer's day/evening. If we ever see any of those, of course.

I've eaten the majority of Kibou's

menu (probably more than) 10 times over, just not at Kibou itself. Japanese cuisine is up there with my very favourites, and I visit my local independent restaurant once a month without fail. The menus are very similar, which means it's tempting to compare the two. Not that that's much of a problem - the restaurants are 60 miles apart.

The menu is divided up into: sharers & small plates (think pork gyoza, takoyaki, bao buns and tempura); large plates (ramen, katsu curry and maki udon); and sashimi, traditional hand-pressed nigiri and signature sushi rolls. Sharing and mixed sashimi/sushi platters are also available, as well as plenty of vegan dishes and Japanese-inspired desserts.

We start with drinks. An Asahi for my partner and a highball for me. I'd almost always opt for the lager, but given the popularity, I feel it's a wise move. Simplicity at its best, the Ginko features classically paired ingredients - Roku gin, ginger, lemon and soda. I'm not a massive fan of gin - or at least I thought I wasn't. My eye is drawn to the 'sweet and sour' note on the menu. A botanical gin from one of Japan's

most renowned whisky producers, its sharp citrus flavour converts me. I order another.

The wakame arrives first. A seaweed salad with mirin and sesame, it's one of my go-to dishes. It helps add a freshness to the mostly fried dishes that kickstart the majority of our Japanese meals. Another go-to, ebi tempura. Cooked nicely, the juicy prawns are lightly battered and boast just the right amount of crisp.

Kibou's bao buns come with a choice of four different fillings: marinated duck with teriyaki sauce; chicken karaage with sriracha mayo; softshell crab tempura with crab sauce; and seasonal mushroom tempura with tonkatsu sauce. We opt for the crab. As with the prawns, the crab tempura is cooked to perfection - and there's a generous helping, too. The bun itself is fluffy and comforting, while the contrasting flavours from the creamy crab sauce and the sharp beni shoga that accompany the dish are a winning combination.

A menu item that can't be found in my local restaurant is ebi stake. Essentially it's a Japanese take on prawn toast, with the addition of nori (Japanese seaweed) and a wasabi mayo. You may or may not be aware that over 95% of wasabi served in restaurants is fake, but I could eat the delicious horseradish blend mayo that Kibou serve over and over again. In a sandwich? Yes. With fries? Yes. On a spoon straight out of the jar? Yes. The toast itself is tasty too - universes away from the often dry and overcooked version you get from your local takeaway on a Friday night. You can actually taste the prawn and not just copious amounts of oil. Thankfully.

I know we've over-ordered when the two special sushi rolls arrive. They are huge! Luckily we're able to take away what we can't eat. The Volcano roll features salmon, avocado and tobiko, dipped in tempura batter, fried

and drizzled with special Kibou sauces. The Fuji roll features mixed seafood futomaki coated in panko breadcrumbs, deep-fried and drizzled with sriracha mayo and unagi sauce. Kibou is known for its handmade sushi for a reason. Firstly, the presentation is stunning - this is true for every dish we order. Bright and colourful, with edible flowers to match, they're an Instagram lover's dream. Do I take a picture? Yes. More importantly, though, they taste good. Having food that looks great but tastes awful is entirely pointless. Or should be, anyway! The seafood tastes as fresh as you're going to get in Solihull town centre. The rice is prepared well, and the amalgamation of sauces makes for a taste sensation with a welcome kick.

We finish our Kibou experience (unfortunately we are too full to sample anything from the dessert menu) with a ramen. It's my least favourite part of the meal, mostly due to the broth not being quite to my taste (I feel it needs stronger depth in flavour). The 'lightly battered' chicken thigh is under-seasoned and turns soggy very quickly. In hindsight, I should have opted for the pork. That said, the broth is elevated with a generous helping of soy sauce and I enjoy it nevertheless.

I agree with our waitress when she says 'we needed this in Solihull'. The place is rammed. Admittedly, I'm visiting not long after Kibou has opened, but the restaurant is a great addition to the region, and one which will be thoroughly deserving of the huge success it seems certain to enjoy.
Lauren Foster

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall value:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
OVERALL	■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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Photo Hugo Glendinning.

BOUNDARY-BUSTING BE

Birmingham European Festival of Performing Arts is back with a summer edition...



Challenging the norms of theatre and blurring the boundaries between artists and audiences has always been the objective of Birmingham-based BE FESTIVAL. Returning post-Covid with a summer edition, this year's event takes place at two city venues - Crescent Theatre and Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) - and marks the last time that BE will be seen in its current format.

Focusing on encounters and welcoming inclusive space, festival organisers have devised a programme of activity that celebrates everything that makes BE FESTIVAL unique.

First up, Portuguese artists Ana Borralho & João Galante will present *Trigger Of Happiness* at the Crescent Theatre on 3 & 4 June - inviting 12 young adults, with no experience of theatre, on stage.

Sitting at the same table, they play Russian roulette and answer a list of questions about their lives, concerns, anxieties, families, and visions of the future. As words are released, life paths overlap, drawing multicultural and explosive cartography of local youth. A deadly game in search of happiness.

Following on, *Garden State* - at MAC, 8 - 11 June - will see the venue's main stage transformed into an exotic communal garden made from favourite houseplants loaned by city residents.

The resulting space will provide a social oasis where people can engage and enjoy a series of FREE events and activities, ranging from workshops and talks to performances and concerts.

Below are just some of the events coming to MAC as part of BE.

WED 8 JUNE

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP WITH MING DE NASTY

5pm - 6.30pm

During a 90-minute session, participants will look at how to take photos of the plants featured in the exotic Garden State.

CASEY BAILEY

8.30pm - 9.15pm

Casey Bailey is Birmingham Poet Laureate 2020-2022. He is a writer, performer and educator born and raised in Nechells, Birmingham.

THURS 9 JUNE

4 LEGS GOOD PRESENTED BY CLAIRE CUNNINGHAM

7pm - 8pm

This lecture performance

explores Claire's artistic practice - specifically the use/misuse, study and distortion of crutches and how they shape her work and connect her to the world.

DAVID AUSTIN GREY TRIO

9.30pm - 10.15pm

Celebrated pianist, composer and educator David Austin Grey appears with his vocalist & guitarist Germa Adan and drummer Euan Palmer. The trio perform heartfelt and original contemporary jazz along with some improvised music.

FRI 10 JUNE

MODIFIED TOY ORCHESTRA

10pm - 10.45pm

MTO are at the forefront of circuit bending, which involves rescuing children's electronic toys and converting them into

new and sophisticated musical instruments. The toy instruments are then used to create random, ambient, chaotic and fascinating music.

SAT 11 JUNE

PALAUVER PARTY PRESENTED BY FATT PROJECTS

12pm - 1pm

Featuring a 'spectacular' line-up, this is an inclusive performance party for kids' aged from three to eight (and their grown-ups too). An interactive hosted performance event, the party mixes drag, cabaret, live music, DIY costume-making and disco dancing. There will also be a considerable amount of glitter thrown in for good measure!

TOMORROW'S PARTIES PRESENTED BY FORCED ENTERTAINMENT

9pm - 10.20pm

A playful, poignant and compelling performance that imagines a multitude of hypothetical futures, both possible and impossible.

BE FESTIVAL CLOSING PARTY

10.20pm - close

After 13 years, BE Festival comes to an end with this farewell party. The event features DJ Glynn Phillips, whose GlobalSoundClash sees him mixing and blending a range of exuberant Afro-Latin grooves, soul, Balkan beats, funk, hi-life and more.

For further information on BE Festival and additional events, visit: befestival.org

Key To The City

Birmingham 2022 Festival initiative unlocks hidden treasures, surprise views and intriguing secrets...

A special key which unlocks Birmingham's hidden treasures, surprise views and intriguing secrets is to be given to thousands of people.

This month, for the Birmingham 2022 Festival, the ornamental key associated with the Freedom of the City ceremony is being replaced with a real one.

The City of 1,000 Trades will become the City of 15,000 Keys when the Key To The City project begins (on 28 May). The keys will open 22 locks in locations around Birmingham and Solihull. They will be presented at an exchange site under the departure board at Birmingham New Street Station.

For six weeks - until 10 July - in a free ceremony, anyone will be able to award the Key to the City to whoever they want, for whatever reason – from thanking them for

being a good friend or partner, to wearing great shoes. Then the recipient of the key has until 7 August to explore 'Birmingham's secrets'. These include access to a Harry Potter-like secret entrance at Platform One of New Street Station, the 18th floor terrace at 103 Colmore Row and hidden artwork behind a door at the Ikon Gallery. The key-recipients can also open Northfield Community Garden, observe prayers at Green Lane Masjid and unlock a door in the brick arch over the canal at 230-year-old Minworth Green Bridge at the city's edge.

The key comes with a passport revealing the full list of locations. Recipients could get a new perspective on a sporting venue, enjoy after-hours access to familiar public places such as Touchwood Shopping Centre, and make use of their key-given right to open display cases and rooms across the city.

Key To The City is being presented by the Birmingham 2022 Festival and Fierce, the Birmingham arts organisation providing the local knowledge for the project's creator, artist Paul Ramirez Jonas. Paul first held Key To The City in his home city of New York in 2010. Among the places to which the key provided access were a hidden door in the Brooklyn Museum and gates on the George Washington Bridge.

Birmingham will be the second host of Key To The City.

"Only Birmingham and New York are crazy or brave enough to tackle it!" laughs Paul. "The way I work is to think of an idea that's completely impossible and fantastical, then pare it down to something practical and within budget, but which still has the magic you need for a public project to capture people's imagination. One such first



impossible thought was, 'Why don't we make a key that will open the cage to the lions in the zoo?'.

"Fierce have been fantastic to work with to bring the project to Birmingham. They've introduced me to wonderful spaces like the tunnel beneath New Street Station. There's something very Harry Potterish about that, the city extending under our feet via a secret door on Platform One.

"Some people will want to be competitive and tick off every location, but I think it's more than a game. Having a key might make you notice more about what's closed to us and why. Ultimately I hope people think, 'Why are we so afraid of each other?'"

Key To The City is sponsored by Yale, which has been making all the keys at its factory in Portobello, Willenhall and fitting the special locks. The key is a master one which opens padlocks, door locks and display cases.

There is no need to register in advance for the key exchange, which takes place from 11am to 7pm every day until 5 June, and then from Wednesdays to Sundays. Just turn up in pairs, or solo to be partnered up.

Fierce has been trying to bring Key To The City to Birmingham for 10 years, but such a large-scale project needed major funding. Now it's happening in Fierce's 25th anniversary year thanks to the £12million cultural festival around the Commonwealth

Games.

Artistic Director Aaron Wright says: "We've had more than 200 conversations in order to get 22 locations. The project captures people's imaginations. Many places were keen to be involved but encountered health & safety, insurance and security issues. One site we really wanted but which didn't work out was a secret tasting room at the Cadbury factory.

"It's often easier if places have 24/7 security, such as Touchwood Shopping Centre in Solihull. That's built on a public right of way, so they keep it open late for people to walk through. But the Key To The City will open it between midnight and 6am.

"We wanted sites which pose a question or have a unique perspective, and places you wouldn't normally see which are right under your nose. The key has an interesting psychological effect, giving the holder a sense of power.

"Most journeys in Birmingham happen around where you live or from your suburb to the centre. We're giving people the motivation to explore other parts of the city, and it's as much about the journeys as the destinations."

Louisa Davies, senior producer of Birmingham 2022 Festival, says: "We commissioned Key To The City because there's often a lot of activity in city centres

during festivals, but we want events to happen all over Birmingham and beyond. "We loved the idea of thousands of people going on adventures in their own city during the Birmingham 2022 Festival. It feels like it shouldn't be allowed, and there's something about that that's really exciting. I love the sense of ownership the key gives and the democratising of an honour."

The honour goes back to medieval days, when the gates of walled cities were guarded and locked at night. The literal key to the city meant the freedom to enter and leave at will. The Freedom of the City is one of Birmingham's oldest surviving ceremonies, given to a person or a military unit for their service. Regiments with the honour are allowed to march into the city 'with drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed'. Civilian recipients have included Joseph Chamberlain, members of the Cadbury family and former CBSO conductor Sir Simon Rattle. But now, 15,000 ordinary people can have the Key To The City as well. Where will yours take you?

.....
For more information about the project, visit birmingham2022.com/festival



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BBC Symphony Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 17 June

Birmingham's music and spoken-word scene is here celebrated in a special concert that sees the BBC Symphony Orchestra teaming up with talented local performers. Titled *Beyond The Bricks Of Brum* and bringing together more than 100 musicians, the one-off presentation features brand-new arrangements and compositions from

Black Voices, Casey Bailey (pictured) and Sanity, with contributions also coming from Agaama, TrueMendous, John Bernard and Jasmine Gardosi. The concert is conducted by the BBC Symphony Orchestra's principal guest conductor, the Kyiv-born Dalia Stasevska.

Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 12 June

One of the Midlands' best-known non-professional orchestras, the Birmingham Phil here presents Gustav Mahler's purely instrumental seventh symphony. The least known and among the least performed of his symphonies, the seventh was composed after Mahler had endured a paralysing bout of writer's block.

"For two weeks I tortured myself to the point of melancholy," he wrote to his wife, Alma. "Finally I gave up and went home, convinced that the summer would be wasted... I stepped into the boat to be rowed over [the Wörthersee, the lake on which Mahler's summer home stood]. At the first stroke of the oars, I hit upon the theme (or rather the rhythm and the style) of the introduction to the first movement, and within four weeks, the first, third and fifth movements were completely finished!"

CBSO: Handel's Messiah

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 8 June



The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Chorus here gets its teeth into the challenge of performing Handel's magnificent choral masterpiece for the very first time. A work which tells the story of Christ's Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, the *Messiah* features the rousing Hallelujah Chorus and is one of classical music's best-known works. Baroque specialist Richard Egarr is the conductor while Mary Bevan (pictured) showcases her skills as soprano.

Ex Cathedra: Summer Music By Candlelight

St Paul's Church, Birmingham, Tues 21 & Wed 22 June

Jeffrey Skidmore (pictured) once again picks up the baton to conduct Birmingham's highly rated early music ensemble, on this occasion in a concert that Ex Cathedra confidently predict will see people heading for home singing of summertime.

The programmes for these annual get-togethers, presented by candlelight as dusk falls, move seamlessly from seasonal favourites to rare, rediscovered, contemporary and lighter repertoire.



Birmingham Bach Choir

St Paul's Cathedral, Birmingham, Sat 25 June; Malvern Priory, Sat 2 July

Celebrating its centenary back in 2019, Birmingham Bach Choir is among the city's oldest and most distinguished musical groups.

Here performing under the baton of Paul Spicer, the choir presents 'a programme of British music - and Bach!', with two of the Baroque composer's motets presented alongside pieces by Britten, Finzi, Gibbons, Joubert and MacMillan. The organist for the concert is Martyn Rawles.



After the horse has bolted

**Only Fools And Horses actors reunite in a two-hander adapted
for the stage by Beautiful Thing playwright Jonathan Harvey**



Starting life as a series of books, Ladies Of Letters went on to become a BBC Radio Four favourite and a 10-episode television show. Now adapted for the theatre, the humorous two-hander reunites Gwyneth Strong and Tessa Peake-Jones - perhaps best known as Cassandra and Raquel in long-running TV sitcom Only Fools And Horses.

What's On recently caught up with Gwyneth to find out more about the new stage show...

"It's a bit of a shock to the system," laughs Gwyneth Strong in talking about two-hander comedy Ladies Of Letters, in which she reunites with old pal Tessa Peake-Jones. "There's quite a lot of words to say, being as there's only two of us on stage. When you say 'yes' to things like this, you know they're going to be tricky, but we've been working very hard and long days, and it's worth it. It's nice, good fun, and lovely to be with Tessa after all these years."

The new stage play reunites Gwyneth and Tessa professionally for the first time since they appeared together in iconic TV sitcom Only Fools And Horses.

Ladies Of Letters - created by Carole Hayman and Lou Wakefield - began life as a series of books that traced a Royal Mail-powered back'n'forth between two elder women - Vera and Irene. Having met once, the characters struck up a correspondence, exchanging news and opinions, subtly and not so subtly trying to out-do each other, and offering support when the chips were down. Adapted for a BBC Radio Four series in 1997, which ran for over a decade and starred Patricia Routledge and Prunella Scales, it transferred to television in 2009, with Anne Reid and Maureen Lipman as Vera and Irene.

"I do remember hearing it on Radio Four and thinking it was very funny," recalls Gwyneth, who'd previously worked with writers Lou and Carole while at London's Royal Court Theatre. "I really liked it, and then I heard the names Carole Hayman and Lou Wakefield come up at the end, and I thought, amazing! I didn't know it was them who'd written it!"

Despite the appeal of the earlier radio and TV incarnations, both Gwyneth (Vera) and Tessa (Irene) decided to steer clear of any old recordings.

"We haven't gone back to listen to it again because I think it might confuse us. Neither of us have it in our heads - I only heard it all those years ago - which I think is best because we've got to make it our own."

Ladies Of Letters' premise may be simple, but it's also highly effective.

"They get very much into a one-upmanship that brings out lots of comedy - hopefully - and pathos. It's very interesting, the mix that it is, and I don't think there's anything you can compare it to, which is a good thing."

Though sharing common ground - both Irene and Vera are widows who live alone - their rivalry, spanning everything from offspring to recipes and household tips, makes for some beautifully observed comedy. On the surface, it may seem a little (dare we say it?) comfortable, but brewing in the background are very real concerns and darker themes.

"It can be quite dark. A word that wouldn't have been around when they first made the radio series is 'frenemy', and they are definitely 'frenemies' - the two ladies need each other, and that works; they keep hooking back in. It's quite lively - and fruity in parts too, which we like!"

Adapting the series of (occasionally poisoned) penned exchanges for the stage is acclaimed writer Jonathan Harvey (Corrie, Gimme Gimme Gimme, Beautiful Thing). Though he keeps in the spirit of the original, his input has given the production a contemporary sheen, allowing characters to engage with such 21st-century issues as climate change.

"Jonathan's done an amazing job in adapting the letters to a fully blown story, and it's amazing how much of it was in the original book. He's done a magical job with weaving it all together and updating the bits that needed updating. He's made the women a bit younger than they were, and that's given them a bit more scope to talk about different things. He's a great writer."



Gwyneth and Tessa first met in 1988 after they joined the cast of BBC One sitcom Only Fools And Horses. Gwyneth starred as Cassandra, the partner of Nicholas Lyndhurst's Rodney, while Tessa was Raquel, the long-term (and long-suffering) girlfriend of David Jason's London chancer, Derek 'Del Boy' Trotter.

Written by John Sullivan (who'd previously created Citizen Smith, starring Robert Lindsay), Only Fools And Horses followed Del Boy's exploits as he attempted to better himself with get-rich-quick schemes that consistently ended in disaster. The series ran from 1981 to 2003 and remains hugely popular today, with regular repeats and even a West End stage musical.

"I first saw Tessa when I went to see her first episode. I was rehearsing, and they asked if I wanted to see a recording of the show; I'd never seen one before, live.

"So the first time I actually saw her was on the set - which was really funny - and we met really briefly after.

"Actually, at the beginning, we didn't know if we would be involved together, or even any more, because we were both booked originally, I think, for one episode each."

Both Cassandra and Raquel were instant hits, becoming vital characters for the rest of the show's life.

Discussing the series' enduring popularity, Gwyneth says: "It has this life of its own that just goes on and on, which is delightful. Obviously, we knew that we were in this very successful show back then, but we never thought we'd be talking about it 30 years later.

"It seems to be able to entertain all generations, and doesn't seem to have dated in the way that other shows perhaps have.

"John Sullivan was such a wonderful writer, so we always had this incredible material, which was a joy to read even before it was in the hands of all the other talent involved in the show."

Gwyneth Strong (main image) stars alongside Tessa Peake-Jones (left) in Ladies Of Letters at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, from Tues 7 to Thurs 9 June.

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 SCAN ME

Live music from across the region...

Macy Gray

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 16 June

Born and raised in Ohio, Macy Gray honed her unique voice at local underground clubs during her 20s.

After landing a deal with Epic Records and providing guest vocals for Love Won't Wait on Black Eyed Peas' album, she released her debut offering, *On How Life Is*, in 1999. It was a huge success thanks to the single *I Try*, which peaked at number six on the UK singles chart and went on to score her a Grammy for best female pop vocal performance.

Macy appears in Birmingham this month with her band, The California Jet Club.



Credit: Giuliano Bekor



Electric Swing Circus

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Fri 24 June

A full-time touring band on the international circuit, Electric Swing Circus' live sets include electric double bass, vintage samples, gypsy-jazz guitar, keys, drums, synths and electro beats.

Hot off the back of curating popular Birmingham festival Swingamajig, the six-piece visit the Hare & Hounds to headline another of their events, Hot Club De Swing - 'the city's finest night of electro-swing, vintage sounds and antique beats'. They will be joined by Ragtime Records' resident DJ, the C@ in the H@.

Parquet Courts

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Thurs 16 June

Brooklyn's Parquet Courts was formed in 2010 by former Fergus & Geronimo member Andrew Savage - on vocals and guitar - guitarist/vocalist Austin Brown, bassist Sean Yeaton and drummer Max Savage.

The band's two most recent releases, 2018's *Wide Awake* and 2021's *Sympathy For Life*, have seen a shift away from the punk and indie rock of their past and feature a greater emphasis on funk, dance and electronica.



Kings Of Leon

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Mon 13 June

Kings Of Leon's *When You See Yourself*, released last year, was the band's sixth consecutive album to debut at number one in the UK.

Since forming in 2003, the rock four-piece have sold over 20 million albums and nearly 40 million singles worldwide, with their most famous numbers including *Sex On Fire*, *Use Somebody* and *Red Morning Light*. They visit Birmingham as part of their first major tour for five years.

Diana Ross

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Mon 20 June

With an extraordinary career spanning more than five decades, pop-culture icon Diana Ross brings her timeless music, sparkle and glamour to Birmingham.

Ross is one of the most successful recording artists of all time, with more than 50 number-one hits and 100 million record sales to her name.

Expect to hear a host of gold-star classics, including *I'm Coming Out*, *Upside Down* and *Endless Love*.


Nell Bryden

Pizza Express Live, Birmingham, Thurs 9 June

For 10 years New Yorker Nell Bryden studied the cello and dreamed of becoming an opera singer. But then she heard Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. "And that was that. I was 15, and that was the first time I realised it's more about your personality than your technical prowess. People fell in love with Janis because she gave it everything."



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Windmill Hill, Warwick Arts Centre

Wed 24 Aug 7.45pm / Thu 25 Aug 7.45pm

West Park, Wolverhampton*

Sun 28 Aug 1.45pm & 7.45pm

Doors open at 12 noon (when performance starts at 1.45pm) and 6pm (when evening performance starts at 7.45pm), with pre-performances at 12.30pm (matinees) and 6pm (evenings).

*Subject to licence

Produced in association with Warwick Arts Centre, City of Wolverhampton Council and DRPG Creative.

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WARWICK

ARTS

CENTRE

Festivals coming to the region in June and July...



Nozstock: The Hidden Valley

Rowden Paddocks, Bromyard,
Thurs 21 - Sun 24 July

Intimate, eccentric and family-friendly, Nozstock is a unique festival taking place away from the hustle and bustle of life and boasting outstanding views of the Herefordshire countryside.

Alongside its impressive line-up of music acts, the event also features comedy, theatre, games, workshops and opportunities to learn 'funky new skills'.

2022 line-up includes: Sister Sledge, Bill Bailey, Andy C ft. Tonn Piper, Calyx & Teebee with LX One, Huey Morgan, The Craig Charles Funk And Soul Club, Flava D, Gentleman's Dub Club, Submotion Orchestra, Ibilio Sound Machine (pictured), Break, Utah Saints and Rosie Jones

Alder Fest

Alderford Lake, Whitchurch, Sat 16 July

Popular Shropshire attraction Alderford Lake is launching a brand-new festival this summer.

Alongside the event's live-music line-up, there's also plenty for the family to enjoy, from Disney singalongs and a 12ft T-Rex, to dance workshops with AJ & Curtis Pritchard, a silent disco and circus acts.

An 'extraordinary' 120-person aquapark will be open throughout the day.

Camping tickets are available, providing access to the camping field from 12pm on Friday the 15th to 10am on Sunday the 17th.

2022 line-up includes: FIVE, The Feeling (pictured), Blazin' Squad, Toploader, Scouting For Girls, Planet ABBA, Take On This, Spice Girls - The Experience and Mini Mix



Warwick Folk Festival

Castle Park, Warwick, Thurs 21 - Sun 24 July



Established more than 40 years ago, Warwick Folk Festival boasts the very best in contemporary and traditional folk arts from the UK and beyond.

As well as an extensive line-up of performers, the four-day camping event features ceilidhs, workshops, acoustic concerts, singarounds, an extended craft fair, a range of real ales and on-site catering.

Taking place at Castle Park for the first time, the festival's principal venues and camping spaces will be together on one site, retaining the special atmosphere for which the event has become known.

2022 line-up includes: Show Of Hands, Seth Lakeman, Spiers And Boden (pictured), The Young'uns, Nancy Kerr, Will Pound And Jenn Butterworth and Inlay

Lichfield Fuse Festival

Beacon Park, Lichfield, Fri 8 - Sun 10 July

Fuse was founded in 2001 and is now established as one of the Midlands' largest free music & arts festivals.

As well as a line-up of music that spans genres as diverse as rock, afrobeat, RnB/soul, ska, pop, folk, jazz and reggae, the event also features a selection of family activities.

Circus skills, dance displays & workshops, open mic & poetry sessions, sports challenges, belly dancing and food & drink outlets further add to the festival's line-up of attractions.

2022 line-up includes: Blue Nation, Homecoming UK, The Allergies, The Equators, The Clause (pictured), The Bar-Steward Sons Of Val Doonican and Lucas D & The Groove Ghetto



Lichfield Blues & Jazz

Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield,
Thurs 9 - Sun 12 June

Having launched in 2015, this ever-growing festival has become a firm favourite on Lichfield's cultural calendar.

The four-day get-together celebrates the best in local jazz & blues talent as well as showcasing quality musicianship from further afield.

A blues & jazz-themed Sunday morning service 'like no other' will take place at Wade Street Church on the 12th.

2022 line-up includes: Julian Smith with the Tom Morgan Trio, Thomas Atlas Band (pictured), Staffordshire Jazz East Big Band and Nick Dewhurst Quartet





Wherefore art thou, Doreen?

Actor Gill Jordan talks about her role in an ambitious new production of Romeo + Juliet at Stafford Castle - and explains why she's taking a break from playing her most famous character: Black Country 'lazy cow' Doreen Tipton...

After two years of cancellations, the Stafford Festival Shakespeare returns this month with an ambitious showpiece production of Romeo + Juliet.

Up to 11,000 people are expected to attend performances of the Bard's classic romantic tragedy, which will be presented against the magnificent backdrop of historic Stafford Castle.

The spectacle is likely to be made even more special by the fact that the festival is this year celebrating its 30th anniversary.

No one is more excited about the show than Gill Jordan. The Staffordshire actress is best known as her comic creation, Lazy Cow Syndrome sufferer and Queen of the Black Country Doreen Tipton. Hapless benefits scrounger Doreen, who was co-created by Gill and comedy writer David Tristram, became an online sensation back in 2012, since which time she's evolved into one of the UK's best-loved comic characters.

For the time being at least, Gill is stepping away from the role to play the Nurse in Romeo + Juliet.

"I can't wait to get started," she gushes in her cheery Black Country twang. "I'm talking to you and my heart's really going as I'm so excited about it."

The role couldn't have come at a better time for the actress, who made the decision last year to take a break from playing Doreen and return to mainstream acting.

"I got to a point with Doreen where I'd done almost 10 years. I was starting to think, where are we going with it, and I thought I'd like to get back to doing other stuff.

"When I was talking to my agent about where I want to go this year, I said I'd love to do some classical work, I'd love to do Shakespeare. And it was during the pantomime [Gill, as Doreen, starred alongside Jason Donovan in Goldilocks And The Three Bears at Birmingham Hippodrome] that Tim contacted my agent and asked if I'd play the Nurse. I was jumping for joy!"

Despite becoming synonymous with Doreen over the past decade, Gill's keen for people to see her in other roles. After all, she's been treading the boards for nearly 40 years!

Having trained at the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama, she then toured the UK with a number of theatre companies and also set up her own company, Sundial, which focuses on historical first-person interpretative theatre. Her love for the latter sprang from doing immersive character work at an interactive brewing museum in Leeds, a job that led to her being cast as Charlotte Bronte during the Bronte Festival in Haworth. Sundial went on to provide resident professional on-site interpreters at Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust for nearly 20 years, with Gill and colleagues playing a range of characters at Blists Hill. They performed Victorian music hall and texts by Shakespeare and Dickens, amongst many other classical writers, but she has never done Romeo And Juliet.

"I've always brought history into my work, so to be able to immerse myself into this great period of British history - through the costume, the castle backdrop - is all part of the excitement for me."

Gill also believes the character of the Nurse, who often lightens the mood, is ideal for her.

"It's the perfect role for me as a character actress, and it's one of the best roles in the play. Hopefully I'm going to portray her beautifully", she says, bursting into laughter.

"That's a perfect word for it really, because the character is so lovely, and she's one that people can relate to - the down-to-earth one."

Gill definitely won't be tempted to slip in any Doreenisms, even though she admits that some elements of the Nurse are 'quite pantomimey'.

"Oh no, she'll be very different from Doreen. If someone said they wanted Doreen to play the Nurse, then Doreen could play the Nurse because you can do anything with any character, but I don't want to bring Doreen into this."

As much as Gill's keen to labour the point that she needs a break from her alter-ego, she's quick to acknowledge the character's popularity and importance to her career.

"I do get it. People are interested in her, they've followed us for 10 years, so she's part of their lives. And she's part of my life, and she'll never not be, but right now I want my life to be more about Gill Jordan the actor doing different things."

One of those different things is upcoming Netflix fantasy drama The Sandman, which stars an array of big names including Jenna Coleman, David Thewlis, Stephen Fry and Tom Sturridge. Filming at the world-famous Shepperton film studios in Surrey was evidently quite an experience for the girl from the Black Country.

"Just going down to Shepperton was really exciting because I'd never been before, and it was wonderful. It was full-on special effects and incredible to watch it all taking place.

"We were part of a small ensemble of about six actors with a much bigger group of extras all dressed like us, and we were the main disciples of Charles Dance's character."

The similarity in scale with the upcoming production at Stafford Castle isn't lost on Gill, and she's counting her blessings to have hit the post-Doreen ground running.

"Oh yeah. And to think it's all going to be live theatre is amazing - the Sandman was all special effects and studio work. But to be doing these two different projects within a year is great. That's why I love doing what I do - because I'm still excited at 54. I'm like a little kid! If you're not excited, it's time to move on, and I've never wanted to move on from acting. It's all I've ever wanted to do."

Romeo + Juliet shows at Stafford Castle from Fri 24 June to Sat 9 July



Singin' In The Rain Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 6 - Sat 11 June

A musical romantic comedy set in the era when the talkies hit Tinseltown, the MGM film of *Singin' In The Rain* is a glittering jewel in the Hollywood crown.

Made 70 years ago and starring the irrepressible Gene Kelly, it boasted unforgettable numbers like *Broadway Melody*, *Moses Supposes* and *Make 'Em Laugh*. The most memorable song of them all, of course, was the title track itself, performed by Kelly during a brilliantly choreographed scene in which he danced in a downpour.

Not surprisingly, the film has translated extraordinarily well to the stage, with Tommy Steele and Paul Nicholas among the UK musical-theatre stars to have put on their dancing shoes and splashed around in the puddles.

And speaking of puddles, there should certainly be no shortage during this touring version of Jonathan Church's critically acclaimed production, with every performance coming complete with 14,000 litres of water... Getting wet may never have been more fun!

The Rocky Horror Show

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 13 - Sat 18 June

Hook up your fishnets, tighten your corsets and prepare to 'do The Time Warp again'... *The Rocky Horror Show* is returning to the Midlands (complete with *Strictly Come Dancing* winner Ore Oduba!). Richard O'Brien's cult production tells the tale of the straight-laced Brad and the deliciously corruptible Janet, who arrive at the castle of the alien transvestite Frank N Furter and witness the birth of the monster, Rocky.

Along the way, they take the audience through a selection of love-'em-or-loathe-'em musical numbers, including *Sweet Transvestite*, *Damn It Janet* and *The Time Warp*.

Great fun's a guarantee - particularly if you get into the spirit of things and attend the show dressed in your very best stockings and suspenders (as many patrons do)!



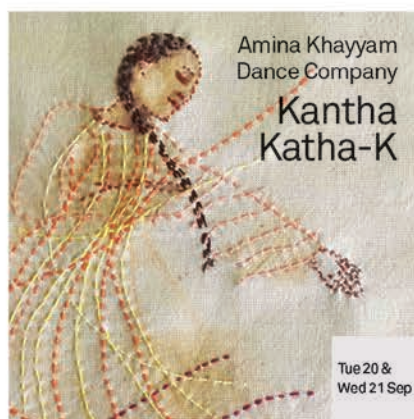
Hamlet The Comedy

The Church Green, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Tues 7 June; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 14 - Thurs 16 June; The Place, Telford, Fri 17 June; Tamworth Castle, Sun 19 June; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 9 - Sun 10 July; Victoria Gardens, Tewkesbury, Sun 17 July; Mary Arden's Farm, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 22 - Sat 23 July; Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sun 24 July

Zany funsters Oddsocks make a welcome return with another sizzling summertime special. On this occasion, they're turning their attention to Shakespeare's best-known tragedy to create yet another of their much-loved laughter fests.

"Our inclusive approach means that varied communities across the UK are able to engage with theatre," say the company's founders and husband-and-wife team, Andy Barrow and Elli Mackenzie. "We aim to tell good stories in a fun, informative way, gently challenging people's perceptions and the way in which they react to theatre."







Waitress

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 28 June - Sat 2 July

"Waitress is one of my favourite shows and definitely my favourite soundtrack," reveals Chelsea Halfpenny, who takes the lead role of Jenna in this touring version of the hit musical. "You can't help but love the characters. And it's so funny. I don't think people expect it to be funny, but it really is." Waitress' storyline sees expert pie-maker Jenna accidentally fall pregnant while trapped in a loveless marriage. After developing romantic feelings for her new doctor, she decides to search for the recipe for happiness. She is helped in her endeavour by fellow waitresses and close confidantes Becky and Dawn... "Waitress tackles some really hard-hitting topics in a way that some musicals don't," Chelsea continues, "and I think that strikes a chord. It shows that humans are flawed and that we all make mistakes, which really resonates with people. Every night is brilliant, the audience reaction has been incredible, and everyone goes away feeling full of love."

The White Card

The Rep, Birmingham, Tues 7 - Sat 18 June

"The White Card stages the discussions which we have privately about the roles of art, race, suffering, discrimination and patronage, out loud and beyond what is comfortable to say and hear." So speaks Claudia Rankine, the writer behind this thought-provoking new work. Telling the story of a wealthy white couple and the talented Black artist they invite to dinner, it focuses on the hot topics of white privilege, cultural appropriation and representation. The piece is directed by Natalie Ibu. "Although set in America, the play is just as relevant in the UK," says Natalie, "a country where a young Black girl can be strip-searched at school or a Black man can be stopped and searched, simply for wearing a coat on a sunny day. I think there's never been a more urgent need for this play and the discussions it will force about race in the UK."

Mrs Kapoor's Daughter's Wedding

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sat 11 June

Mrs Kapoor's Daughter's Wedding scored a big hit when it toured pre-pandemic, and with its winning blend of relatable comedy

and Bollywood glamour, there's every chance its welcome return this month will be accompanied by a further cascade of plaudits. The show's storyline is wafer-thin, but where the production really scores is in its celebration of all things Bollywood, imaginatively blending dancing and singing to create a party atmosphere that's clearly enjoyed by performers and audiences alike.



Richard III

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 23 June - Sat 8 October

The hunch-backed, crooked, wicked, murderous and machiavellian Duke of Gloucester, better known - once he's ascended the throne, of course - as Richard III, is perhaps the most powerful and evil of all theatre villains. Shakespeare's brutal play follows Gloucester's blood-soaked trail as he

uses all his skills as a lover, a liar, a trickster and a tyrant to seize power and become the King of England. Arthur Hughes, who played Gloucester to great critical acclaim in the RSC's springtime production of Henry VI Part Three - retitled Wars Of The Roses - continues in the role.

Offside

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Thurs 16 June

Turning the spotlight on the still-raging struggle for gender equality, lively three-hander Offside follows the story of four women from across the centuries as they battle for the right to play football and, like men, be judged according to their ability. Punchy, lyrical and dynamic, Sabrina Mahfouz and Hollie McNish's critically acclaimed offering is visiting Birmingham as part of a tour to mark the Women's European Football Championship.



WHAT WILL YOU SEE NEXT?



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cut
loose*

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HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO
ALMOST PARADISE
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY
AND OF COURSE THE
UNFORGETTABLE TITLE TRACK
FOOTLOOSE

DARREN DAY
As Reverend Moore

JAKE QUICKENDEN
As Willard

Footloose
THE MUSICAL

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FOOTLOOSE




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The Healing Gardens Of Bab

Chamberlain Square, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Symphony Hall and other Birmingham City Centre locations, Mon 27 June - Sun 17 July

Inspired by Babylon's hanging gardens - one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World - The Healing Gardens Of Bab sees Fierce transforming a number of locations in Birmingham city centre with unique installations, art and events for everybody. The Healing Gardens are described by Fierce as "a paradise that uplifts alternative expressions of gender, sexuality and family. The gardens are a space to reflect on the violent erasure enforced by British Empire and to celebrate the many sexual identities that are not translatable into English." The project provides numerous ways to get involved. These include costume workshops, performance opportunities, crafting and talks & discussions.

Jinkx Monsoon & Major Scales

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 8 June

Actor Jerick Hoffer as alter-ego Jinkx Monsoon here reunites with Richard Andriessen, as composer and musician Major Scales, in a show that imagines a time some 43 years hence in which the pair take one final desperate shot at stardom. Jinkx will be exceedingly familiar to followers of US reality TV series RuPaul's Drag Race, winning the fifth season of the show back in 2013, while Major Scales has become the drag star's faithful companion across various endeavours over the past few years. Last delighting UK audiences three years ago with hit show The Ginger Snapped, the duo have built up a significant British following and look set to be regular and welcome visitors to these shores in the years to come.



Tropicana

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 17 & Sat 18 June



Eighties synth-pop provides the soundtrack to 'queer cabaret icon' Aidan Sadler's award-winning Tropicana, a show that's described as 'an exploration of body image, heteronormativity and sometimes wearing a dress round the house on a muggy day'. Aidan scored a big hit with Tropicana at Edinburgh last year, earning effusive praise for energetic performances of golden oldies including Human League's Don't You Want Me and a-ha's Take On Me. Although the stand-up aspect of the show wasn't as universally praised by critics, the occasionally self-conscious delivery of the material was a small and unimportant spanner in the works of a night out that otherwise hit the mark in so many ways. An impressive rendition of Wham!'s Club Tropicana rounded the show off nicely and ensured the audience headed for home with an '80s-inspired spring in their step.

In Our Skin

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Fri 10 - Sat 11 June

"The aim is to create a kind of conversation about perceptions of sexuality," explains In Our Skin director & project creator Greg Homann, "and about how these perceptions raise social and cultural tension points." South African-born playwright Greg has drawn on 50 hours of interviews with 28 participants to create this brand-new work of theatre, a piece which integrates verbatim text with video and original music. Presented by six actor-musicians, the show connects the lives of gay men from two diverse cities: Birmingham in the West Midlands and Johannesburg in South Africa. The production is being presented as part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival.



THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING



Arthur Hughes talks about starring in a ground-breaking new production of Richard III that marks the first time the Royal Shakespeare Company has cast a disabled actor in the title role.

Arthur Hughes described it as “a dream come true” when he found out he’d been cast as Richard III, one of the most murderous and despised characters in Shakespeare’s canon. But there was rather more to it than a desire to play the villain, even though he admits that was a big part of it.

“It’s great fun to play the bad guy!” he laughs. “Bad people are interesting to play because I don’t believe people are inherently bad. You’re a product of the atmosphere and environment you grow up in, and Richard gets a bad rep if he did all the things they say he did in history.

“Certainly in the play he’s very bad, but he’s a product of an environment that breeds that, and he’s characterised as an inherent villain because of his shape and because he’s disabled, and that hangover has pervaded our culture for the last 500 years. ‘Deformed in body, deformed in mind’ is the old Elizabethan philosophy, which we know is absolute nonsense.

“But when people think of villains they think of Richard III, and they think hunchbacked, crooked, deformed... and that means evil. Those words are all horrible, and in modern terms the way we think of disabled people has changed, but they are still often portrayed as villains.”

Arthur has another good reason to be pleased about playing the crippled king (whose unearthed skeleton displayed curvature of the spine but no ‘withered hand’ as per the Bard’s other description), since he himself is disabled. The actor, who identifies as ‘limb different’, was born with a condition known as radial dysplasia, which affects one in 30,000 people. He has no thumb or radius bone on his right arm, and his right wrist is disfigured.

His delight at winning the role - he made his RSC debut as Richard, Duke of Gloucester, in this spring’s Wars Of The Roses - is tempered by a recognition of the ongoing battle faced by disabled actors.

“I’m thrilled not only to be playing this title role at the RSC, but also that a major production of this play is putting disability centre stage. It’s sadly rare in many plays to find a leading disabled character, and with this production I hope we prove that disabled talent deserves to be in the spotlight.”

Arthur is best known for his role as Ryan McDaniel in Netflix’s The Innocents and last year starred in Channel Four care-home

drama Help, with Jodie Comer and Stephen Graham. He argues that having disabled actors playing disabled characters brings an authenticity to a production, as “only they understand what it is to be different and ‘other’ - looked at differently and treated differently”.

Not having to affect any form of disability also means he can concentrate on other aspects of his performance as well as understand Richard and the world he lived in.

“The play is set in a very cruel, patriarchal ableist world - as are most of Shakespeare’s plays, because that was the world at the time - but I think I can see it much clearer. You don’t have to labour on what you think life is like for a disabled person, it’s just your truth.”

The new production will be the last to be helmed by the RSC’s outgoing artistic director, Gregory Doran, and is especially poignant in the wake of his husband Antony Sher’s death last year. Sher’s 1984 performance as Shakespeare’s ‘bottled spider’ is widely regarded as the greatest ever seen.

“It’s obviously quite a poignant production for Greg to be doing Richard so soon after losing Tony,” agrees Arthur. “But Greg himself has spoken about this - it’s nearly 40 years since Tony’s performance, which by today’s standards couldn’t and shouldn’t happen.

“The representation of disabled people is getting better, so even though [Tony’s portrayal] has gone down in history as one of the great performances, I’m glad history has moved on so we hopefully won’t see those type of performances where non-disabled actors play disabled parts.

“It’s a great reclaiming, I think, and hopefully this will be the first of many around the world where we see major large-scale productions with a disabled Richard.”

Arthur sighs when I say it shouldn’t be a big deal for a disabled actor to be playing a lead role in 2022, but his casting has been a big part of the hype surrounding this production.

“I know. And not just because it’s Richard - you just don’t see many leading disabled actors, full stop. It’s great to have Richard III reclaimed, but why not a disabled Macbeth, Hamlet, Iago or Othello?

“That’s the next step. It’s great to have the

most famous disabled character in the English-speaking language, or at least one of them, being played at the Royal Shakespeare Company by a disabled actor, but the next step is casting other leading roles where the disability is just incidental.”

Like when deaf actor William Grint was brilliant (and hilarious) as the second merchant in the RSC’s acclaimed production of A Comedy Of Errors last year...

“Yeah, William’s a great actor. But that’s exactly it - this kind of integration within productions doesn’t need to be ‘oh we’re a disabled production now’. There should be fully disabled-led productions as well, of course, but it’s more about integration and incidental characters as well as telling disabled stories. Being there is telling a story in itself.”

Speaking of telling stories, Arthur has got to see the entire story arc of Richard, having portrayed him in Wars Of The Roses, the final part of the Henry VI trilogy and effectively this play’s prequel.

“I feel so lucky to play Richard in both of these plays. It’s a real gift for an actor to play both, because so much of Wars Of The Roses’ story unlocks who he is in Richard III and you really see his rise to power.”

The corruption, lies and deceit that facilitate Richard’s unscrupulous ascent to the throne draw a number of parallels with the modern world, making the play as alarmingly relevant today as it’s ever been.

“Leaders who are patently unsuitable for power are the ones that power always attracts,” suggests Arthur. “Look in our country, Russia, America, almost anywhere - the upper echelons of power are always full of the same type of people, doing the same type of things. If you wrote Boris Johnson as a character in a play, no one would believe that it could be a real person!

“But these people are fascinating to behold, and the similarity between Shakespeare’s characters and real-life politicians is the entertaining and frightening thing. And it’s why these plays can be done over and over again, because they always have something to say about what’s going on.”

.....
Richard III runs at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre from Thursday 23 June to Saturday 8 October.

Dance previews from across the region



On Your Marks

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 June

This mouthwatering triple bill - inspired by the Commonwealth Games and presented as part of Birmingham International Dance Festival and Birmingham 2022 Festival - marks the first time Birmingham Royal Ballet has performed with dancers from Director Carlos Acosta's other company, the Cuba-based Acosta Danza.

"Acosta Danza have, for a long time, performed a really popular work called 12 by Jorge Crecis," explains Carlos. "Now Jorge has upgraded this work so it has 12 dancers from Acosta Danza and 12 dancers from BRB in a new version called 24. It's all about celebrating sports and mathematics and is a really fun crowd-pleaser."

The triple bill also features the world premiere of Interlinked, a commission from Brazilian choreographer Julianio Nunes, and Will Tuckett's Lazuli Sky - which the company premiered in October 2020 to reduced audiences because of Covid.

"Juliano is a brilliant choreographer and is working with the Australian composer Luke Howard on the new commission, which has the Commonwealth Games in mind," Carlos explains. "And this is also a chance for everyone who couldn't see Lazuli Sky before to come and experience it now. It's a great piece by Will, who is from Birmingham, and uses augmented reality in a really amazing way."

A vibrant, colorful poster for the Godiva Festival 2022. The top section features the festival's name "GODIVA FESTIVAL" in large, multi-colored letters, with the dates "2-4 SEPT 2022" to the right. Below the title, three artist portraits are featured: The Libertines on the left, Tom Grennan in the center, and Bananarama on the right. The background is black with various colorful geometric shapes and patterns. At the bottom, there is a call to action: "Book now and save £££" followed by the website "www.godivafestival.com/buytickets". A small pink bird icon with the text "Early bird tickets" is also present. The bottom of the poster includes logos for "Brought to you by: Coventry City Council", "In association with: FreeRADIO", "GHR GREATEST HITS RADIO", and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

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Michael Flatley's Lord Of The Dance The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 June

Since catapulting traditional Irish music and folk dance into the limelight back in the mid-1990s (ably assisted in so doing by the similarly sensational Riverdance, of course), Michael Flatley's choreographed adventure, Lord Of The Dance, has become an international phenomenon.

This Birmingham stop-off forms part of a nationwide tour to celebrate

25 years of the hit show. The last quarter-century has seen Lord Of The Dance visit over 1,000 venues in a total of 60 countries and entertain in excess of 60 million people. If you've not yet been among them, then this is the perfect opportunity to catch up with one of the world's most successful dance extravaganzas.

Autin Dance Theatre: Out Of The Deep Blue

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 26 June

Birmingham-based Autin have been performing across the Midlands and further afield since 2013. "We draw on contemporary social issues and events to make work which is beautifully crafted, accessible and relevant," says founder Johnny Autin. "The company has a reputation for creating powerful performances, catapulting audiences into intense dance-worlds which we hope will resonate with them long after they leave the auditorium."

Out Of The Deep Blue finds the ensemble heading outdoors and combining dance, movement and puppeteering to explore the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.



Strictly Presents: Keeeep Dancing!

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 26 June

The latest production from the Strictly Come Dancing stable of shows sees 2020 finalist and EastEnders star Maisie Smith joining forces with 2021 semi-finalist and CBBC presenter Rhys Stephenson.

The duo are accompanied by the show's professional dancers, Neil Jones, Gorka Marquez, Jowita Przystal and Nancy Xu.

An extra-special treat for Strictly fans comes in the form of live music from The Wanted's Max George, who competed in the 2020 series of the long-running BBC One show.

Mi Flamenco

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 12 June



"Our inspiration comes from how flamenco speaks to us, and we are constantly evolving to find ways of expressing that voice to our audiences; to intrigue and inspire."

So say the long-established Mi Flamenco, a company widely admired for productions which seamlessly blend engaging imagery and soul-stirring music with evocative dance.

Their Shropshire visit sees them presenting brand-new touring show Echoes.

GET DANCING!



Birmingham International Dance Festival will turn the city into a dance floor this month, and Lucie Mirkova, Head of Artistic Programmes for the festival, is promising to get everyone up on their feet...

Produced by FABRIC (the new strategic organisation created by the recent merger of Birmingham's DanceXchange and Nottingham's Dance4) Birmingham International Dance Festival (BIDF) is presented this year in partnership with Birmingham 2022 Festival. Taking place across the city's public spaces and theatres BIDF is already the largest event of its kind in the UK. But this year's offering promises to be bigger and better than ever before, with an extensive programme showcasing not only talent from around the West Midlands but also artists from across the Commonwealth, to tie in with the city's hosting of the Commonwealth Games.

The jam-packed programme showcases some of the best in current choreography, online screendance and professional industry events, including nine world and 11 UK premieres. Much of BIDF is free and outdoors, with opportunities for everyone to join in the dancing across the city.

"The overarching theme for this year's festival, and for the festival going forward, is to see Birmingham as a dance floor," explains Lucie Mirkova, Head of Artistic Programmes at FABRIC.

"We have created an array of incredible opportunities in public spaces where people can come together, join in and experience the joy of dance."

Lucie's background gives her an appreciation of the benefits of inclusive dance as she founded a community dance company in her home city of Prague before going on to study choreography. She arrived in the UK in 2010 to take an MA in Arts Management & Policy, before beginning work on BIDF in 2013.

BIDF's participatory events aim to bring local people together to share their stories. Tappin' In is one such initiative. Taking place on 18 June, the free-to-attend mass-participation tap-dancing and storytelling 'extravaganza' will see Brindleyplace stage Birmingham's biggest tap lesson, with people from across

the West Midlands being invited to take part in a performance of the classic tap dance routine, Shim Sham.

Also bringing together people from across the region are inclusive dance collective Critical Mass. Uniting young people with and without disabilities from all over the West Midlands, the ensemble made their debut performance as part of Wondrous Stories - the event which kicked off Birmingham 2022 Festival - and will be participating in the opening ceremony of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Critical Mass 2022 is a £1 million project funded by the Spirit of 2012 charity, to encourage the legacy of London 2012. The world premiere of Critical Mass' show, SENSE, will open BIDF in Centenary Square. It will be followed by a deaf rave from London-based Deaf DJ, performer, festival curator and events organiser Troi Lee.

Through these community and participation events BIDF will be showcasing more than 450 individuals on a global stage. A world first in inclusive community activity.

BIDF's outdoor programme also includes a return to Handsworth Park to present an amazing weekend of dance. "Our first visit last year was a huge success, bringing the festival right into the heart of the community" says Lucie, 'so this year the programme is even more ambitious with live music, workshops, performances and the world premiere of two new Hip Hop dance performances by Midlands artists, commissioned in partnership with Punch Records and Gallery 37."

The festival also features a fascinating theatre programme featuring artists from across the Commonwealth, designed to celebrate Games coming to Birmingham this summer, BIDF is encouraging collaborations between local and Commonwealth artists.

"This festival is about the intersection between the global and the local," explains Lucie. "Our aim is to reflect Birmingham and the people who live here, as well as put a

spotlight on things that are happening around the globe.

"We're doing that through our programme, by looking at the journeys and identities of our artists and how they approach their art, but also through the local and global working together. We have international artists working with local audiences as well as local artists working alongside international performers. That mix is at the core of what we're doing at the festival."

This spotlight perhaps shines brightest during the second weekend of BIDF, which is themed Dance Around The World. The jam-packed programme, bringing together UK and global dance, includes an experimental dance-battle contest called KRE8!, a daring circus performance inside a huge 7m high rotating hourglass, and thrilling UK premieres from Belgium, Spain, France and Canada.

Lucie explains that supporting Midlands-based artists to grow is a core goal of BIDF, and the festival's primary motivation is to open up new ways for local communities to experience dance. And from ceilidhs and swing dance to silent discos and urban fusion, there's something for everyone at this year's event.

"The overall ambition for us is for everyone to see dance and dancing as part of their life. Birmingham International Dance Festival creates the opportunity for people to try things for free and without any commitment, and then maybe they'll enjoy something new that will become part of their lives.

"I hope that people will feel joy and feel empowered by the sense of togetherness and community."

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Check out our selection of Birmingham International Dance Festival highlights on page 33. For further information on all events, visit: bidf.co.uk



DEVA Photo by Parag Dhanani



Tappin' In Photo by Doug Peters PA Wire



Folk Dance Remix Photo by Alan Hong

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DISCOVER BIRMINGHAM AS A DANCING CITY

Birmingham International Dance Festival makes a welcome return this month (17 June - 3 July). The largest festival of its kind in the UK, the event offers an amazing programme of spectacular dance for people to enjoy. As well as performances in Birmingham's theatres, the 2022 edition of the festival is taking over the city's public spaces, presenting three FREE-to-attend family-friendly outdoor weekends and providing lots of opportunities to take part. Check out our selection of highlights below...

BIRMINGHAM IS A DANCEFLOOR

Fri 17 - Sun 19 June

The festival opens with dance in Centenary, Chamberlain and Victoria Squares - as well as Brindleyplace - as a programme of FREE family-friendly performances and workshops transforms the city centre into a stage. Be inspired and join in!

Attractions include a Midlands talent takeover, a mass tap shim sham, a rave for tots, an interactive queer silent disco, and folk dance reimaged. There's even yoga!



DANCE AROUND THE WORLD

Thurs 23 - Sun 26 June

The festival's second weekend offers a high-energy line-up of the best of international and UK outdoor dance, presented across the city centre. Attractions include a daring circus performance inside a huge 7m-high rotating hourglass, Contemporary and Hip Hop dance, with four UK premieres from Belgium, Spain, France and Canada.

BIDF FOR HANDSWORTH PARK

Sat 2 & Sun 3 July

A weekend of stop-in-your-tracks dance activities for all the family to enjoy. Highlights include performances by international dance companies, brand-new hip-hop commissions, live music and a local Midlands Talent Takeover of the stage.



MIRAGE BY CIE DYPTIK

Victoria Square, Fri 17 - Sun 19 June

Fences, barbed wire, rusty metal sheets and hanging flags provide the backdrop to an athletic performance featuring traditional dances inspired by the experience of the inhabitants of a camp on the West Bank.



TIMELESS BY JOLI VYANN

Victoria Square, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June

Daredevil performers combine dance, circus and theatre on a 7m-high rotating hourglass to tell the poignant story of civilisation's fragile relationship with climate change. Are we running out of time?



HIPPOS BY ZUM ZUM TEATRE

Centenary Square, Sat 25 & Sun 26 June;
Handsworth Park, 3 July

Charming and joyful - are they humans disguised as hippos or are they hippos searching for their identity? A wonderful show for all the family.



GHOST BY TENTACLE TRIBE

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome,
Fri 24 June

Elements of martial arts, contemporary and street dance are combined in a physical score that echoes the subtle pulse of respiration. From technical feats to dreamlike sequences, Ghost is a welcome breath of air.



BLOOD, WATER, EARTH BY KAHA:WI DANCE THEATRE

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 28 & Wed 29 June

Weaving performance video and music to affirm First Nation womxn's kinship relationship to all living entities.



BYGONES BY OUT INNERSPACE DANCE THEATRE

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 30 June

Ghostly architecture, puppeteering and illusions to tease our sense of reality. Bygones celebrates how we are shaped by what we overcome, and how something challenging can lead to something beautiful.



For all Birmingham International Dance Festival events, visit: bidf.co.uk



SOUNDS OF THE CITY

Birmingham Music Archive's Jez Collins goes 'On Record' to discuss two music-focused elements of Birmingham 2022 Festival - a series of live interviews and a unique album that celebrates the city's diverse musical past and present...

The Birmingham 2022 Festival, a six-month celebration of local culture and creativity, is now well under way, with a wide variety of projects and events timed to coincide with the city's hosting of the Commonwealth Games.

The festival has huge ambitions, not only to unite people from around the Commonwealth in tandem with the 11-day sporting spectacle, but also to entertain and engage with more than 2.5 million people in person and online, as well as embrace local culture and provide a creative legacy for Birmingham and the wider West Midlands.

It's a ridiculously tall order, but with more than 200 projects across the region - embracing art, dance, theatre and more - there should be something for almost everyone, and with virtually all events being free to attend, no excuse not to join in.

One of the festival's musical components is a series of live podcast recordings featuring conversations with local musicians and other people connected with the music industry. Another component is a multi-artist, multi-genre concept album of songs built around the theme of Birmingham.

Both are helmed by Jez Collins, founder-director of Birmingham Music Archive, an online resource that documents and celebrates all aspects of music activity in the city.

The two projects are designed to reflect Birmingham's diverse communities, as well as the range of music the city has produced.

The live interviews, conducted by broadcaster Satnam Rana and radio journalist Adrian Goldberg, are also aimed at inspiring the next generation by showing the range of opportunities the music industry can provide.

"The idea was to have people in the room so we could document everything from bhangra music to sound systems to punk, through to managers and people who have really contributed to our music culture," explains Jez. "We wanted to make sure we capture the past but also celebrate the contemporary nature of music making in the city, because it's a great city and so much amazing music comes from here, and is coming from here."

Despite running the archive, Jez says he doesn't believe in nostalgia. He reels off the city's musical icons without taking breath - Andy Hamilton, The Move, Spencer Davis Group, ELO, Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, Steel Pulse, UB40 and Duran Duran were just some of the acts namechecked in our conversation - but Jez has as much, if not

more, enthusiasm for contemporary artists such as James Indigo, Bambi Bains and Elle Chantelle.

"We don't amplify these people and what they're doing enough, so we wanted to make sure it wasn't just about looking back at the good old days. It's good to look back, but what I'm interested in is how do we learn from the past and how does it influence our future."

Chantelle is one of 22 people featured in the podcasts, on a list that includes promoters, managers, venue owners and entrepreneurs as well as musicians, all at different stages in their careers. Recorded at Symphony Hall, the events are free to attend (though tickets must be booked in advance) and Jez has been surprised at how open the guests have been.

"All the conversations have been really revealing - I've been taken aback a bit, so I think we've got the pitch right. Personal experiences are what it's all about, as the connections and background all feed into it. And their background is Birmingham - they're all from here or live here.

"We go right back to their school days, how they first got interested in music, what their parents were like, what they listened to as a teenager... all those issues. So you get a real richness of where that person has come from, where their influences and inspirations came from and their journey, I guess. That tells the story of the individual, of the community, of the city and our music. Because music doesn't just exist in a vacuum - people don't just wake up and make it, it's a product of their environment.

"It's all about connecting it all and saying there are people who look like you, talk like you, went to school where you did, worked where your parents worked, who have gone on to have a career in music. You don't have to be a multi-million-selling artist - there are many different ways to work in music, whether that's as a manager, working at a venue or being in a band, and we're just trying to connect that. This is a city of music, and here are some of the people who have had amazing careers in that industry."

Jez's enthusiasm for the project, for Birmingham and for the city's music scene is simultaneously boundless and infectious - and there's clearly a chip on his shoulder about the way in which the city is often ignored in national conversations about music.

"People say Manchester's a great music city, or Liverpool's a great music city, or London, but for me this city is the best... it creates

music of all different kinds," he says, claiming that the variety is a strength, and more important than having an identifiable (and often mono-cultural) sound: "There's never a sound of this city - there are *multiple* sounds in the city."

The latter is perfectly encapsulated by *On Record*, a unique all-star concept album that features 11 original songs written and recorded by artists from a diverse range of genres - from Afrobeat, Asian electronica and trip-hop to folk, garage rock, jazz and reggae.

"We'll probably get a little bit of stick because there's no metal on there!"

The task of reflecting music from across the city, as well as making a coherent album, was a challenging one.

"The hardest part of putting the album together was who to leave out, but all the artists represent Birmingham's incredibly rich and brilliant music past, present and future, as well as the many and varied cultures and communities of the Commonwealth and beyond who call the city home."

All the artists were tasked with providing a musical response to the word 'Birmingham', and Jez says they all responded brilliantly.

"What we've had back is what we're calling a sonic love letter to Birmingham, because the songs and the lyrics have really highlighted how important Birmingham has been to these artists. You might not like all the music, but I think the album gives an insight into the city and its incredibly diverse communities, and I think that's what's really pleasing about it.

"We really believe in it, and the festival organisers really believe in it too. I think it's the only dedicated music project for the festival, so they want to get the music played in stadiums when spectators are there, during ceremonies, medal presentations and so on.

"When people hear it, (a) I think they'll like the music, and (b) they'll also have this small window into who we are, and I'm hoping that will start to shine a spotlight on our contemporary music making, which is incredible."

.....

On Record is released on 17 June in physical and digital formats. For more information, visit birmingham2022.com/festival and birminghammusicarchive.com

Film highlights in June...

Lightyear CERT PG (100 mins)

With the voices of **Chris Evans, Keke Palmer, Dale Soules, Taika Waititi, Peter Sohn, Uzo Aduba**
Directed by **Angus MacLane**

This is the definitive origin story of Buzz Lightyear - the hero who inspired the Toy Story toy - and sees Chris Evans lending his voice to the legendary Space Ranger.

"The phrase 'a dream come true' gets thrown around a lot, but I've never meant it more in my life," says Chris. "Anyone who knows me knows that my love for animated films runs deep. I can't believe that I get to be a part of the Pixar family and work with these truly brilliant artists who tell stories unlike anyone else. Watching them work is nothing short of magic. I pinch myself every day."

Released Fri 17 June



Dashcam CERT 15 (82 mins)

Starring **Annie Hardy, Amar Chadha-Patel, Angela Enahoro, Seylan Baxter, James Swanton, Caroline Ward**
Directed by **Rob Savage**

This found-footage, shot-on-an-iPhone horror flick finds LA musician Annie escaping her pandemic lifestyle by visiting old band mate Stretch in the UK. Following a bust-up between the pair, Annie steals the car Stretch uses for a food delivery service, and when an order comes in, she decides on a whim to take the job. But this is no ordinary delivery: a frail, elderly woman named Angela - who's apparently being followed by someone looking to do her harm - needs to be delivered to a safe address out of town.

It isn't long before Annie starts to realise she may well have bitten off more than she can chew...

First shown in the UK at the London Film Festival, Dashcam has been called 'the most polarising horror in years'. Its director, Rob Savage, previously scored a hit with the chiller Host.

Released Fri 3 June



Elizabeth: A Portrait In Parts CERT tbc (89 mins)

Directed by **Roger Michell**



Notting Hill director Roger Michell, who died last autumn, is the man behind this watch-it-from-the-comfort-of-your-own-home celebration of Her Majesty The Queen, released to coincide with her platinum jubilee weekend.

Although the film should have no trouble finding an audience, it's a tall order for its director to offer something fresh and imaginative when walking the well-trodden path of Elizabeth II documentaries. To his great credit, Michell meets the challenge head-on. The film manages to be not only an absorbing chronicle of the life of the world's longest-serving monarch, but also a nostalgic homage to the times through which she has lived - and in particular to the lost and deferent Britain of her early years on the throne, a place bearing little resemblance to the country over which she now reigns as a 96-year-old.

Released on Prime Video on Fri 3 June

Jurassic World: Dominion

CERT tbc (146 mins)

Starring **Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Dichen Lachman, Sam Neill, Daniella Pineda, Jeff Goldblum** Directed by **Colin Trevorrow**

Dominion takes place four years after Isla Nublar has been destroyed. Dinosaurs now live - and hunt - alongside humans all over the world. It's a fragile balance, one which will reshape the future and determine, once and for all, whether human-beings are to remain the apex predators on a planet they now share with history's most fearsome creatures...

The latest offering from the \$5billion Jurassic Park franchise, Dominion is certain to do some 'monster' summertime business at the box office, with its producers promising a movie replete with never-before-seen dinosaurs, breakneck action and astonishing new visual effects.

Released Fri 10 June





Elvis CERT tbc (159 mins)

Starring **Austin Butler, Tom Hanks, Olivia DeJonge, Dacre Montgomery, Kodi Smit-McPhee, David Wenham**
Directed by **Baz Luhrmann**

Written & directed by Oscar-nominated visionary Baz Luhrmann and boasting a rave review from Priscilla Presley, this epic, big-screen spectacle explores the life and music of the boy from Tupelo who went on to become the brightest star in the world.

Elvis' story is seen through the prism of his complicated 20-year relationship with his enigmatic manager, Colonel Tom Parker (played here by no less a luminary than Tom Hanks).

As told by Parker, the film follows Presley's story from initial fame to unprecedented stardom, the narrative playing out against the backdrop of America's evolving cultural landscape and loss of innocence.

Austin Butler stars as the king of rock & roll, giving a performance that's received a massive thumbs-up not only from Priscilla but also Jerry Schilling, a member of Elvis' legendary Memphis Mafia.

Released Fri 24 June

Good Luck To You, Leo Grande CERT tbc (97 mins)

Starring **Emma Thompson, Daryl McCormack, Isabella Laughland** Directed by **Sophie Hyde**



Widow and retired RE teacher Nancy Stokes is on the lookout for something her marriage didn't provide: good sex.

She hopes to find the gratification she seeks in the arms of Leo Grande, a young sex worker with whom she aims to get discreetly 'down and dirty' in an anonymous hotel room in Norwich. But Leo's bringing more to the party than good looks and sexual know-how - as Nancy soon finds out...

Good Luck To You, Leo Grande made a big splash at this year's Sundance Festival and finds Thompson and Peaky Blinders star McCormack in fine and amusing form.

Released Fri 17 June

Spiderhead CERT tbc (106 mins)

Starring **Chris Hemsworth, Miles Teller, Jurnee Smollett, Nathan Jones, Tess Haubrich, Charles Parnell** Directed by **Joseph Kosinski**

This genre-bending and darkly funny psychological thriller sees brilliant visionary Steve Abnesti (Thor star Chris Hemsworth) running a state-of-the-art penitentiary in which inmates wear a surgically attached device that administers dosages of mind-altering drugs in exchange for commuted sentences.

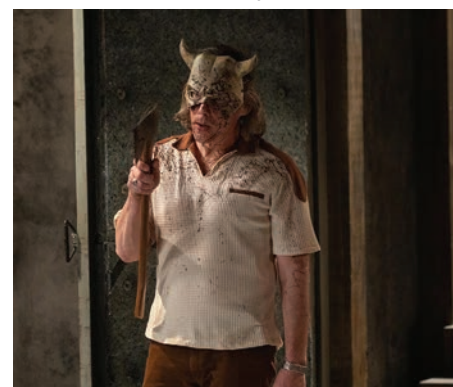
There are no bars, no cells, no orange jumpsuits in Spiderhead - incarcerated volunteers are free to be themselves. But when two subjects - Jeff and Lizzy - form a connection, their path to redemption takes an unexpected turn, as Abnesti's experiments start pushing at the boundaries of free will...

Released on Netflix on Fri 17 June



The Black Phone CERT tbc (102 mins)

Starring **Ethan Hawke, Jeremy Davies, James Ransone, Madeleine McGraw, Kellan Rhude, Mason Thames** Directed by **Scott Derrickson**



Abducted by a sadistic killer and trapped in a soundproof basement, 13-year-old Finney Shaw is in a lot of trouble. But then a disconnected phone on the wall begins to ring, and Finney discovers that he can hear the voices of the killer's previous victims. What's more, they're all determined to ensure that what happened to them doesn't happen to Finney...

Adapted from a short story, The Black Phone was director Scott Derrickson's go-to project when creative differences saw him walking away from Marvel Studios' recently released second Doctor Strange movie.

Released Fri 24 June

LET'S

GO

GO

GO

OUT

LET'S GO OUT,

**A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS**

@sister_minor

Him & Me

Five minutes with Strictly stars Anton du Beke and Giovanni Pernice ahead of their visit to the Midlands this month...

Congratulations Anton on becoming a full-time judge on Strictly, and to Giovanni for winning the glitter ball and a BAFTA.

Anton - Thank you. I'm honoured to be part of the show that I love. I enjoy being able to give advice to the couples, to help them improve every week. And I know what they are going through, having been on the other side of the table for so many years. And a huge congratulations to this one..! (Anton gestures towards Giovanni).

Giovanni - Thank you, thank you, thank you! I was always the bridesmaid and never the bride, but finally... And I'm so happy to win with Rose. Such a special person and such a special message behind it.

How did the idea of doing a tour together come about?

Giovanni - I had an idea that I would love to do a tour with my idol. I know Anton is such a busy man, so we had been back and forth for a couple of years to see if we could make it work with our schedules. We managed to do some shows in 2021, and now we get to do the most phenomenal, beautiful and fun show touring around the country again.

Anton - I can only agree, he says it so beautifully. I'm so fond of him.

Is there anything new we can expect in this year's show?

Giovanni - We have some beautiful new cast members, plus a few familiar faces from 2021. We have more set, more lights, more costumes, and now we have a Strictly Come Dancing champion in the show too!

Anton - I knew it wouldn't be long before that came up.

Giovanni - I was in about 104 finals, so I was due to win at some point.

What have you both been doing recently?

Giovanni - We've both been working out, to give the people what they want!

Anton (to Giovanni) - You look tremendous, by the way!

What makes this tour different to all the others?

Giovanni - The fact that you have a legend on stage - and also a rising-star legend - is something special!

Anton - A rising-star legend? We should have called the show that!

Giovanni - Plus, we are very different in terms of dance styles...

Anton - And age. It's wonderful for me, as I love his enthusiasm. So, in that respect, we are very similar. He's a wonderful person, and I love spending time with him. He's a wonderful dancer and an absolute stage presence.

Giovanni, what was the best advice Anton gave you when you started Strictly Come Dancing?

Giovanni - He said to always keep your feet on the ground. Everyone is replaceable, so enjoy, but stay grounded and don't become a diva!

Anton - Then he didn't do any of it!

Giovanni - Well, I didn't speak English at the time, so I didn't understand any of it!

Anton, what English dish would you suggest Giovanni tries?

Anton - Something deep-fried.

Giovanni - I have tried bangers and the smash.

Anton - You mean 'bangers and mash'?

Giovanni - Yes! And toad in the hole.

Anton, who would you like to see Giovanni dance with on Strictly this year?

Anton - If it was a same-sex partner... Luke Evans. Or, I know who would be great... Holly Willoughby.

Giovanni - I would love to dance with Holly Willoughby on the show. We would have so much fun and she would do amazing. You're a judge now, Anton, but if you were still dancing on the show, I would pick Mary Berry for you.

Anton - We would be the cherry on the cake!

Giovanni - I like what you did there!

.....

Anton & Giovanni bring their Him & Me tour to Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury on Tues 14 & Wed 15 June and The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sat 9 July





Image credit: Jaskirt Boora

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The Sky In A Room

Bring together a prestigious Birmingham art gallery, a talented Icelandic artist, a well-known Italian song and a quintessentially English church, and what do you get? A five-star performance in the heart of the Warwickshire countryside, that's what. Or, to put it another way, The Sky In A Room...

"Il Cielo in una Stanza is the best song I know about the transformation of space," says Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson.

He is talking about the famous composition written by Italian singer-songwriter Gino Paoli and released in 1960. The song sits at the heart of Ragnar's 2018 creation, The Sky In A Room.

"Gino got the idea [for Il Cielo in una Stanza] when lying in bed in a brothel with a woman he had fallen in love with," explains Ragnar. "Thinking of that lovely moment and how feelings transform space, how the walls of the room changed into endless woods, he got that melody into his head."

Ragnar's The Sky In A Room earned plenty of plaudits and five-star reviews when it was first presented four years ago. The project involves professional singers taking turns to perform an ethereal arrangement of Il Cielo in una Stanza. Simultaneously playing a

church organ, the singers repeat the song uninterrupted for five hours a day for nine days, like a neverending lullaby.

The Sky In A Room is being presented by Birmingham's Ikon gallery as a major off-site project. It takes place deep in the Warwickshire countryside in Tanworth-in-Arden, in the village's Grade I listed, 14th century St Mary Magdalene Church.

Quintessentially English and recently renovated, the church is perhaps best known for being the location of the interred ashes of singer-songwriter Nick Drake. A Tanworth resident, Drake died in 1974 at the age of 26 from a drug overdose.

The repetitive-performance aspect of The Sky In A Room is also evident in other works by Ragnar. The 46-year-old's artistic practice engages multiple mediums, creating video installations, performances, drawings and paintings that make use of myriad historical and cultural references.

An underlying pathos and irony connect his works, with each deeply influenced by the comedy and tragedy of classical theatre. The artist blurs the distinctions between mediums, likening his films to paintings, his performances to sculpture. Throughout, Ragnar conveys an interest in beauty and its banality, and uses durational, repetitive performance as a form of exploration.

For the Reykjavik-based artist, hearing Il Cielo in una Stanza performed time and time again is an absolute pleasure. "It is a song all Italians know," he says. "It is almost the Italian national anthem of love. Space and love. An ode to the transformation of space. The Sky In A Room."

The Sky In A Room takes place at St Mary Magdalene Church in Tanworth-in-Arden, from 25 June to 3 July. The work will be performed daily from 2pm to 7pm.



Visual Arts previews from around the region

Photograph (detail) by Terence Donovan © Terence Donovan Archive.



In The Que: Celebrating The Que Club

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery,
until Sun 30 October

Birmingham Music Archive has developed and curated this fascinating exhibition, a sensory homage to a legendary venue which was located in one of the city's most beautiful buildings - the Grade II listed Methodist Central Hall. Providing a significant space in which the city's rave and dance culture could evolve and thrive, the Que Club also hosted concerts by big-name performers including David Bowie and Blur. Club nights at the venue included Atomic Jam, Flashback and House of God, while BBC Radio One used the space for its Essential Mix nights, during which DJs Carl Cox, Paul Oakenfield and Sven Vath entertained on-site partygoers and millions of listeners alike. Celebrating the promoters, musicians, performers and ravers who came together in the venue, In The Que features a wide range of memorabilia, including personal artefacts, photographs, flyers and posters, as well as a brand-new 35 minute movie.



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Alyssia Rajania 3 months, Indy Buray Rajania 40, Surinder Buray 66, Sarjit Kaur 90, 2021. By Julian Germain

GENERATIONS BY JULIAN GERMAIN

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Yayoi Kusama in her Shinjuku studio, Tokyo, 2016 (c) Alex Majoli, Magnum Photos

Magnum Photos: Where Ideas Are Born

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Thurs 2 June - Sun 16 October

This thoroughly engaging exhibition comprises more than 80 photo portraits of famous and influential 20th-century artists, created by 20 critically acclaimed photographers from the world-renowned Magnum agency.

Images of Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol, Frida Kahlo, Francis Bacon, Ai Weiwei and Yayoi Kusama all feature in the show. The photos were taken in the artists' studios by photographers whose aim was

to capture the precise moment at which the subject's creativity took hold and new ideas were born...

Magnum photo agency was founded in 1947 with the aim of protecting photographic authorship and documenting the realities of post-war life. Collectively owned and run by its member photographers, the agency has permanent offices in London, New York, Paris and Tokyo.

Abdulrazaq Awofeso: Out Of Frame

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, Fri 10 June - Mon 29 August

Abdulrazaq Awofeso's solo exhibition forms part of Arrivals, an Ikon programme concerned with the international movement of people and ideas, which is being presented to coincide with the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Featuring all-new work, the exhibition includes a multitude of small, figurative sculptures that embody the modern city, where people from all walks of life come together. The figures have been individually crafted and painted by the artist and are made from wooden forklift pallets. Utilised to transport goods around the world, the pallets here work as a metaphor for human migration.



Last chance to see - three exhibitions we recommend checking out before they finish...

Be Yourself: Everyone Else Is Already Taken

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, 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 has brought 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.



Sharon Walters: Seeing Ourselves

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Sun 26 June

Sharon Walters' first solo exhibition features intricate paper cut pieces which 'unapologetically celebrate and uplift' Black women beyond the monolith. "Through my carefully constructed hand-assembled images, curated programmes and collaborations, I simultaneously reference under-representation whilst using art as a form of self-care," Sharon recently explained to Grazia Magazine. "The process of creating acts is an extension of my optimistic outlook on life. At its heart, Seeing Ourselves is an insight into my own experiences as a woman from the African diaspora, and I make the conscious decision to re-frame them in a celebratory and uplifting light."



Hokusai's Great Wave: Reflections of Japan

Worcester City Art Gallery, until Sat 2 July

A significant exhibition exploring the extraordinary influence of Japanese art and culture, Hokusai's Great Wave: Reflections Of Japan features newly researched Japanese ukiyo-e prints and Samurai armour from the Worcester City and Worcestershire County collections. The show also

includes 19th-century Japanese illustrated books and ceramics from the Museum of Royal Worcester, Hokusai's Great Wave from Bristol Museum & Art Gallery and contemporary woodcuts from Tate.



Creating a splash!

Jonathan Church's critically acclaimed musical
returns to the Midlands...



Into every life a little rain must fall - and for Midlands-based musical theatre fans, there's a positive deluge heading their way this very month, courtesy of the currently touring stage version of hit Hollywood movie *Singin' In The Rain*...

The Chichester Festival Theatre & Stage Entertainment production of *Singin' In The Rain* - directed by Jonathan Church - is out on a UK & Ireland tour to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the famous MGM movie.

For those not in the know, its storyline revolves around the character of Don Lockwood, a huge star in 1920s Hollywood, who is suddenly tasked with the challenge of helping turn silent movie *The Duelling Cavalier* into a talkie. Trouble is, his co-star, Lina Lamont, has a terrible speaking voice, and she and Don have been playing the happy couple to appease the publicity department, which complicates his burgeoning romance with chorus girl Kathy Selden.

The film version of *Singin' In The Rain*, starring Gene Kelly, was surprisingly not the huge hit its now-iconic status suggests. Most critics loved it, but it was only up for a couple of Oscars, and the one major award it bagged was a Golden Globe for Donald O'Connor. Time has been kind to the movie, though, with many film historians citing it as the greatest screen musical ever. It is currently ranked fifth on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 best films.

Sticking faithfully to the original story but including a few additional songs, the stage musical premiered at the London Palladium in 1983. Directed by and starring Tommy Steele, it ran for nearly two years. It opened on Broadway in 1985 and returned to the West End in 1989 with Broadway star Don Correia.

In the 1990s, Paul Nicholas took it on tour around the UK, and there were revivals in 2000 at the National Theatre and 2004 at Sadler's Wells, the latter of which featured Adam Cooper in the lead as well as on duty as choreographer. Adam went on to play Don again at Chichester Festival Theatre in 2011 and in the West End in 2012, returning to the show at Sadler's Wells last year ahead of this year's tour.

Adam is making guest appearances on a few of the tour dates, as is Faye Tozer of Steps fame as Lina Lamont and Kevin Clifton as Don's comedy sidekick, Cosmo Brown. However, the bulk of the tour sees the role of Don played by Sam Lips, with Charlotte Gooch as Kathy, Ross McLaren as Cosmo and Jenny Gayner as Lina.

Charlotte is back as Kathy having played the aspiring starlet in London and Japan. She considers *Singin' In The Rain* to be the perfect tonic for troubled times. "It's nice to have some old-school musical escapism. It gives everyone a nice, joyous feeling for a couple of hours and an escape from the darkness that is the outside world right now. It's romance, it's comedy, and there's a happy ending. It's all-singing, all-dancing, all-acting, and Kathy is such a joyful character. Everything about her is cheeky, loveable and wholesome, and I love bringing all that to life."

Asked to name a favourite number in the show, she cites Good Morning. "We have so much fun," she says of goofing around with Sam and Ross. "We're meant to be playing and bantering with each other, and we genuinely are. I also love the encore, in which we all get to splash around in the water. I still have moments where I'm thinking, 'It's raining! Inside a theatre!' Who normally gets to do that for a living?!"

Ross McLaren was in the ensemble in a Paris production of the show and played Cosmo in Japan. He humbly classes himself as a 'jack of all trades and master of none': "You have to be able to sing, dance, act and really rise to the occasion. Cosmo is a comic character with so many brilliant lines, and he does full-out dances and full-out harmonies. I have to bring my A game."

Ross's previous musical theatre credits include *Sleepless*, *Big The Musical* and *White Christmas*, but having been in *Doctors* on TV for the past year and a half, he adds: "It was a bit of a shock to the system to get back into dance. I've danced since I was four, but I was out of practice."

So how does he feel about taking on a role that Donald O'Connor played to comedy perfection in the film? "Gene Kelly said that O'Connor was the best comic actor he'd ever worked with, and that's a tough act to follow. I'm rewatching the film and learning from him - and it was great to see Kevin Clifton's take on the role too. You have to put a lot of yourself into it, so I'm bringing my own take to it as well."

As Lina Lamont, Jenny Garner shared the part with Faye Tozer at Sadler's Wells and played it full-time in Japan. A stage veteran who's been in everything from *Annie* and *Spamalot* to *Chicago* and *Legally Blonde*, she was drawn to the squeaky-voiced character of Lina because: "I'm a sucker for comedy. I absolutely love making people laugh, so it's a gift of a role. Lina's not as stupid as she appears at the beginning, and you want her naivety to come across because you don't want the audience to hate her."

Deliberately singing out of tune isn't as hard as it seems or indeed sounds. "People have said to me you need to be able to sing well to sing out of tune, and I'm grabbing onto that! It's a lot of fun, but you don't want to go too far with it, otherwise it can make it unbelievable. Playing the truth with Lina is important."

Japanese etiquette meant that audiences over there were instructed not to laugh, talk or cheer during a performance. "But they'd applaud at the end of a number and not stop," Jenny says. "That's how they expressed their enjoyment. Now I'm looking forward to being on tour over here, getting a more vocal reaction, making everyone laugh and giving them a really good time. Laughter really is the best medicine, isn't it?"



***Singin' In The Rain* shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Mon 6 - Sat 11 June**

Take your pick! - here are a few of our favourite attractions across the West Midlands



Bear Grylls Adventure

Exhibition Way, Marston Green, B40 1PA beargryllsadventure.com

Celebrity adventurer Bear Grylls has certainly pulled out all the stops with this popular visitor attraction. Activities include high ropes, indoor archery, indoor climbing, escape rooms and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course. The 'more courageous' can challenge themselves to the Fear Zone, or maybe venture to the depths of the deep blue sea with Shark Dive, in the process getting 'up close and personal' with black tip reef sharks and cownose rays.

Fancy experiencing the thrill of free-falling at 12,000ft without having to jump out of a plane? Then iFly is for you. The weightless adventure takes place in a wind tunnel and comprises two one-minute flights to get the adrenaline pumping.

Visitors can also unleash their inner lumberjack with the attraction's latest activity - axe-throwing.

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

Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

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

Legoland Discovery Centre is a great place to share creative play time with your little ones. The venue houses a city builder area, a duplo farm, two rides - Kingdom's Quest and Merlin's Apprentice Ride - and a 4D cinema. Perhaps the most impressive attraction at the centre, though, is Lego Miniland. Built from more than 1.5 million Lego bricks, Miniland is a replica of Birmingham. The model includes Lego constructions of Bullring, the BT Tower, The Mailbox and the Library of Birmingham.

PRICES: £18.30 online off-peak, £22.95 online peak, adults and pre-schooler £15 (online only)

National Sea Life Centre

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

Housing more than 2,000 creatures - including a colony of gentoo penguins, black-tip reef sharks and a giant green sea turtle - National Sea Life Centre Birmingham features a world-class rescue Marine Mammal facility, which homes the UK's first-ever sea otters, Ozzy and Olain.

Other Sea Life Centre highlights include a 4D cinema, the zebra shark in Shark Lagoon and the Clownfish Kingdom tunnel.

The centre also boasts the UK's only 360° Ocean Tunnel, in which visitors can marvel at hundreds of underwater creatures while enjoying the truly unique experience of 'walking through the sea'!

PRICES: £20.65 online off-peak, £22.95 online peak

British Motor Museum

Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warwickshire, CV35 0BJ
britishmotormuseum.co.uk

Home to the world's largest collection of historic British vehicles, the British Motor Museum tells the stories of the people and places behind the cars. Themed trails, touch-screen exhibits, an interactive zone, costumed guided tours, and a varied programme of themed activities make for an inspiring day out.

PRICES: Adults £14.50, children £9, under-fives go free



Severn Valley Railway

Kidderminster: Station Dr, DY10 1QX
Bridgnorth: 2 Hollybush Rd, WV16 4AX
svr.co.uk

Operating mainly steam-hauled passenger trains between Bridgnorth, Bewdley and Kidderminster, this much-loved railway transports visitors on a journey of about 16 miles along the beautiful Severn Valley. The journey includes a stop-off at the Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, where passengers can check out massive locomotives, enjoy themed exhibitions of unique railway vehicles and meet Gordon the Blue Engine.

Those starting their journey at Bridgnorth will also have the option of stop-offs at Bewdley and Kidderminster, the latter of which boasts a railway museum.

PRICES: 'Freedom of the Line' adult tickets £25, child £16.50, Family Saver (two adults and up to four children) £65



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Twycross Zoo

Norton-Juxta-Twycross, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 3PX twycross.org

Explore Twycross Zoo's 100 acres and say hello to over 60 species and more than 400 animals - including some of the rarest on the planet!

The zoo is also the only place in the UK to have all four types of great ape - the chimpanzee, orangutan, gorilla and bonobo. Earlier this year Twycross opened its brand-new Gruffalo Discovery Land, inspired by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's

bestselling children's book. With the help of the story's much-loved characters, the four-acre immersive attraction provides young visitors with the chance to learn about the importance of conservation and the natural world.

PRICES: £21.95 adult, child (2-16 years) £17.40, under-twos free. All tickets must be prebooked online.

Drayton Manor Resort

Nr Tamworth, B78 3TW draytonmanor.co.uk

Drayton Manor annually welcomes over one million visitors and is home to the hugely popular Thomas Land attraction. There's also a 15-acre zoo to enjoy, where you'll find many species of animal from all over the world, including meerkats, Sumatran tigers, kangaroos and exotic birds. Those looking for adrenaline-pumping fun need look no further than Drayton's four main white-knuckle rides - Apocalypse, Maelstrom, Shockwave and Pandemonium. And just in time for half term, the venue has opened a brand-new Vikings area, featuring rides and attractions inspired by ancient gods and legends.

PRICES: £27.50 online, under-fours online £11



West Midlands Police Museum

Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, B4 6BJ
museum.west-midlands.police.uk

The new West Midlands Police Museum opened its doors a couple of months back and showcases more than 200 years of policing history. The lock-up was built in 1891 and during its time housed more than one million prisoners. The cell doors closed for the final time in 2016.

As well as bringing together an unrivalled collection of police artefacts, the museum also offers a range of hands-on activities, providing visitors with the opportunity to play the role of detective at a crime scene, examine evidence in a forensics lab, take their own police 'mugshot' and dress up in police uniforms from years gone by.

PRICES: £9 adult, child (3-15 years) £5.50, under-threes free.



Tamworth Castle

Lady Bank, Holloway, Tamworth B79 7NA
tamworthcastle.co.uk

Step back in time and sample 900 years of history at Tamworth Castle. Wander the chambers and hallways and get a real sense of how the Saxons, Normans, Tudors and Victorians spent their time in the castle. Venture up the castle tower to enjoy 360° views of Tamworth, including St Editha's Church and the surrounding castle grounds. Meanwhile the Battle & Tribute exhibition includes a display of the Staffordshire Hoard and features Saxon weapons and a range of real and replica items.

PRICES: £9.95 adult, child (2-15 years) £7.50, under-twos free.



Roundhouse Birmingham

1 Sheepcote St, Birmingham B16 8AE
roundhousebirmingham.org.uk

Acting as a heritage enterprise and independent charity, Roundhouse Birmingham was created through a partnership between the Canal & River Trust and the National Trust.

From exploring the iconic building, to taking walking tours of the city and kayaking on Birmingham's network of canals, the venue hosts a variety of volunteer-supported activities, providing visitors with a great opportunity to learn about the city's history.

PRICES: Activities vary in price from £9 - £30

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Our pick of Jubilee events across the region



Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 June

The Severn Valley Railway is putting on a celebration fit for a Queen to mark Her Majesty's platinum jubilee. Crowning the first day of the event will be the unveiling of locomotive 34027, complete with its new name - Elizabeth II - new number - 70 - and purple livery, specially commissioned to mark the jubilee. In a nod to the 1953 coronation, there will be 1950s-themed entertainment at each station,

including a pop-up milk bar and juke box at The Engine House, a vintage fairground ride at Bridgnorth and live music at Kidderminster.

The Engine House will also be hosting a hand-built Paddington-themed exhibition, presented courtesy of BrickLive, and a display of work by photographer Jack Boskett, showcased under the title From Railways To Royalty.

Birmingham Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Victoria Square, Birmingham, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 June



Victoria Square is hosting a free four-day celebration to mark the jubilee weekend. The festivities start on Thursday the 2nd with a DJ and street entertainment, followed by live music. Beacons will be lit after 9pm as part of a nationwide initiative. There's further music and street entertainment on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with a jubilee concert being broadcast live from Buckingham Palace on Saturday.

Bostin' Jubilee Bash

The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, until Sun 5 June

Don your best red, white & blue outfits and step back in time to sample jubilee celebrations across more than 100 years - from Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897, all the way through to this month's platinum parties for Elizabeth II. Visitors are welcome to offer a helping hand to the museum's characters, who will be setting up for the jubilee celebration with craft activities and party decorating. A grand parade will then make its way through the museum, with a special performance of God Save The Queen over on the boat dock.



Penkridge Jubilee Open Air

Penkridge Sports & Recreation Centre, Wed 1 - Sun 5 June

Penkridge Open Air returns for five days of live music and entertainment over the jubilee weekend.

Each day of the festival has its own theme: Rock Royalty on Wednesday the 1st features a Queen tribute act and local band Shine. Then there's Pop Legends on Thursday the 2nd (Take That, Dolly Parton and Pink tributes), Battle Of The Decades on the Friday ('60, '70s & '80 tributes) and Motown Legends on the Saturday (with tributes to Diana Ross, Lionel Ritchie, Michael Jackson and Marvin Gaye). The festival is brought to a conclusion on Sunday the 5th with jubilee celebrations featuring the D Day Darlings and D Day Juniors.

A Platinum Jubilee Tea

Cadbury World, Bournville, Sat 4 & Sun 5 June

Cadbury World is celebrating the Queen's platinum jubilee with its very own tea party over the jubilee weekend.

Taking place in a specially decorated marquee, the event features appearances by Cadbury characters and family entertainers. Refreshments are available in the form of drinks and cakes.



CBSO 2021/22: Queen's Platinum Jubilee Concert

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 2 June

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra here pays its own tribute to Her Majesty with a special concert featuring a selection of works from throughout her 70-year reign. The repertoire for the evening includes music from the coronation, works dedicated to The Queen and HRH The Princess Margaret, compositions from across the Commonwealth, personal favourites of Her Majesty and even bagpipes, in former Master of the Queen's Music Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' An Orkney Wedding, With Sunrise.

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Bookings and Offers:

ninjawarrioruk.co.uk/walsall



Crown Wharf Retail Park, Walsall WS2 8LL



Half-term events previews from around the region



Circus Vegas NEC, Birmingham, until Sun 5 June

Circus Vegas merges Las Vegas traditions and contemporary styles with extreme stunts and classic clown escapades. Acts include Edy the Clown and the Danguir Troupe, the latter of whom will be performing a never-before-seen-in-the-UK

high-wire & wheel-of-death stunt. Roller-skating, hula-hooping, comedy trampolining, juggling and stunt riding also feature in a show that's promising to offer 'something for everyone'.



Safari Street Party

West Midland Safari Park, until Sun 5 June

West Midland Safari Park's Safari Street Party sees gates opening earlier than usual, at 9.30am, with entertainment running daily from 10.30am to 5.15pm.

Attractions include towering giraffe stilt-walkers, a Caribbean steel band and a bubblelogist. There's also a kids' craft club in the Safari Academy, where youngsters can make safari-themed crowns and check out a selection of animal artefacts.

Throughout the week, the park will be fundraising for the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, with the charity's friendly and knowledgeable team on hand to educate families about giraffes and the lives they live in the wild.

Lego Legends

Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham, until Sun 5 June

Legoland Discovery Centre is celebrating the country's emergency services with a host of themed activities.

Youngsters can track down the heroes in Miniland, try their hand at building an emergency-service vehicle to race down the zipwire, check out the Lego City short film in the 4D cinema and meet Lego police hero Max. Plus, as a special thank-you to the emergency services, Blue Light cardholders can purchase tickets to the event for only £9.99 per person.



Midlands Air Festival

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 June



Back for a fourth year, the Midlands Air Festival sees over 100 hot-air balloons take to the skies above Ragley Hall for twice-daily mass ascents at dawn and dusk.

The show also features flying displays from World War Two warbirds, World War One air displays, fast jets, helicopters, gyroplanes, high-energy aerobatic displays, aerial ballet & flying circus acts, and parachute & formation display teams.

A musical firework grand finale rounds off the fun.

Dino Week

National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent, until Sun 5 June

There's a roar-some half-term experience to enjoy at the National Forest Adventure Farm's new Raptor Ranch, where dinosaurs including the terrifying T-Rex are ready and waiting to greet visitors. Youngsters can learn how to tame the ferocious beasts in a special 'dino training camp' and sample a one-on-one encounter with a dinosaur. And if they're brave enough, they can also have a go at the Raptor Run, where they're challenged to collect dino eggs while evading the clutches of the not-to-be-messed-with velociraptor.



Family Fun Day

Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire, Sun 5 June

Eastnor Castle is offering families an activity-filled day out this half term, with attractions including a junior obstacle course, a knight's maze, rope swings and an adventure playground, all of which are included in the general admission price.

Four-legged friends are also welcome, and visitors can bring their own picnics to enjoy in the grounds.

The castle tea room and ice cream parlour will be serving up treats throughout the day.



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Charity Number: 501564



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SHREWSBURYFLOWERSHOW.ORG.UK

Events previews from around the region

**BBC Good Food Show Summer** NEC, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 June

Boasting tasty food, mouthwatering recipes, and in-the-kitchen entertainment served up by some of the nation's most celebrated chefs, the summer edition of the BBC Good Food Show makes a welcome return.

TV chefs including Dame Mary Berry, James Martin (pictured) and Nadiya Hussain will be sharing their culinary skills and cooking

live on stage.

The show's ever-popular shopping village, meanwhile, provides visitors with plenty of opportunity to 'taste, try and buy' a wide range of delicious produce from an impressive selection of food & drink suppliers.

**BBC Gardeners' World Live** NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 June

Green-fingered visitors to BBC Gardeners' World Live will, as usual, find plenty to delight them.

Attendees can take ideas and inspiration from the show gardens or Beautiful Borders displays, pick up tips and tricks from the likes of Monty Don and Alan Titchmarsh (pictured), or enjoy an exclusive garden

walk or one of the all-new 'plant expert' tours.

This year also marks the BBC's 100th anniversary. To celebrate, the Floral Marquee will feature a host of displays inspired by some of the Corporation's most popular radio and television programmes from across the decades.

Midsummer Carnival

Warwick Castle, Sat 11 June - Sun 10 July

Warwick Castle's brand-new Midsummer Carnival is promising to be 'the ultimate Tudor solstice celebration'. Bringing the past to life, the event will take visitors back in time to meet famous figures from history, including Queen Elizabeth I and William Shakespeare.

'Thrilling horse shows and exciting trick riding' in a purpose-built arena also features, as do minstrels and jugglers, live poetry and sure-to-be-fun 'knight schools' both for children and adults.

**Time Travel Tram**

West Midlands Metro Route, until Fri 30 September

As part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival, Time Travel Tram launches living history into the 21st century by transporting a carriageload of passengers back in time onboard the West Midlands Metro. This immersive experience thrusts participants into a time slip, transforming the view from their tram window into 'a 3D visual extravaganza' of people and places from the region's past.

The trip is accompanied by a contemporary soundtrack created by some of the West Midlands' most highly rated musicians and performers.





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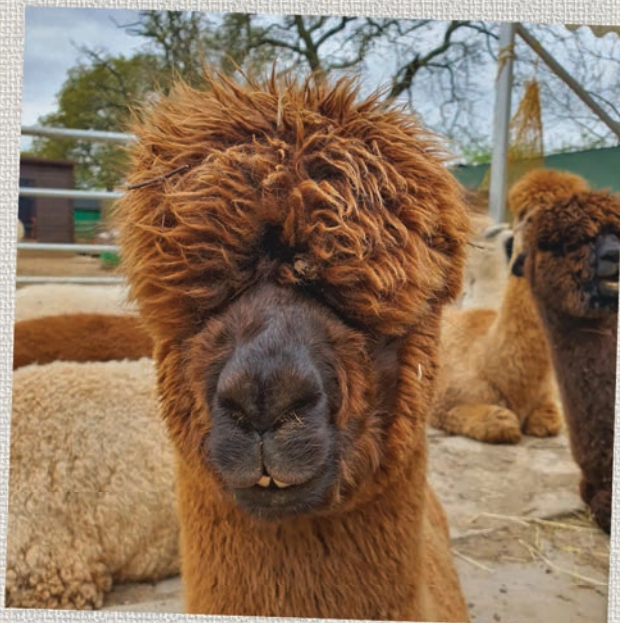
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Events previews from around the region



The World Of Park & Leisure Homes Show

NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, Fri 10 - Sun 12 June

The World Of Park & Leisure Homes Show returns to Warwickshire this month after a two-year absence.

The biggest event of its kind in the UK, the show features around 40 state-of-the-art leisure lodges and residential park homes.

It also offers visitors the chance to check out the latest designs and innovations, meet leisure-lifestyle experts and discover locations across the UK and beyond in which to enjoy weekend breaks and holidays.

Armed Forces Weekend

National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, Sat 25 & Sun 26 June

National Memorial Arboretum is holding its Armed Forces Day celebrations across a full weekend this year.

A Service of Tribute will be held in the amphitheatre on the Saturday, where visitors will be able to give thanks to the UK Armed Forces.

Climbing walls, segways, archery, a Red Arrows simulator, a World War Two assault course, military bands and a food & craft fair also feature across the weekend.



Sarehole Mill Bio-Blitz

Sarehole Mill, Birmingham, Sat 25 June



Join the Natural Science Curator and explore Sarehole Mill's outdoor spaces, including its historic courtyard and Woodland Realm, making a record of the plants, animals and insects that you find there.

The data which people collect will then be shared with regional wildlife data-collecting programmes and apps, the aim being to provide a better understanding of 'the world around us and our contribution to it'. Each child will receive a 'bug collector' to take home, to help study their finds, as well as a spotter's guide and worksheet.

The Royal Three Counties Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Fri 17 - Sun 19 June

Food, farming and alfresco entertainment are on the agenda at this year's Royal Three Counties Show.

Some of the UK's finest livestock will compete for the title of best in show, in one of the largest livestock competitions in the country.

The event's new Food & Drink Festival, meanwhile, will feature international street food stalls, a cider show, local chefs cooking up a storm in the theatre and daily children's cookery workshops.

Main-arena entertainment comes courtesy of the Red Devils Freefall Team and Bolddog Lings Motocross Stunt Display Team, while the Countryside Arena hosts a selection of vintage machinery.



Potfest By The Lake

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Fri 17 - Sun 19 June

Transforming the lawns of Compton Verney into a vibrant artisan ceramics market, Potfest will showcase the work of over 80 of the UK's finest ceramics artists and artisan pottery makers.

Spread across three large open-sided marquees and three open-fronted aisles, the show features a variety of work - from large-scale sculptural pieces and fine jewellery, to functional domestic ware and contemporary, decorative pieces. All items are for sale from the artists who made them.



BLACK COUNTRY BEATS

Black Country Beats
Sat 7 May - Sun 4 Sep 2022
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Celebrating popular music in
the Black Country between the
1970s and 2000s.

Free admission

Slade • Aisha • Robert Plant • **Goldie**
Beverley Knight • **Babylon Zoo**
Macka B • **Capital Letters** • Azaad
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Events previews from around the region



The Creative Craft Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 24 - Sun 26 June

A dream for knitting, cross stitching, paper crafting, jewellery & dressmaking enthusiasts, the Creative Craft Show boasts more than 100 stalls and offers the very latest in supplies and innovative ideas. As well as getting their hands on all sorts of

goodies at the event - from kits, charts and patterns to fabrics, yarns, threads and buttons - crafters can also seek out advice from industry experts and take part in a selection of interactive workshops being held across the weekend.

Classic & Vintage Commercial Show

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Sat 11 & Sun 12 June

Commercial vehicle fanatics will be in seventh heaven at this two-day show, which features hundreds of pre-2002 lorries, vans and pick-ups.

Vehicles on display include vans such as Ford Transits, Morris Minors and J Types, lighter lorries from Austin, Bedford, Dodge and Ford Thames, and 'big boys' including AECs, Atkinsons, ERFs, Fodens and Leylands. An autojumble further adds to the show's appeal.



The Big Bang Fair

NEC, Birmingham, Wed 22 - Fri 24 June

With the support of over 100 organisations, The Big Bang Fair is an annual celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) for seven to 19-year-olds.

The event offers a combination of theatre shows, interactive exhibits and careers information, along the way providing young people with the chance to meet hundreds of scientists and engineers.



The National Cycling Show

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 18 & Sun 19 June

Described as an 'immersive retail experience', the National Cycling Show is a one-stop shop for all your cycling needs. The event brings together experts from

across the industry, with this year's special guests including Sir Chris Hoy, Team GB's Kye Whyte and Guinness world record holder Mimi Anderson.





A cool place to stay...

**The Rotunda. A building that needs no introduction. A Brummie favourite.
A candle in the sky. A beacon for the city.**

Built in 1965 as an office block, the 82-metre cylindrical tower has had an eventful history, including an IRA bombing in 1974 and the threat of demolition in 1993. Thankfully, it was saved by English Heritage and given a Grade II listed building status in 2000.

It sat empty for a few years until multi-award-winning developers Urban Splash and Birmingham-based Glenn Howells Architects were brought in to give it the look that it still sports today.

Boasting floor-to-ceiling windows and wrap-around balconies on the top floor, it took around two-and-a-half years to lovingly restore the building.

As well as 199 residential apartments (there was a three-hour frenzy in 2005 which saw people sleeping out overnight in a bid to snap up a piece of the famous landmark!), the Rotunda boasts 35 Staying Cool apartments across its top five floors. These are made up of studios, one and two-bedroom apartments, duplexes and penthouses. Costing between £99 to £750 per night, these can be booked all year round.

Located right between Birmingham's two main train stations, the Rotunda is just three minutes on foot from Birmingham New Street and Moor Street. It has Zara in its basement and Selfridges as its corner shop. Better still, it's a short walk away from some of Birmingham's best restaurants, pubs, bars and attractions: Brindleyplace, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, China

Town, Digbeth, The Roundhouse, Adam's, Library of Birmingham, Purecraft, The Mailbox - the list goes on. In fact, its location could not be any more convenient for people wanting to pay the UK's second city a visit.

Sounds good, right? Well, this is just the start...

I was lucky enough to spend the night in one of Staying Cool's beautiful apartments back in April, and I couldn't recommend it more. It was perfect in every way.

We were greeted by Gavin, Staying Cool's friendly and welcoming manager. In speaking with him when booking, I'd mentioned that I was visiting Birmingham to watch Steve Coogan's new Alan Partridge touring show, Stratagem. The welcome card I received featured some classic Partridge one-liners, and there was a bottle of bubbly chilling in the fridge. Personal touches like this make all the difference. All hotel staff should take a leaf out of Gavin's book.

My partner and I, along with two friends, were booked into one of the four-person penthouse suites on the 20th (top) floor. There was a real 'wow factor' from the moment we opened the door - from the stylish decor and the impressive cleanliness, to the personal touches previously mentioned and the balcony. Oh, the balcony! On a clear day, you can see for miles.

Fortunately, when we visited, the weather was on our side and we enjoyed breathtaking views both day and night.

The furnishings are all design-led and

colourful statement pieces, while wall art features locally shot '60s-themed photography to reflect Rotunda's birth decade. Every minor detail has been thought through here.

After many a laugh in the company of Mr Partridge at Utilita Arena Birmingham, we headed back. Our original plan was to go to a few bars, but it felt wrong not to make the most of the penthouse. After all, it's not every day opportunities like this arise.

A few drinks and a natter later and we were all out like lights, not least thanks to our seriously comfortable beds!

Not only are the apartments and penthouses perfect for groups of friends and romantic getaways, they're fantastic for families too. They feature home-from-home kitchen facilities - including popcorn makers and juicers, new bean-to-cup coffee machines and roasts from local coffee indie Quarter Horse - board games, televisions showing all Freeview channels and more.

We didn't want to leave. We woke up to a beautiful day. We'd all enjoyed a glorious sleep and the sun was shining. We sat on the balcony basking, enjoying the sounds of a guy playing steel drums on the street below. Check-out is midday. We stayed until 11.55am. I could happily have stayed another night. Or five.

For more information, or to book your stay at Staying Cool at the Rotunda, [click here](#).

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

the list



Billie Eilish at Utilita Arena, Birmingham - Wed 15 June

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

What's On

Wed 1 - Sun 5 June



Jubilee Crown Craft at
Blakesley Hall

Wed 1 - Sun 5 June

Mon 6 - Sun 12 June



Russell Kane at Birmingham
Hippodrome

Sun 12 June

Mon 13 - Sun 19 June



TLC at O2 Academy
Birmingham

Tues 14 June

Mon 20 - Thurs 30 June



Ghost by Tenacle Tribe at
Birmingham Hippodrome

Fri 24 June

THROUGHOUT JUNE

Visual Arts

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

WE ARE BIRMINGHAM Exhibition co-curated by Birmingham Museums and six members of Don't Settle - an initiative empowering young people of colour from Birmingham and the Black Country 'to change the voice of heritage through the arts, research and governance', until Sun 30 Oct

BLACKLASH: RACISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DEFENCE Mukhtar Dar's extensive archive of photographic, video and political ephemera showcases the street & state racism faced by Asian and African Caribbean communities, until Sun 30 Oct

SAVAGE K'LUB: VA TAMATEA An installation that reclaims the gentleman's clubs of the same name which were first established in London in the 19th century, until Sun 30 Oct

UNPRECEDENTED TIMES Exploring themes of hope and loss through historic artwork from Birmingham's collection alongside loans and new acquisitions from Birmingham-based artists, until Sun 30 Oct

WONDERLAND: BIRMINGHAM'S CINEMA STORIES Featuring unseen photographs and cinema memorabilia, alongside historic magic lanterns and optical toys from Birmingham's Collection, until Sun 30 Oct

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

MIXED RAGE COLLECTIVE: UNAPOLOGETICALLY OTHER The effect of 'othering', lack of representation, daily micro-aggressions and the sense of displacement felt by people of mixed heritage, are among the subjects being explored in this thought-provoking exhibition by Mixed Rage Collective, until Sun 14 Aug

JOHN AKOMFRAH: THE UNFINISHED CONVERSATION A moving portrait of the life and work of cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who led the Cultural Studies department at the University of Birmingham from 1964, until Sun 26 June

MADE AT MAC: THE ART OF PRINTMAKING New artwork created by MAC's artist tutors and talented students who attended print-focused courses, until Sun 6 Nov

The Barber Institute

FOUNDING THE BARBER INSTITUTE: AN ARTS CENTRE AHEAD OF ITS TIME Archive material including rarely seen photographs and architectural

blueprints are featured in this fascinating display, put together to mark the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, until Sun 12 June

DÜRER: THE MAKING OF A RENAISSANCE MASTER Featuring works from the Royal Collection, including one of only two paintings by Dürer in the UK, Fri 17 June - Sun 25 Sept

Other VISUAL ARTS

JOY STICKS A family friendly, sport and games inspired exhibition where visitors have to work with others through physical activity to win the games, until Sat 27 August, Birmingham Open Media

PEOPLE, PLACE AND SPORT A collection of photographic portraits and recorded conversations with individuals who take part in everyday sports across the West Midlands, until Wed 31 Aug, Bournville Green, Birmingham Coach Station, Moseley Road Baths, St Pauls Square in the Jewellery Quarter, Haden Hill Leisure Centre, Hadley Stadium, Wednesbury Leisure Centre and West Bromwich Leisure Centre

JULIAN GERMAIN: GENERATIONS Large-scale photographic portrait project based on the aesthetic of the family portrait, until Fri 30 Sept, outdoor locations across Birmingham & Sandwell

CEREMONY: POP COMES TO CAMPUS Exploring and celebrating the contribution the University of Birmingham has made to local and international music culture. Featured items on display include posters, photographs and archive material, until Fri 28 Oct, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

THE AGE OF DREAMERS IS OVER Immersive exhibition bringing together interactive sculpture, sounds and light works from artists Louise Beer, Jack Lewdjaw and Mina Heydari-Waite, Fri 3 - Sat 25 June, Grand Union, Digbeth

RAJINA PERERA: TRAVELLERS A series of paintings, sonic art works and sculptures that animate ideas and issues of hybridity, ancestorship and futurity, Sat 4 June - Sat 6 Aug, Eastside Projects, Birmingham

HAFFENDI ANUAR; RUMAH BERKAKI (LEGGED HOUSE) Postcolonialism, architecture, ways of living and identity construction are among the subjects explored in the sculptures, paintings, installations and drawings of London and Kuala Lumpur-based Malaysian artist Haffendi, Fri 10 June - Mon 29 Aug, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham



The Script - Utilita Arena

Gigs

ASHANTI + TREY SONGZ + MARIO Wed 1 June, Utilita Arena

ODD SOUL + MADELYN Wed 1 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

YOUNG CULTURE BAND Wed 1 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

RICKY COOL & THE IN CROWD Wed 1 June, The Jam House

HANG MASSIVE Wed 1 June, O2 Institute

ACTION BRONSON + THE ALCHEMIST + EARL SWEATSHIRT Wed 1 June, O2 Academy

KATE NASH Wed 1 June, Castle & Falcon

THE SUMMER SET + MISERY KIDS Wed 1 June, The Asylum

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Wed 1 June, Symphony Hall

GILBERT O' SULLIVAN Wed 1 June, Birmingham Town Hall

GRANNY'S ATTIC Wed 1 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

MARGARITA WITCH CULT + UNSCHOOLING MUTES Thurs 2 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE MAJOR TOMS + THE ENIGMA STRING QUARTET + KATE O'MALLEY ON SAX Thurs 2 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JOHNNY2BAD Thurs 2 June, The Jam House

NOISY Thurs 2 June, O2 Institute

STAND ATLANTIC + CON + CRASHFACE Thurs 2 June, O2 Institute

TEDDY SWIMS Thurs 2 June, O2 Institute

KENNYHOOPLA Thurs 2 June, O2 Academy

SID GRIFFIN Thurs 2 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

THE SCRIPT Thurs 2 June, Utilita Arena

MALA Fri 3 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

TOMMY BLAIZE TRIO Fri 3 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

BNXN (BUJU) Fri 3 June, O2 Institute

ROACHFORD Fri 3 June, O2 Academy

JOHN POPE TRIO FEATURING MICHAEL MOORE Fri 3 June, Midlands Arts Centre

WEST COAST EAGLES Fri 3 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

RED LEMONS Fri 3 - Sat 4 June, The Jam House

MING CITY ROCKERS +

MODERN LITERATURE + UNO VAS + STEP FORWARD + CROOKED HOOKS + FALLEN HOUSE Sat 4 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LUNAR C Sat 4 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LUNA COHEN & SAM WATTS Sat 4 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

SPORTS TEAM + AKEMI FOX + BABY QUEEN + BAD SOUNDS & MANY MORE Sat 4 June, O2 Institute

GOSPEL REVISITED Sat 4 June, Birmingham Town Hall

ERASURED Sat 4 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

DADI FREYR + MICKEY CASTILLO Sun 5 June, O2 Institute

LIL LOTUS + SMRTDEATH Sun 5 June, Mama Roux's

JEFF BECK + SHARON CORR Sat 4 June, Symphony Hall



Kate Nash - Castle & Falcon

Classical Music Theatre

CBSO: QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CONCERT Featuring Ben Gernon (conductor) & John Suchet (pictured). Programme includes works by Walton, Grainger, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Coates, Selacoe, Wiseman, Loewe & Maxwell Davies, Thurs 2 June, Symphony Hall



LUNCHTIME GUITAR CONCERT Guitar music from the Spanish, Latin and classical repertoire, Fri 3 June, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

WM PLATINUM JUBILEE ANTHEM WORLD PREMIERE WITH CBSO Featuring Simon Halsey (conductor). Programme includes the world premiere of Jubilee Anthem Lighting Our Way by Oliver Hayne, Sat 4 June, Symphony Hall

THE ELGAR FOR EVERYONE FAMILY CONCERT Featuring the ESO Advanced Chamber Choir, ESO Intermediates Orchestra, ESO Beginners Orchestra & James Topp (conductor). Programme includes works by Bach, Brahms, David Burndrett, Richard Rodney Bennett & Ruth Gipps, Sun 5 June, Bromsgrove School

Comedy

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MIKE WILMOT & HELEN BAUER Thurs 2 June, The Glee Club

JOE LYCETT Fri 3 - Sat 4 June, Birmingham Hippodrome



ERIC RUSTON, ROGER MOREHOUSE, MIKE WILMOT & HELEN BAUER Fri 3 - Sat 4 June, The Glee Club

DALISO CHAPONDA, ANDREA HUBERT, JACK CAMPBELL & COMIC TBC Sat 4 June, Rosies Nightclub

KANE BROWN & TOMMY SADDHU Sun 5 June, The Glee Club

WOULD YOU BET AGAINST US? Brummie and lifetime Aston Villa fan Paul Hunter's 'funny, poignant, and uplifting' show about challenging expectations and proving people wrong, until Sat 4 June, Birmingham Rep

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS Amateur staging presented by Sutton Coldfield Musical Youth Theatre, until Sat 4 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

WARS OF THE ROSES The climax to Shakespeare's three-part Henry VI saga of nationhood and power, until Sat 4 June, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

HANDBAGGED Moira Buffini's witty, boisterous speculation on what might have taken place at the weekly meetings between Margaret Thatcher and the Queen, until Sat 4 June, Crescent Theatre

TRIGGER OF HAPPINESS Presented as part of BE Festival, Fri 3 - Sat 4 June, The Crescent Theatre

PASSION Intimate and violent multimedia piece telling the story of a young man and his fight to define his ideals. Written and performed by Royal Birmingham Conservatoire graduates Tom Dalrymple and Nadav Burstein, Fri 3 - Sun 5 June, The Old Joint Stock

Kids Shows

BILLIONAIRE BOY New production of David Walliams' bestselling children's story, Wed 1 - Sun 5 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Light Entertainment

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE Laughter, cabaret, mystery and glamour, Wed 1 June, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

RU PAUL'S DRAG RACE: WERK THE WORLD Join the queens of the critically acclaimed show for a choreographed extravaganza, Wed 1 June, Resorts World Arena

A RIGHT ROYAL KNEES UP Take a trip down memory lane with Jimmy Cricket & Leah Bell, Thurs 2 June, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

BENDELACREME IS... READY TO BE COMMITTED Global drag icon BenDeLaCreme presents her latest critically acclaimed narrative cabaret show, blending burlesque with comedy and original music, Sun 5 June, The Crescent Theatre



Billionaire Boy

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 1 - Sun 5 June

The always excellent Birmingham Stage Company make a welcome return with this clever and lively production. For those unfamiliar with David Walliams' original book, Billionaire Boy tells the tale of how Mr Spud made and lost his money, and how his son, Joe, became the richest boy in the world.

Events

MAY HALF-TERM FAMILY ACTIVITIES Fuel your kids' imagination with a range of jubilee activities, until Sun 5 June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

BOSTIN' JUBILEE BASH Celebrations of past monarchs, from the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria all the way to this month's platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, until Sun 5 June, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SAFARI STREET PARTY Celebrate with music, entertainment and much more fun over Whit Week, until Sun 5 June, West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

HALF-TERM FUN Experience the whole theme park, with all the fun and excitement of over 100 rides & attractions, until Sun 5 June, Drayton Manor Resort, Staffordshire

LEGO LEGENDS Celebrate the awesome work of the emergency services teams with some brick-tastic themed activities, until Sun 5 June, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre

DINO WEEK Open the gates to the new Raptor Ranch, where the T-Rex, velociraptor, triceratops and spinosaurus are waiting to meet you, until Sun 5 June, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent

MARDI GRAS Carnival-inspired takeover featuring 'an explosion of colours, sounds, entertainment, and themed food from the Deep South and around the world', until Sun 19 June, Alton Towers, Staffordshire

PEPPA PIG Meet Peppa as she dives into an adventure and makes friends

with some of the ocean's most incredible animals, until Sun 3 July, National SEA LIFE Centre

FREDDO'S FESTIVAL OF FUN The famous frog goes on a musical journey with his very own festival, until Sun 9 Oct, Cadbury World, Bournville



NATURE EXPLORERS AT SAREHOLE MILL Nature Explorers encourages children and their grown-ups to get hands-on with nature in the grounds of Sarehole Mill and the wider area, Wed 1 June, Sarehole Mill

SMETHWICK ENGINE STEAMING DAY Check out the power of the engine first hand after its recent extensive restoration, Wed 1 June, Thinktank Science Museum, Millennium Point

TALL TALES: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST STORYTELLING TOUR Interactive telling of the much-loved fairytale, Thurs 2 June, Aston Hall

EXPLORE BLAKESLEY Chance to explore Blakesley Hall, a fine Tudor house and beautiful gardens built in 1590, Wed 1 - Sun 5 June, Blakesley Hall

JUBILEE CROWN CRAFT Make your own unique crown to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee, Wed 1 -



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SATURDAY 23 JULY 2022

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC CONCERT ORCHESTRA

performing
Music from the Movies

PLUS

RUSSELL WATSON & THE OVERTONES

GATES 5.00PM
SHOW STARTS 6:30PM

TICKETS: ADULT (18+) = £37.50
YOUTH (10-17) = £27.50 (WITH FULL PAYING ADULT)
CHILD (9 & UNDER) = FREE (TICKET STILL REQ.)
FAMILY TICKET (2ADULT+2YOUTH) = £115

Tickets available from www.ticketmaster.co.uk
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Borough Council

Tickets may be subject to booking fee. Promoter has the right to change the line-up.

Tamworth Castle Grounds, Holloway, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7NA

Sun 5 June, Blakesley Hall

MIDLANDS AIR FESTIVAL Spectacle featuring over 100 hot-air balloons, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 June, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE The biggest platinum jubilee party outside of London across the 16-mile line, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 June, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS Pop along dressed up in your best red, white & blue clothing and enjoy traditional jubilee activities, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 June, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

CAMPER SITE - JUBILEE EDITION Live music, street food, late-night discos and entertainment, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 June, Weston Park, Shropshire

A TALE OF TWO MONARCHS Enjoy a queen's garden party whilst a 17th-century king's army and forces of parliament clash on the fields of Avoncroft, Fri 3 - Sun 5 June, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

UK GAMES EXPO All aspects of the tabletop gaming hobby are represented under one roof, Fri 3 - Sun 5 June, NEC

CIRCUS SKILLS ACTIVITY AT BLAKESLEY

HALL Have a go at juggling, diabolo, hula hoops, spinning plates, balance beam and tightrope, Sat 4 June, Blakesley Hall

GUIDED TOUR OF WEOLEY CASTLE

Explore Weoley Castle with experienced guides, Sat 4 June, Weoley Castle

WEOLEY CASTLE BIOBLITZ Explore the Weoley Castle Ruins, making a record of the plants, animals, and insects you find, Sat 4 June, Weoley Castle

ASTON ARTS CLUB Completely free drop-in club open to all. Relax and create together, Sat 4 June, Aston Hall

A PLATINUM JUBILEE TEA Celebrate the platinum jubilee with a special tea in the marquee, Sat 4 - Sun 5 June, Cadbury World, Bournville

THE BIG JUBILEE LUNCH Fun activities for children, Sun 5 June, Masefield Community Garden, Birmingham

BIG JUBILEE LUNCH Community get-together, Sun 5 June, St Marks Church Hall, Smethwick

STIRCHLEY AFTERNOON TEA Food, refreshments & light entertainment. Focusing on older residents in the neighbourhood, Sun 5 June,



Jubilee Crown Craft - Blakesley Hall

Stirchley Baths

QUIET AT THE AQUARIUM A quieter Sea Life experience that aims to provide a more comfortable visit for those with autism and other sensory requirements, Sun 5 June, National SEA LIFE Centre

VINTAGE MOTORSPORT FESTIVAL

Highlights will likely include cars from as far back as the 1920s and championships for cars from vintage, pre-war and historic eras, Sun 5 June, Donington Park

FUN CLUB: SWING-A-DING Daytime social event aimed at older audiences, Mon 6 June, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

CASTLE KIDS PLAYGROUP A stay & play group for children aged up to five, Tues 7 June, Weoley Castle

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLUB Whether you're looking for help to improve your English or support for a qualification, these free drop-in classes are here to help, Tues 7 June, Soho House



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illyria.co.uk

Individual venues might not host all three titles. Check tour dates online.
Photo: @GordonScammell



HAMLET

THE COMEDY

14-16 June
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
belgrade.co.uk
024 7655 3055

14-16 July
Markeaton Craft Village, Derby
derbylive.co.uk
01332 255800

22-23 July
Mary Arden's Farm, Wilmslow
oddssocks.co.uk
0333 666 3366

17 June
The Place, Telford
theplacetelford.com
01952 382382

20 July
Nottingham Castle
nottinghamcastle.org.uk

9-10 July
Midlands Arts Centre
macbirmingham.co.uk
0121 446 3232

21 July
Coach House, Matlock
oddssocks.co.uk
0333 666 3366

24 July
Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove
oddssocks.co.uk
0333 666 3366



Faith No More - O2 Academy

Gigs

STEVE WICKHAM

(WATERBOYS) + JOE CHESTER Mon 6 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

JESS JOCOY Tues 7 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

SORRY Wed 8 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LOU WARREN BAND Wed 8 June, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

FAITH NO MORE Wed 8 June, O2 Academy

JIMMY WEBB Wed 8 June, Birmingham Town Hall

MADISON VIOLET Wed 8 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

ALICIA KEYS Thurs 9 June, Utilita Arena

BIG SHIP ALLIANCE FEATURING ROBBIE LEVI + DJ COMMISSIONER

BENJI + DJ FITZ Thurs 9 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JON SPENCER & THE HITMAKERS + QUASI Thurs 9 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE COLLECTIVE Thurs 9 June, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

NELL BRYDEN Thurs 9 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

TALON Thurs 9 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE CARPENTERS STORY Thurs 9 June, The Alexandra

HANNAH READ & MICHAEL STARKEY Thurs 9 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

WE ARE (NOT) DEVO Fri 10 June, Hare & Hounds, King's Heath

ELIZA MAY Fri 10 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

THE HIGH KINGS Fri 10 June, Birmingham Town Hall

URBAN INTRO Fri 10 - Sat 11 June, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

BLUES CLUB - ACTS TBC Sat 11 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

TRIONIQ Sat 11 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

EMMA BLACKERY + BRONNIE Sat 11 June, O2 Institute

UK FLEETWOOD MAC + GIANT AND THE GEORGES + MATT TREGORTHA Sat 11 June, O2 Institute

LP Sat 11 June, O2 Academy

BASIL GABBIDON & THE GABBIDON BAND Sat 11 June, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

QUEEN + ADAM LAMBERT Sat 11 - Sun 12 June, Utilita Arena

LAURA VEIRS Sun 12 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BOB MOULD Sun 12 June, The Mill, Digbeth

SUBSTANCE (NEW ORDER TRIBUTE) + THOMPSON TWINS EXPERIENCE Sun 12 June, Fletchers Bar

THE SANDY DENNY EXPERIENCE Sun 12 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

TUBULAR BELLS LIVE! WITH PHIL TOMS Sun 12 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER

Programme includes works by Walton, Bull, Gibbons, Anon, JC Bach, Coates, Binge & Elgar, Mon 6 June, Birmingham Town Hall

NEW ELEMENTS TRIO Featuring Adrian Wang (violin), Hsuan-Hsuan Lee (piano) & Yuxuan Lu (cello). Programme includes works by Debussy & Shostakovich, Mon 6 June, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

YUSHENG GAO PIANO CONCERT Tues 7 June, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO: HANDEL'S MESSIAH Featuring Richard Egarr (conductor), Mary Bevan (soprano), Reginald Mobley (counter tenor), James Gilchrist (tenor) and Christopher Purves (baritone), Wed 8 June, Symphony Hall

CBSO CENTRE STAGE Featuring Jonathan Martindale (violin), Christopher Yates (viola), Helen Edgar (cello), Julian Atkinson (double bass) & John Thwaites (piano). Programme includes works by Vaughan Williams & Faure, Thurs 9 June, CBSO Centre

CONCERTO BUDAPEST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Andras Keller (conductor) & Angela Hewitt (piano). Programme includes works by Bartók, Mozart & Beethoven, Thurs 9 June, Symphony Hall

CBSO: RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN SOME ENCHANTED EVENING Featuring Martin Yates (conductor), Scott Davies, Gina Beck, Alice Fearn & Rob Houchen (vocalists), Fri 10 June, Symphony Hall

CONDUCTOR'S ENSEMBLE Featuring Julian Hauptmann & Dexter Drown. Programme includes works by Wagner, Ibert & Grace Williams, Fri 10 June, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: MAHLER'S SEVENTH SYMPHONY Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor), Sun 12 June, Birmingham Town Hall

ALEXANDRA WHITTINGHAM AND VIDA GUITAR QUARTER Sun 12 June, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy

BRING YOUR OWN BABY COMEDY Tues 7 June, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, IAN STONE & ABIGAIL SCHUMANN Thurs 9 June, The Glee Club

POLSKI KLUB COMEDY Fri 10 June, The Glee Club

AL MURRAY'S GIG FOR VICTORY Fri 10 June, The Alexandra

IAN SMITH, BARRY DODDS, IAN STONE & ABIGOLIAH SCHAMAUN Fri 10 - Sat 11 June, The Glee Club

BRUM CRAIC Tues 14, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall

ALI COOK, ADAM STAUNTON, LIAM FARRELLY & ROSS SMITH Sat 11, Rosies Nightclub

RUSSELL KANE Sun 12 June, Birmingham Hippodrome



COUNT ARTHUR STRONG Sun 12 June, The Alexandra

ADAM ROWE Sun 12 June, The Glee Club

Theatre

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN Journey back to the glamour of Hollywood in the Roaring '20s with Jonathan Church's critically acclaimed production, Mon 6 - Sat 11 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

LADIES OF LETTERS Only Fools And Horses actors Tessa Peake-Jones and Gwyneth Strong come together in Jonathan Harvey's staging of the BBC Radio Four drama of the same name, Tues 7 - Thurs 9 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

WEST SIDE STORY Amateur staging presented by The Trinity Players, Tues 7 - Sat 11 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE WHITE CARD Claudia Rankine's first published play questions whether society can progress when whiteness remains invisible, Tues 7 - Sat 18 June, The Rep

SOME VOICES Royal Birmingham Conservatoire present Joe Penhall's powerful and moving drama about mental health, innocence, loyalty and love, Wed 8 - Sat 11 June, Old Rep

A WINTER'S TALE The Shakespeare Institute delve into the mystery of the missing queen... Fri 10 - Sat 11 June, The Rep

PLAYBOY OF THE WEST INDIES Mustapha Matura's classic play has been transformed into a brand-new musical rooted in the Caribbean, Fri 10 June - Sat 2 July, The Rep



Alicia Keys - Utilita Arena

MRS KAPOOR'S DAUGHTER'S WEDDING Bollywood dancing, live singing and comedy sketches combine in a show that follows the build-up to a huge Asian wedding, Sat 11 June, The Alexandra

Kids Shows

WIND IN THE WILLOWS Nouveau Theatre School present an amateur staging of Kenneth Grahame's riverside tale, Sat 11 June, The Crescent Theatre

AWFUL AUNTIE Heartbreak Productions presents David Walliams' popular story, which follows orphan Stella Saxby as she pits her wits against her awful Aunt Alberta to save Saxby Hall, Sun 12 June, Bewdley Museum

ERROL'S GARDEN Interactive musical featuring catchy songs, big ideas and passion for plants. Suitable for children aged three to 11, Sun 12 - Mon 13 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Dance

BALLET CENTRAL Featuring new pieces from choreographers Ashley Page, Mithuthuzeli November and Mikaela Polley, alongside a re-staging of Cathy Marston's Moving, Still, Thurs 9 June, Crescent Theatre

B-SIDE HIP-HOP FESTIVAL Annual festival bringing together 'extraordinary artists and breathtaking acts' from across all four elements of hip-hop - breakin', graffiti, DJing and MCing, Sat 11 - Sun 19 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

JINKX MONSOON & MAJOR SCALES - TOGETHER AGAIN, AGAIN! RuPaul's Drag Race winner Jinkx Monsoon and musical prodigy Major Scales return to the UK with their 'most outrageous, salacious and sacrilegious show yet', Wed 8 June, The Alexandra

ANDY EASTWOOD'S MERRY MUSICAL MATINEE Midday variety featuring comedian Gerry Graham and Britain's Got Talent ventriloquist Steve Hewlett, Thurs 9 June, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

BINGO AT TIFFANY'S Join award-winning character comedian Tracey Collins (Tina Turner Tea Lady), appearing as her creation Audrey Heartburn, for an evening of bingo games, raucous singalongs and

glamorous dancing, Fri 10 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre

SHELL SUIT CHER Award-winning show in which Tracey Collins (Tina Turner Tea Lady) turns the music icon into a shellsuit-wearing, chain-smoking, bingo host... Sat 11 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre

Events

FUN CLUB: SWING-A-DING Daytime social event aimed at older audiences, Mon 6 June, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

CASTLE KIDS PLAYGROUP A stay & play group for children aged up to five, Tues 7 June, Weoley Castle

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLUB Whether you're looking for help to improve your English or support for a qualification, these free drop-in classes are here to help, Tues 7 June, Soho House

WORLD OF PARK & LEISURE HOMES SHOW Providing plenty of inspiration for a leisure-led lifestyle, Fri 10 - Sun 12 June, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

DEVA DUBS VOLKSWAGEN RALLY Full weekend of show cars and live music, Fri 10 - Sun 12 June, West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

MORNING EXPLORERS Early opening for people and families with children on the autistic spectrum, living with a sensory processing disorder or who have other special needs, Sat 11 June, Thinktank Science Museum

INSPIRED FAMILY DAY A free family fun day packed with a range of creative and engaging activities for all ages, Sat 11 June, Birmingham City University City Centre Campus

ADULT ONE-DAY WRITING RETREAT Join scriptwriter Gaby Songui for this one-day writing retreat, using the backdrop of Aston Hall to fire your creativity, Sat 11 June, Aston Hall

CLASSIC & VINTAGE COMMERCIAL SHOW Featuring hundreds of pre-2002 commercial vehicles, including lorries, vans and pick-ups, Sat 11 - Sun 12 June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

MIDSUMMER CARNIVAL Warwick Castle presents 'the ultimate Tudor carnival celebration', Sat 11 June - Sun 10 July, Warwick Castle

SOUL MEDICINE FESTIVAL First edition of the festival that aims to 'inspire, empower and uplift', Sun 12 June, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

THE COSFORD AIR SHOW Telling a 70-year story of aviation and royalty, this year's show will celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee 2022, Sun 12 June, RAF Cosford, Nr Wolverhampton



Dreamboys

Buzz Bingo, Sat 11 June

Ladies (and gentlemen, for that matter), if you like your fellas naked and sporting six-packs, this is the show for you. Tossing their clothes aside like so much unwanted material, male stripper act The Dreamboys return to the Midlands after scoring splendid sell-out successes with their previous tours. Presenting a show that brings together high-energy dance routines, West End choreography and audience participation, the lads are joined on this occasion by former fireman and Love Island star Michael Griffiths.



Sutton Coldfield TOWN HALL
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suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com

NOW BOOKING

ONE NIGHT OF BILLY JOEL - THE PIANO MAN
Thurs 15 September - 7.30pm

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
SUTTON COLDFIELD MUSICAL YOUTH THEATRE
Tuesday 31 May - Saturday 4 June
(Tues - Sat at 7.30pm, Sat matinee at 2.30pm)

WEST SIDE STORY
PRESENTED BY THE TRINITY PLAYERS
Tuesday 7 - Saturday 11 June
(Tues - Sat at 7.30pm, Sat matinee at 2.30pm)

TUBULAR BELLS LIVE!
12 PIECE BAND CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF MIKE OLDFIELD
Sunday 12 June (7.30pm)

THE ROYAL BUSINESS FAIR 2022
FREE SUTTON COLDFIELD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENT
FEATURING STANDS AND SEMINARS. REGISTER ONLINE.
Fri 17 June (10am-3pm)

NORTHERN LIVE - DO I LOVE YOU
OVER 30 NORTHERN SOUL HITS FROM A LIVE 11 PIECE BAND!
Saturday 2 July (7.30pm)

BIRMINGHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL
LIVE AND FREE - MUSIC IN THE BAR
Monday 18 July (from 7pm)

PSYCHOLOGY OF SERIAL KILLERS
WITH JENNIFER REES
Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 August (7.30pm)

UNDISCOVERED TALENT UK
TALENT COMPETITION WITH ALL TYPES OF ACTS
Saturday 20 August (7.30pm)

GO YOUR OWN WAY - FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY
Saturday 10 September (7.30pm)

LUTHER - THE LEGEND LIVES ON
INTERNATIONAL LUTHER WANDERLUST TRIBUTE
Friday 16 and Saturday 17 September (7.30pm)

MADE IN DAGENHAM
TUDOR MUSICAL COMEDY SOCIETY PRODUCTION
Tuesday 20 - Saturday 24 September (from 7pm)



Crowded House - Utilita Arena

Gigs

TATE MCRAE + ALEXANDER 23 Mon 13 June, O2 Institute

ZACH LOUNT Mon 13 June, Castle & Falcon

ELVIS COSTELLO & THE IMPOSTERS Mon 13 June, Symphony Hall

KINGS OF LEON Mon 13 June, Resorts World Arena

MAMA'S BROKE Mon 13 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

CROWDED HOUSE Tues 14 June, Utilita Arena

DEATH VALLEY GIRLS Tues 14 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

TLC Tues 14 June, O2 Academy



THE UTOPIA STRONG Wed 15 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CODY PENNINGTON COUNTRY SHOW Wed 15 June, Hare & Hounds

SHALAMAR Wed 15 June, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

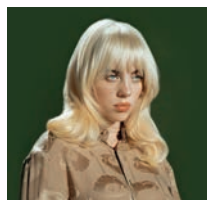
TEMS Wed 15 June, O2 Institute

DRAUGED UNDER Wed 15 June, The Asylum

BILLY IDOL + THE GOGO'S Wed 15 June, Resorts World Arena

SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK - THE ROD STEWART STORY Wed 15 June, The Alexandra

BILLIE EILISH Wed 15 June, Utilita Arena



RORY AND THE ISLAND Thurs 16 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

YOUTH KILLED IT Thurs 16 June, The Sunflower Lounge

DISCO DISCIPLES Thurs 16 June, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

ROME STREETZ Thurs 16 June, O2 Institute

PARQUET COURTS Thurs 16 June, O2 Institute

MACY GRAY Thurs 16 June, Birmingham Town Hall

BLOOD RED SHOES Thurs 16 June, The Rainbow, Digbeth

JAMES MADDOCK Thurs 16 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

WOLFGANG FLUR + PETER DUGGAL Fri 17 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BARRY HILTON Fri 17 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

PIL + BRIX SMITH Fri 17 June, O2 Institute

TIM BURGESS Fri 17

June, Castle & Falcon
BEYOND THE BRICKS OF BRUM FEAT. BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, BLACK VOICES, CASEY BAILEY, SANITY Fri 17 June, Symphony Hall

BARRY MANILOW + CURTIS STIGERS Fri 17 June, Resorts World Arena

AMPLIFY SOUNDS - OPEN MIC Fri 17 June, The Rainbow, Digbeth

YASMIN WILLIAMS + GWENIFER RAYMOND Fri 17 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

MR BEN Fri 17 - Sat 18 June, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

BLUES CLUB - ACTS TBC Sat 18 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

KING AWESOME Sat 18 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JEROME HILL + SUBCITIZEN + CHROMATOUCH Sat 18 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JOHN FISHER AND IDMC GOSPEL SOUL CHOIR Sat 18 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

SHARON VAN ETEN + L'RAIN Sat 18 June, O2 Institute

LEON BRIDGES Sat 18 June, O2 Academy

RONAN KEATING Sat 18 June, Symphony Hall

CURRENT JOYS Sun 19 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

GLADYS KNIGHT Sun 19 June, Symphony Hall

Classical Music

VENESCA YAPSON PIANO CONCERT

Programme includes works by Sumera, Scarlatti & Strauss, Mon 13 June, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

HSUAN WU PERCUSSION CONCERT

Programme comprises Christopher Deane's Mourning Dove Sonnet; Javier Alvarez's Temazcal; Vinko Globokar's Corporel & Pierre Jodlowski's Time and Money, Tues 14 June, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

KILIAN SCHOLLA PIANO CONCERT Tues 14 June, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER MUSIC BY

CANDLELIGHT Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor) & George Parris (associate conductor), Wed 15 June, Hereford Cathedral

PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA:

SHOSTAKOVICH Also featuring Ludovic Morlot (conductor). Programme includes works by Thorvaldsdottir, Britten & Shostakovich, Wed 15 - Thurs 16 June, Symphony Hall

EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER MUSIC BY

CANDLELIGHT Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor) & George Parris (associate conductor), Thurs 16 June, St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

SIMONE DAMIANI PIANO CONCERT Thurs 16 June, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: BEYOND

THE BRICKS OF BRUM Featuring Dalia Stasevska (conductor), Jules Buckley (arrangements & orchestrations), Black Voices, Casey Bailey & Sanity, Fri 17 June, Symphony Hall

Comedy

ROB BECKETT Tues 14 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MICK FERRY & COMIC TBC Thurs 16 June, The Glee Club

EMMANUEL SONUBI, ANTHONY J BROWN, MICK FERRY, LIAM FARRELLY & ELLY SHAW Fri 17 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANIEL KITSON Fri 17 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)



EMMANUEL SONUBI, ANTHONY J BROWN, MICK FERRY & LIAM FARRELLY Sat 18 June, The Glee Club

THE RAYMOND AND MR TIMPKINS REVUE, ADAM BEARDSMORE, LILY PHILLIPS & DAISY EARL Sat 18 June, Rosies Nightclub

ROUGH WORKS - NEW MATERIAL NIGHT Sun 19 June, The Glee Club

Theatre

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW Richard O'Brien's iconic musical starring Ore Oduba as Brad, Mon 13 - Sat 18 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HAMLET: THE COMEDY Oddsocks present a unique take on Shakespeare's famous tragedy, Tues 14 - Thurs 16 June, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

MADE IN DAGENHAM Amateur staging presented by Queensbridge Musical Theatre Society, Tues 14 - Sat 18 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

OFFSIDE The story of women's football in the UK, as told through the eyes of a modern professional female footballer, Thurs 16 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)



EVERYDAY Deafinitely Theatre present a new work which draws on the true stories of deaf women and non-binary people's experiences of surviving abuse, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 June, The Rep

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL ON STAGE!

Amateur staging presented by Birmingham Youth Theatre, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 June, Old Rep

JANE EYRE Heartbreak Productions' adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's classic follows the eponymous heroine as she battles many ordeals, aided by 'astounding acrobats and jaw-dropping jugglers' Sat 18 June, Castle Bromwich Gardens

AS YOU LIKE IT Presented by The Lord Chamberlain's Men, Sat 18 June, Packwood House, Solihull

MUCH ADO ABOUT MURDER Heartbreak Productions present an original murder-mystery where five suspects are put under the spotlight... Sat 18 June, Castle Bromwich Gardens

Dance

DIVERSITY: CONNECTED 2022 The Britain's Got Talent winners present a new show focusing on social media,

Monday 13 - Sunday 19 June



Diversity - The Alexandra

the internet and the digital era, Mon 13 - Tues 14 June, The Alexandra

25 YEARS OF LORD OF THE DANCE A revived and updated version of Michael Flatley's much-loved dance spectacle, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 June, The Alexandra

SENSE New original performance by Critical Mass, an inclusive dance-participation project bringing together young people, with and without disabilities, from across the West Midlands, Fri 17 June, Centenary Square

MIRAGE, A DAY OF CELEBRATION BY COMPAGNIE DYPYTIK UK premiere where fences, barbed wire, rusty metal sheets and hanging flags provide the backdrop to an athletic performance featuring traditional dances inspired by the experience of the inhabitants of a camp on the West Bank, Fri 17 - Sun 19 June, Victoria Square

SAMARPAN MAHOTSAV: A CELEBRATION OF INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE Curated by Jaivant Patel Dance, Sat 18 June, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

TAPPIN' IN Mass-participation tap-dancing and storytelling 'extravaganza', Sat 18 June, Brindleyplace

STEP HOP HOUSE BY FOLK DANCE REMIXED 'Quirky, colourful and magical' collision of traditional and hip-hop dance and music, presenting a unique remix of maypole, clogging, ceilidh, street, house and breakdance, with an added hint of African & Bollywood, Sat 18 - Sun 19 June, Centenary Square

Light Entertainment

GUARDIAN FOOTBALL WEEKLY LIVE Each show will feature the podcast's unique take on the world of football, as well as audience interaction, special guests and at least two anecdotes you haven't heard on the podcast before!, Wed 15 June,

Birmingham Town Hall

THE LAST DRAGONS A collection of traditional and original dragon myths from Britain and Asia, brought to life by award-winning performance storyteller Jason Buck, Fri 17 June, The Blue Orange Theatre

TROPICANA Join queer cabaret icon Aidan Sadler for an evening of '80s synth-pop nostalgia punctuated with stand-up comedy, Fri 17 - Sat 18 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre



Events

CASTLE KIDS PLAYGROUP Stay & play group for children up to the age of five with their parents or carers, Tues 14 June, Weoley Castle

GAYDON GATHERING All motoring enthusiasts and vehicles welcomed, Tues 14 June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLUB If you're looking for help to improve your English or support for a qualification, these free drop-in classes are here to help, Tues 14 June, Soho House

PLANETARIUM LATES - ELIZA PLANETS In collaboration with Colin Hutcheson at Thinktank Planetarium, Wrenne & Tanna Chamberlain have created a multimedia experience using original music, dance and film, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 June, Thinktank Science Museum

BBC GARDENERS' WORLD LIVE An inspirational day out featuring plants, shopping, live entertainment, expert advice and your favourite Gardeners' World presenters, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 June, NEC

BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW SUMMER

Featuring seasonal treats, live demonstrations, masterclasses and hundreds of artisan producers, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 June, NEC

POTFEST BY THE LAKE Vibrant three-day artisan ceramics market showcasing the work of over 80 of the UK's finest ceramics artists and artisan pottery makers, Fri 17 June, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

DEAF RAVE Unique experience promising fun, good music and laughter, Fri 17 June, Centenary Square

WHAT'S IN STORE - BEARWOOD Black Country Touring present two days of pop-up events in shops, bars and takeaways, Fri 17 - Sat 18 June, various locations, Bearwood

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL Showcasing the very best of Great British produce in time for Father's Day, Fri 17 - Sun 19 June, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

ROYAL THREE COUNTIES SHOW 2022 A long weekend of 'fantastic food, farming and family fun', Fri 17 - Sun 19 June, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

WESTON PARK AIR SHOW Featuring

model and full-sized aircraft displays, off-road and circuit model car racing, model boats and helicopters, Fri 17 - Sun 19 June, Weston Park

MIDLANDS TALENT CENTENARY SQUARE TAKEOVER Talented Midlanders present 'inspiring, fun and engaging performances', Sat 18 - Sun 19 June, Centenary Square

THE NATIONAL CYCLING SHOW An immersive retail experience enabling consumers to 'try and buy' everything from bikes to accessories, Sat 18 - Sun 19 June, NEC

YOGA AND MOVEMENT WITH DIONNE A space to land, explore, rest, be, unwind, release some tension and create space, Sun 19 June (11am), Centenary Square

MOBILISE BY FATT PROJECTS Huge interactive queer silent disco dance party, Sun 19 June (2pm), Centenary Square



CONCERTS AT THE GARDENS

Birmingham Botanical Gardens & Glasshouses is proud to present their brand new musical series, 'Concerts at the Gardens'.

10/06/2022 ABBA
08/07/2022 SHIRLEY BASSEY
12/08/2022 STEVIE WONDER
09/09/2022 DOLLY PARTON
14/10/2022 UB40

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Toyah - Symphony Hall

Gigs

DIANA ROSS Mon 20 June, Utilita Arena

ABC Mon 20 June, Symphony Hall

SARAH POTENZA Mon 20 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

KALEO + BELLE MT Tues 21 June, O2 Academy

JAKE SHIMABUKURO Tues 21 June, The Glee Club

CAHALEN MORRISON Tues 21 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

TRY2SMILE Wed 22 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

TIFFANY Wed 22 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

URBAN SOUL Wed 22 June, The Jam House

THE ORB Wed 22 June, O2 Institute

KHRUANGBIN Wed 22 June, O2 Academy

BATTLES Wed 22 June, Castle & Falcon

CRAIG GOULD + JENNY COLQUITT Wed 22 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

DR LINUS + BIG TROPPIY Thurs 23 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ASHLEY ALLEN Thurs 23 June, Hare & Hounds

BROTHER STRUT Thurs 23 June, The Jam House

STEVE TILSTON Thurs 23 June, Kitchen Garden

Cafe, Kings Heath

STEVE NORMAN & THE SLEEVEZ Thurs 23 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

ALANIS MORISSETTE Thurs 23 June, Utilita Arena

REPLAY Fri 24 June, Hare & Hounds

ELECTRIC SWING CIRCUS Fri 24 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MAJOR TO MINOR Fri 24 June, Pizza Express Live, Brindley Place

THE WONDER STUFF + MY LIFE STORY (ACOUSTIC) Fri 24 June, O2 Academy

DRUG CHURCH + ANGEL DUST Fri 24 June, Castle & Falcon

TOYAH + LENE LOVICH + SAFFRON OF REPUBLICA Fri 24 June, Birmingham Town Hall

YES Fri 24 June, Symphony Hall

STEVE GIBBONS BAND Fri 24 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

BLUES CLUB - ACTS TBC Sat 25 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

RARE AMERICANS Sat 25 June, O2 Institute

DEVOUT... DEPECHE MODE TRIBUTE Sat 25 June, O2 Academy

WATERPARKS + BAD SUNS + PHEM Sat 25 June, O2 Academy

MUSHROOMHEAD Sat 25 June, The Asylum

ZOE RAHMAN TRIO Sat 25 June, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall

METZ JNR BAND Sun 26 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BLACK BOMBERS + DIABLO FURS Sun 26 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

PHOEBE BRIDGERS Sun 26 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MNOZIL BRASS Sun 26 June, Symphony Hall

FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS Sun 26 June, Resorts World Arena

DARDEN SMITH Sun 26 June, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Kings Heath

THE BEAT Mon 27 June, The Glee Club

THE LOVE BAND Tues 28 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE COLD STARES Tues 28 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

GEORGE BENSON Tues 28 June, Symphony Hall

BLACK TOP WITH XHOSA COLE Tues 28 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

MAJOR RUSE Wed 29 June, Hare & Hounds

THE BOBBY LEES Wed 29 June, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CHRIS BOWDEN & THE HYPNO FILES Thurs 30 June, Hare & Hounds

Classical Music

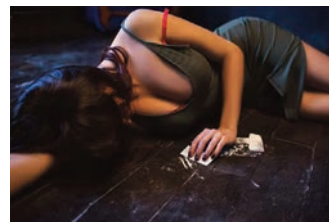
EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor) & George Parris (associate conductor), Tues 21 - Wed 22 June, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

CBSO: MAHLER'S RESURRECTION Featuring Markus Stenz (conductor), Janai Brugger (soprano) & Karen Cargill (mezzo soprano). Programme includes works by A & R Panufnik & Mahler, Wed 22 & Sat 25 June, Symphony Hall

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: LUX AETERNA Featuring Paul Spicer (conductor) & Callum Alger (organist), Sat 25 June, St Paul's Church

summer of 1974, Wed 22 June, The Hub, Lichfield

THE KNOT OF THE HEART David Elridge's honest portrayal of addiction, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Oscar Wilde's classic social satire, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 June, The Crescent Theatre

RICHARD III Gregory Doran directs Arthur Hughes in this climax to Shakespeare's first history cycle, Thurs 23 June - Sat 8 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Five couples - three human, one fairy and one mythical - find their relationships sorely tested, intimately probed and indecently exposed in Illyria's outdoor staging, Fri 24 June, Winterbourne Gardens

MRS BROWN'S BOYS D'LIVE SHOW The award-winning Brendan O'Carroll promises to take audiences on an 'exhilarating and side-splitting adventure', Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, Utilita Arena

ROMEO & JULIET Stafford Festival Shakespeare returns with 'the world's greatest love story'. Archers actress Madeleine Leslay stars as Juliet opposite Tom Lane as Romeo. Gill Jordan (best known for playing the character of benefits-scrounging 'lazy cow' Doreen Tipton) takes on the role of Nurse, Fri 24 June - Sat 9 July, Stafford Castle

MAY QUEEN Frankie Meredith's

Comedy

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN & MARK SIMMONS Thurs 23 June, The Glee Club

SEAN COLLINS, JARLATH REGAN, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN & MARK SIMMONS Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, The Glee Club

TOM LUCY, MIKE NEWALL, AARON SIMMONDS & MORGAN REES Sat 25, Rosies Nightclub

LUNCHTIME FAMILY COMEDY SHOW WITH ROBIN MORGAN, BARBARA NICE & FOXDOG STUDIOS Sun 26 June, The Glee Club

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, DAVE FULTON & COMIC TBC Thurs 30 June, The Glee Club

Theatre

THE DAMNED UNITED Stage adaptation of David Peace's award-winning novel about Brian Clough's 44 days as manager of Leeds United in the



Richard III - Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon



Derren Brown: *Showman - The Alexandra*

acclaimed one-hander addresses themes of consent, lack of consent, folklore and growing up... Sat 25 June - Sat 2 July, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

MAYBE THIS TIME Birmingham Ormiston Academy Year 12 students celebrate the legacy of John Kander and Frank Ebb with tributes to *Cabaret*, *Chicago*, *Kiss Of The Spider Woman* and more... Mon 27 - Tues 28 June, Old Rep

DEAD LIES Hilary Bonner's fast-paced political thriller starring Jeremy Edwards (*Hollyoaks*/*Holby City*), Alicia Charles (*Coronation Street*), Portia Booroff (*Doctors*) and Claire Dyson (*Made In Italy*), Wed 29 - Thurs 30 June, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THINGS I KNOW TO BE TRUE Andrew Bovell's story of a family and marriage, seen through the eyes of four grown siblings struggling to define themselves beyond their parents' love and expectations, Tues 28 June - Sat 2 July, The Crescent Theatre

GUYS AND DOLLS BMOS Musical Theatre Company presents an amateur staging of Frank Loesser's Broadway musical, Tues 28 June - Sat 2 July, The Alexandra

WAITRESS Hit West End musical starring Chelsea Halfpenny as a waitress and expert pie-maker in search of happiness. Matt Willis also stars, Tues 28 June - Sat 2 July, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

DESIRING GOD BY MAVIN KHOO & AKSHAY SHARMA Stories of love, lust, desire and heartbreak are the focus of this experimental evening of dance, presented as part of Birmingham International Dance Festival 2022, Wed 22 June, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

KRE8! A diverse cast of eight international guest dancers go head to head to the sound of a live band

and DJ, Thurs 23 June (5pm), Centenary Square

CROWD_CTRL BY ANDROIDX + MEGAHERTZ Four dancers from London's Dragonsquad busking crew (of Oxford Circus fame) turn their personal history of the Afrobeats movement into a futuristic odyssey in a high-impact dance, sound and visual experience for outdoor settings, Thurs 23 & Fri 24 June, Centenary Square

ON YOUR MARKS Birmingham Royal Ballet present a triple bill of works celebrating 'the expressive energy and gravity-defying athleticism of the company's world-class dancers'. Programme comprises 24, New Nunes & Lazuli Sky, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

PUZZLE BY TENTACLE TRIBE A dynamic and complex collage, made up of excerpts from Emmanuelle Lê Phan and Elon Höglund's repertoire, which brings together some of Montreal's best street dancers, Thurs 23 June & Sat 25 June, Centenary Square

GHOST BY TENTACLE TRIBE Canadian-Swedish creative alliance Emmanuelle Lê Phan and Elon Höglund combine elements of contemporary dance, street dance and martial arts in a physical score that echoes the subtle pulse of respiration, Fri 24 June, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome



HOW TO BUILD A UNIVERSE BY EXTENDED PLAY Brand-new dance in which choreographer Jamaal Burkmar reimagines the formation of our universe with collective human experience at its core, Fri 24 June, Chamberlain Square

MUGHAL MINIATURES BY SONIA SABRI COMPANY Dance, live music, theatre,

puppetry, intricate costuming and set design create living versions of Indian miniature paintings, Fri 24 June, Centenary Square

TIMELESS BY JOLI VYANN New work which moves through the narrative of climate change, its consequences and the larger questions of how humanity copes with the precarious balance that could at any point tip into chaos, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, Victoria Square

BORN TO PROTEST BY JUST US DANCE THEATRE The second part of a hip-hop dance theatre trilogy, created by Joseph Toonga, which highlights black excellence and challenges racial stigma, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, Chamberlain Square

DANDYISM BY PATRICK ZIZA DANCE Playful performance featuring high-stepping footwork and inspired by the original African Dandies who represented empowerment and post-colonial freedom, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, various times & locations, Birmingham

VOID BY COMPANY CHAMELEON A male & female duet explore not only the space created by the pandemic but also what has moved into that space - both good & bad, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, Centenary Square

DEVA BY URJA DESAI THAKORE & HETAIN PATEL Challenging myths and expectations of the South Asian body in Indian classical dance, Thakore and Patel present the complexities of British Asian identity through a playful approach to classicism, connecting dance grammar and the everyday, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, Victoria Square

BLACK VICTORIANS BY JEANEFER JEAN CHARLES Exploring a complex but often forgotten black presence in pre-Windrush Britain, Jeanefer Jean Charles' performance calls attention to previously hidden figures and challenges historical and contemporary perceptions, Fri 24 - Sun 26 June, Centenary Square

COME ON FEET BY GRANVAT A dance and live-music performance harnessing the energy and craft of underground dance forms (footwork, house, afro house, beats) and the aesthetics of a contemporary dance performance, Sat 25 June, Centenary Square

ECHOES BY CIA MOCED The third part of a trilogy dedicated to the relationship between reality and fiction, Sat 25 - Sun 26 June, Chamberlain Square

BLAME GAME BY CRYING OUT LOUD A genre-defying movement language is here used to explore the dirty politics of scapegoating, Sat 25 - Sun 26 June, Chamberlain Square

BONDED Alleyne Dance explore the construct of human dependency - especially that of siblings - and how time and external conditions can affect the synergetic connection, Sat

25 - Sun 26 June, Victoria Square

HIPPUS A trio of hippos embark on a physical journey in this fun family show from Zum Zum Theatre, Sat 25 - Sun 26 June, Centenary Square

REMEMBRANCES A unique collaboration between contemporary theatre-makers, dance artists and poets from the Midlands and First Nations Canada, Sat 25 - Sun 26 June, City Centre Gardens, Birmingham

AUTIN DANCE THEATRE: OUT OF THE DEEP BLUE An outdoor spectacle fusing dance, movement & puppetry to explore the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, Sun 26 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

LANDSCAPES BY LA MIGRATION A performance that confronts the cycles of a strange machine with the fluid movement of tightrope artists, making the landscape and its hazards their partners, Sun 26 June, Victoria Square

STRICTLY PRESENTS: KEEEEP DANCING! New show featuring Strictly 2020 finalist Maisie Smith and CBBC presenter Rhys Stephenson alongside the show's professionals - Neil Jones, Gorka Marquez, Jowita Przystal and Nancy Xu, Sun 26 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

INFINITE BY HUMANHOOD Be guided through 'a powerful, mystical journey and visionary dance-theatre meditation', Tues 28 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

BLOOD, WATER, EARTH BY KAHAWI DANCE THEATRE Performance, video & music combine in a physical incantation which channels the ancestral, elemental and dream world, Tues 28 - Wed 29 June, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

DRUMMING IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN BY STEPHEN JOVANOVIĆ A performance that invites its audience to consider what togetherness can be when we occupy space and time physically, fictionally and fantastically with creatures and stories from other times and other places, Wed 29 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

BYGONES UK premiere celebrating how we are shaped by what we overcome and how something challenging can lead to something beautiful, Thurs 30 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

DERREN BROWN - SHOWMAN One-man show featuring the award-winning master of mind control and psychological illusion, Tues 21 - Sat 25 June, The Alexandra

MALCOLM STENT IN THE AFTERNOON Bringing together comedy, variety, music and special guests, Wed 22 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

PSYCHOLOGY OF SERIAL KILLERS Explore one of true crime's most troubling topics with ex-forensics lecturer Jennifer Rees, Thurs 23 June, Dudley Town Hall

Events

HIGHER EDUCATION EXHIBITION Whether it's about kick-starting research or refining choices, there's something for everyone at a UCAS exhibition, Mon 20 - Tues 21 June, NEC

CASTLE KIDS PLAYGROUP A stay & play group for children aged up to five, Tues 21 June, Weoley Castle

THE BIG BANG FAIR Annual celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) for seven to 19-year-olds, Wed 22 - Fri 24 June, NEC

GAMES NIGHT Opportunity to meet new neighbours or old friends, Thurs 23 June, Soho House

ADVENTURE BIKE RIDER FESTIVAL Bring out the adventurer in you with

'fantastic trails, test-ride areas, off-roading and road rideouts', Thurs 23 - Sun 26 June, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

THE AUTISM SHOW Choose from over 100 hours of talks, clinics and workshops. Hundreds of specialist products and services also feature, Fri 24 - Sat 25 June, NEC

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW Offering all the latest supplies and crafting ideas, Fri 24 - Sun 26 June, NEC

COMMUNITY ARCHIVING EVENING An evening of collective community archiving inspired by the exhibition, Blood & Fire: Our Journey Through Vanley Burke's History, Sat 25 June, Soho House

SAREHOLE MILL BIO-BLITZ Explore Sarehole Mill's outdoor spaces, making records of the plants, animals and insects you find, Sat 25 June, Sarehole Mill



CELEBRATING SANCTUARY FAMILY DAY Featuring performances by local community groups and an array of music from around the world. Artists include Seikou Susso (Gambia), Muha (Ukraine, Latvia, UK), Los Musicos (Columbia) and Didier Kisala & The Redeemed (DR Congo), Sat 25 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

SHREWSBURY FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring over 180 food, drink and artisan craft stalls, Sat 25 - Sun 26 June, Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

ARMED FORCES WEEKEND A chance to show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community, Sat 25 - Sun 26 June, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

BLAKESLEY HALL CAR BOOT SALE Sun 26 June, Blakesley Hall

THE STUART HALL PROJECT PLUS Q&A Cinema screening of John Akomfrah's 2013 documentary combining extensive archive material against a Miles Davis soundtrack, Sun 26 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

FORD NATIONALS Display featuring hundreds of cars from over 50 Ford car clubs all over the UK, Sun 26

June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

ARMED FORCES DAY Sun 26 June, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

ARTIST TALK: SHARON WALTERS Join Sharon Walters in conversation with curator Charlie Levine. Everyone welcome! Fri 24 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

CASTLE KIDS PLAYGROUP A stay & play group for children aged up to five, Tues 28 June, Weoley Castle

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLUB Whether you're looking for help to improve your English or support for a qualification, these free drop-in classes are here to help, Tues 28 June, Soho House

CIRCUS ZYAIR Colourful and action-packed show featuring high-energy acts from all over the world, Wed 29 June - Sun 3 July, Tamworth Castle Grounds

EXHIBITION TOUR: FOUND CITIES, LOST OBJECTS: WOMEN IN THE CITY Join Exhibitions Team Leader Katie Morton as she leads a tour of key artworks from both the Arts Council Collection and Birmingham's own collection, Thurs 30 June, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

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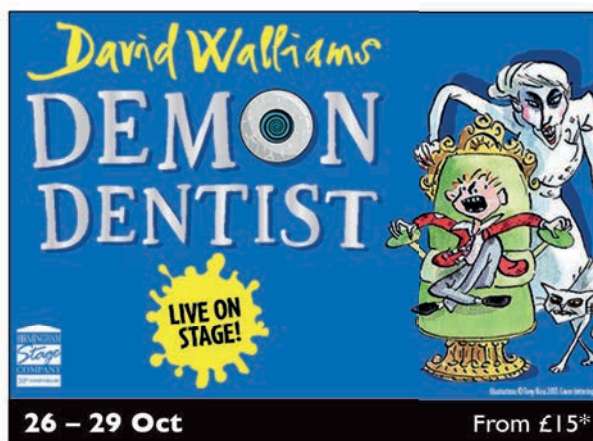
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Key to the City

by Paul Ramírez Jonas
Produced by Fierce
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This summer, be one of the thousands of Brummies to award someone the Key to the City - a ceremonial honour, but also a physical Yale key that will enable the recipient to explore private and intriguing places and spaces around the city that they might not have happened on before.

From private gardens to underground tunnels, a locked museum drawer to a panoramic skyline view, opportunities to discover a secret menu as well as to witness daily worship – the Key to the City sites will bring a new perspective to the city.



28 May - 7 August

