Your FREE essential entertainment guide for the Midlands



Shropshire

ISSUE 428 SEPTEMBER 2022

What's On

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



inside:

PEAKY BLINDERS
Rambert's brand-new dance show debuts in the Midlands



LOTTERY WINNERS
Manchester indy pop quartet visit Southwater venue



POLINATIONS
fun and fauna as Birmingham 2022 Festival draws to a close



CHESHIRE STREET | MARKET DRAYTON | SHROPSHIRE

Ginger & Spice Festival 2022

Saturday 24th September

Plus Fringe Events



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FESTIVAL AWARDS

RURAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL FINALIST 2018/19

RURAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL FINALIST 2019/20

RURAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL FINALIST 2021/22

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECORD HOLDER

Love British Food 2017 Winners

MBA Winner 2021

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★★★★★ EXPRESS & STAR

★★★★★ PLAYS TO SEE

★★★★★ WHAT'S ON

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comedy



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comedy



P*SSED UP PANTO: CINDERELLA

Sat 15 Oct @ 7.30pm

comedy



ALFIE MOORE: FAIR COP UNLEASHED

Sun 16 Oct @ 7.30pm

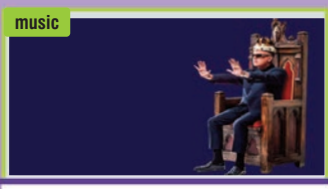
comedy



MUM'S THE WORD

Tues 18 Oct @ 7.30pm

music



SUGGS: WHAT A KING CNUT

Wed 19 Oct @ 7.30pm

music



THE DRIFTERS

Thurs 20 Oct @ 7.30pm

music



BARRY STEELE IN THE ROY ORBISON STORY

Sat 22 Oct @ 7.30pm

musicals



THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Thurs 27 - Sat 29 Oct @ 7.30pm, 2.30pm matinee on Sat

music



THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS: A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Fri 21 Oct @ 7.30pm

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September 2022

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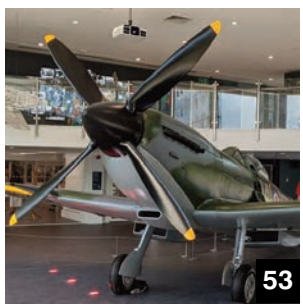

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BRB hit the ground running with autumn season line-up

Birmingham Royal Ballet will hit the ground running with their autumn programme next month.
Starting with a triple bill celebrating 'the marriage of music and movement', the company then present two critically acclaimed Sir Peter Wright productions: Coppelia and The Nutcracker. The latter has just received a million-pound refurbishment.
To find out more and book tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

New shows for 2023 on sale at the Grand Theatre

Northern Ballet's Ugly Duckling, romantic opera La Bohème and a singalong film screening of Disney's Encanto are among the shows visiting the Wolverhampton Grand during the first half of 2023.
Other stand-out highlights of the venue's spring/summer season include a fully choreographed homage to The Rat Pack, Elton John tribute show The Rocket Man, and the return of The Dreamboys with their No Strings Attached touring show.
For more information about these and other productions, visit grandtheatre.co.uk



SVR to host part of one-off anniversary rail tour

The Severn Valley Railway (SVR), based in Worcestershire and Shropshire, is hosting part of a one-off anniversary rail tour on Tuesday 27 September.
The event is being organised by Modern Railways magazine in partnership with CrossCountry trains, using one of the operator's High Speed Trains (HST).
A limited number of tickets are available to join the HST at the SVR's Kidderminster Town station, just for the SVR leg of the journey. The tickets are all situated in the first-class section of the train.
For more information and to book tickets, visit svr.co.uk

Rural Shropshire hosts new arts festival

Rural south Shropshire will this month host a brand-new nine-day-long international arts event.
Taking place from 16 to 24 September, the Corvedale Festival features a programme of classical music concerts, exhibitions, poetry and readings. To find out more, visit corvedalefestival.org

Brief Encounter at the New Vic Theatre

A playful new production of Noël Coward's Brief Encounter is coming to the New Vic Theatre's stage in Newcastle-under-Lyme this month.
Co-produced by the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Octagon Theatre Bolton and Theatre By The Lake Keswick, the show will be performed 'in the round' at the venue from Wednesday 7 to Saturday 10 September. For more details and to book tickets, visit newvictheatre.org.uk

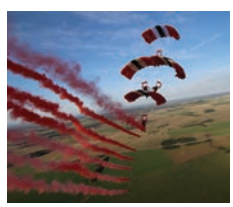


What's In Store in Wednesbury?

Black Country Touring will this month present two days of pop-up music, poetry and storytelling performances in Wednesbury's shops and cafes.
Produced in association with Multistory, What's In Store Wednesbury (Friday 23 & Saturday 24 September) follows on from the success of What's In Store Bearwood, which took place back in the summer.
All performances are free and take place multiple times across the two days.
Visit bctouring.co.uk to find out more.



Family fun aplenty at Weston Park event



There's plenty of family fun to enjoy at this month's Weston Park Country Fair.
Taking place in the Shropshire venue's stunning grounds on Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 September, the ever-popular event features, among other attractions, main-arena displays - including a performance by the Red Devils Parachute Display Team - a countryside arena, live music, food and fishing villages, and a clay shooting festival.
For a full rundown of what's happening, visit westonparkcountryfair.co.uk

Freedom Road Reimagined at Wolverhampton arts centre

An immersive live-music performance aiming to highlight 'the resilience, determination and pride of Black British communities' is being presented at the Newhampton Arts Centre in Wolverhampton on Friday 30 September.
Combining music, photography and filmed footage, Freedom Road Re-Imagined presents 'an intergenerational perspective of protest' through the lenses of photographers Charlie Phillips and Vanley Burke. To find out more about the event, visit newhamptonarts.co.uk



The Magic Of Middle-Earth in Lichfield

An exhibition celebrating JRR Tolkien's famous fantasy world of Middle-Earth will go on display at The Hub At St Mary's in Lichfield from 24 September until 11 December.
The Magic Of Middle-Earth features more than 200 items, including first-edition copies of the books, paintings of dragons, ents and elves, models and dioramas - including The Battle of Helms Deep - and Middle-Earth-inspired video games and Lego sets. To find out more, visit thehubstmarys.co.uk





Cirque Du Soleil to bring brand-new show to the Midlands

The world-renowned Cirque Du Soleil is bringing its brand-new show to Birmingham's Utilita Arena next month.
Titled Corteo, which means cortege in Italian, the production is described as 'bringing together the passion of the actor with the grace and power of the acrobat to plunge the audience into a theatrical world of fun, comedy and spontaneity, situated in a mysterious space between heaven and earth'.
The show stops off at the Utilita Arena from Wednesday 19 to Sunday 23 October. For tickets, visit ticketmaster.co.uk

New comedy at The Hangar



A brand-new comedy club opens in Wolverhampton this month.
Launching on 9 September, Not Your Average Comedy Club is located in the city's Hangar venue. The opening night line-up features Britain's Got Talent winner Lost Voice Guy (pictured), Liverpool-based comic Eddie Fortune and former XS Manchester Comedian of the Year Jamie Hutchinson.
To find out more, visit hangarvenues.co.uk

Jasmin Vardimon's brand-new show reimagines Lewis Carrol classic

Internationally acclaimed dance ensemble Jasmin Vardimon Company will next month present a 'bold reimagining' of Lewis Carrol's Alice's Adventures In Wonderland at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn.
Promising 'a sensory feast of arresting images, powerful performers and striking kinetic scenery', the show explores the themes of time, identity, rules and authority. It shows in Shrewsbury on Tuesday 18 & Wednesday 19 October.
To find out more and book tickets, visit theatresevern.co.uk



Shake it all about at Wolves belly-dancing fest

Belly-dancing enthusiasts can shake it all about in Wolverhampton next month, when the 10th Infusion Emporium takes place at various venues in the city from 19 to 23 October. The event features workshops, theatre shows and a raucous 'glitterball shakedown after-party'. To find out more, visit infusionemporium.com

Roundabout pop-up fun at Burton Washlands

The Roundabout Pop Up Theatre is coming back to Burton.
Following last year's success, the state-of-the-art theatre - complete with LED lighting and surround sound - will return to Burton's Washlands from Thursday 8 to Sunday 11 September, presenting a packed programme of live theatre, music, comedy, family activities and workshops.
For further information, visit brewhouse.co.uk/roundabout

Arts Alive brings new play to Whitchurch venue

A brand-new play celebrating female working-class voices over the last 100 years is being presented at Whitchurch Rugby Club late this month.
Facilitated by Arts Alive and written by the award-winning Ruth E Cockburn, Miss Nobodies shows at the venue on Wednesday 28 September. For more information and to buy tickets, visit artsalive.co.uk

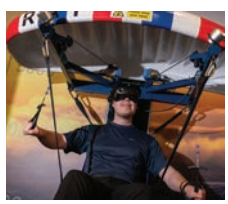




Programme revealed for British Science Festival

The British Science Association (BSA) has unveiled the full programme for this year's British Science Festival.
An event dedicated to celebrating 'the people, stories and ideas at the heart of science', the festival takes place in Leicester this month (13 - 17 September) and features more than 100 'free, engaging and off-the-wall installations, performances and activities'.
The programme has been curated by BSA in partnership with De Montfort University Leicester and fuses science and research with performance, art and technology.
Commenting on the event, its director, Antonio Benitez, said: "The British Science Festival exists to shake up the UK's science-engagement landscape in a truly unique, creative and inclusive way.
"This year's line-up - developed in collaboration with De Montfort University alongside dozens of fantastic research institutions, organisations, visual & performance artists, creative researchers and activists - will do just that. We're excited to deliver a programme of unique events that showcases world-class research taking place in the Midlands and beyond."
For further information and to book tickets, visit britishsciencefestival.org

New airborne adventures at RAF Museum Midlands



Autumn visitors to the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands can check out a multi-sensory flying experience on board the venue's new ParadropVR.
VR content combined with a range of motion will transport users into a virtual world of airborne adventures. To find out more, visit rafmuseum.org

Midlands Massaoke fun

Hairbrush anthems from across the decades are on the agenda when Massaoke - 'the world's biggest singalong party' - descends on two Midlands venues this autumn.
Promising sequins, spandex, dazzling dancers, confetti blasters and an 'unforgettable' atmosphere, the show's Sing The Musicals edition stops off at Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, on 3 September and Shrewsbury's Buttermarket on 21 October. The Victoria Hall then hosts two further get-togethers: Massaoke Halloween Hits (28 October) and Christmas Massaoke (21 December). For more information and to book tickets, visit massaoke.com



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



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Town Hall



The 80s Show
Wed 28 Sep
Town Hall

Kim Wilde: Greatest Hits Tour – Plus Special Guests China Crisis
Fri 16 Sep
Symphony Hall



Boyzlife
Sat 1 Oct
Town Hall





The Billy Joel Songbook
Sun 18 Sep
Town Hall

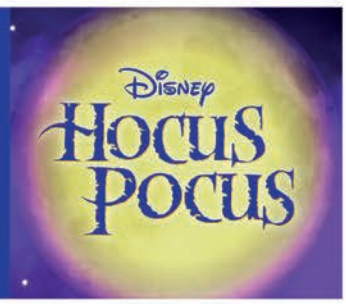


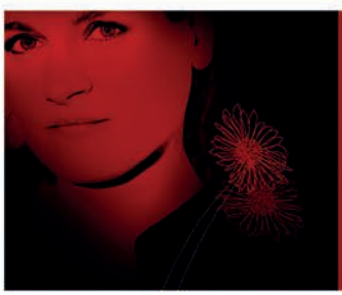
Soweto Gospel Choir
Sun 23 Oct
Town Hall

Monkey Puzzle & Peter and The Wolf with Toscana Strings
Sun 25 Sep
Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space



Disney's Hocus Pocus: Film plus Orchestra
Tue 25 Oct
Symphony Hall





Madeleine Peyroux
Tue 27 Sep
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BLOOD BROTHERS

TUE 27 SEP – SAT 1 OCT

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AN INSPECTOR CALLS

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SIX

TUE 15 – SUN 20 NOV

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A NIGHT OF FUN, FANTASY AND NO HOLDING BACK

DREAMBOYS

FRI 25 NOV

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RHYTHM OF THE DANCE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

SAT 26 NOV

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PETER PAN

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LOST IN MUSIC — ONE NIGHT AT THE DISCO
SAT 17 SEP | VICTORIA HALL

80s LIVE
THU 22 SEP | VICTORIA HALL

RUSSELL KANE: THE ESSEX VARIANT!
FRI 23 SEP | VICTORIA HALL

TIM PEAKE: MY JOURNEY TO SPACE
THU 29 SEP | VICTORIA HALL

A GALA CELEBRATION OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN
SAT 1 OCT | VICTORIA HALL

10cc
WED 12 OCT | VICTORIA HALL

THE SENSATIONAL 60s EXPERIENCE
THU 13 OCT | VICTORIA HALL

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Heritage building to reopen following major renovation work

A newly restored industrial mill and former maltings in Shropshire will this month open its doors to the general public (Saturday 10 September).

The completely transformed and rejuvenated Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings features a new visitor experience, a café, shop, offices and venue space.

The Main Mill originally opened over two centuries ago, in 1797, as a purpose-built flax mill. Since then, the site has grown and been repurposed and adapted many times.

A maltings from 1897 to 1987 (and a temporary army barracks during the Second World War), the venue has now been turned by its owner - Historic England - into a place in which to celebrate and explore the past.

To find out more and book tickets, visit shrewsburyflaxmillmaltings.org.uk



Initiative to nurture comedy writing talent makes a return at Birmingham Rep

Sky Studios and Birmingham Repertory Theatre have announced the return of Sky Comedy Rep, a joint partnership that aims to discover and nurture emerging comedy writing talent from across the UK - and particularly from communities that have traditionally been under-represented in the arts.

Now in its second year, the scheme will see eight writers selected to develop a one-act stage play. This year, all plays will focus on the premise of 'a proposal in the park'.

The eight plays will then be performed as part of a three-day festival at the Rep in early 2023.





All change at iconic Shrewsbury hospitality venue

It's all change at one of Shropshire's most iconic grade II listed hospitality venues.

The Buttermarket in Shrewsbury has invested more than £500,000 in a major refurbishment to adapt its operating model and become the county's biggest live music & events venue.

The new era will see The Buttermarket host tribute bands, interactive shows, boxing & wrestling events, talks, psychic nights and the increasingly popular Bongo's Bingo in its Main Arena and Mezzanine level.

Meanwhile at the ground level of the venue - in the completely refurbished Cellars Club - nightclubbers will be able to enjoy up to four rooms of music, a host of VIP areas, and outside space The Urban Terrace.

The refurb has also seen The Buttermarket launch the Flamingo Terrace Bar & Roof Garden, Shrewsbury's largest outside hospitality space. The new area is already hosting a large number of popular 'terrace parties' featuring a wide range of music genres, from house to punk-rock and indie.

To find out more and purchase tickets for all events, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk

Half a Conchord set to visit Midlands venue



Flight Of The Conchords star Bret McKenzie is visiting Birmingham this month to perform songs from his new album.

The talented New Zealander, whose CV also includes writing compositions for the Muppet movies, plays Symphony Hall on Thursday 22 September. For more information, visit bmusic.co.uk/events/bret-mckenzie

Adrian Edmondson to star as Dickens' Scrooge

Adrian Edmondson will play Ebenezer Scrooge in the Royal Shakespeare Company's autumn/winter revival of David Edgar's adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic ghost story, A Christmas Carol.

The production, directed by Rachel Kavanaugh, runs in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from 26 October to 1 January. To find out more and book tickets, visit rsc.org.uk





by Diane Parkes

An Inspector Calls

JB Priestley's most performed play, An Inspector Calls, makes a welcome return to the Midlands this month - offering What's On a perfect opportunity to catch up with leading man Liam Brennan and find out why the show remains so popular...

The hugely successful National Theatre production of JB Priestley's An Inspector Calls is out on tour again this autumn, taking in local venues in Shrewsbury, Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham and Coventry.

Directed by Stephen Daldry, the show opened in the West End 30 years ago and is both critically acclaimed - it's won a host of Olivier, Tony and Evening Standard awards - and a favourite with audiences, having been watched by more than five million people to date.

The story focuses on the Birling family, who have met for a celebratory dinner. Suddenly there is a knock at the door - and a police inspector calls. But who is Inspector Goole, what does he want with the family, and what is their connection to the death of a young woman?

In Inspector Goole, Priestley, who was born in Yorkshire but spent his later years living in Alveston in Warwickshire, created one of the most enigmatic characters in British theatre. And it's Goole's air of mystery which Liam Brennan, who plays the inspector, believes lies at the heart of the play's success.

"I guess if you've never seen this play before or read it, you probably would spend the time thinking 'Who is he, is he the girl's father, what is he?' And that's fun.

"Who the inspector is, isn't really revealed, and people want to work that out. We often do question & answer sessions after school performances, and the kids are very intrigued by the inspector. They often say to me, 'but who are you?'

"I know it sounds like a cop-out, but I usually say 'Look, at the end of the day, the play doesn't answer that question, so I can't answer it either. So it's kind of up to you'.

"I think we love puzzles and trying to work things out, so any good detective yarn where there's a mystery to solve, like The Mousetrap or An Inspector Calls, has an endurance. It will always intrigue us because we like trying to solve problems and work something out."

As Goole unpicks his story, the members of the Birling family come to learn they may know more about the dead girl than they initially realised. And it is their culpability which lies at the heart of the play.

"I think its basic themes are eternal. It's about responsibility, it's about kindness, it's about looking after people - particularly people who have very little or nothing. It's about taking responsibility for when we are all occasionally maybe a bit cruel or a bit selfish - and that theme of responsibility doesn't go out of fashion. And it's about more than individuals; it's the accumulation of things that is disastrous for this young woman."

Liam first played Goole on a UK tour eight years ago and has returned to the part again and again since then, performing in the West End, America and on UK tours. But his acquaintance with An Inspector Calls goes back beyond his involvement in the theatre production.

"I remember reading the play when I was a teenager and seeing the old black & white movie. I just thought it was really intriguing. I like the fact that all the questions don't get answered, and we're not sure who or what the inspector is."

Daldry's production, with dramatic sets by Ian MacNeil and music by Stephen Warbeck, emphasises the cryptic aspects of the story.

"In some ways this production kind of re-invents the play to a certain extent, but the spirit of it is the same. I think one of the reasons it's been so successful is because it's very fast-paced and without an interval, and I think that kind of stresses the thriller element of it. It's exciting, the music is great, and it has the most wonderful set. I used to expect the massive schools' audiences to be very restless, but actually that hardly ever happens - it does seem to grip them. It's a powerful story, and hopefully a really exciting piece of theatre, even for kids."

Liam has toured with the show to Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn and Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre before, but this will be the first time he's performed the role of Goole at Birmingham's The Alexandra and Coventry's Belgrade Theatre.

"I like touring. I know some actors don't, and it's quite tiring because you're in a different place each week, so you spend a lot of time on trains and sorting out digs, but I quite like that.

"This is a great company to work for. It's always interesting, as there are cast changes each time, so it always stays fresh. People bring their own vibe."

After playing Inspector Goole for eight years, does Liam view the role any differently from when he first took on the part?

"Fundamentally I don't think so. I don't think I've changed, but I hope I'm more deft and relaxed because I've done it so much now. I'm sure that if I was to watch a video of me eight years ago, I would probably say, 'Oh Liam, you look a lot more relaxed and confident now.' But it's such a fun role to play, and I love the story. That's why I keep coming back to it."

The show, which often sells out venues, is definitely one to catch, says Liam.

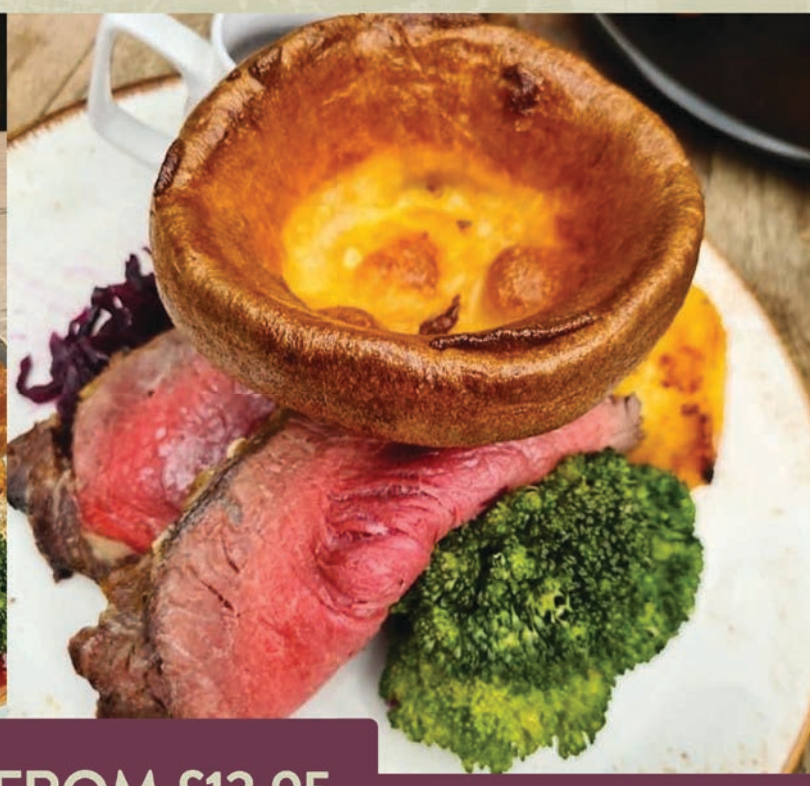
"It's a really good night at the theatre. It's a good thriller, it has a message but it's not preachy, it looks fantastic, and hopefully it's genuinely exciting."

An Inspector Calls shows at: Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Tues 20 to Sat 24 September; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tues 4 to Sat 8 October; The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tues 29 November to Sat 3 December and the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tues 28 February to Sat 4 March

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Five guys set to open in Telford retail park

American burger chain Five Guys is opening a new restaurant in Telford's Forge Retail Park.
The fast food favourite boasts 250,000 possible topping combinations for burgers, hot dogs and sandwiches, and 1,000 different shake mix-in combinations. The restaurant's opening date is yet to be announced.

Tettenhall Food & Drink Festival returns

The Tettenhall Food & Drink Festival and Artisan Market returns to Upper Green on Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 September.
The free-to-attend event features a wide selection of international street food, hot and cold drinks, a huge range of artisan food & drink sellers, and artisan traders selling everything from jewellery to musical instruments.
Live music and entertainment for all the family will also feature throughout the weekend.

Tapas On A Summer's Eve in Shropshire

Buntingsdale Hall in Market Drayton is running a Tapas On A Summer's Eve event on Saturday 3 September.
Tickets are £40 and include a champagne reception and a generous selection of dishes - cooked by chef Simon from Merchant House 1820 - plus wine.
Tickets are available via the Buntingsdale Hall Facebook page or Dawn Clayton on 07791374480.





Annual event brings spice to Shropshire's Market Drayton

Ginger & Spice Festival returns to Market Drayton on Saturday 24 September.
The annual celebration, which takes place during British Food Fortnight, explores the town's culinary heritage and social history via an eclectic mix of fringe events.
Visitors can enjoy a Spicy Street Market on Cheshire Street, a family Heritage Town Trail and a Floating Market featuring local artisan traders selling food, drink and crafts, many with a spicy twist.
The event will also feature a Joules Brewery Fodder & Tipple Trail, Palethorpes Children's Cookery Theatre and an evening of live jazz & blues with Colin Browne and friends.
In addition, and as part of the festival, the town will welcome comedian Anuvab Pal, all the way from India.
Talking about his Market Drayton stop-off, he said: "This stand-up show will begin with the British Empire in India but go into what connects Britain and India today - especially the food. And by food, we can't ignore the journey of spices."
Anuvab plays Festival Drayton Centre on Thursday 22 September. Tickets are available via the Ginger & Spice Festival website.

Popular Food Gusto event returns to Tamworth

The Tamworth Food Gusto Festival returns to the picturesque setting of Tamworth Castle Grounds on Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 September.
The popular event, now in its seventh year, will bring a wide variety of artisan food & drink to the area, including Mac'n'cheese & dirty fries, Korean dishes, Sri Lankan curries, organic beefburgers and wood-fired pizzas.
Beer, cocktails and prosecco will also be available.
The event will be sharing a stage with We Love Tamworth for a second year running.
Gates open at 10.30am (until 5pm) both days.
Entry to the festival arena is £2 per adult and free for children under the age of 12.



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Andrea Bocelli Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Sat 24 September

One of the world's most acclaimed classical music stars, Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli this month stops off in Birmingham as part of a major UK tour. Bocelli has performed for presidents, popes and the royal family, sung at ceremonies for the Olympic Games and the World Cup, and been praised by a host of fellow and admiring megastars, including Luciano Pavarotti, Jose Carreras and Renee Fleming. Celine Dion, meanwhile, once introduced him by declaring: "I heard someone say that if God had a singing voice, he would sound a lot like Andrea Bocelli."

CBSO - Human Nature: The Rite Of Spring

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 24 September

The CBSO Chorus and the Halle Choir here team up with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (under the baton of guest conductor Nicholas Collon) to perform one of classical music's most game-changing compositions: Stravinsky's The Rite Of Spring.
Nowadays widely considered to be among the 20th century's most influential works, the piece caused an absolute riot at its 1913 premiere in Paris. Presented in tandem with a Nijinsky ballet, its avant-garde nature sat uncomfortably with some members of the audience, who were unused to the flagrant rawness and unfettered vitality of the composition's rhythmic elements...
The concert programme also features Brett Dean's In This Brief Moment, a CBSO Centenary Commission here receiving its world premiere.

G4

Walsall Arena & Arts Centre, Fri 9 September



After scoring a hit in the first-ever series of X Factor, G4 became one of the country's biggest crossover classical groups.
Their debut album went straight to number one and sold more than 245,000 copies, making it the fastest-selling record of 2005.
Although they disbanded two years and three albums later - citing as the reason their need to pursue individual interests - they reunited in 2014 for their 10th anniversary.
Their visit to Walsall sees them performing a song set that includes Bohemian Rhapsody, My Way and Nessun Dorma.

CBSO: A New World

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 20 September

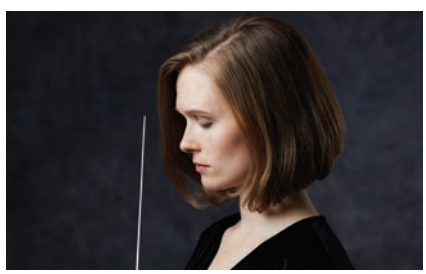
Kazuki Yamada - who next spring becomes the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's chief conductor & artistic advisor - here makes a welcome return to the region to kickstart the CBSO's new season.
The programme for the evening sees celebrated violinist Nicola Benedetti (pictured) performing Mendelssohn's dramatic violin concerto, and the CBSO Chorus sharing a moment of reflection from Ukraine via Grigorjeva's In Paradisum.
The concert begins and ends with works by Antonín Dvořák: Carnival Overture and New World Symphony. The latter piece, first performed 129 years ago, has since become established as one of the most popular symphonies ever written.



CBSO: The Sea

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 28 September

The sea's the place to be.
And thanks to the CBSO's late-month concert, we landlubbing Midlanders can imagine the salt on our lips and the sand between our toes.
Britten's dark and stormy Four Sea Interludes is joined by the 'shimmering reflections' of Debussy's La Mer in a programme that also features a symphony inspired by the 1961 horror film, The Exterminating Angel.
The concert line-up is completed by Weinberg's Jewish Rhapsody.
Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (pictured) conducts.



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Tickets: £10-12



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



30 September, 8pm
Suzi Ruffell: Snappy
Tickets: £13-15



8 - 11 September
The Roundabout Pop Up Theatre
Tickets: £5-10



9 October, 7.30pm
Dave Kelly & Bob Hall with Hilary Blythe
Tickets: £15



13 - 17 September, 7.30pm & 2.30pm Sat
Kipps: The New Half a Sixpence Musical
Tickets: £13



12 October, 7.30pm
Hal Cruttenden: It's Best You Hear It From Me
Tickets: £19



20 September, 7.30pm
An Evening with Stephen Sondheim
Tickets: £10



24 October, 11am & 2pm
Tangled Feet & Half Moon: Butterflies
Tickets: £5-10



29 September, 7.30pm
Rory Jackson as Michael Jackson
Tickets: £16



29 October, 2pm
Box Tale Soup: Wind in the Willows
Tickets: £10 or £35 family

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Scott Matthews

St. Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 16 September

Singer-songwriter Scott Matthews' ground-breaking debut album, Passing Stranger, earned serious critical acclaim, with his first single, Elusive, winning the Ivor Novello for 'best song musically & lyrically'.
He's since gone on to produce a further six albums, including 2020's New Skin. Fans attending his St Mary's Church gig can expect to hear songs from that album, favourites from his extensive back-catalogue, and unheard tracks from his forthcoming offering, New Skin: The Acoustic Sessions, which is set for release early next year.



The Lottery Winners

Albert's Shed Southwater, Telford, Fri 30 September

Indie pop quartet The Lottery Winners provide a melodramatic blend of momentous melodies coupled with wistful and insightful lyrics. Citing inspiration from 'all the painfully miserable' groups like The Smiths, The Cure and Joy Division, the band have released three albums to date.





Newton Faulkner

The Robin, Bilston, Tues 27 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 28 September

Stripping his songs back to their purest form, Newton Faulkner this month brings brand-new acoustic show Feels Like Home to the Midlands...

Newton is one of the most successful UK singer-songwriters of the 21st century (he's sold over 1.5 million records, with 180 million streams!), and will here be presenting acoustic versions of favourite songs such as Longshot, Against The Grain, I'm Not Giving Up Yet, Been Here Before and Waiting On You.

Nick Heyward

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 16 September

Nick Heyward brings his acoustic show to Lichfield in celebration of his soon-to-be-released new album and chart-topping back-catalogue.
Creatively ambitious from the start, Nick began his career as the songwriter frontman of Haircut 100, who rode the post-New Romantic funk wave of the early '80s. Artistic differences saw him go his own way in 1983, since which time his solo career has included tours with the likes of The Lemonheads and Tony Bennett.

Ferocious Dog

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 16 September; The Robin, Bilston, Sat 1 October

A favourite on the festival scene, Ferocious Dog have been entertaining Celtic folk and punk fans since their inception in 1988, but didn't release their debut album until 2013. "My politics are my politics," explains lead Ken Bonsall. "We'll sing those songs about what we believe, but whatever side of the political divide you're from, we want you to feel welcome at an FD show. We always say you're never alone at one of our gigs, and that is the most important thing to us."

Chris Wood

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 24 September

Singer-songwriter Chris Wood's music has been described as 'as close as it gets to a perfect union of voice and guitar, lyrics and melody, compassion, irony, realism, wit, and humanity'.
It's been a while since the self-taught musician released an album, but just for the record, 2016's So Much To Defend included reflections on subjects as diverse as minor-league football, empty-nest syndrome, learning to swim and cook-in sauce.



Credit: Rob Blackham



More Than Just Another Diamond Day

Vashti Bunyan opens up about her incredible music journey...

Vashti Bunyan is an English singer-songwriter whose first foray into music came to an abrupt end in 1970 following the release of debut album Just Another Diamond Day. Disillusioned by the industry, Vashti decided to call time on her burgeoning career. Fast forward 30 years to 2000, and the very same album had garnered a cult following, leading to a re-release and the second phase of Vashti's career. Vashti's memoir, Wayward, was published earlier this year, and this month she joins a stellar line-up at Moseley Folk & Arts Festival, where she'll take part in a Q&A about her musical journey. What's On recently caught up with her to find out more..

Songwriter Vashti Bunyan is enjoying being back on the road. But rather than singing and strumming, she's out promoting her debut book.

"Doing these book readings is great," she says enthusiastically. "You get to travel without getting on a plane with a guitar, without carrying a guitar around airports or stations or trains, wherever. Now I only have to take a book! That's really, really great."

The book in question is Vashti's autobiography, Wayward: Just Another Life To Live, which she initially began for her family. More of that later.

Born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Vashti grew up in post-war London and adored music. She looked set to make an impression in 1965, when - guided by the Rolling Stones' manager & producer, Andrew Loog Oldham - she released the Jagger/Richards composition, Some Things Just Stick In Your Mind. But the single flopped - as did her debut album, Just Another Diamond Day, featuring musicians from Fairport Convention and the Incredible String Band, and recorded by Nick Drake's producer, Joe Boyd.

Explaining why she believes the album failed to make any impact at the time, Vashti says: "The songs were written in '68/'69, it was recorded at the end of '69, and it didn't come out till the end of 1970. In all of that time, there were changes - in the music industry, in people's lives, in the attitudes, likes and dislikes. Things had changed so, so much.

"So by the time it came out, it had missed its little window of opportunity, where people were maybe looking for gentle music. It was ignored.

"Also, by the time it came out, I didn't particularly like it anyway. I didn't like the folkiness of it, and I still find it quite difficult. I love the tracks that [string arranger] Robert Kirby arranged, but the more folky treatment of the tracks, I hadn't thought of them before - when I was writing the songs, I just had my guitar with me. So I didn't feel that it was mine anymore. I didn't promote it in any way. I did a couple of interviews, and Joe Boyd wanted me to stay in London and do some shows to promote it, but I didn't."

Having just had a baby, Vashti simply vanished, turning her back on music.

And that was the end of the story, until - thanks to the internet, and totally unbeknownst to her - Just Another Diamond Day became much sought after by record collectors, prompting a surprise re-release in 2000.

Flabbergasted by its popularity, Vashti soon found herself championed by a younger generation of musicians - including Devendra Banhart, Joanna Newsom, Adem, Vetiver - and part of the so-called Twisted Folk movement. The album's growing reputation was boosted by its fascinating backstory; Vashti had begun writing songs during an 18-month journey by wagon & horse from London to the Scottish islands. She and then-partner Robert had planned to settle in an artists' colony where troubadour popstar Donovan also resided.

"Just by chance Donovan was back on Skye when we arrived," she recalls. But their long-held plans rapidly dissipated.

"It was very clear to us that there wasn't a place for us there anymore - it was impossible for us to stay there. But I did sing him Rainbow River, and nothing was said. Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing was said! So I understood that we were going to have to keep going - which is what we did, to the Outer Hebrides."

Back to the 21st century - and realising how much she'd missed music since the disaster of Diamond Day's initial release, Vashti began playing live. She released two albums of new material - 2005's Lookaftering and 2014's Heartleap. And now comes Wayward, published by White Rabbit earlier this year to great reviews. The book has been a chance for Vashti to tell her side of her story. In the process, she's corrected many of the myths which have grown up about her over the years - and in particular about the wagon & horse trip.

She began writing the book way back in the 1990s, before her rediscovery.

"Every few years, I'd come back to it and write a little bit more, but I became so much more involved in music when Just Another Diamond Day came out in 2000. I started performing and recording again, so the story got shelved."

However, while making a documentary about her (From Here To Before, completed in 2008), she mentioned the partially penned autobiography to filmmaker Kieran Evans, who in turn mentioned it to Lee Brackstone at White Rabbit.

"Lee wrote to me, I sent him some of the writing, and he offered me a book!"

She completed the autobiography during lockdown.

"Although lockdown was so completely horrible and dreadful and awful, it did give me the time to sit down and write.

"I found that it came really easily in the end, to just write." In terms of the 1968 horse & wagon trip, Vashti was pleased to be able to put the record straight. "So many people had written it for me, in so many articles, but I felt that it was never quite right, and I wanted to put it right. I didn't want to disappoint people who loved the story for its fantasy of this lovely wagon; I didn't want to take that away too much. But I did want to bring a bit more reality into it, a bit more of the mud and rain, and what we went through."

Having now told her story in print, Vashti's hitting the road again to perform at Moseley Folk & Arts Festival on its final day (Sunday 4 September). Now in her 70s and with no plans for any more concerts, she seems happy with the idea of occasional recordings and further books.

"I'm trying to do a bit more writing because I really enjoy it, which really surprised me. I'm trying to write the bit that's missing in the book."

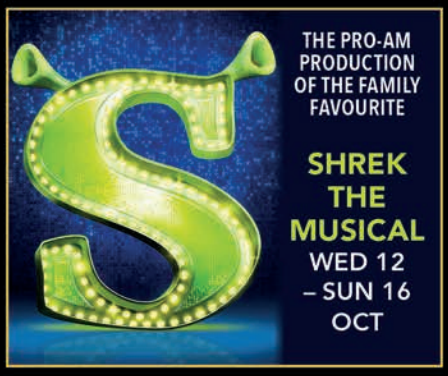
Moseley Folk & Arts Festival takes place in Moseley Park, Birmingham, from Friday 2 to Sunday 4 September. For further information, tickets and line-up, visit moseleyfolk.co.uk

CREWE LYCEUM'S NEW SEASON



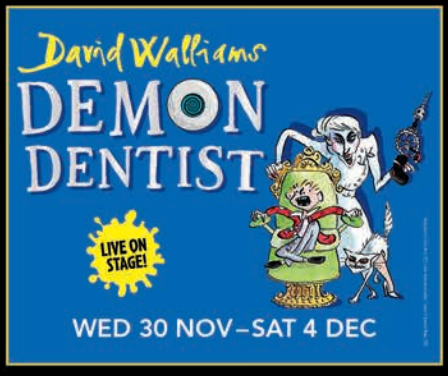






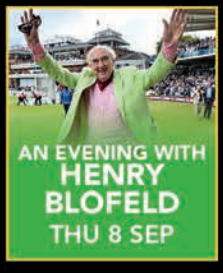
















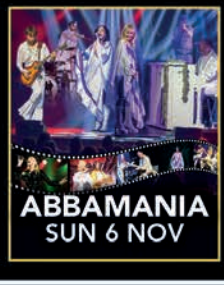


















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Suzi Ruffell

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Fri 30 September; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Tues 4 October

Gay, quirky and delightfully self-deprecating, Suzi Ruffell is making good progress in the challenging world of stand-up comedy. Presenting an unquestionably likeable persona, she imbues her act with an impressive dynamism - although critics point out that she'd probably benefit from developing a 'unique selling point'.
As well as being a comedian, Suzi's also a writer, contributing to shows including 8 Out Of 10 Cats, The Last Leg and Stand Up For The Week.
Away from comedy, she lists her 'likes' as 'cooking' and 'those cats with no hair'.
She visits the Midlands with her currently touring show, Snappy.



Dawn French

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 18 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 9 October

"This show is so-named because, unfortunately, it's horribly accurate," reveals Dawn French, in talking about Dawn French Is A Huge Tw*t, her latest touring show. "There have been far too many times I have made stupid mistakes or misunderstood something vital or jumped the gun in a spectacular display of tw*ttery. "I thought I might tell some of these buttock-clenching embarrassing stories, to give the audience a peek behind the scenes of my work life..."





Joe Lycett

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Fri 16 & Sat 17 September; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 20 & Fri 21 October

Joe Lycett may have been described as a fella whose act blends a little of Larry Grayson and a dash of Julian Clary with a large helping of Kenneth Williams, but he's nonetheless very much his own man. Joe comes from the well-established British tradition of camp comedians, and presents a somewhat risque act that ably showcases both his natural charisma and impressive capacity for mischief-making. Gags include: "What do we want!? More research into a cure for ADHD! When do we want it!? Let's play swingball!"



Adam Kay

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Sat 10 September

After watching an Adam Kay performance, Stephen Fry declared, "This made me very, very happy." Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is this month visiting the Midlands with an extended and updated version of his hit show, This Is Going To Hurt: Secret Diaries Of A Junior Doctor. The show will feature brand-new stories from Adam's forthcoming book, Undoctored: The Story Of A Medic Who Ran Out Of Patients.

Dom Joly

Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Fri 16 September; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sun 18 September; Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 6 October; Bilston Town Hall, Sat 8 October; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Fri 21 October; Brierly Hill Civic, Sat 22 October; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sun 23 October; Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 3 November; Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, Wed 9 November



From a launchpad provided by Trigger Happy TV, Dom Joly as led an intriguing and extraordinary life. Some of his more memorable experiences include world drinking, skiing down volcanoes, holidaying in Chernobyl, trying to fly across the Grand Canyon strapped to an eight-foot rocket, and eating from the pants of Dr Gillian McKeith (remember her?) while imprisoned in the Australian jungle during a series of I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!...
Some guys have all the luck.

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Tom Stade

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 18 September; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 9 November; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 17 November

Clever, controversial and Canadian pretty much sums up Tom Stade, a familiar face on TV programmes such as Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow and Mock The Week. Tom has headlined gigs in comedy hotspots like New York and London, by way of locations such as Amsterdam and Johannesburg. He's also earned his corn in far-flung war zones like Afghanistan and Iraq, scoring some major hits by entertaining the troops. He stops off at several Midlands venues this month with his touring show, The High Road.



Jack Dee

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 18 September

Once described by the late Jeremy Hardy as "a little ray of sleet", Jack Dee is a funny man. He's also a bitter man, an angry man and a man whose humour revolves around his pet hates, which are legion. What makes him so very funny, of course, is his totally deadpan style of delivery. He never even smirks, let alone grins, and a warm smile is right out of the question. Jack's turned being morose into an art form, and that's no mean feat. He stops off in Wolverhampton with his latest touring show, Jack Dee: Off The Telly.





Russell Kane

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 21 September; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 23 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 17 February, 2023

Past publicity blurb for this fella said it all: "Strap in for some super-speed sunderings and inconvenient sociology in a show of self-soiling merriment that will leave you with rickets."
In short, Russell Kane is a very funny man - and it's not just his publicist who thinks so.

Kane's been drawing a crowd since bursting onto the scene back in 2004, serving up liberal doses of humour in an act which features some considerably weighty and thought-provoking material.
Jokes include, "What's the most evil snack imaginable for a vegetarian? Philosophically speaking, it's a Scotch egg, because it's got death on the outside and potential for life within."
Russell visits the Midlands with latest touring show The Essex Variant.

Luke Kempner

Stourbridge Town Hall, Thurs 29 September



Puppeteer, dancer, singer, pianist, actor, impressionist and stand-up comedian Luke Kempner began his showbusiness career in musical theatre, playing Marius in the UK touring version of Les Misérables.
Comedy-wise he's since made a name for himself on television in shows including Murder In Successville and as resident funnyman on Celebrity Big Brother's Bit On The Side.
Luke is currently touring Macho Macho Man, a show in which he tries to work out what masculinity really means... with the help of Piers Morgan, Louis Theroux and Jürgen Klopp.

Mitch Benn

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Fri 30 September; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 1 October;

"I wouldn't say there's an absolutely taboo subject when it comes to comedy," says Mitch Benn, who visits the Midlands this month with his It's About Time tour, "but there are some things which are just so hard to make funny, you'd probably just upset yourself and everyone else by trying. "I'm also quite suspicious of self-consciously dark humour. My problem with it is that I think it shifts the burden onto the audience. It makes it their job to find you funny, rather than it being your job to make them laugh. As a comedian, I believe it's never the audience's responsibility to find you funny."





SOUL MAN

Former Corrie favourite Nigel Pivaro is returning to the stage in a brand-new touring production of The Commitments

by Steve Adams

After a lengthy break from acting and an unlikely career change, Nigel Pivaro - best known as Coronation Street's loveable rogue, Terry Duckworth - is returning to the stage in a new production of the hit Roddy Doyle musical, The Commitments. What's On finds out what made Nigel quit acting - and what made him come back...

Readers of a certain vintage will probably be depressed to discover that it's 31 years since musical comedy-drama The Commitments first hit the cinema screens, introducing us to Jimmy Rabbitte and his rag-tag gang of young musicians who are miraculously transformed into Dublin's greatest-ever soul band.

Directed by Alan Parker and based on a novel by Roddy Doyle, the film won a host of admirers, along the way introducing a new generation to Motown music classics such as Mustang Sally; River Deep, Mountain High; In The Midnight Hour; Papa Was A Rolling Stone; Knock On Wood and many more.

The movie also spawned a successful stage musical. Debuting in 2013 and enjoying a record-breaking run in the London West End, the show then hit the road, proving so popular across the country that it's now returning for a nine-month UK tour.

The all-new production will be directed by Andrew Linnie, who's clearly not afraid of commitments (ahem), having made his West End debut in the original production and then played the lead role of Jimmy Rabbitte on the 2016/17 UK tour.

This time, that role goes to Dublin-born actor James Killeen. Most of the buzz about the casting for the new production, though, has been around the inclusion of Coronation Street legend Nigel Pivaro, who plays Jimmy's father, known as 'Da'. The role is not only a far cry from the character he played in Corrie - lovable rogue Terry Duckworth - but also a major career U-turn for Nigel, who hasn't appeared on stage for nearly 20 years. Indeed, he effectively gave up acting after leaving the Street, albeit with a brief return in 2012.

"The Commitments is my first stage play for Ginger and Spice19 years after coming back to the business in 2018 following encouragement from my old mate, playwright Jim Cartwright," explains Nigel.
Having quit acting to become a journalist, his first gig back was linked to his post-acting career.

"In 2019 I got a role in a play for BBC Radio Four, playing a BBC foreign news editor managing a rookie journalist during the Burma uprising."

Back in the swing of things, he followed that work with a pantomime and roles in the BBC radio series The Corrupted, starring Toby Jones.

Then came the call to read for the part of Da. "[I was] excited to be offered the role because I remember seeing the movie - a great little tale with some of the best songs of the past 60 years as its soundtrack; part of the soundtrack to our lives in many cases - certainly mine."

So why had he quit acting in the first place, and why the switch to journalism?

"I suppose I needed a change after 20 years. History, politics and international relations had been an interest of mine since being a young kid, but the schools I attended unfortunately were not disposed to prepping students for Oxford - or university study in general, for that matter. So I followed my other passion - acting. In reality, I didn't think I could crack that either, but thought at least I would have fun trying."

Once he felt the need for a change, it was a chance encounter with a Salford University poster declaring 'It's never too late' that set Nigel off on a brand-new course. He initially studied for an honours degree in Contemporary Military & International History at Salford. A Masters then followed, in International Relations, at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth.

Journalism seemed the obvious way to utilise his newly acquired knowledge, so after completing an NCTJ Post Graduate course, he worked for newspapers including the Manchester Evening News, Daily Mirror, Daily Star and Catholic Herald.

"I had always been interested in journalism, and it really felt like a natural progression. Acting and journalism have several inter-transferable skills, not least an interest in the human condition and an ability to question it and subjects influencing it.

"I was also able to use journalism to pursue issues I felt passionate about, like the government kicking people out of their low-value homes in Salford, Liverpool, Manchester and other towns, to rebuild or refurbish for higher income groups under the Housing Market Renewal Initiative."

The latter investigation was turned into a documentary for BBC's Inside Out series - later nominated for a Royal Television Society award. Nigel also appeared on Newsnight to discuss the effects of regeneration in Salford. It's clearly something he was passionate about, but after "17 great years in journalism, doing everything from community magazines to local, regional, national print, TV and radio", he's delighted to be returning to his first love, albeit happy to have added another string to his bow.

"Am I a journalist who acts or an actor who writes? Does it matter? I just feel so privileged to be able to do both."

But will he still be saying that four, five, six months into a lengthy tour? I doubted he'd be up for doing any pantomimes during the show's yuletide break...

"I can tell you I will be maximising the break time around Christmas to recharge - no panto for me! Touring can be gruelling and you have to pace yourself, so the break will be very welcome."

And has he given much thought to being the show's elder statesman? In many ways, the Elvis-loving Da Rabbitte - played in the movie version by the great Colm Meaney - is just that, providing something for the narrative - and his son - to bounce off.

"My approach to Da is still open-minded - he provides a lot of the dramatic tension in the piece and is dyed-in-the-wool Elvis. But I think it's fair to say he gets taken on a journey by his son's efforts with the band and becomes more supportive than from his original position."

Nigel also thinks Roddy Doyle's story and the music are as relevant today as they've ever been.

"It's an iconic story that resonates across the years, about people who, though distant from the music's origins, find communion and expression in the Motown style - a musical genre which was borne out of oppression and which the characters embrace as their own. The Motown Sound is as vibrant today as it was when it first burst through in the '60s."

The Commitments visits Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 11 to Friday 15 October and Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 24 to Saturday 29 April



The Color Purple

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 13 - Sat 17 September

In an era marked by conversations about abuse of women and female empowerment, The Color Purple has plenty to say.

Initially a story of male control achieved through rape, domestic violence and servitude, Alice Walker's captivating coming-of-age tale ends on a far more triumphant, celebration-of-feminism kind of note, along the way taking a provocative look at the cycle of slavery in the black community.

Walker's original novel was published in 1982 and won the coveted Pulitzer Prize. Three years later, Steven Spielberg brought the story to the cinema screen, teasing from Whoopi Goldberg an Oscar-nominated performance and providing Oprah Winfrey with her film debut.

The stage-musical version of the story launched on Broadway in 2005, earning 11 Tony Award nominations, since which time it has been produced in countries across the world.

This critically acclaimed Birmingham Hippodrome and Made At Curve version premiered in Leicester in 2019, and is well worth an evening of any dedicated theatre-goer's time...

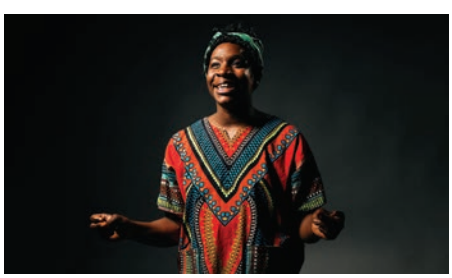
One note of caution, though; the show contains themes of rape, abuse, incest, overt racism and sexism, and as such has been deemed suitable only for audience members aged 14-plus.

Black Is The Color Of My Voice

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 6 September; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 22 September

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

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



Fisherman's Friends - The Musical

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 13 - Sat 17 September

Publicised as the true story of the world's most unlikely, er, buoy-band(!) and 'packed with more musical treats than you can fit in a lobster pot', brand-new musical Fisherman's Friends is breaking the surface of the UK's theatrical waters some three years after the film version netted a fine catch of rave reviews.

The story revolves around a group of Cornish fisherman whose singing of sea shanties to raise funds for charity comes to the attention of a fish-out-of-water music manager from the big smoke. What follows for the fellas is an unexpected voyage of discovery that ends up with them dropping anchor on the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury!

A whale of a tale about friendship, community and music, Fisherman's Friends premiered in Cornwall last autumn, smashing box-office records as audiences fell for its charms hook, line and sinker...

Bugsy Malone

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 13 - Sun 18 September



Gangsters rule the roost in this tongue-in-cheek tribute to the 1920s mobster flick, best known from the 1976 film version written & directed by Alan Parker and starring newcomers Jodie Foster and Scott Baio.

Fat Sam is feeling the pressure. His crooked business rackets are under attack from arch rival Dandy Dan, whose new weapon, the splurge gun, has given his hoodlums the edge. With a St Valentine's Day massacre on the cards, Sam needs to even the odds - and fast. But is baby-faced Bugsy Malone really the answer to his prayers?...

A madcap mobster musical that's always worth a look, this Lyric Hammersmith production is a revival of the stage adaptation written by Alan Parker himself back in the early 1980s.

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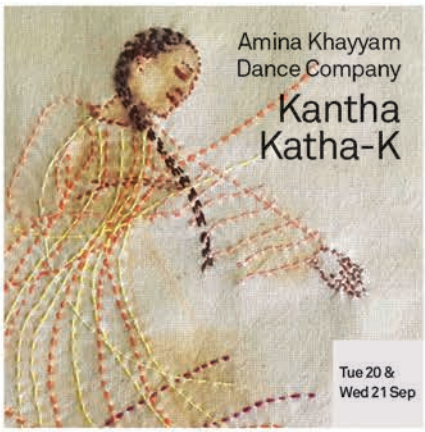
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Tue 4 - Sat 15 Oct



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Sun 9 Oct



Fri 21 - Sat 22 Oct



Sun 23 Oct



Wed 26 - Sat 29 Oct



Sun 30 Oct



Mon 31 Oct - Sat 5 Nov



Blood Brothers

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 13 - Sat 17 September; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 27 September - Sat 1 October

Although it's effectively a class-driven 'scouse melodrama', to describe Blood Brothers as such is to greatly underestimate the emotional response it produces within its audience.

The show features adult actors playing children, a narrator who wanders through the scenes with warnings of impending doom, a good helping of sharp social awareness to counteract the sticky sentimentality, and a raft of much-loved musical numbers, including Bright New Day, Marilyn Monroe and the emotionally charged Tell Me It's Not True...

The show sees Niki Colwell Evans and Sean Jones return to the cast.

Precious Emily

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 15 - Sat 17 September



Ever-inventive Birmingham theatre company Stan's Cafe here present a show about two inspirational weightlifters: four times Commonwealth Games gold medal winner Precious McKenzie and Midlands-born Emily Campbell, who claimed weightlifting gold at Birmingham 2022 (with Precious watching on from the front row of the audience).

A playful and fun bilingual production that's suitable 'for everyone aged nine-plus', Precious Emily marks Stan's Cafe's first foray into the world of family entertainment.

All's Well That Ends Well

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 8 October

A darkly comic tale of a scheming woman's attempts to secure the love of a disinterested - and largely dislikeable - man, All's Well That Ends Well is a romantic fantasy that won't be to everyone's taste. Indeed, its edgy cynicism and mixture of toxic masculinity and gender role reversal may well have contributed to it being one of Shakespeare's least performed plays.

There's little question, however, that this brand-new RSC version has plenty to offer a modern audience, as its director, Blanche McIntyre, points out. "All's Well is Shakespeare's most modern comedy," she says. "Its story of sexual politics, class prejudice and generation gaps would always have felt contemporary, and the fantasy relationships and fake identities in the play make it a perfect match for our anxious, idealistic, lonely, social-media-addicted age."

Apartness

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 8 - Sun 11 September

Former Doctor Who Sylvester McCoy stars alongside Linda Marlowe (EastEnders' Sylvie Carter) in this intriguing multimedia hybrid, this month stopping off in Birmingham after last month showing at the Edinburgh Fringe. Mixing moving image with vaudevillian-style comedy and telling the true-life tale of two isolated souls and their devilish comedian saviour, the show is the brainchild of the award-winning Kevin Short.

"Apartness is for theatre and movie lovers alike," explains Kevin. "So, roll up, roll up, it's for all of you - and you will see Sylvester McCoy give what I believe to be his greatest film performance. He is remarkable in it."



The MP, Aunty Mandy And Me

The Rep, Birmingham, Wed 21 September

Biting humour and social commentary combine in a play exploring the subject of consent, coercion and grooming within the gay male community. Life isn't working out for Dom. He wants to be out, proud and loving life on the scene, but instead he's living an isolated existence with his mum and his social anxiety. Then, one day, a chance encounter with his local MP turns Dom's world on its head...



Shakespeare In Love

The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, Sat 24 September - Sat 1 October

Based on Tom Stoppard & Marc Norman's Oscar-winning film of the same name and adapted for the stage by Billy Elliot writer Lee Hall, Shakespeare In Love finds the Stratford bard suffering from a calamitous case of writer's block. Until, that is, a beautiful muse comes into his life to inspire him.

Will is positively bedazzled by Viola de Lesseps - but as he sets about writing Romeo & Juliet, it soon becomes painfully apparent that whether it be in fiction or in real life, the course of true love never runs smooth...

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Six The Musical

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 27 September - Sun 2 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 25 - Sat 29 October; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 15 - Sun 20 November

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

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

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

Crimes On Centre Court

Crewe Lyceum, Tues 13 - Wed 14 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 26 September



Poised and polished purveyors of mirth the New Old Friends make a welcome return with a show that serves up murder, mystery, mayhem - and tennis!

The chair of the Wombledon International tennis tournament has died, and his son is suspicious. Enter seriously silly sleuths Perry & Penny Pink, who're hoping to solve the case with all the speed and efficiency of a Novak Djokovic forehand smash...

Highly regarded for their comic songwriting and happy to employ both puppetry and slapstick routines in the name of comedy, the New Old Friends look set fair to serve another ace with this latest show.

Marvellous

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Sat 17 September - Sat 8 October

The heartwarming story of a Staffordshire local hero here makes a welcome return to the New Vic stage after scoring a major hit earlier in the year. The play is a celebration of the life and achievements of Neil Baldwin - a man diagnosed with a learning disability when he was a child, but who has resolutely refused to be limited by the label.

Neil's extraordinary life has seen him go from registered clown, to Stoke City Football Club kit man and unofficial mascot for Keele University.

In 2019 he was awarded a British Empire Medal for services to the community.

"The play is quirky and funny, and it's very much like Neil," says New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins, who has helmed the show. "He's got all these personalities that he's played, like the circus clown and the chicken, which are part of the story we tell."



The Shawshank Redemption

Malvern Theatre, Mon 19 - Sat 24 September; The Alexandra Theatre, Mon 7 - Sat 12 November

Given that film critics regard The Shawshank Redemption as one of the greatest movies of all time, it's hardly surprising to find that its stage version is out on the road and doing good business.

Based on a 1982 Stephen King novella, the story revolves around the character of Andy Dufresne, a man serving a double life sentence at the notorious Shawshank facility. An unlikely friendship with prison fixer Red makes the experience a little more bearable. But when the warden decides to make Andy's life hell, the nothing-to-lose lifer hatches a daring and ingenious plan to escape...

Joe Absolom and Ben Onwukwe star.

King Of Reggae: The Man - The Music

The Rep, Birmingham, Tues 20 - Sat 24 September; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Sat 10 September

A brand-new narrated musical, King Of Reggae pays homage to Jamaican superstar Bob Marley. Following his story from its humble beginnings in a government yard in Trenchtown, the show charts the course of Marley's life across the decades, examining his rise to the status of Rastafari icon via a soundtrack featuring more than 20 of his greatest hits.

The show is presented by Rush Theatre Company, whose previous productions include the critically acclaimed Rush - A Joyous Jamaican Journey.




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Room On The Broom

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 7 - Sat 10 September; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 13 - Thurs 15 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 24 & Sun 25 September

Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, the creators of The Gruffalo and We're Going On A Bear Hunt, are the team behind this "spellbinding" story.

Room On The Broom tells the tale of a witch who makes the mistake of thinking she can fit a daft dog, a beautiful bird and a friendly frog - as well as her own cat - on her broomstick without it snapping in two. And when a hungry dragon appears, things really start to hot up...

Dinosaur World Live

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 September

Dinosaurs are once again roaming the earth this autumn, thanks to this interactive show for all the family to enjoy. Youngsters get to meet a host of impressive prehistoric creatures - including, of course, every child's favourite flesh-eating giant, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. Promising to be an absolute monster of an experience, the show may well leave a T-Rex-size imprint on your child's memory for many a year to come.



Demon Dentist

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 September; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 26 - Sun 29 Octoberl Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 30 November - Sun 4 December

"Birmingham Stage Company (BSC) has created three amazing adaptations of my books," says David Walliams, "so I can't wait to see their new production of Demon Dentist! It's going to be *jaw*-dropping!"

Telling a toothy tale of dental disaster, Demon Dentist finds Alfie and his best pal, Gabz, doing their level best to solve a disturbing mystery: why is it that children who leave their teeth for the tooth fairy are then waking up to find horrible things under their pillow? Could it have anything to do with the new dentist in town - the appropriately named Miss Root?...

BSC's stage adaptations of Walliams' Gangsta Granny and Billionaire Boy were both nominated for an Olivier Award, so you can bet your wisdom teeth that Demon Dentist is a show well worth catching.

Peppa Pig's Best Day Ever

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 7 & Thurs 8 September; The Place, Telford, Sat 8 & Sun 9 October; Malvern Theatres, Wed 2 & Thurs 3 November

If you've taken your little ones to any of the previous Peppa Pig stage shows - and enjoyed the experience of watching them having a fantastic time - you'll already know that this currently touring production is well worth catching. Peppa Pig is heading out on a road trip with George, Mummy Pig and Daddy Pig, and there are plenty of adventures waiting to be had - including ones that involve dragons, dinosaurs, ice-creams and muddy puddles...



Milkshake! Live

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 24 September; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 25 September; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 24 October; Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 30 October

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

If you've watched the TV series and/or been to a previous live production, you'll already know what to expect from a Milkshake! show. If not, get ready for an event that promises lots of laughter, bucketloads of family fun, bags of audience participation and plenty of singing and dancing.



Dick And Dom In Da Bungalow Live

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 23 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 24 March

Quadruple Bafta winners Dick & Dom are promising fun for all ages in a show inspired by the hit BBC children's television series, Da Bungalow.

The show premiered in 2002 and finished 16 years ago, so this live-on-stage revival will certainly be looking to pick up some brand-new fans.

Expect plenty of the show's most popular features to make a return, including the legendary Creamy Muck Muck game.



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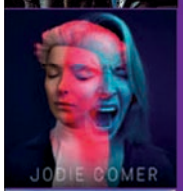
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21/9 The Wonder of Stevie *Tribute show*

22/9 The Stars of Irish Country Music

23/9 Henry's Blueshouse Music Night

24/9 Desi Central Comedy Show

26-27/9 Rolling Back The Years *Nostalgia show*

30/9-1/10 The Roy Orbison Story

7/10 An Evening with Clive John *Music*

8/10 Dire Streets *Tribute show*

11/10 Keith Slater's 60s Celebration *2pm*

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Something a little different - events popping up across the region...



Horizons: Professor Brian Cox

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Sun 11 September

Subtitled 'a 21st-century space odyssey', Professor Brian Cox's new show asks some really big questions: Why does the universe exist? How did life begin, how rare might it be and what's the significance of life in the cosmos? What does it mean to live a small, finite life in a vast, eternal universe? What is the nature of space and time?
Brian will be doing his level best to provide answers to these and other questions in the company of award-winning comedian Robin Ince, with whom he co-hosts BBC Radio Four's The Infinite Monkey Cage.
State-of-the-art LED-screen technology ensures the show comes complete with images of far-away galaxies, alien worlds, supermassive black holes and a time before the Big Bang.

La Voix

Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Fri 23 - Sat 24 September



You know you've hit the big time when stellar showbiz names deign to have an opinion about you - and if it's a positive one, so much the better! Such is the situation in which La Voix now finds herself, with celebrity royalty in the shape of Sir Ian McKellen and Dawn French both waxing lyrical about her.
The one-time Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist has been playing the cabaret circuit for all she's worth these last few years, picking up plaudits - and devoted fans - like they're going out of fashion.
As her stage name suggests, she's an impressive vocalist, but she's also a talented impersonator and bitingly funny comedian. Past routines have seen her explaining that the only difference between performing as Shirley Bassey and Tina Turner is that when she's impersonating Tina, she leaves the coat hanger in her dress and holds a football between her legs!

Solve-Along-A-Murder-She-Wrote

The Electric, Birmingham, Thurs 1 September; Lichfield Garrick, Fri 9 - Sat 10 September

Lasting for 264 episodes across 12 seasons until the mid-1990s, Murder She Wrote - starring veteran English actress Angela Lansbury as amateur sleuth Jessica Fletcher - is one of the longest-running and most popular detective drama series in television history. As such, the success of this spin-off night out is hardly surprising.
Devised by superfan Tim Benzie, the show not only features an interactive screening of Murder She Wrote episode Sing A Song Of Murder, but also a chance to solve a crime, the opportunity to take part in a wholehearted singalong to the theme tune, a special quiz, and clips and biographies of the show's 'campy guest stars'.

The Thinking Drinkers

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 10 September; Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 17 September; The Robin, Bilston, Thurs 15 December

Comedy and cabaret combine in a show that offers audiences the chance 'to learn and laugh in equal measure, as answers to life's most important and unusual questions appear at the bottom of their glass'.
A fun quiz show hosted by 'two of the world's leading alcohol experts' - drinks writers and comedy performers Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham - the evening's shenanigans come complete with the added attraction of not one, not two, but *five* free drinks.



An Extra Good Night With Yotam Ottolenghi And Noor Murad

Birmingham Town Hall, Mon 26 September



Fascinated by food and keen on cooking? Then this is a show for you. Yotam Ottolenghi and Noor Murad here team up to present an evening of culinary innovation which will see them sharing ideas for flavour-packed sauces, sprinkles and condiments.

Waswasa: Whispers In Prayer

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sat 3 September



An immersive theatrical experience exploring the subject of Islamic prayer, Waswasa combines art installation, live performance and film projection.
The Birmingham 2022 Festival commission has been created by award-winning local artist Mohammed Ali.
Commenting on his show, he said: "We hope this multi-disciplinary performance will give the audience a window into the Islamic world and in some small way bring communities together."


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Beautiful!

Molly-Grace Cutler grew up listening to the songs of Carole King. Now, the Olivier Award-winning actress - she bagged the coveted gong in 2020 for her performance in The Worst Witch - is starring as the legendary American singer-songwriter in Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, which comes to Birmingham Hippodrome this month. What's On recently caught up with Molly-Grace to find out more...

How does it feel to be playing such a musical icon, Molly-Grace? Were you a fan of Carole King before joining the show?

It's an incredible honour and a privilege to be portraying such an incredible woman. It's also a little daunting knowing there are people coming to see the show who - like myself - are such big fans of the music. I grew up listening to Carole's music. My grandad gave me the Tapestry album on vinyl when I was young, and I've loved her songs ever since. It's been such a wonderful process learning her songs and discovering I was a fan of the songs that she even wrote for other people. Most people have no idea how many iconic songs she's written over the years!

What's your favourite moment in the show?

I think it's the scene just after singing You've Got A Friend with Joss Slovick and Seren Sandham Davies, who play Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil. The scene really shows the audience what a close and supportive friendship they all had. And it helps that our cast are also all so supportive and wonderful to work with - it makes my job incredibly easy. Sharing the stage with them every night is an absolute dream.

Do you have a favourite song you perform?

It has to be Natural Woman, without a doubt. Not only does it have powerfully intimate and emotional lyrics, the melody of the chorus is of a gold standard. You don't come across that kind of writing very often. I always feel emotional whenever I perform that song. It's sort of a pinch-me moment really. I think about Carole writing it, and how Aretha's voice made the song utterly iconic. I feel extremely empowered as a woman knowing that these incredible women who came before me have paved the way to enable me to sing that same song today.

How does the latest production differ from previous ones?

This is the first time ever the show has been performed by a cast of actor-musicians. The entire cast play all the music live on stage for the audience to see. I think it's so important for that to be seen more in theatre. Everyone always thinks we're miming, which is a wonderful compliment because we've all worked so hard to do the music justice. We've worked alongside the incredible Sarah Travis, our musical supervisor, who helped me encapsulate the spirit of Carole's playing and her very distinct voice. The arrangements that Sarah's created for our ensemble of musicians perfectly capture the heart and soul of Carole's music. I feel it's less like a typical musical and more like you're a fly on the wall, witnessing the process of what made Carole King the legend she is today.

Have you performed in Birmingham before?

Once, which was back in 2018 with the UK tour of The Worst Witch musical. You never get to spend a lot of time actually seeing the city you're performing in, but Birmingham has always been a city brimming with culture, especially the arts, and you're never short for things to see and experience. I think hosting the Commonwealth Games has really made people aware of what a great city Birmingham is! I can't wait to return to the Hippodrome, and I'm very much looking forward to meeting people who come to see the show, and who've fallen in love with Carole's music as much as I have.

Beautiful - The Carole King Musical runs at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tues 30 August to Sat 3 September





2Faced Dance Company: EVERYTHING (but the girl)

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 10 & Sun 11 September

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

The Qualies brings to life writer David Foster Wallace's ground-breaking study of American tennis player Michael Joyce...

Hollow In A World Too Full is a solo work featuring a score from Cannes award-winning composer Alex Baranowski...

7.0 explores how people respond when everything they thought they knew is taken away from them.

A highly physical presentation, the piece is one of 2Faced Dance's most popular productions.





Rambert Dance In Peaky Blinders 2022

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 27 September - Sun 2 October

If you're not only a fan of Birmingham-based television drama Peaky Blinders but also an admirer of long-established and critically acclaimed dance company Rambert, then this brand-new show - here receiving its world premiere - will definitely see you in seventh heaven. Co-produced by Rambert and Birmingham Hippodrome, written by Steven Knight - the creator of the global-hit television series - and boasting an eclectic Peaky Blinders soundtrack, the production takes a deep dive into the backstory of lead character Tommy Shelby.

"Peaky Blinders has always had music and movement at its heart," says Steven, "and now the beating heart of the show will be transferred to the stage: an interpretation of Tommy's story, performed by Rambert, one of the leading dance companies in the world. This is dance for people who don't usually watch dance, and what I've written has been transformed into something startling by consummate dancers and choreographers.

"If the concept of a Peaky Blinders dance seems strange, reserve judgement and reserve a ticket."

The show is being presented as part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival.

Kantha Katha-K

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 20 & Wed 21 September

Local stories originated during the Covid pandemic lie at the heart of this unique performance/installation, presented in the Hippodrome's Patrick Centre by the well-established Amina Khayyam Dance Company. Making use of WhatsApp and Zoom, the highly regarded ensemble engaged Birmingham women with the creative activity of Kantha - a traditional south Asian form of embroidery - via which the participants told their Covid experiences and stories. They were assisted in the initiative by artists Abeda Begum and Bhajan Hunjan.

The final part of the project sees Amina Khayyam kinetically progress the Kanthas to Kathak. The music score used for the presentation, Borodin's Nocturne, has been specially adapted by Jonathan Mayer to Indian instrumentation.



English Youth Ballet: Swan Lake

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 23 & Sat 24 September

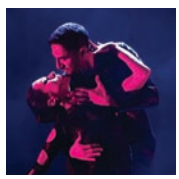


Performing full-length versions of classics such as The Nutcracker, Giselle, Coppelia and The Sleeping Beauty, English Youth Ballet utilises professional principal dancers in its productions' leading roles while also providing young dancers with the opportunity to perform within a professional setting.

Their 'powerful new adaptation of one of the world's most cherished classical ballets' features 100 talented young performers from the local area.

Vincent Simone: Tango Passions

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 14 September; Stourbridge Town Hall, Wed 28 September; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 9 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 10 October; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 13 October; Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 20 October



Vincent Simone is certainly not a man to let the grass grow under his ever-dancing feet. The Argentine Tango King and Strictly Come Dancing legend has been much in evidence at venues across the country of late, starring alongside fellow Strictly favourite Ian Waite in The Ballroom Boys.

Now he's back with this brand-new show, stopping off at theatres across the region with a production that's being publicised as 'a sexy, steamy, passionate night not to be missed!'.

Featuring music from Astor Piazzolla and Gotan Project, the show stars Paula Duarte as Vincent's leading lady.



STRICTLY BALLROOM

Craig Revel Horwood chats about a brand-new musical coming to the Midlands next month...

by Diane Parkes

No stranger to the spotlight himself, Craig Revel Horwood now goes behind the scenes to direct a brand-new stage show based on Baz Luhrmann's hit 1992 movie, Strictly Ballroom. Starring Kevin Clifton and Maisie Smith in the lead roles, the production this month embarks on a UK tour, stopping off at two Midlands venues along the way. What's On recently caught up with Craig to find out more...

Professional dancers may look amazing as they trip the light fantastic in shows such as Strictly Come Dancing, but it takes them years of hard graft to reach the top of their trade. So says Strictly judge Craig Revel Horwood, who is directing and co-choreographing Strictly Ballroom, a brand-new stage production about the challenges of making it big in the dance world.

Based on the hit 1992 Baz Luhrmann film of the same name and coming to Birmingham Hippodrome in October and the Wolverhampton Grand next February, the show tells the tale of Scott Hastings, a rebellious young competitor who defies the judges and is forced to dance with beginner Fran. The tour stars Strictly professional Kevin Clifton as Scott and EastEnders actress and Strictly finalist Maisie Smith as Fran.

"This show introduces people to the backstage world," says Craig. "Everyone who watches Strictly Come Dancing is seeing the glossy side of it, but Strictly Ballroom delves into the hearts and minds of the people doing the dance - the trials and tribulations they have to go through in order to get to that competition standard. It's about the fight and struggle, and all the animosity that's involved in it to win the day and become a gold medallist. It's about dancing with your heart rather than just dancing the steps.

"It's an age-old story, with really dark and sinister characters, that culminates in high comedy. It tells the story of true-to-life Latin and ballroom dancing, where you've got the pushy parents and the amateurs having to spend all their money on costumes and fake tans. And they're in a very insular world - the circle of people where winning the competition is a matter of life and death."

It has been a battle to bring the Strictly Ballroom tour to life, with Covid scuppering plans for the last two years. Craig is delighted that the show is finally taking to the road.

"It's been quite a long time in the making - about three-and-a-half years. I secured Kevin Clifton for the show two-and-a-half years ago and was delighted. He left Strictly in order to do this particular musical because it was his lifelong dream to play the role of Scott Hastings.

"Then of course Covid struck, and that put us back two years. Having to wait, like everyone did, during Covid was horrific, but it did give us time to think about it, and to develop the set and the script. I feel relieved that audiences are finally going to get to see it, and see my vision of it as well as Kevin's and Maisie's.

"It's Kevin's life, and he's been wanting to do this for the last 25 years. Scott is a huge role and a fantastic one. Kevin can show off not only his dancing skills but also his acting - and his Australian accent, which he's very proud of! And of course we have Maisie, who's a fantastic actor, a brilliant singer and a brilliant dancer, as we already know because we saw Kevin and Maisie dance in the Children In Need special back in 2019, which they went on to win. Then she did the full show of Strictly, became a finalist in that, and people fell in love with her all over again."

Craig may be best known to audiences for his role as the grumpy judge in Strictly Come Dancing, but he also has an impressive CV as a choreographer, director, actor and writer, working on countless West End shows and national tours, including Spend Spend Spend, My One And Only, Chess and Sister Act. And he knows only too well the obstacles young male dancers can sometimes face.

"Like Baz Luhrmann, I'm Australian. I left Australia in 1988, and when the movie of Strictly Ballroom came out, I saw my life flashing before my eyes on the screen. Dance has been a passion all my life, and dancing was at the forefront of Strictly Ballroom, long before Strictly Come Dancing.

"The motto of Strictly Ballroom, which resonated with me, is what Fran says to Scott: 'A life lived in fear is a life not lived'. I think that's true of everyone in the world; you shouldn't live in fear of failure. To have convictions, to have a passion, to follow it and not be scared to do it - that's what makes people what they are.

"I have applied that motto to my life, by not listening to people and by believing in myself. I was fearless. I had to be. I was bullied at school. I didn't want anyone to know that I was dancing, because of people's attitude towards it when I was growing up.

"It's a lot easier today to say you want to study dance, but I was studying classical ballet. Wearing a pair of tights was not cool in Ballarat in Australia, so I hid that from people. But I still followed my passion, and you end up having to be fearless. Any horrible comments that people made, I let them slip like water off a duck's back, because I had a dream and I stuck to it. You will do well in life if you have a passion and a dream, and I encourage all people to follow it and not live in fear."

Craig's determination has certainly paid off. Highly regarded within the theatrical world, he returns to the small screen with Strictly Come Dancing this autumn.

"I can't wait for Strictly to come back. People often say to me, 'It's your 20th series, aren't you bored of it yet? Are you considering leaving?' I always reply that I love it. I get the best seat in the house for some of the best dancing and some of the worst dancing that the UK will ever see. And how wonderful is that? For me, it's different every time because you get different stories, different people. It's a change of cast each year, so each year it feels like a brand-new show but with the same format. It's brilliant!"

Strictly Ballroom shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 31 October to Saturday 5 November and at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 13 to Saturday 18 February.

See How They Run

CERT **12a (98 mins)**

Starring **Harris Dickinson, Sam Rockwell, Saoirse Ronan, Adrien Brody, Ruth Wilson, Shirley Henderson** Directed by **Tom George**



World-weary Inspector Stoppard (Sam Rockwell) and over-eager rookie Constable Stalker (Saoirse Ronan) have got a murder on their hands in the West End of 1950s London.

Plans for a film version of a smash-hit play are brought to an abrupt halt when a pivotal member of the crew is murdered.

Now, faced with a puzzling whodunnit, Stoppard and Stalker find themselves investigating the glamorously sordid underbelly of the theatre world. But can they keep themselves safe from danger while doing so?...

This lighthearted murder-mystery is helmed by Tom George, who directed all 19 episodes of the hit Cotswolds-set BBC mockumentary sitcom, This Country. Indeed, one of the series' stars, Charlie Cooper (he played the character of Kurtan in the show), features in the film's cast.

Released Fri 9 September

The Forgiven CERT **tbc (117 mins)**

Starring **Jessica Chastain, Ralph Fiennes, Matt Smith, Caleb Landry Jones, Abbey Lee, Christopher Abbott** Directed by **John Michael McDonagh**

Speeding through the Moroccan desert to attend an old friend's lavish weekend party, wealthy Londoners David and Jo Henninger (Ralph Fiennes and Jessica Chastain) are involved in a tragic accident with a local teenage boy. Arriving late at the grand villa with the debauched party raging, the couple attempts to cover up the incident with the collusion of the local police. But when the boy's father arrives seeking justice, the stage is set for a tension-filled culture clash in which David and Jo must come to terms with their fateful act and its shattering consequences.

Released Fri 2 September



Three Thousand Years Of Longing CERT **15 (108 mins)**

Starring **Tilda Swinton, Idris Elba, Pia Thunderbolt, Berk Ozturk, Anthony Moisset, Alya Browne** Directed by **George Miller**



An academic and a woman of reason, Dr Alithea Binnie (Tilda Swinton) encounters a Djinn (Idris Elba) while in Istanbul and finds herself being offered three wishes in exchange for his freedom. At first, she doubts the Djinn is real. She's also familiar with all the cautionary tales of wishes gone wrong. But with the Djinn pleading his case and Alithea more than a little beguiled, she finally grasps the nettle and makes a wish. And it's one that surprises both of them...

Released Fri 2 September

Bodies Bodies Bodies

CERT **tbc (94 mins)**

Starring **Amandla Stenberg, Maria Bakalova, Rachel Sennott, Chase Sui Wonders, Pete Davidson, Myha'la Herrols** Directed by **Halina Reijn**

Backstabbing, fake friends, and an event that goes very, very wrong are the unsavoury dishes on the menu when a group of rich twentysomethings attend a 'hurricane party' at a remote family mansion.

It's not the drinking, dancing and drug-taking that sees the get-together take a significant turn for the worse, but rather a session of 'murder in the dark'-style game Bodies Bodies Bodies. After two of the participants argue, a third storms off - only to then be found outside with his throat slashed. As the tension mounts, it soon becomes clear that there'll be more than one dead body at the mansion before the hurricane subsides...

Released Fri 9 September





Don't Worry Darling

CERT **tbc (123 mins)**

Starring **Florence Pugh, Harry Styles, Chris Pine, Olivia Wilde, Gemma Chan, Nick Kroll** Directed by **Olivia Wilde**

If Alice (Florence Pugh) had just left well alone, everything could've been perfect. Living in a utopian community in California during the 1950s, there's plenty to recommend the life she shares with husband Jack (Harry Styles). Problem is, she can't shake the need to understand more about the experimental town that she calls home - a town which has been created and is paid for by the mysterious company for which Jack works. Unable to rein-in her curiosity, she begins her own investigations, in the process not only creating tensions within the town but also making her question her own sanity...

Released Fri 23 September

Crimes Of The Future

CERT **tbc (107 mins)**

Starring **Viggo Mortensen, Lihi Kornowski, Léa Seydoux, Scott Speedman, Kristen Stewart, Don McKellar** Directed by **David Cronenberg**



Cult sci-fi/horror director David Cronenberg here makes a welcome return with a movie for which he wrote the script way back in 1998.

As the human species adapts to a synthetic environment, the body undergoes new transformations and mutations. Assisted by partner Caprice (Léa Seydoux), celebrity performance artist Saul Tenser (Viggo Mortensen) publicly showcases the metamorphosis of his organs in avant-garde presentations.

An investigator from the National Organ Registry, Timlin (Kristen Stewart), obsessively tracks the duo's movements. Meanwhile, a mysterious group tries to use Saul's notoriety to shed light on the next phase of human evolution...

Released Fri 9 September

Ticket To Paradise CERT tbc

Starring **Julia Roberts, George Clooney, Kaitlyn Dever, Billie Lourd, Lucas Bravo, Maxine Bouttier** Directed by **Ol Parker**

With Academy Award winners George Clooney and Julia Roberts topping the bill, romantic comedy Ticket To Paradise should have no problem accessing a significant and appreciative audience.

The A-list duo star as exes who find themselves on a shared mission to stop their lovestruck daughter from making the same mistake they once made.

"I think it's so funny," Julia Roberts told Vanity in talking about the movie, "and George is so funny, and George and I together... it's probably going to be terrible because there's too much potential for it to be great; it'll just implode on it itself!"

Released Fri 16 September



Flux Gourmet CERT tbc (111 mins)

Starring **Gwendoline Christie, Asa Butterfield, Richard Bremmer, Ariane Labed, Fatma Mohamed, Makis Papadimitriou** Directed by **Peter Strickland**



A dysfunctional sonic collective - a band of experimental performance artists devoted to the challenge of extracting disturbing sounds from various foods - navigates both internal and external rivalries, in a movie which is described by its official publicity as 'an absurdly original feast for the senses'.

Peter Strickland is the man who's helmed the film, four years after causing a significant stir with comedy-horror flick In Fabric, in which a haunted red dress torments its various owners.

Critics have had a mainly positive response to Flux Gourmet, hailing it 'a wild and witty ride' (Deadline Hollywood) and praising Strickland for having yet again created 'a crazy maelstrom of quirk' (The Hollywood Reporter).

Released Fri 30 September



One Dance, One City

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sun 2 October

Birmingham's commitment to providing an environment in which first-class dance not only exists but positively thrives, is here celebrated in a special photographic exhibition by Dani Bower.

Dani is the marketing manager of One Dance UK, the sector support organisation which moved from London to Birmingham in 2019 and has since worked tirelessly to champion the artform across the second city and out into the wider West Midlands.

The photographs on display are the result of a project which saw One Dance UK invite some of the region's finest dance artists to partner with the city itself, exploring and celebrating the sights, venues, culture and surroundings which make Birmingham so vibrant, diverse and unique.

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Adeela Suleman: Allegory Of War

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Sun 9 October

Film projections, metal repoussé work, ceramic plates, intricate applique and installation all feature in Adeela Suleman's most comprehensive solo exhibition in a UK public gallery.
Allegory Of War is awash with recurring motifs - an important feature of the Karachi-based artist's work. The motifs - organic subjects such as birds and flowers which reference the decorative traditions of the Mughal style - form detailed, repetitive patterns replete with symbolic meaning.
Adeela is known for the social and political commentary underlying her sculptures. She particularly focuses on the links between historic and contemporary violence experienced in Karachi, where up to 12 people per day are murdered in gang-related or political attacks. Her work acts not only as a memorial to the victims, but also as an interrogation of the juxtapositions of creativity and destruction.

Collaborations

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 23 October

With 2022 being the UN International Year of Glass, this 'dynamic showcase' examines what glass artists can do when brought together for a collaborative experience. The 20 creatives involved having been paired across glassmaking disciplines.



Dürer: The Making Of A Renaissance Master

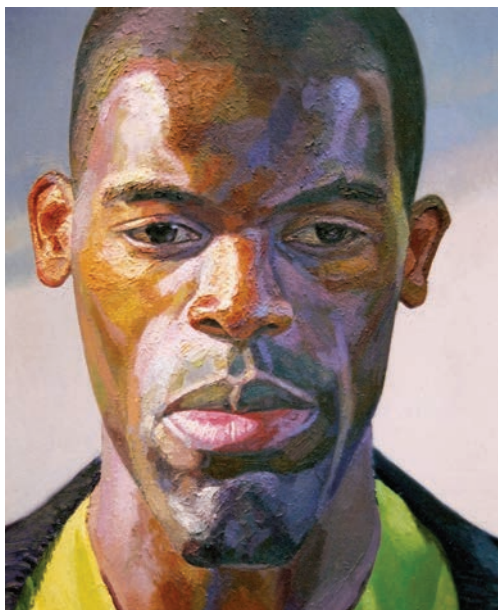
The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, until Sun 25 September

This fifth exhibition in an annual collaborative series with Royal Collection Trust explores how Albrecht Dürer earned a lasting reputation as the Renaissance's most important and influential northern European artist.
As well as presenting the German painter & printmaker's finest works from the Royal Collection - in the form of rare drawings, iconic prints, and one of only two paintings which currently reside in the UK - the display also examines the 16th-century artist's not-inconsiderable skill as an entrepreneur. Dürer's shrewd eye for making a splash with his art saw him exploring subjects and issues which struck a chord not only with the general public but also with numerous high-ranking patrons - including the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I.

Brought To Light

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Sun 8 January

This latest Herbert Art Gallery & Museum exhibition provides visitors with the chance to explore a selection of the paintings, drawings and sculptures which the venue has collected over the past 65 years.
Early inclusions in the gallery's contemporary collection presented scenes of British life and landscape, often featuring working-class people going about their everyday lives.
A small number of more radical works, by artists like Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, were also included.
The last 40 years has seen the collection expand to embrace artworks with a broader subject matter. During the last decade in particular, the Herbert's collecting has focused on themes of conflict, peace and reconciliation, as well as works by Black artists and female artists, to redress a historic imbalance in the collection.



Farwa Moledina: Women Of Paradise

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, Fri 9 September - Sun 13 November

Birmingham-based artist Farwa Moledina uses her artwork as a means of exploring the way in which western historical art narrative portrays the Muslim woman. In the process she questions the extent to which that portrayal has impacted how Muslim women are viewed in the contemporary world.
Farwa's latest installation is a study of the four women promised paradise in Islamic tradition - one of whom, Maryam, mother of Isa, is otherwise known as Mary, mother of Jesus.


KATE

by Brian O'Faolain

Ginny & Tonic

If you watched the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony, chances are you'll have spotted RuPaul's Drag Race icon Ginny Lemon making a spectacular aerial entrance over the Alexander Stadium, suspended from a big yellow hot-air balloon and shouting 'Fancy a slice?' What's On recently caught up with Ginny - whose birth name is Lewis Mandall - to find out more...

Tell us about the creation of Ginny Lemon and where the idea originated from...

Well, this is always a sad story to tell. I originally started drag in 2016 after the death of my sister. Ginny Lemon, for me, was a kind of coping mechanism - I was able to use drag as a form of escapism. Then, when I started doing more and more shows, it became more of a spiritual possession, as well as a kind of healing talisman. So that's how it originally started. Throw reality television and the fabulous drag society into the mix and that's how I ended up here.

Does the name have any significance. Gin & Lemon, perhaps?

Legend has it that I used to drink quite a bit of gin back in the day - so much so that people used to call me Ginny. When I was searching for a drag name, Ginny was the obvious choice, but I thought I'd add something zesty - a little slice...

Ostensibly your performance is categorised as drag, but how would you describe your style of entertainment?

I try not to describe it really. I don't think I've got the words - or can make the sounds with my mouth. I would say it's performance art. I think deep down I'm a character actress. I don't really see myself as a drag queen - more of a deity that just does drag as an illusion.

You've garnered quite a following, both here in the Midlands and beyond. Was that your ambition from the outset?

I think it's more like a leader of a cult - you kind of want more followers to follow your cult. I suppose it's kind of like a happy accident that so many people got to find out who I am. It was never something I intended to do; I really just wanted to pay my bills, so I had to work.

You recently appeared in the opening ceremony for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Tell us how that opportunity came about and what the experience was like...

The director of the opening ceremony, Iqbal Khan, approached me. He'd seen me perform live on the season-two Drag Race tour and was kind of inspired by my performance. They were looking for an alternative mascot to do this anthem for Birmingham. They lured me with the idea of a hot-air balloon, but it wasn't until they said I could come in in a *lemon-shaped* hot-air balloon that I said 'Yes, I'm in!' That kind of sold it to me. I thought it would be such a great opportunity for the little ol' queer folk from the West Midlands to be representing Birmingham to over one billion people. It was quite a big opportunity, and I felt very honoured to be part of it.

What was your rider like?

I had a rather lethal rider of a bottle of Grey Goose vodka, which was quite nice - although I shouldn't drink and ride really! And of course, I was very sensible. They very much looked after me. The funniest thing they did was to hire me a yellow sofa for my dressing room, which I thought was brilliant. They said: 'We've hired this for you, so don't deface it.' That's the first thing I did - deface it. There's a yellow sofa somewhere with my autograph on it.

What else do you treasure from that experience?

The thing I treasure most is working with the volunteers, of which there were thousands. My part was tiny, but seeing the passion from people who'd given up their free time - from the performers to the people in high-vis running around - is the thing I'll take away from it. Just seeing that community effort and the West Midlands - and in particular Birmingham - coming together made me very proud to be a part of it.

You've just released a new album, titled Tonic. What's the messaging behind this, and why now?

As soon as I left Drag Race, I started to write the album. Obviously we had lockdown, Covid, the sea's on fire, Australia's burning - you know, the world is f*****. So I really just wanted to write myself out of my own depression. So Tonic, for me, is kind of like the medicine I needed and I wanted to share with everyone. I thought the best way to share this medicine was to administer it through the ears, and I thought that creating an album would be the best thing to do with my time. The songs on there are a right mix of absolutely silly stuff, but also stuff that, deep down, I think is quite dark. So I wanted to address that and bring some light into dark times.

THE FESTIVAL CONTINUES

MOBILISE - BIRMINGHAM PRIDE

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Of those songs, do you have a personal favourite?

It's a very difficult choice. I don't really have a favourite, but the one that kind of is the biggest earworm is I Am Over My Overdraft. That song, or that mantra, has been with me for years and years and years. I wrote that song to pour myself into that frustration. It was that song that got me out of my overdraft. So that's kind of one of the things I'm most proud of.

Who are the musical influences that helped shape your style and presentation?

My biggest musical influence is definitely Tori Amos - my number-one deity. Then I would say Kate Bush, Bjork, Enya, Grace Jones. People like that really - that sort of 'strong female singer-songwriter' vibe. Anything straddling a piano tends to get my gears going.

You're also heavily involved in Mobilise, which forms part of Birmingham Festival 2022. Tell us about the initiative....

It was my friend, Fat Butcher, who asked me to get involved. We'd worked together on quite a few projects and wanted to do something that was a bit more community-focused and for a more sober audience, but also something that was in an accessible place. As a disabled person, I faced difficulties during the season-two tour of Drag Race trying to access these venues. And trying to get good support networks within those was also hard. So instead of just being pissed off, going online and trying to cancel people, I thought, No, I'm going to do something here; I'm going to create a safe space for people to come. So that was kind of my motivation. I didn't want to just sit on my arse and go on Twitter and slag people off. I thought, F*** you, I'll write a song and put on a night instead.

Has it changed at all since the first event?

Absolutely. We're very 'for the people', and we've adapted *with* the people. We get feedback after each night. It kind of works with the audience, as opposed to going 'Here's your fish supper, eat it up'. It's more like 'What do you want for dinner?'

Birmingham Pride makes a welcome return in all its glory this month. What will your input be, and what are you most looking forward to about the festival?

I'm looking forward to jumping in at the beginning of the weekend and then kind of landing somewhere at the end of the weekend. For me, no doubt that will mean working, but I shall be partying hard as well. It's one of my local Prides and the first Pride I ever went to, so it's always a homecoming Pride for me. So you'll see me there, but if my make-up is hanging on my belly and I'm swearing and I've got 10 fags in my mouth, do not approach me! Leave me to party!



ABOUT:

MOBILISE is a 'Queer and sober dance party' created to empower LGBT+ people to dance, take up public space, feel confident and celebrate themselves. The initiative is part of FATT Projects - a Birmingham-based Queer performance company.

The next Mobilise event takes place at The Exchange in Centenary Square, Birmingham, on Friday 9 September. For further information, visit fattprojects.org

TONIC - Ginny's new album features 11 tracks, including the single Ding Dong. Released early summer, the song is inspired by "hearing the sound of your alarm, that space in between sleep and waking, and how the alarm sound can trigger you into remembering you have to go to work, earn money, and take whatever abuse you get in order to pay the bills."

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The Photography Show & The Video Show

NEC, Birmingham,
Sat 17 - Tues 20 September

Europe's biggest photography & moving-image event, The Photography Show & The Video Show caters for everyone from budding beginners to seasoned pros.

This year sees the likes of Canon, Nikon, Sony and Fujifilm joining the 250-plus exhibiting brands, with the show also featuring 400-plus tutorials, demonstrations, workshops and masterclasses for creatives to get their teeth into.

Other highlights include the return of the Super Stage, presenting a packed programme of talks from a star-studded line-up of talented creatives. Contributors include environmental filmmaker Jack Harries and award-winning portrait photographer Roberto Valenzuela.

New attractions at the show include the Creator Stage - catering for content creators online - and the On Location Stage, focusing on travel, weddings and everything in-between.

Peaky Blinders Nights

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Fri 16 & Sat 17 and Fri 23 & Sat 24 September

Flat caps and flapper dresses at the ready - the Black Country Living Museum's ever-popular Peaky Blinders event is making a welcome return this month.

The immersive experience brings to life the popular BBC television series with the help of 1920s-themed cocktails, live music, street theatre and plenty more.

Many of the series' scenes were filmed at the museum, with the Canal Arm acting as Charlie Strong's Yard - the location in which numerous deals and disagreements took place.

Other museum locations featured in the show include the canal bridge - a popular place for illicit meetings - and St James's School, which was used as the backdrop to a grisly murder.



The Birmingham International Tattoo

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham,
Sat 10 & Sun 11 September



The Birmingham International Tattoo debuts at its new home of Resorts World Arena this month, presenting a special pomp & pageantry celebration to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee year.

Bringing together marching bands from Poland and France with British Army Bands from Sandhurst and Colchester, the show also features massed dancers, the Inter-Service Field Gun Competition, and dog-racing during the British Flyball Association competition.

As usual, proceedings are rounded off with the ever-popular 'spectacular grand finale', a visually stunning presentation featuring more than 1,000 performers.



THE FESTIVAL CONTINUES

POLINATIONS

BY TRIGGER PRODUCTIONS

LET'S GO OUT

BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL

commonwealth games

2 - 18 SEPTEMBER

VICTORIA SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM

COMMISSIONED BY UNBOXED-CREATIVITY IN THE UK

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PoliNations Victoria Square, Birmingham, Fri 2 - Sun 18 September

Victoria Square is this month being transformed into 'an epic super-garden of magical proportions', bringing to a close the six-month-long Birmingham 2022 Festival. Featuring giant fabricated trees sitting amongst thousands of plants and flowers co-planted by the city's residents, the garden will host a free events programme featuring live music, poetry, workshops, light shows and 'a grand finale like no other'.



Birmingham Pride

Birmingham City Centre, Smithfield Site & Birmingham Gay Village, Sat 24 & Sun 25 September

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2022, Birmingham Pride once again gets the city partying this month, with 40,000-plus people expected to attend the event over the course of the weekend (and more than 75,000 participating in or watching the annual Pride parade through the city's streets).

The festival's Smithfield site is the centre of the action, featuring the main stage, the Conrad Guest Cabaret Stage and the dance arena. Headline acts include Steps, Becky Hill and Melanie C.

The Birmingham Pride 'street party' - taking place in the heart of the Gay Village - and the quieter, family-friendly Community Village Green also return.

Shropshire Oktoberfest

Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Fri 30 September & Sat 1 October

Dubbed 'the biggest party in the county', Shropshire Oktoberfest returns this month with its usual line-up of attractions.

With more than 150 ales & lagers available, not to mention a selection of cocktails and wines (and a gin den!), there's plenty of opportunity to get pleasantly merry.

Entertainment comes in the form of a comedy tent, a silent disco, carpool karaoke, and live music from oompah bands and local talent on the Full Fibre stage.



Museum Of The Moon

Lichfield Cathedral, Wed 21 September - Mon 31 October

Artist Luke Jerram's touring artwork, Museum Of The Moon, will spend more than a month of the autumn suspended in the nave of Lichfield Cathedral.

A fusion of lunar imagery and moonlight, the installation is enhanced by the addition of a surround-sound composition created by Bafta and Ivor Novello award-winning composer Dan Jones.

Visitors will be able to view The Museum Of The Moon as part of their day visit to the cathedral, with some special evening ticketed events also on offer.

Science: Spectacular Sound And Light Show

Worcester Cathedral, Tues 20 - Sat 24 September

Created by award-winning artistic duo Luxmuralis, this dramatic sound & light installation takes visitors on a journey of scientific discovery.

The artwork examines chemistry and biology and interprets artistically the scale of molecules, cells and DNA. It also explores the history of science and the contributions of science to humanity, as well as taking a look at famous scientists past and present.

A DAY OUT IN COVENTRY

The Wave Waterpark

The Wave waterpark offers something for thrill, spill and chill seekers:

Ride 6 high-speed slides, get soaked in The Reef, make a splash in the Wave Pool and wind around the Lazy River.

Book your tickets
www.thewavecoventry.com





Coventry Transport Museum

A world-class collection. A world-class experience.

Housing the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles on the planet and telling the story of a city which changed the world through transport.

Book your tickets
transport-museum.com

Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

An award-winning gallery and museum situated in the heart of Coventry.

The perfect place to delve into history and engage with art and culture.

Free entry
theherbert.org



THE wave

Herbert
Art Gallery & Museum

COVENTRY TRANSPORT MUSEUM

CV Life

Coventry Transport Museum photograph by @garryjonesphotography and Herbert Art Gallery and Museum photograph by Dylan Parrin.



Autumn Steam Gala

Severn Valley Railway, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 September

All aboard! Steam train fanatics this month have the chance to ride behind the best of the Severn Valley Railway's home fleet, including up to four visiting locomotives (one of which is the above-pictured LMS Stanier Class 5, No 45231 Sherwood Forester).

There will also be starring roles for the newly overhauled GWR 4930 Hagley Hall - after a 36-year absence - and final gala appearances for GWR 2857 and BR(W) 1501 before their respective tickets expire. Goods trains and local services will run across the four-day festival of steam.

Oktoberfest

Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire, Sat 10 September - Sun 2 October

Alton Towers is getting a Bavarian-themed makeover this month as it once again plays host to Oktoberfest.

The popular annual get-together features lederhosen-clad hosts, a talented oompah band and a bierkeller offering a laidback Bavarian experience (complete with singalong tunes to enjoy and tasty beers to sample!).



Malvern Autumn Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Fri 23 - Sun 25 September



Celebrating the change in seasons - and promising plenty of family fun into the bargain - Malvern Autumn Show makes a welcome return this month.

The 2022 edition of the event features the Canna UK National Giant Vegetables Championship, animals of all shapes and sizes on the family green, and the opportunity to take a step back in time in a 'vintage village'.

The RHS Flower Show, meanwhile, offers green-fingered visitors the chance to check out some stunning displays and benefit from expert advice, with this year's line-up of special guests including Great British Bake Off's Chigs Parmar and The Big Allotment Challenge's Jonathan Moseley.

A Place In The Sun Live

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 23 - Sun 25 September

A Place In The Sun Live is not only the official companion event to the popular Channel Four TV series but also the largest overseas-property exhibition in Europe.

As well as hosting a wide array of overseas property agents with thousands of properties available, the show also features an impressive range of service companies, providing visitors with the chance to access expert advice on subjects including tax, healthcare, finance, currency transfer and relocation.



Craft In Focus

Trentham Estate, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 September

The Craft In Focus fair is back at Trentham for a fourth year. Featuring up to 80 of the UK's finest contemporary artists & makers - and showcasing everything from textiles to ceramics - the event offers visitors the chance to purchase not only from established designer makers but also emerging British talent.

Firework Champions

Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire, Sat 10 September and Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, Sat 17 September

Spectacular fireworks displays light up the autumn sky at two popular Midlands venues this month.

Guests are invited to bring picnics and make like it's still the summer, as three of the UK's finest firework companies each present a choreographed-to-music display.

Visitors then get to vote for their favourite. The evening's entertainment is rounded off with a larger 'finale display', complete with pyrotechnics and drones.



Heritage

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations. Every September it brings people together to celebrate their heritage and community. Stories are told, traditions explored and histories brought to life. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences - and it's all FREE.
The festival returns this year from 9 to 18 September - and here are just some of the venues you can explore around the region...

Shropshire

Tanat Valley Light Railway & Nant Mawr Visitor Centre

Nant Mawr Visitor Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire, SY10 9HW

TVLR is a small local heritage railway charity offering lots to see and do. As well as enjoying nature walks, families can check out a collection of quirky railway vehicles, including an original BMW Isetta Bubble car with NG railway wheels, monorails rides and much more.
Visitors can also view 309 coaches rescued from the now-closed Coventry Electric Museum, sample the hospitality of the Clacton Cafe coach, and pay a visit to the museum coach to learn about the history of electric railway power.

Fri 9 - Sun 18 Sept | 10am-5pm



Brake van ride along the railway tracks at Llynclys

Cambrian Heritage Railways, Llynclys South Station, Llynclys, Oswestry, North Shropshire, SY10 8BX

Experience a ride in a brake van, hauled by a diesel shunter locomotive, on a journey along the short stretch of line south of Llynclys station. The line is being reopened especially for the Heritage Open Days event, with a free heritage 'rail replacement bus' connecting the site with the main railway at Oswestry and Weston.

Sat 10 - Sun 11 & Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept | 11am-3.30pm



Shrewsbury Castle - Soldiers of Shropshire Regimental Museum

Soldiers of Shropshire Museum, Shrewsbury Castle, SY1 2AT

Find out about the castle's rich, 1,000-year history and discover the county's regimental past in the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum - from the King's Shropshire Light Infantry to the formation of the 53rd (Shropshire) Regiment (1755) and the 85th Light Infantry (1759).

Sun 11 Sept | 10.30am-4pm



Staffordshire

Regent Theatre Open Day

Regent Theatre, Piccadilly, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 1AP

The Regent Theatre is throwing open its doors and inviting members of the public to take a look behind the scenes of a working theatre. Taking place between 10am and 4pm, activities will include backstage tours led by theatre staff, live performances on stage, technical demonstrations, and lots of free workshops for little ones to enjoy.

Sun 11 Sept | 10am-4pm



National Memorial Arboretum - Our Story Guided Walk

The National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE13 7AR

Join one of the Arboretum's expert volunteers on a special guided walk to discover how this former gravel-extraction site became the UK's year-round 'place to remember' - a home to

Open Days

more than 400 memorials and 25,000 trees. Packed full of anecdotes and stories, the free walk will bring the story of the Arboretum and its memorials to life.

Thurs 15 Sept | 11.30am & 2.30pm



Battle Of Britain Day - Talks And Tours

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 3DW

Spitfire-themed talks and tours mark Battle of Britain Day and celebrate Heritage Open Days' 'outstanding inventions' theme. Highlights include a short, free talk about Spitfire RW388 and its recent restoration, a screening of Flying The Dream - a 20-minute film about the pioneering work of the women of the Air Transport Auxiliary during the Second World War - and two tours of the Spitfire Gallery with curator Joseph Perry.

Thurs 15 Sept | Talk and film at 2pm in the museum's Forum Theatre, tours at 3pm and 4pm



Wolverhampton & Black Country

Wightwick Manor & Gardens

Wightwick Bank, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV6 8EE

Wightwick Manor is hosting a garden party for all, with outdoor games on the tennis lawn, Victorian costumes to try on, and lots of other surprises. Inside the manor, check out the Pre-Raphaelite art, William Morris interior, and a special exhibition titled Look Beneath The Lustre - then treat yourself to a relaxing break in the tearoom.

Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept | 10am-5pm



Dudley Zoo & Castle

Zoological Drive, Discovery Way, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 4AL

The 11th-century castle will be opening its doors for free from 5pm to 7.30 pm (last admission is 6pm).

Thurs 15 - Fri 16 Sept | 5pm-7.30pm

17th Century Life At Moseley Old Hall

Moseley Old Hall, Moseley Old Hall Lane, Featherstone, Wolverhampton, WV10 7HY

Explore Moseley as the home that Charles II entered, under the cover of darkness, back in the 17th century. With costumed volunteers around the hall, visitors can learn about innovations that were introduced at the time, sample some traditional family activities, and check out this year's apple harvest.

Sat 17 Sept | 10.30am-5pm



Aldridge Transport Museum

Shenstone Drive, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 8TP

Primarily a commercial road transport museum featuring buses with a local connection, Aldridge Transport Museum will have some small commercial vehicles and a car on display for the Heritage Open Days event, together with a number of two-wheeled mechanical and pedal vehicles. Ticket machines, garage signs and models will also be on display.

Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept | 10.30am-4pm



Full Heritage Open Days listings can be found at heritageopendays.org.uk



It's showtime!

Derren Brown is coming to the Midlands this month with his currently touring production, Showman. The Master of Illusion recently chatted to What's On about why he's looking forward to his Birmingham stop-off...

You're back at The Alexandra in Birmingham with your Showman production this month, Derren, having first performed it there last year. Why the return visit?

I love performing in Birmingham. I had such a great time here last year that when the opportunity came to return, I had no hesitation in saying yes. And I'm looking forward to seeing what the city's like post-Commonwealth Games.

What's the inspiration behind your show?

Funnily enough, the show was written pre-lockdown, about how the things in life that feel most isolating actually tend to be the very things that we share. And then this literal play-out of that idea happens - globally! So that has remained at its heart. It has a gentle thread about how we share our human difficulties, and the value of remembering what's important.

The 2022 Showman tour is the largest you've ever undertaken. What do you see as your main personal challenges?

It's such an enjoyable process. I'm with the best bunch of people, and I get to have my days free, which is quite a luxury. My main personal challenge is to have things to occupy me during the day. It's a great time to be writing, so I tend to concentrate on that.

The 2021 tour of Showman garnered rave reviews. Does this put extra pressure on you, or does it act as a confidence booster?

I think it's had the best response of any show I've done. It's lovely to know, and a happy thing to read people's responses right after a show on Twitter. But ultimately, in order to do it night after night, I can only really be concerned about the relationship between me and the particular audience in front of me. I think about that; I think about whether I'm enjoying it and bringing to it what I must; I think about how I will spend my days; I think about how my little team are, and whether they're happy and doing a good job. And it's always hard for any performer in a relationship, leaving your partner at home to deal with all the day-to-day stuff while you're off 'having fun with your friends'. Navigating that takes up mental space, too. Those are really all my concerns. As far as reviews go, if they all had the same grumble, I'm sure we'd look at changing what was obviously a problem. But as long as they're all very happy, they don't really take up any space in my head. Which is the best way.

Would you say Showman is your most personal theatrical production to date?

Definitely. And it's a real treat to do, for exactly that reason. And to have people respond to it so well night after night makes it even more so.

Looking back, what did you want to be when you were a kid?

A vet! Because I loved animals. And I think I wanted to be a poet at some point. I studied later to be a lawyer, but that was no fun. I soon preferred the idea of becoming a magician. I thought it was important to know the way I wanted my life to feel, and I knew I wanted to be in charge of how I spent my time, when I worked, when I woke up in the morning and so on. So as I was good at magic, it made sense to try to do it as a job. If the magic hadn't worked out, I'd have found something else that still gave me those things I thought were important. I've always thought like that: I've never had any ambition, or thought much about where I wanted to be in the future. I've just tried to make things feel right in the present and do things that seemed interesting or fun.

Your latest book, A Book Of Secrets, advises us to embrace uncertainty and consider the value of difficulty in our lives. Did the pandemic influence the book?

Yes, I started it in New York pre-pandemic and finished it during the second lockdown. The previous book, Happy - and its baby brother, A Little Happier - are about stoicism, which I think is very useful. But there is much more to be said about the human experience, and this book is about ways of navigating difficulty that are more about connection, rather than drawing your centre of gravity within.

Finally, what new projects are you working on?

I'm helping form an interesting magic-related event which is in its early days, and I'm co-creating a big show, which I think will be rather special, for 2023. These both have me firmly behind the scenes, which I'm rather enjoying. When I have my art studio sorted out at the new house, I'll be painting again. I'm also writing a book for magicians, and I have a juicy idea for a new book for the public. And then there's this eight-month stint with Showman... so plenty to be getting on with.

Derren Brown brings Showman to The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 September



BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL

commonwealth games

27 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

BY RAMBERT

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A RAMBERT PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME Co-produced with The Lowry
Inspired by the television series Peaky Blinders created by Steven Knight,
and in association with Caryn Mandabach Productions Peaky Blinders™
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the list

Your week-by-week listings guide

September 2022



Ricky Cool and The In Crowd at Lichfield Guildhall - Fri 9 September

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

What's On

Thurs 1 - Sun 11 September



Talon at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Sun 4 September

Mon 12 - Sun 18 September



Basil Gabbidon at The Robin, Bilston

Sat 17 September

Mon 19 - Sun 25 September



Kerry Godliman at New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Wed 21 September

Mon 26 - Fri 30 September



Crooners at Lichfield Garrick

Thurs 29 September

THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER

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 October

IN THE QUE: CELEBRATING THE QUE CLUB Sensory celebration of one of the UK's greatest music venues, featuring personal artefacts, photographs, film footage, flyers, posters and more... until Sun 30 October

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 October

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

NRITYA: COLLECTING THE STORY OF INDIAN DANCE IN THE BLACK COUNTRY 1960 - 2000 Featuring shared stories, memories, photographs, films and objects collected from pioneer dancers, teachers and choreographers, Fri 23 Sept - Sun 13 Nov

New Art Gallery, Walsall

WEST MIDLANDS OPEN Celebrating the diversity and quality of visual arts in the region, until Sun 25 Sept

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

COMMONWEALTH CONNECTIONS Join Ozzy Owl as he explores some of the Commonwealth countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean and Americas... until Sun 11 Sept

LOVELY JUBILEE: THREE CENTURIES OF ROYAL COMMEMORATION POTTERY Display of royal jubilee wares spanning three centuries, until 8 Jan

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

BLACK COUNTRY BEATS Exhibition that celebrates the diverse musical genres that emerged from the Black Country between the 1970s and 2000s, until Sun 4 Sept

Elsewhere:

MACHINE MEMOIRS: SPACE A 360-degree exhibition which uses artificial intelligence to reimagine two million publicly available images taken by satellite and telescopes, transporting visitors from the centre of Coventry to the deepest regions of outer space, until Sun 4 Sept, The Reel Store, Coventry

IT'S BACK AT THE VIC Celebrating 60 years of theatre-making, and showcasing the work of artists and craftspeople, as well as treasures from behind the scenes, until Sat 10 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

QUBE ARTS OPEN Annual competition and showcase, with 'discovery & exploration' the theme for 2023, until Mon 12 Sept, Qube, Oswestry, North Shropshire

THE FOOL Multimedia group exhibition bringing together the works of seven artists 'to explore ideas of fooling, in an attempt to understand this moment in history', until Sun 25 Sept, Air Space Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

BLOOMING LOVELY Pop along and see how VAN members interpret the words 'blooming lovely', until Sun 25 Sept, Visual Arts Network, Darwin Centre, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM SOCIETY OF BOTANICAL ARTISTS Celebrating all things botanical and the many ways in which nature evokes our senses, until Thurs 29 Sept, The Granary, Weston Park, Staffordshire

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

SOFIA NIAZI EXHIBITION Exploring the potential of contemporary craft workshops to provide public services, drawing inspiration from 14th-century waqfs (charities) of the Islamic world, Tues 6 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Air Space Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

MUSEUM OF THE MOON Touring artwork by UK artist Luke Jerram, Wed 21 Sept - Mon 31 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

THE MAGIC OF MIDDLE EARTH New exhibition featuring a treasure trove of more than 200 rare objects and artworks associated with or influenced by the fantasy world of JRR Tolkien, Sat 24 Sept - Sun 11 Dec, The Hub @ St Mary's, Lichfield



Talon - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Gigs

ROLE MODEL + FLOWEROVLOVE + OLIVER MALCOLM Thurs 1 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ROB LAMBERTI - GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE Thurs 1 Sept, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

CLOUDBUSTING - THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH Thurs 1 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ARCADE FIRE Fri 2 Sept, Utilita Arena, B'ham

THE INTERRUPTERS + THE SKINTS + BAR STOOL PREACHERS Fri 2 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALICE LILY + GOLDFISH AND THE THINKTANK + TALKING AUTUMN + PULSAR + NOTION OF FORTUNE Fri 2 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BROS LANDRETH + MARIEL BUCKLEY Fri 2 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

STAYIN ALIVE UK - BEE GEES TRIBUTE Fri 2 Sept, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

ELECTRIC BOYS + SLYDER SMITH & THE OBLIVION KIDS Fri 2 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE SMITHS LTD Fri 2 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

SOUL TRAIN Fri 2 Sept, The Hanger, Wolverhampton

MORETALLICA Fri 2 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LUTHER VANDROSS CELEBRATION Fri 2 Sept, The Prince Of Wales, Cannock

NOASIS Fri 2 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SAM & THE HOTRODS Fri 2 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CALL OF THE KRAKEN Fri 2 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

ZENON + EVERYONE LIES + VISCERAL NOISE DEPARTMENT Fri 2 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

ROB KINGSLEY AS ELVIS Fri 2 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

AMBER MARK Sat 3 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE CADILLAC THREE + LINDSAY ELL Sat 3 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

AND FINALLY... PHIL COLLINS Sat 3 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

NICK HARPER Sat 3 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

PARAMORE GB Sat 3 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BRAVADO - RUSH TRIBUTE Sat 3 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MASSAOKE Sat 3 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

KILLERSTREAM Sat 3 Sept, Factory Floor @ the QUARTER, Stoke-on-Trent

DAN WALSH AND BROOKS WILLIAMS Sat 3 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE SLEAZE BROTHERS Sat 3 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

CANTALOOP Sat 3 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE BAREBACKS Sat 3 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

ELO AGAIN Sat 3 Sept, The Place, Telford

THE RAT PACK Sat 3 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

SILVERCHILD + WHITE CROW + LEAF Sat 3 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

FOY VANCE Sun 4 Sept, The Alexandra, B'ham

ZACK KNIGHT Sun 4 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TALON Sun 4 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Classical Music

OPERA BOYS Fri 2 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

MASSED MALE VOICES OF CORNWALL Charity concert featuring 370 choristers from 25 member choirs, Sat 3 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ANDREW PADMORE ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Alfred Hollins, Michael Festing, J.S Bach, Norman Cocker, Percy Whitlock & Gabriel Fauré, Sat 3 Sept, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

Comedy

MARK MAIER, SEAN PERCIVAL, KEVIN DANIEL, CAMERON KENT & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 1 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

LOU CONRAN, RICKY BALSHAW & COMICS TBC Thurs 1 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

JARRED CHRISTMAS, GLENN WOOL, CERYS NELMES, CONNOR BURNS & MO MAGALEO Fri 2 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JARRED CHRISTMAS, GLENN WOOL, CERYS NELMES & CONNOR BURNS Sat 3 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RANDY FELTFACE Sun 4 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

BEAUTIFUL - THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL New production telling the inspiring true story of King's remarkable rise to stardom, until Sat 3 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

ONCE Let Me In present the story of two disenfranchised artists, drawn together by their shared love of music, until Sat 17 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL New production in which director Blanche McIntyre explores the modern resonance of Shakespeare's dark comedy, until Sat 8 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

RICHARD III Gregory Doran directs Arthur Hughes in this climax to Shakespeare's first history cycle, until Sat 8 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

OLIVER! Curtain Call Theatre Company present an amateur staging of Lionel Bart's classic musical, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SHERLOCKS EXCELLENT ADVENTURE Follow Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson on this riveting, and until now unpublished, case... Sat 3 Sept, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

Kids Shows

DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE Interactive family show featuring a post-show meet & greet, during which 'brave explorers' get the chance to make a new dinosaur friend, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SARAH & DUCK'S BIG TOP Join Sarah and her best friend, Duck, as they plan the ultimate circus soiree to help Scarf Lady celebrate her birthday, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AWFUL AUNTIE Heartbreak Productions presents its stage version of David Walliams' popular book, which follows orphan Stella Saxby as she pits her wits against her awful Aunt Alberta, Sat 3 Sept, Tamworth Castle Grounds

Light Entertainment

RU PAUL'S DRAG RACE UK: SEASON 3 TOUR Featuring series finalists Kitty Scott-Claus, Krystal Versace, Vanity Milan and Ella Vaday, Thurs 1 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

COFFEE WITH SAM & FRIENDS Based on the hit podcast, this live show promises a night filled with life stories from some very special guests, Fri 2 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

BINGO AT TIFFANY'S Join award-winning character comedian Tracey Collins (Tina T'urner Tea Lady) as she hosts an evening of hilarious bingo games, raucous singalongs and glamorous dancing! Sat 3 Sept, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

WASSIFA IN THE FRONT ROOM Immersive evening of film, music and conversation celebrating 50 years of the Wassifa Foundation Sound System and 60 years of Jamaican Independence, Sat 3 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

MASSAOKE: SING THE MUSICALS Dress up as your favourite characters and belt out songs from Mamma Mia!, Grease, Frozen, Les Miserables, The Greatest Showman, Dirty Dancing, Evita, Mary Poppins, We Will Rock You, Hamilton and many more... Sat 3 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Events

ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET, SHOW! – THE GREAT THINKTANK GAMES Inspired by big sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games, this family show is a lively and interactive way to learn about the science of sport, until Fri 2 Sept, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

COME OUT AND PLAY AT COMER WOODS Visit Comer Woods and join in with fun outdoor games and activities, until Sun 4 Sept, Comer Woods, Heath Meadow, Shropshire



Beautiful: The Carole King Musical - Birmingham Hippodrome

EXPLORE BLAKESLEY A chance to explore Blakesley Hall and its beautiful gardens, until Sun 4 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

LET'S PLAY AT ATTINGHAM Head to Attingham's Field of Play for a special Pavilion of Play, created by Wild Rumpus, until Sun 4 Sept, Attingham Park, Shropshire

VICTORIAN ANIMAL TRAILS Trails, talks & activities take place across all of the museums, featuring Ironbridge's many connections with animals, from cats to elephants, until Sun 4 Sept, Ironbridge Gorge Museums, Shropshire

LEGO PIRATES Jump onboard for a swashbuckling pirate party, until Sun 4 Sept, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

PIRATE TREASURE HUNT Navigate the high seas on a swashbuckling treasure hunt through the aquarium, until Sun 4 Sept, National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham

FARMARAMA Navigate the maize maze, enjoy live shows, join the foam party 'and much, much more', until Mon 5 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire

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

TRENTHAM LIVE 2022 Four nights of live music, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Sept, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Fri 2 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

ADVENTURE CINEMA Take along a blanket or camping chair and watch some blockbuster films on a giant cinema screen, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

OUTDOOR CINEMA A wide range of films for all the family, including the greatest singalongs, new releases and nostalgic classics, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Sept, RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford

WORLD OF WEDGWOOD END OF SUMMER PARTY Experiential outdoor pop-up stalls with hands-on educational elements for kids and adults alike, Sat 3 Sept, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

IBIZA PROMS IN THE PARK Feelgood Ibiza classics performed by a 50-piece orchestra and vocalists, Sat 3 Sept, Bantock Park, Wolverhampton

STEAM WEEKEND Get up close to a variety of steam engines, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge



GUILDEX 2022 - MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Bingley Hall, Staffordshire

MULTI CULTURAL COMMUNITY FUN DAY Annual celebration of Shrewsbury's many cultures, with dance groups, singers, food and children's activities, Sat 3 Sept, Shrewsbury United Reformed Church

ORIGINS OF MIDDLE-EARTH: JRR TOLKIEN AND SAREHOLE GUIDED WALK A guided walk introducing the scenery that inspired JRR Tolkien, Sun 4 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham



Ricky Cool and The In Crowd - Lichfield Guildhall

Gigs

BRIGHT EYES Mon 5 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GUS DAPPERTON + BINKI Mon 5 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TAVARES Tues 6 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DAVE HAUSE AND THE MERMAID MERCY UNION Tues 6 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WILLY MASON Tues 6 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JAH WOBBLE & THE INVADERS OF THE HEART Wed 7 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MAN Wed 7 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ASCENSION OF THE WATCHERS + SULPHER Wed 7 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

FASTLOVE: A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Thurs 8 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EMBRACE Thurs 8 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

NOAHFINNCE + SOPHIE POWERS + THE OOZES Thurs 8 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BOSSK + OUTLANDER Thurs 8 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

FURY + MERCIA Thurs 8 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

QUEEN RHAPSODY Thurs 8 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GLEN LEON AS TOM JONES Thurs 8 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

FAME UK REUNION 2022 Thurs 8 - Sat 10 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

BABBU MAAN Fri 9 Sept, Utilita Arena, B'ham

AMINÉ Fri 9 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BLACKWATERS + IDLE NOISE + MICKEY NOMIMONO Fri 9 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE NOISY PARKAS Fri 9 Sept, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

FRANKIE'S GUYS - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS Fri 9 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Fri 9 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

NEARLY DAN - STEELY DAN TRIBUTE Fri 9 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THUNDER HAMMER Fri 9 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

KILLERSTREAM Fri 9 Sept, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

RICKY COOL AND THE IN CROWD Fri 9 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

BOOTLEG BLONDIE Fri 9 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GOLDWATER Fri 9 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BOBCAT BILLY'S MOONSHINE MISSION Fri 9 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

GENESIS CONNECTED Fri 9 Sept, The Place, Telford

MALLEN + THIS STATE OF OURS + DAM.G Fri 9 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES Fri 9 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

CANDID Sat 10 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GO YOUR OWN WAY - THE FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY Sat 10 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

RATS IN THE KITCHEN - UB40 TRIBUTE Sat 10 Sept, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

ULTIMATE 40 - UB40 TRIBUTE Sat 10 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

SWEDE DREAMZ - ABBA TRIBUTE Sat 10 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

RULE THE WORLD - TAKE THAT TRIBUTE Sat 10 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

GLORY HAMMER + BROTHERS OF METAL + ARION Sat 10 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

JANE MCDONALD Sat 10 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

AZIZ IBRAHIM Sat 10 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

BARRY STEELE AND FRIENDS - 'THE ROY ORBISON STORY' Sat 10 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE TOTAL WHO SHOW Sat 10 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SKABURST Sat 10 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ELO AGAIN Sat 10 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE ELO EXPERIENCE Sun 11 Sept, The Alexandra, B'ham

FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS Sun 11 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LIMP BIZKIT Sun 11 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sun 11 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

JANE MCDONALD Sun 11 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Classical Music

ORGAN RECITAL WITH KATHERINE DIENES-WILLIAMS (GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL) Tues 6 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

G4 Fri 9 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

ORGAN PROM WITH DANIEL GREENWAY Sat 10 Sept, Victoria Hall, Hanley

AN AFTERNOON WITH SIR EDWARD ELGAR Featuring Daniel Greenway (organist) & Rev Allan Townsend (narrator), Sat 10 Sept, Bethesda Chapel, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Comedy

WILLY MASON Tues 6 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

VIR DAS Tues 6 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall



SILKY, EMMANUEL SONUBI, ALEX HYLTON & CERYS NELMES Thurs 8 Sept, Lichfield Sports Club

JAY LAFFERTY, MARK NELSON, JONNY AWSUM, TOM LUCY & AARON WOOD Fri 9 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GLENN MOORE Fri 9 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BILLY PEARCE Fri 9 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LOST VOICE GUY, EDDIE FORTUNE, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & PAUL NIGHTINGALE Fri 9 Sept, The Hanger, Wolverhampton

TOM TOAL, PATRICK MONAHAN, AARON SIMMONDS & SULLY O'SULLIVAN Fri 9 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

JAY LAFFERTY, MARK NELSON, JONNY AWSUM, TOM LUCY & AARON WOOD Sat 10 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM KAY Sat 10 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

DAN EVANS, RACHEL CREEGER, IGNACIO LOPEZ & DAVE TWENTYMAN (PICTURED) Sun 11 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Theatre

SILVER & GOLD All-new monodrama based on Robert Louis Stevenson's classic maritime adventure, Treasure Island, Thurs 8 Sept, Crewe Lyceum

APARTNESS Sylvestor McCoy and Linda Marlowe star in a true tale of unexpected outcomes, based on - and inspired by - a comedian who believed art to be more important than life, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Sept, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

CALENDAR GIRLS Get Your Wigle On present an amateur staging of Tim Firth & Gary Barlow's musical, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WINDRUSH: THE BETRAYAL Agape Theatre Company tell the story of how the Windrush Generation were targeted by the government as part of its 'hostile environment' policy to reduce net migration, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows

PEPPA PIG'S BEST DAY EVER Live theatre for younger audiences - packed with adventure, fun, songs, games and laughter, Wed 7 - Thurs 8 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Light Entertainment

DERREN BROWN: SHOWMAN Critically acclaimed one-man show from the Master of Illusion, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

EVENING OF PSYCHIC MEDIUMSHIP WITH CRAIG MORRIS Wed 7 Sept, Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

SOLVE-ALONG-A-MURDER-SHE-WROTE Interactive screening of the classic film alongside games, prizes and audience participation, Fri 9 - Sat 10 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

ILLUSION: IMPOSSIBLE Featuring exclusive never-before-seen tricks. Performers include Kayden Black, Oliver Tabor and The Glamourists, Sat 10 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

MURDER MYSTERY: ALLO ALLO Cabaret-style entertainment where audience members are required to help solve the murder of Lieutenant Gruber, Sat 10 Sept, Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

ROBERT TEMPLE: THE HYPNOTIST Brand-new production in which volunteers from the audience unlock their imaginations and create a once-in-a-lifetime show of improvised comedy under the influence of hypnosis - live on stage, Sun 11 Sept, Old Rep, Birmingham

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX LIVE Join everybody's favourite scientist for a cinematic journey exploring how we came to be and what we can become, Sun 11 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

Dance

2FACED DANCE COMPANY: EVERYTHING (BUT THE GIRL) Triple-bill of 'emotionally charged, lung-busting physicality'. Pieces include Fleur Darkin's The Qualies plus Tamsin Fitzgerald's Hollow In A World Too Full and 7.0 Reduxed, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

Talks & Spoken Word

DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE - I WANNA BE YOURS WITH SPECIAL GUEST MIKE GARRY Expect a fusion of classic verse, new material, ponderings on modern life, good, honest gags, riffs and chat aplenty, Wed 7 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



AN EVENING WITH HENRY BLOFELD Brand-new theatre show in which cricket commentator 'Blowers' reflects on his 'extraordinary' life, Thurs 8 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

BBC CONTAINS STRONG LANGUAGE The BBC's flagship four-day festival, celebrating spoken words in all forms, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

Events

TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Create your own unique tile using the traditional process of tube-lining, Wed 7 - Thurs 8 Sept, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge



TAMWORTH BEER FESTIVAL Featuring 75-plus real ales from micro breweries, including festival specials and many new ales, Thurs 8 - Sat 10 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Fri 9 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - BIRMINGHAM'S BIG INVENTIONS An hour-long talk focusing on some of the city's incredible inventions, Fri 9 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

LUNA CINEMA The outdoor cinema franchise comes to Trentham with Harry Potter, Mamma Mia! and James Bond, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Sept, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring 100-plus exhibitors, predominantly from Ludlow and across the Welsh Marches, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Sept, Ludlow Castle, Shropshire

NATIONAL FOREST TREK An annual walking challenge, weaving through the lush woodlands, gently rolling countryside and industrial heritage of the National Forest Way, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Sept, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

DAN SALADINO: EATING TO EXTINCTION Join Dan as he embarks on a tour of the world's most endangered foods and reveals why it's so important we help to save them. Bill's Kitchen Ludlow will be offering a menu inspired by the foods and flavours covered in Dan's talk, Sat 10 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

OAKENGATES CARNIVAL A day of carnival fun and family entertainment, Sat 10 Sept, Hartshill Park, Oakengates, Shropshire

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Sat 10 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

GLASS FACTORIES WALKING TOUR Explore the area with a knowledgeable tour guide, Sat 10 Sept, Stourbridge Glass Museum

SHAKE UP YOUR SOUL - YOGA & DJ SET Sat 10 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO 2022 Britain's biggest indoor tattoo, with military and marching bands from across the world, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

TAMWORTH FOOD GUSTO The best of the region's food & drink alongside live music and children's entertainment, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Tamworth Castle

WOODLAND WEEKEND A seasonal celebration of the natural woodland habitat, with family activities and a food & craft fair, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

RETRO TRUCK SHOW Bringing together hundreds of trucks from 1971 to 2001, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon



Oakengates Carnival - Shropshire

OKTOBERFEST See the front lawns transformed into a Bavarian-themed venue, complete with lederhosen-clad hosts and an oompah band, Sat 10 Sept - Sun 2 Oct, Alton Towers, Staffordshire

HISTORY TALK: MEET THE DESIGNERS Talk explaining how art & design developed in glassware, Sun 11 Sept, Stourbridge Glass Museum

AUTUMN PLANT FAIR Pick up blooming plants going into the new season, Sun 11 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

HERITAGE OPEN DAY THEATRE TOUR Go behind the scenes at Cheshire's historic Edwardian theatre, Sun 11 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



Gigs

JUSTIN HAYWARD Mon 12 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

CHRIS DE BURGH & BAND Tues 13 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

TURIN BRAKES Tues 13 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PROFESSOR GREEN Tues 13 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham



ELVANA Tues 13 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

THE JOHN MARTYN PROJECT Tues 13 Sept, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

DON MCLEAN Wed 14 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE KILKENNYS Wed 14 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall



LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III + KATHERINE PRIDDY Thurs 15 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

DARREN PAGE AS ROY ORBISON & MARC ROBINSON AS BUDDY HOLLY Thurs 15 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THAT JOE PAYNE Thurs 15 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BATTLE BEAST + FUTURE PALACE Thurs 15 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

REVERSE + THE TWO STEP GOODBYE'S Thurs 15 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

INGLORIOUS + A NEW TOMORROW Thurs 15 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

KIM WILDE + CHINA CRISIS Fri 16 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE PRIMITIVES Fri 16 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT Fri 16 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

STARSAILOR Fri 16 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

BLACK CELEBRATION - DEPECHE MODE TRIBUTE Fri 16 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

LEATHER & LACE + JANE GOULD Fri 16 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

FEROCIOUS DOG + MILLIE MANDERS & THE SHUTUP Fri 16 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

TASHA LEAPER AS MADONNA Fri 16 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

STEVE MITCHELL AS GEORGE MICHAEL Fri 16 Sept, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC Fri 16 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

NICK HEYWARD Fri 16 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

STEREOSONICS Fri 16 Sept, Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SLEEP IN MOTION Fri 16 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SCOTT MATTHEWS Fri 16 Sept, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

EFFERVESCENT Fri 16 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE STONES Fri 16 Sept, The Place, Telford

JAH WOBBLE & THE INVADERS OF THE HEART Fri 16 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs



LUTHER - THE LEGEND LIVES ON Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ASH Sat 17 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

UK BJORN - ABBA TRIBUTE Sat 17 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

SOUND OF SPRINGSTEEN Sat 17 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

ULTRA 90S Sat 17 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BASIL GABBIDON Sat 17 Sept, The Robin, Bilston



THE MIGHTY WRAITH Sat 17 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

HEY PIXIES Sat 17 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SMITHS LTD Sat 17 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FLOYD EFFECT - DARK SIDE OF REASON Sat 17 Sept, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Sat 17 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE JAM'D Sat 17 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THOMAS ATLAS Sat 17 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury



AUDIO THIEVES Sat 17 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

BLACK BEAR KISS + GIANT AND THE GEORGES Sat 17 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE BILLY JOEL SONGBOOK WITH ELIO PACE Sun 18 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

STEVE HACKETT - GENESIS REVISITED Sun 18 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE BLACKHEART ORCHESTRA Sun 18 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE WONDER OF STEVIE Sun 18 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



Watson - Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Classical Music

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: DVORAK PIANO QUINTET Featuring Philip Brett & Kirsty Lovie (violins), Amy Thomas (viola) & Arthur Boutillier (cello). Programme includes works by Britten & Dvorák, Fri 16 Sept, CBSO Centre, B'ham

THE JARUALDA QUARTET Programme includes works by Haydn, Ravel & Beethoven, Fri 16 Sept, St Michael's Church, Munslow, Nr Ludlow, South Shropshire

Comedy

COMEDY IN THE MET Fri 16 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DOM JOLY Fri 16 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

CATHERINE BOHART, ADAM ROWE, GEORGE ZACH & TOM HOUGHTON Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

DANIEL HOWELL Sat 17 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FITZ OF LAUGHTER COMEDY Sat 17 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DANNY MCLOUGHLIN, DREW TAYLOR, PETER BRUSH & DAMION LARKIN Sat 17 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

DAWN FRENCH Sun 18 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

JACK DEE Sun 18 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TOM STADE Sun 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

CRIMES ON CENTRE COURT Mirth, murder, mayhem and tennis are the order of the day as award-winning New Old Friends serve up their latest theatrical offering, Tues 13 - Wed 14 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE COLOR PURPLE Hit adaptation of Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

KIPPS: THE NEW HALF A SIXPENCE MUSICAL Amateur staging presented by The Mellow Dramatics, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS: THE MUSICAL Based on the true story of the chart-topping Cornish singing sensations, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's iconic musical tells the story of twins separated at birth who grow up on opposite sides of the tracks, only to meet again with tragic consequences, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PRECIOUS EMILY Stan's Cafe present a playful and fun theatre show which tells the story of two inspirational weightlifters. Suitable for audience members aged nine-plus, Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE HAUNTING OF BLAINE MANOR The story of renowned American parapsychologist Doctor Roy Earle, famous for discrediting hauntings and exposing fake mediums, who is invited to attend a seance in what is said to be the most haunted building in England, Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

WATSON A tale of long-buried secrets, betrayal and death... Sat 17 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Kids Theatre

DEMON DENTIST Birmingham Stage Company present David Walliams' 'electrifying tale', Thurs 15 - Sun 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Light Entertainment

BEST OF BRITISH TV COMEDY A glimpse at life behind the camera in a nostalgic celebration of classic TV

starring Jeffrey Holland, Thurs 15 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW - AN EVENING WITH ALAN FLETCHER Join Karl Kennedy (Alan Fletcher in Aussie TV soap Neighbours) as he looks back on his 28 years as Ramsey Street's doctor, Fri 16 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

Talks & Spoken Word

DR. JORDAN PETERSON: BEYOND ORDER Join the bestselling author as he takes to the road with his Beyond Order: 12 More Rules For Life tour, Wed 14 Sept, Utilita Arena, B'ham

Events

BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR A guided tour of Aston Hall, with the rare opportunity to see some sections of the building not usually open to the public, Wed 14 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - LOST CHILDREN EXHIBITION TALK Talk by Balsall Heath Local History Society about the 5,000-plus emigrated children from the Middlemore Homes, Wed 14 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - WORKSHOP OF THE WORLD TOUR Discover how Birmingham has contributed to inventions and creativity, from the Industrial Revolution to the present day, Thurs 15 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

AFTER HOURS TOUR Guided tour of the museum. Discover what it was really like to spend time on both sides of the bars, Thurs 15 - Fri 16 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

AUTUMN STEAM GALA Train fanatics have the chance to ride behind the best of the Severn Valley Railway's home fleet, plus up to two very special guest locomotives, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

ADULT NIGHT An adults-only evening to meet other Lego fans and explore the centre, Fri 16 Sept, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHTS Enjoy the roaring nightlife of the inter-war years, with music and entertainment around every corner, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



Fisherman's Friends The Musical - The Alexandra, Birmingham

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Sat 17 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

WESTON PARK COUNTRY FAIR A full timetable of countryside showcases and performances, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

OSWESTRY ANTIQUE & COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring 200 stalls manned by experienced dealers from all over the country, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Oswestry Showground, Shropshire

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Visit the museum to discover all about Cameo glass, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Stourbridge Glass Museum

THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW & THE VIDEO SHOW Europe's biggest photography, video & content creation show, Sat 17 - Tues 20 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

AUTUMN CRAFT & GIFT FAIR Featuring local artists and crafters, Sun 18 Sept, The Robin, Bilston



Gigs

A1 Mon 19 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

OLIVER FRANCIS Mon 19 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BANKS Mon 19 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

THREE DAYS GRACE + 10 YEARS Mon 19 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Mon 19 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

REMA Tues 20 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LAURENCE JONES Tues 20 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton



WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Tues 20 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CARDINAL BLACK Wed 21 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BIG MOON + GENTLY TENDER Wed 21 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

LESOIR Wed 21 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE ROBSON/LEVY QUARTET Wed 21 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

BRET MCKENZIE Thurs 22 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

GEORGE EZRA Thurs 22 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

MOWGS Thurs 22 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham



BEN PORTSMOUTH AS ELVIS Thurs 22 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

SKINNY MOLLY Thurs 22 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

INGLORIOUS + A NEW TOMORROW Thurs 22 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ROBERT CASTELLI Thurs 22 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE SLOW READERS CLUB Thurs 22 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

RHABSTALLION + DAYLIGHT ROBBERY Thurs 22 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

FLAMES OF DURGA + PHOENIX Thurs 22 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

FU MANCHU + ELECTRIC CITIZEN Fri 23 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CIAN DUCROT Fri 23 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GABZY Fri 23 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

I'M STILL STANDING - ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE Fri 23 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

THE SKA 45'S Fri 23 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

NINE BELOW ZERO Fri 23 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SOUND FEST 2022 WITH THE BRITANNIA BEAT + THE SHAUN TOBAR BAND Fri 23 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

BACK INTO HELL - MEAT LOAF AND JIM STEINMAN TRIBUTE Fri 23 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SUNSCREEM Fri 23 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE SUBWAYS Fri 23 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE JAM'D Fri 23 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ROD STEWART STORY Fri 23 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

NEXUS Fri 23 Sept, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

STARS OF IRISH COUNTRY Fri 23 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SEX PISTOLS EXPOSE Fri 23 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GOOD TO GO Fri 23 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

PENNY FAMOUS Fri 23 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE REAL THING Fri 23 Sept, The Place, Telford

DURAND JONES & THE INDICATIONS + ORACLE SISTERS Sat 24 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

BLUE NATION Sat 24 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NE-YO Sat 24 Sept, Forum, Birmingham

ROBERT TAYLOR AS GEORGE MICHAEL Sat 24 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

CHRIS WOOD Sat 24 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

SHANGHAI TREASON Sat 24 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SETH LAKEMAN Sat 24 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SPECIALS LTD Sat 24 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ROB LAMBERTI - A CELEBRATION OF GEORGE MICHAEL Sat 24 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WATERMELON CHRONICLES Sat 24 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HOTROX Sat 24 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE ELVIS EXPERIENCE WITH MARK GREEN AND THE DIXIE ROCK N' ROLL BAND Sun 25 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

THE MERSEY BEATLES Sun 25 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MARILLION Sun 25 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



LUKE JACKSON AND JULIE AUBÉ Sun 25 Sept, The Hive, Shrewsbury

WOMEN IN ROCK Sun 25 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Classical Music

THE JARUALDA QUARTET Programme includes works by Haydn, Ravel & Beethoven, Fri 16 Sept, St Michael's Church, Munslow, Nr Ludlow, South Shropshire

CBSO: A NEW WORLD Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Nicola Benedetti (violin) & the CBSO Chorus. Programme includes works by Dvorák, Mendelssohn & Grigorjeva, Tues 20 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

ORGAN RECITAL WITH PETER STEVENS (WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL) Tues 20 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

A MISCELLANY OF MUSIC FOR SOPRANO & HARP Featuring Claraliz Mora (soprano/harp) & Emily Hopper (harp), Fri 23 Sept, St Michael's Church, Munslow, Nr Ludlow, South Shropshire

ANDREA BOCELLI Sat 24 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

CBSO: THE RITE OF SPRING Featuring Nicholas Collon (conductor), Jennifer France (soprano), Patrick Terry (countertenor), CBSO Chorus & Halle Choir, Sat 24 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ANDREA BOCELLI Sat 24 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: SPACE SPECTACULAR Featuring Anthony Inglis (conductor). Programme includes John Williams' scores from Star Wars, Superman, Close Encounters and E.T plus works from Holst & Strauss, Sun 25 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

TEZ ILYAS, MICK FERRY & SCOTT BENNETT Tues 20 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

GARY DELANEY Wed 21 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

KERRY GODLIMAN Wed 21 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



RUSSELL KANE Wed 21 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PHIL NICHOL, ALEXANDRA HADDOW, CARL DONNELLY & COMIC TBC Thurs 22 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANUVAB PAL Thurs 22 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

COLIN HOULT Fri 23 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL KANE Fri 23 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

PHIL NICHOL, ALEXANDRA HADDOW, CARL DONNELLY & EMMAM IDAMA Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FAMILY COMEDY SHOW WITH AARON SIMMONDS, JAVIER JARQUIN & THE DARK ROOM FOR KIDS Sun 25 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOMMY SANDHU, FIRUZ OZARI, ESHAAN AKBAR & NABIL ABDULRASHID Sun 25 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MC HAMMERSMITH Sun 25 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

KING OF REGGAE - THE MAN - THE MUSIC Rush Theatre Company present a brand-new narrated musical that charts the life & times of the King of Reggae, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT Amateur staging presented by Lichfield Operatic Society, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

MADE IN DAGENHAM: THE MUSICAL Amateur staging presented by Tudor Musical Comedy Society, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

AN INSPECTOR CALLS Stephen Daldry's award-winning National Theatre production of JB Priestley's classic thriller, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

A SONG FOR YOU New musical comedy presented by Staffordshire-based company Artz Productions, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MP, AUNTY MANDY AND ME Strong language, strobe lighting and sexual scenes combine in Rob Ward's thought-provoking play about consent, coercion and grooming within the gay male community, Wed 21 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

TWOPENCE TO CROSS THE MERSEY Helen Forrester's period drama, set in the early 1930s during the Great Depression, Wed 21 - Sat 24 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

DISNEY'S THE LITTLE MERMAID Amateur staging presented by Quarry Bank Musical Theatre Society, Wed 21 - Sat 24 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE Apphia Campbell's acclaimed one-woman play inspired by the life of Nina Simone, Thurs 22 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MUM'S THE WORD A show which takes audiences on an emotional journey through parenthood - from pregnancy pitfalls to teenage tantrums, Thurs 22 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE WIZARD OF OZ Amateur staging

presented by Cannock Chase Drama Society, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Sept, Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

WAR OF THE WORLDS One-man version of HG Wells' classic story, Sat 24 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE THE PLAY Lee Hall's humorous adaptation of Tom Stoppard & Marc Norman's story of theatre and love. Note that this production contains nudity and adult themes, Sat 24 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Shows

DICK AND DOM IN DA BUNGALOW LIVE Expect the unexpected as the legendary Creamy Muck Muck game returns, with appearances by Diddy Dick and Dom, and DI Harry Batt, Fri 23 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

ROOM ON THE BROOM Tall Stories presents its acclaimed staging of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's book, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MONKEY PUZZLE & PETER AND THE WOLF WITH TOSCANA STRINGS Two children's favourites are brought to life via narration, music and dance, Sun 25 Sept, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

AN EVENING WITH STEPHEN SONDHEIM Sharon Plummer is joined by local friends to celebrate the life of one of musical theatre's greatest composers, Tues 20 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

OLD TIME MUSIC HALL Join Keith Minshull and Guy Rowland as they take audiences on a trip down memory lane, Fri 23 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HEAR ME NOW Unique collection of over 100 brand-new monologues, written by and for actors and writers who are either from the global majority and/or deaf and disabled, Fri 23 Sept, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

LA VOIX: EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD Wit and show-stopping tunes from the diamanté diva, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

LITTLE BOXES Joann Condon's comedic one-woman show attempts to de-mystify the many 'boxes' she finds herself in as an actor and parent... Sat 24 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW - AN EVENING WITH ALAN FLETCHER Join Karl Kennedy (Alan Fletcher in Aussie TV soap Neighbours) as he looks back on his 28 years as Ramsey Street's doctor, Sat 24 Sept, Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon

SING! SING! SING! South Staffs Musical Theatre Company present an evening of songs from the shows, Sun 25 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

KANTHA KATHA-K Amina Khayyam Dance Company present a unique performance/installation narrating local stories originated during Covid lockdown, Tues 20 - Wed 21 Sept, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

ENGLISH YOUTH BALLET: SWAN LAKE Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH NIGEL OWENS MBE One of the world's top rugby referees recounts stories from his life and career, Tues 20 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Events

MUSEUM OF THE MOON Stunning artwork, suspended in the Nave of Lichfield Cathedral, Wed 21 Sept - Mon 31 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

CRAFT IN FOCUS Featuring up to 80 of the UK's finest contemporary artists and makers, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Sept, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Fri 23 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHTS Enjoy the roaring nightlife of the inter-war years, with music and entertainment around every corner, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

A PLACE IN THE SUN LIVE The official exhibition show of the long-running Channel Four TV series, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

ARNOLD SPORTS FESTIVAL UK 2022 A celebration of health, fitness and nutrition, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW The 'ultimate destination' for wedding inspiration, with hundreds of specialists, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Sept, NEC, Birmingham



Museum Of The Moon - Lichfield Cathedral

GLASS OWNERS AND CANAL WALKING TOUR Learn about the people and companies along the cut who put Stourbridge glass on the map, Sat 24 Sept, Stourbridge Glass Museum

THE GREAT BRITISH DOG WALK A fun-filled sponsored walk through Weston's beautiful parkland, Sat 24 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Sat 24 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

PORSCHES ON THE PARK Over 200 cars from every era, Sun 25 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

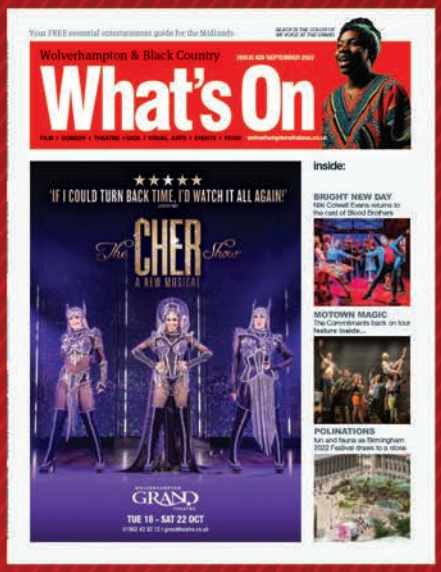
MGB 60TH ANNIVERSARY Celebrate the 60th anniversary of the MGB in this special event, Sun 25 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warks



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Newton Faulkner - The Robin, Bilston & Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Gigs

REGRESSIVE LEFT Mon 26 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BLACK UMFOLOSI Mon 26 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SOEN Tues 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE LEMONHEADS Tues 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ANTHRAX + MUNICIPAL WASTE Tues 27 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

DEAFHEAVEN + LAUREN ADLER Tues 27 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

NEWTON FAULKNER Tues 27 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SUPREME QUEEN Tues 27 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MARTIN SIMPSON Tues 27 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE 80S SHOW Wed 28 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

MOONCHILD + EMMAVIE Wed 28 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

INCUBUS Wed 28 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

MARTIN SMITH Wed 28 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

INTO THE GROOVE - MADONNA TRIBUTE Wed 28 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MIDNIGHT TRAIN TO GEORGIA - THE SONGS OF GLADYS KNIGHT Wed 28 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE SMITHS ARE DEAD Wed 28 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

NEWTON FAULKNER Wed 28 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SABA Thurs 29 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE UNDERTONES Thurs 29 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CLAIRO + JONAH YANO Thurs 29 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CARPENTERS SONGBOOK WITH TONI LEE Thurs 29 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

CATS IN SPACE Thurs 29 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

COURTING Thurs 29 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

RORY JACKSON AS MICHAEL JACKSON Thurs 29 Sept, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

JIVE TALKIN' - BEE GEES TRIBUTE Thurs 29 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MAXIMO PARK + PIP BLOM Fri 30 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham



BOOTLEG ABBA Fri 30 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ULTIMATE MADNEZZ Fri 30 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE SUPERSKAS Fri 30 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

MONSTER TRUCK + THOSE DAMN CROWS Fri 30 Sept, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN' Fri 30 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DREAMS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Fri 30 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

TONY GOLD AS TOM JONES Fri 30 Sept, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

RALPH MCTELL Fri 30 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

REGIME + CARTOON VIOLENCE Fri 30 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE LOTTERY WINNERS Fri 30 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

HATS OFF TO LED ZEPPELIN Fri 30 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

GUNS FOR GIRLS + THE VONICS + SMOKIN ESKIMO Fri 30 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Fri 30 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Handel, Michel, Bach, Gershwin & Guilmant, Mon 26 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

THE SEA: CBSO AND MIRGA GRAŽINYTE-TYLA Programme includes works by Britten, Adès, Weinberg & Debussy, Wed 28 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

Comedy

THE ALTER COMEDY CLUB Wed 28 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

IAN COPPINGER, ROBYN PERKINS, JIMMY MCGHIE & COMIC TBC Thurs 29 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ARABS VS ASIANS STAND-UP COMEDY SHOW WITH PATRICK MONAHAN & LATEEF LOVEJOY, MANI LIAQAT & JAY DROCH WITH MC SALMAN MALIK Thurs 29 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

LUKE KEMPNER Thurs 29 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

ED GAMBLE Thurs 29 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



FRANKIE ALLEN Thurs 29 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

IAN COPPINGER, ROBYN PERKINS, JIMMY MCGHIE, GORDON SOUTHERN & ALEX PETROVIC Fri 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH KEYWORTH Fri 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE FIRKIN COMEDY CLUB Fri 30 Sept, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

SUZI RUFFELL Fri 30 Sept, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

FITZ OF LAUGHTER COMEDY Fri 30 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CLINTON BAPTISTE: CLINTON VS RAMONE Fri 30 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

Theatre

CRIMES ON CENTRE COURT Mirth, murder, mayhem and tennis are the order of the day as award-winning New Old Friends serve up their latest theatrical offering, Mon 26 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE Get Your Wigle On present an amateur staging of Sue Townsend's iconic novel, Tues 27 - Fri 30 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SOUTH PACIFIC Julian Ovenden and Gina Beck star in Rodgers & Hammerstein's powerful love story, Tues 27 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

DANGEROUS CORNER The Lichfield Players present an amateur staging of JB Priestley's mystery thriller, Tues 27 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's iconic musical tells the story of twins separated at birth who grow up on opposite sides of the tracks, only to meet again with tragic consequences, Tues 27 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

YES QUEENS The West End's first female-led improvised comedy night, Wed 28 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

MISS NOBODIES Two-hander taking audiences through the history of the last 100 years in a shop in a Lancashire town, Wed 28 Sept, Whitchurch Rugby Club, North Shropshire

BEAN SPILLERS: THE IMPROVISED MUSICAL Award-winning Gigglemug Theatre present an improvised musical based on scandalous stories from the audience, Wed 28 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

THESE FOLK Improvised, mythical, musical folk tale presented by Justin Brett and Susan Harrison, Thurs 29 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

DO NOT ADJUST YOUR STAGE Unique show where TED-style talks from expert speakers inspire improvised comedy, Thurs 29 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

MR SINGH'S HAD ENOUGH Nirmala Bhojani & Ritu Sharma's play depicts Punjabi family dynamics in Britain, Thurs 29 - Fri 30 Sept, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

BAREBACK KINGS Four women, dressed as lads, make fun of 'anything related to being alive in the 21st century', including gender, politics and Deliveroo, to name but a few, Fri 30 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

BABY WANTS CANDY A 'rollercoaster ride of off-the-cuff choreographed dance numbers, rhyming verses, and witty, jaw-dropping comedy', Fri 30 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

DO THE RIGHT SCENE Fast-paced improv group featuring Black improvisers, sketch performers, stand-ups and character comedians, Fri 30 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

AN EXTRA GOOD NIGHT WITH YOTAM OTTOLENGHI AND NOOR MURAD Find out how to 'Ottolenghify' your meals in this fun and interactive event, Mon 26 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

CROONERS Evening of one-liners, laugh-out-loud silliness and musical numbers, in a show that pays homage to the greatest crooners of all time... Thurs 29 Sept, Lichfield Garrick



BEST OF BRITISH TV COMEDY A glimpse at life behind the camera in a nostalgic celebration of classic TV starring Jeffrey Holland, Fri 30 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

FREEDOM ROAD - A RE-IMAGINING Featuring protest anthems from a live band, photography from Charlie Phillips and monologues from young Black British voices, Fri 30 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Dance

BALLET BLACK Double bill featuring two new works for 2022: Gregory Maqoma's Black Sun and Cassa Pancho's Say It Loud, Wed 28 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

VINCENT SIMONE: TANGO PASSIONS Featuring Argentine Tango specialist Paula Duarte as Vincent's leading lady, Wed 28 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

RAMBERT DANCE IN PEAKY BLINDERS The world premiere of a new dance-theatre event which delves into the backstory of Tommy Shelby and the Peaky Blinders, Tues 27 Sept - Sun 2 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH NIGEL OWENS MBE One of the world's top rugby referees recounts stories from his life and career, Tues 20 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

TIM PEAKE: MY JOURNEY TO SPACE Astronaut Tim shares his passion for aviation, exploration and adventure, Thurs 29 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



Ballet Black - The Rep, Birmingham

Events

AUTUMN DIESEL BASH A variety of classes and traction types roar through Shropshire and Worcestershire, Thurs 29 Sept - Sun 2 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

GUIDED TOUR OF SAREHOLE MILL Explore Sarehole Mill with experienced guides, Fri 30 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST Featuring 150-plus ales, beers & ciders, a gin den, live music, a silent disco, tasty street food, a comedy club and much more... Fri 30 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Quarry Park, Shrewsbury



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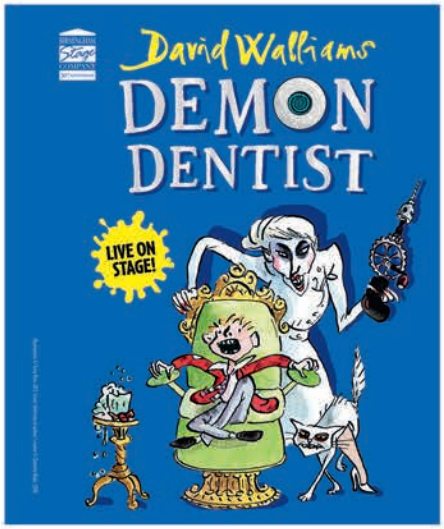


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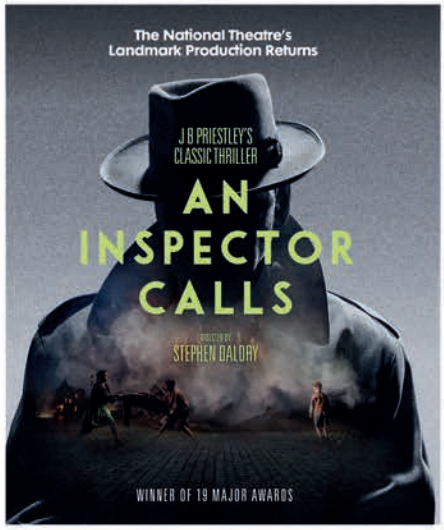
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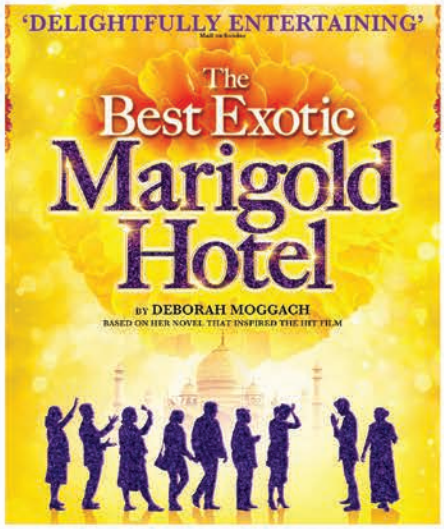
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