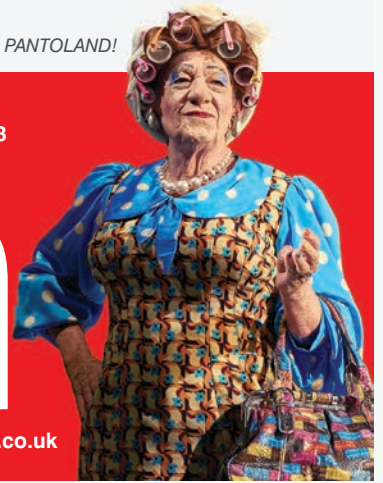


Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 433 FEBRUARY 2023

# What's On

FILM | COMEDY | THEATRE | GIGS | VISUAL ARTS | EVENTS | FOOD [wolverhamptonwhatson.co.uk](http://wolverhamptonwhatson.co.uk)



**THE BOYS ARE BACK!**

# JERSEY BOYS

★★★★★

**'OH WHAT A NIGHT'**  
EXPRESS AND STAR

**TUE 7 – SAT 18 MAR**  
[grandtheatre.co.uk](http://grandtheatre.co.uk)

WOLVERHAMPTON  
**GRAND**  
THEATRE

## inside:

### SPITTING IMAGE

satirical roastings galore as new show takes to the stage



### LITTLE DUCKLINGS

Northern Ballet present a quacker of a kids' show!



### ACTION PACKED

The Arenacross Tour rides into the Midlands



**THE LONDON PALLADIUM  
MULTI-AWARD WINNING MUSICAL**

**'I DOUBT I'LL EVER SEE A BETTER  
PRODUCTION IN MY LIFETIME'**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

THE LINCOLN CENTER THEATER PRODUCTION

**RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S**

# The King and I

DIRECTED BY  
**BARTLETT SHER**

**HELEN  
GEORGE**

STAR OF BBC'S *CALL THE MIDWIFE*

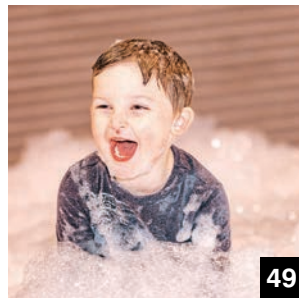
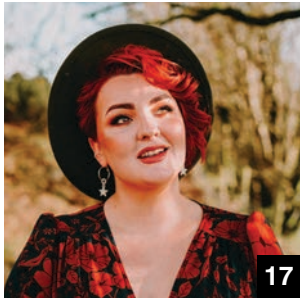
THE  
**ALEXANDRA**  
EST. SINCE 1901

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SAT 4 MAR**

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BIRMINGHAM**

BOOKING FEES APPLY





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### What's On

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## A tale of war, jealousy and revenge in *The Potteries*

Award-winning producer Ellen Kent is bringing her production of *Aida* to the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent this month.

Verdi's tragic story of war, jealousy and revenge will be performed by the Ukrainian Opera & Ballet Theatre Kyiv on Tuesday 14 February.

Commenting on the show, Ellen said: "My vision of *Aida* matches Verdi's vision, and I try to give it the grandeur which Verdi achieved in the first production in Egypt. My *Aidas* have been described as 'the Las Vegas of operas', which I regard as a compliment." Visit [atgtickets.com/stoke](http://atgtickets.com/stoke) to book tickets.

## Beautiful South star's Sunbirds in Shropshire

Beautiful South founder member Dave Hemingway will this spring visit Shrewsbury venue The Buttermarket with his new band, Sunbirds (Friday 14 April).

Dave is joined in the band by erstwhile Beautiful South colleague, guitarist & songwriter Phil Barton, drummer Marc Parnell, and singer/violinist Laura Wilcockson. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit [thebuttermarket.co.uk](http://thebuttermarket.co.uk)



## A Chorus Line in Cannock

Brownhills Musical Theatre Company (BMTc) make a return to the stage mid-month with a new production of *A Chorus Line*.

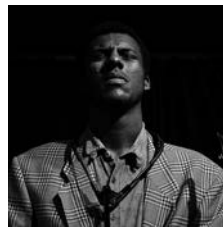
Based on the real-life experiences of Broadway dancers and actors - and featuring hit songs *One* and *What I Did For Love* - the musical's popularity once made it the longest-running show on Broadway. BMTc present their production at the Prince of Wales Theatre in Cannock on Friday 17 & Saturday 18 February.

## And all that jazz...

Newhampton Arts Centre (NAC) is launching its spring season of jazz this month.

04 [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)

The Wolverhampton venue's 2023 programme gets under way on Saturday 18 February with a performance by Birmingham-born BBC Young Musician Jazz Award winner Xhosa Cole (pictured), who will be appearing on the night with his quartet. To find out more about NAC's new jazz season, visit [newhamptonarts.co.uk](http://newhamptonarts.co.uk)



## Major squash tournament returns to the Midlands

One of the most prestigious and historic tournaments in professional squash will this spring return to Birmingham for the first time since 2001.

The opening two days of the 2023 PSA World Tour Platinum tournament - which runs in the city from 9 to 16 April - will take place at Edgbaston Priory Club.

Play will then move to the Birmingham Rep, where the action will unfold on an all-glass show court. Further information is available by visiting [britishopensquash.info](http://britishopensquash.info)

## Wolves art gallery show 'keeps it in the family'

Wolverhampton Art Gallery is currently hosting an exhibition which displays the work of celebrated British Pakistani Modernist artist Anwar Jalal Shemza alongside that of his granddaughter, Aphra Shemza.

The hybrid exhibition features 'the physical experience of the work at the art gallery' and an online version on the venue's website. The show runs until Sunday 16 April.

## New plans unveiled for Potteries visitor attraction

Ambitious new plans have been unveiled for The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, including an extension to the building and the gallery space.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has set out a range of proposals in a brand-new prospectus, which seeks to 'promote and enhance the city's unique cultural and heritage offer'. The prospectus can be viewed at [stoke.gov.uk/pmagprospectus](http://stoke.gov.uk/pmagprospectus)



## Paul Sinha confirmed for comedy festival finale

Organisers of Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival have confirmed that Paul 'The Sinnerman' Sinha will be performing in the event's Gala Show finale at the town's Theatre Severn on Sunday 16 July.

The festival runs for four days, starting on Thursday the 13th.

For further information and to purchase tickets, visit [theatresevern.co.uk](http://theatresevern.co.uk)



## From King Gary to Underdog

Comedian Tom Davis - best known from BBC comedy series King Gary - will make an autumn stop-off in Birmingham as part of a brand-new tour entitled Underdog.

The Live At The Apollo favourite, whose television credits also include A League Of Their Own, The Ranganation, Judge Romesh and Action Team, will play Birmingham Town Hall on 6 October.

To find out more and book tickets, visit [bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)



## Eno brothers rare live concert on the big screen

A film of a live concert in which the Eno brothers performed together for the very first time will premiere in cinemas across the UK next month (Thursday 2 March). The concert took place in August 2021 at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus amphitheatre, part of the Acropolis in Athens. To purchase tickets to see the film, visit [CinemaLive.com/event/brianaandrogereno](http://CinemaLive.com/event/brianaandrogereno)



## Museum visitors head 'into the thick' as coal mine reopens

Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) is reopening its popular underground mine experience.

As visitors head below ground in a recreated Black Country coal pit, they will be able to experience the darkness a miner endured, explore a maze of roadways and working areas, and learn about the world of an 1850s coal miner.

Commenting on the news, David Pitt, BCLM's head of site conservation, transport & maintenance, said: "The whole museum is delighted to bring this experience back to our visitors.

"It has always been a popular part of the museum, and we can't wait to invite returning visitors to head 'into the thick' again, as well as introduce the experience to first-time visitors."

## Shrewsbury date for Paul Zerdin - and his 'friends'...

Ventriloquist extraordinaire and America's Got Talent winner Paul Zerdin is heading out on tour later this year - and will be making an autumn stop-off at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn. Paul's new show will feature a selection of his creations, including Sam, Albert, Baby, Roger the Bodyguard and an urban fox.

He appears in Shrewsbury on Sunday 5 November. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit [theatresevern.co.uk](http://theatresevern.co.uk)



## Choir!Choir!Choir! to bring epic '80s singalong to Stoke-on-Trent venue

Potteries-based fans of 1980s music can take part in an 'epic singalong' at the Victoria Hall in Stoke-on-Trent next month. The opportunity comes courtesy of Choir!Choir!Choir!, an open-participation group from Canada that encourages audiences to get actively involved in singing a selection of pop classics.

Founded in 2011, Choir!Choir!Choir! has amassed a dedicated community of singers and a thriving international fanbase on YouTube, with their videos amassing millions of views.

To find out more about the Friday 24 March show and book your seat, visit [atgtickets.com/stoke](http://atgtickets.com/stoke)

## It's time to sign up for the Chinook Challenge!

The Royal Air Force Museum is urging Midlandsers to sign up for its Chinook Challenge, an initiative that sees participants walking, running or cycling distances of 100km, 200km or 400km. The virtual challenge will run throughout 2023 and can be completed anywhere in the world 'in a time to suit everyone, whether that's in a day, week, month or even a year'.

For more information and to register for the challenge, visit [rafmuseum.org](http://rafmuseum.org)



## The Circus Of Horrors back in the Midlands

The Circus Of Horrors is back in the region next month with a brand-new production. The one-time Britain's Got Talent finalists - whose shows have been likened to Cirque Du Soleil if it were directed by Quentin Tarantino(!) - stop off at Brierley Hill Civic Hall (Sunday 5 March) and Victoria Hall in Stoke-on-Trent (Friday the 25th) with a production entitled The Haunted Fairground.



## Dippy The Dinosaur returns to the Midlands region

The Natural History Museum's iconic Diplodocus cast is heading to Coventry. The cast, affectionately referred to as Dippy, will be available to view at the city's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum (for an initial period of three years) from Monday 20 February. The replica skeleton first arrived in London

in 1905 and recently visited Birmingham as part of an eight-city tour that attracted a record-breaking two million visitors. Tickets to see the free installation - titled Dippy In Coventry: The Nation's Favourite Dinosaur - are available in advance via the Herbert's website.

## Stoke Rep Players set to present classic thriller

The Stoke Repertory Players make a welcome return to the stage this month with a brand-new production of Patrick Hamilton's classic thriller, Gaslight.



Set in the fog-bound London of 1880, the play centres around the character of Bella Manningham, a woman whose experience of hearing footsteps coming from a locked and uninhabited floor at the top of her house leaves her doubting her own sanity. Gaslight runs at the Stoke Rep Theatre from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 February. For more information and to book tickets, visit [stokereplayers.co.uk](http://stokereplayers.co.uk)

## Dickens classic given a fresh Twist at the Grand

One-time Children's Laureate Michael Rosen is bringing a retelling of Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist to the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this spring.

Described as 'an Oliver Twisted Tale', Unexpected Twist combines the 1838 classic with a story of Michael's very own. The production runs at the Grand from Tuesday 16 to Saturday 20 May. To find out more about the show and book your seat, visit [grandtheatre.co.uk](http://grandtheatre.co.uk)

## Rag'n'Bone Man to play Ludlow Castle in July

Rag'n'Bone Man will join Kaiser Chiefs and Bastille 'within the walls' of Ludlow Castle this summer. Much admired for his deep baritone voice, the 38-year-old singer & songwriter, whose real name is Rory Charles Graham,




performs at the castle on Thursday 20 July. Kaiser Chiefs appear there the following evening (Friday the 21st), with Bastille taking to the stage on Sunday the 23rd. To find out more about the three Within The Walls concerts, visit [ludlowcastle.com](http://ludlowcastle.com)

# B:Music

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 bmusic.co.uk  youtube.com/c/bmusic\_ltd

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

**The Musical Box:  
Lamb Lies Down  
on Broadway**  
Tue 14 Feb  
**Symphony Hall**



**Jurassic World  
in Concert:  
Film with Live  
Orchestra**  
Tue 7 Mar  
**Symphony Hall**



**Pete Williams  
& His Band plus  
Special Guests**  
Thu 16 Feb  
**Jennifer Blackwell  
Performance Space**




**Lost In Music:  
One Night at  
the Disco**  
Sat 11 Mar  
**Symphony Hall**



**Lissie: Carving  
Canyons Tour**  
Mon 20 Feb  
**Town Hall**



**Josh Pugh**  
Fri 17 Mar  
**Town Hall**



**Lloyd Griffith:  
One Tonne  
of Fun**  
Sat 25 Feb  
**Town Hall**



**Gordon  
Buchanan:  
30 Years In  
The Wild Tour**  
Mon 28 Mar  
**Town Hall**



**B:Inspired**



B:Music is delighted to be welcoming the best international orchestras, soloists and rising stars from around the world for the 2022/2023 Birmingham Classical Season. From John Wilson with Sinfonia of London, the most talked about orchestra at this years Proms, to Strauss's Alpine Symphony, there's something to inspire everyone.  
[bmusic.co.uk/bclassical](https://bmusic.co.uk/bclassical)

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FREE\***

\*When purchasing an adult ticket to concerts in the season

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

## DarwIN Shrewsbury Festival is back!

An eight-day event celebrating Shrewsbury's most famous son, Charles Darwin, returns to the town this month.

DarwIN Shrewsbury Festival runs at various venues from Sunday 5 to Sunday 12 February and features a programme of exhibitions, lectures, illustrated talks and guided tours. To find out more about what's going on, check out [darwin.originalshrewsbury.co.uk](http://darwin.originalshrewsbury.co.uk)

## Spring return for popular Shropshire Tasty Trail

Shropshire Festivals have announced the return of their 'tasty trail' walk & eat event.

The trail will return to Ellesmere's historic Oteley Estate on Sunday 23 April. Organisers have secured a brand-new eight-mile route through countryside that's not normally open to the public. There will be stop-offs along the trail to provide participants with the chance to enjoy three courses of locally sourced food & drink. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit [shropshiretastytrails.co.uk](http://shropshiretastytrails.co.uk)



## Enjoy a summer stay in Safari Park's Lion Lodges

West Midland Safari Park has opened booking for its four new Lion Lodges. The one-storey lodges - which are available to use from 7 July to 30 September - are authentically themed, can sleep up to six guests, and offer panoramic views of the lions' new habitat.

Staying in a lodge comes with the added benefit of a two-day admission ticket to the Safari Park and all its attractions, and a two-day 'ride wristband' to use in the Adventure Theme Park. To find out more, visit [safari-lodges.co.uk/lion-lodge](http://safari-lodges.co.uk/lion-lodge)



08 [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)



## Paul Weller to play Cannock Chase Forest Live concert

Paul Weller will this summer perform in Staffordshire as part of Forest Live 2023. The annual concert series is presented by Forestry England with the aim of introducing forests to new audiences by staging concerts

in unique and natural woodland arenas around the country. Paul plays Cannock Chase Forest on Friday 9 June. For more information and to check ticket availability, visit [forestryengland.uk/music](http://forestryengland.uk/music)

## Wolves literature festival returns for a seventh year

Wolverhampton Literature Festival returns for its seventh year this month (Friday 3 to Sunday 5 February).

Hosted by City of Wolverhampton Council, the festival aims 'to amplify the voice of authors, poets, writers, storytellers, puppeteers, podcasters, vloggers and publishers across the UK'.

Contributors to this year's get-together include Irving Welsh, Richard Herring, Miki Berenyi and Robin Ince. For more information about the event and to book tickets, visit [wolvesliteraturefestival.co.uk](http://wolvesliteraturefestival.co.uk)

contemporary folk, world musicians and Americana that will offer something for everyone to enjoy across the four days.



## Billy Bragg to headline Shrewsbury Folk Festival

Singer-songwriter Billy Bragg has been announced as one of the headline acts at this summer's Shrewsbury Folk Festival. Taking place from Friday 25 to Monday 28 August, the event will also feature performances by, among others, Oysterband, Breabach, Jiggy, Spiers & Boden, Talisk and Daphne's Flight. Commenting on the announcement, Festival Director Sandra Surtees said: "This year is already shaping up to have a great line-up, with an eclectic mix of traditional and

## Carnival Glass Society celebrates its 40th

The Carnival Glass Society will this year celebrate its 40th anniversary by presenting an exhibition at Stourbridge Glass Museum. Carnival glass is pressed glass that is usually patterned and often hand-finished to obtain different shapes, then iridised to give a spectacular 'oil on water' effect. The Society's exhibition will be available to view at the museum from 8 April to 5 November.



# WORLD CLASS ENTERTAINMENT



PAY HOMAGE TO A MUSICAL ICON WITH A TRIBUTE TO TINA TURNER  
**WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?**  
 WED 1 FEB  
 REGENT THEATRE



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**023 DANCE: OUR PLANET**  
 SAT 4 – SAT 11 FEB  
 REGENT THEATRE



OPERA INTERNATIONAL'S AWARD-WINNING PRODUCTION  
**ELLEN KENT'S AIDA**  
 TUE 14 FEB  
 REGENT THEATRE



DON'T MISS NORTHERN BALLET'S HUGELY POPULAR UGLY DUCKLING!  
**NORTHERN BALLET'S UGLY DUCKLING**  
 THU 16 FEB  
 REGENT THEATRE



BRINGING THE MUSIC OF JEFF LYNNE AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA TO THE STAGE:  
**THE ELO EXPERIENCE**  
 SAT 18 FEB  
 REGENT THEATRE



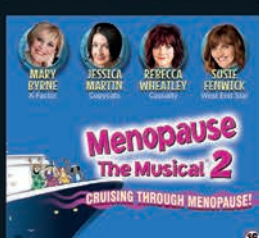
THE STAGE VERSION OF THE NATION'S FAVOURITE MOVIE:  
**THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION**  
 MON 20 – SAT 25 FEB  
 REGENT THEATRE



THERE'S A NEW STAR IN TOWN! PUSSYCAT DOLL  
**MELODY THORNTON**  
**THE BODYGUARD**  
 MON 27 FEB – SAT 4 MAR  
 REGENT THEATRE



SQUIRRELS GET READY! HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO SEE EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE LOVEABLE DOG!  
**HEY DUGGEE**  
 FRI 10 – SUN 12 MAR  
 REGENT THEATRE



ALL ABOARD THE VOYAGE OF SELF-DISCOVERY, LOVE & FRIENDSHIP!  
**MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2**  
 SAT 18 MAR  
 REGENT THEATRE



A CLASSIC TALE OF PARISIAN LOVE AND LOSS.  
**ELLEN KENT'S LA BOHÈME**  
 SUN 26 MAR  
 REGENT THEATRE

**FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS**  
 WED 1 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**SARA PASCOE – SUCCESS STORY**  
 THU 9 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**DANNY BAKER – AT LAST THE SAUSAGE SANDWICH TOUR**  
 SAT 11 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**JASON FOX – LIFE AT THE LIMIT**  
 SUN 19 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS – THE CRUISIN' FOR A BLUESIN TOUR**  
 FRI 24 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**NORTHERN LIVE – DO I LOVE YOU**  
 SAT 25 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**COME WHAT MAY – THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO MOULIN ROUGE**  
 SUN 26 FEB | VICTORIA HALL

**BEYOND THE BARRICADE**  
 SAT 11 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

# BRUMMIE, BRUMMIE, BRUMMIE...

Actor Ian Hallard talks about how his love for a certain Swedish pop group inspired him to write his debut play, *The Way Old Friends Do*



## Birmingham-born actor and self-confessed ABBA maniac Ian Hallard has always dreamed of performing as one of the Swedish supergroup's female singers. Now he's written a play which will finally allow him to achieve his ambition - as he explains to What's On...

It might seem hard to believe now, when their music is celebrated and lauded across the globe, but there was a time - after their break-up - when the songs of ABBA were dismissed as lightweight pop and deeply uncool.

Actor Ian Hallard's ABBA-inspired debut play, *The Way Old Friends Do* (named after a track from the band's seventh album, *Super Trouper*) kicks off at exactly that point in time, back in the 1980s, when two Birmingham school friends tentatively come out - one as gay, the other as a fan of the Swedish hitmakers.

The latter is billed as the more shocking revelation in the play's pre-release publicity, something Ian bases on his own recollections of growing up in the city at the time.

"I grew up as a teenager during those dark times in the mid to late '80s when ABBA were deeply unfashionable," he says. "People wouldn't believe it now, but I remember going to 18th birthday parties and discos, requesting Dancing Queen, and the DJ openly laughing at me."

Thirty years on, with ABBA's music getting the recognition it deserves, the friends reunite to form the world's first drag act tribute band, along the way facing a variety of trials, tribulations and stresses on their relationship.

Ian is at pains to point out that although the tale reflects elements of his own life, it isn't autobiographical - but he then proceeds to list all the ways in which it's bound to be perceived that way.

"I will admit that one of my earliest memories is my mum knitting me a pair of yellow woollen plaits so I could dance around the living room to *Take A Chance On Me*, pretending to be Agnetha... but that isn't a clue to which one I play [in the show]!"

"The background and setting is autobiographical - it's very much set in Birmingham and namechecks and references a lot of areas in the city. And there's a character who's a gay ABBA fan and is the same age as me. But in terms of the [play's] events, I've never thought about setting up an ABBA tribute band in real life!"

Ian has often been asked about writing his own piece - he's co-written with and edited scripts for his husband, Mark Gatiss - but never knew what to write about.

"It felt a bit overwhelming to come up with a topic that hadn't already been sufficiently tackled by someone else, or that I'd have an

original enough take on. So I thought, cards on the table, if my agent rang tomorrow and had a new script for me, what part would I be most excited about playing? And I thought it'd be one of the girls from ABBA. Then I had to work backwards and construct a storyline that would enable me to play that part."

The seed planted, in the summer of 2019 he began writing a first draft without telling anyone - his husband was away on a family holiday at the time - and it instantly became an all-consuming passion.

"Once I'd had the idea, it sort of gripped me, and I was up at six o'clock in the morning, writing straight through and going to the theatre in the evening with my laptop and writing in the dressing room - fortunately I didn't miss any entrances! When I got to the end, I sent it to Mark because I knew I could trust him to read it."

Acclaimed actor, writer & director Gatiss has written multiple episodes of *Sherlock* and *Doctor Who*, as well as plenty of other scripts, so Ian knew he'd get an honest appraisal.

"He could have said 'Listen, I love you dearly, but this is terrible - delete it and never show it to another living being,' but fortunately he didn't!"

Spousal approval secured, there were further positive responses to readings conducted for 'industry people', including Sean Foley, artistic director at the Birmingham Rep.

"Sean was very keen, as I'm a native Brummie, the LGBT slant to it, and because the theatre wanted to encourage new writing and new writers."

Ian thought his dreams had been shattered when the Covid pandemic hit, just as the play was about to be scheduled.

"I went into a period of mourning for the playwriting career that never happened because no one knew if theatres would reopen. I took Covid very personally."

Mercifully we've come out the other side, and even though the high-profile ABBA content and the involvement of Mark Gatiss as director would suggest a show big enough for the main house, *The Way Old Friends Do* will premiere in the Rep's 350-seat studio theatre - something which Ian is very happy about.

"This is a play, not a musical, so it's not a massive *Mamma Mia!*-type thing with a huge cast," he says, admitting the producers didn't want to over-extend themselves initially, especially with audiences still reacquainting

themselves with theatre post-Covid.

"The theatre is still in a very perilous place and audiences still haven't come back in the numbers that there were before. Some people have just lost the habit, some are still nervous, and obviously the cost-of-living crisis is a real concern for people's leisure activities.

"We're also aware that we need people to take a chance - no pun intended - on a new piece of writing. We're very hopeful and optimistic. ABBA is a known brand, and the show's tagline - 'two old friends decide to form the world's first ABBA tribute band in drag' - certainly seems to intrigue and amuse people, but there are no certainties at the moment."

One certainty is Ian's enthusiasm for the pop group at the heart of his show. There's scant room here to expand on his take on all things ABBA, but it's no surprise that he's a dedicated fan of the two female singers: "I love and adore them both, and think they've both got their strengths and vulnerabilities."

As for his favourite track: "There are very few ABBA songs that I don't love, but my favourite is *Under Attack*."

He also confesses that he "sobbed" his "little heart out" at the "sort of extraordinary" ABBA Voyage show in London.

In short, there really is no doubting his love for the Swedish super troupers. And nor is there any question about the pride he takes in the play he's written about them - even though he finds it difficult to blow his own trumpet.

"As an actor I'm used to going out and telling journalists and interviewers that I'm in this amazing, witty, funny show - but now it's *my own work*, my innate Britishness kicks in!

"There's a lot of heart in it, and a lot of me. It feels quite vulnerable to be putting it out there because if people hate it - which I'm hoping they won't! - then you can't just write that off. Although it's not autobiographical, it's my passion, my love, and I'm very fond of the six characters I've created.

"I hope people will come and laugh and have a good time. And obviously there's some dressing up as well!"

---

**The Way Old Friends Do shows at The Rep, Birmingham, from Friday 17 February to Saturday 4 March**

# Valentine's Dinner

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## The Bilash

[thebilashrestaurant.co.uk](http://thebilashrestaurant.co.uk)

Established in 1982 and recommended by both Michelin and Hardens, family-run restaurant The Bilash boasts the best in Bangladeshi and Indian cooking. The restaurant's specially curated Valentine's menu will be available on 10, 11 & 14 February, with three courses costing just £35 per person. Tantalising main-dish options include goan tiger prawn masala, lamb shank and macher malai (fresh Bengali flat fish in a Goan coconut sauce).



## Hencote

[hencote.com](http://hencote.com)

Boasting panoramic views across the Shropshire Hills, Hencote provides a truly unique dining experience. Its Valentine's Day offering includes a bespoke five-course menu (featuring canapés and petit fours), Valentine's decor and roses on tables, and entertainment from burlesque dancer Cherry from Doe Demure. The event is priced at £62 per person and includes an on-arrival glass of Hencote's Evolution sparkling wine.



## Larder

[larderlichfield.com](http://larderlichfield.com)

Whether you're looking to enjoy a mates' date or a romantic evening this Valentine's Day, trust us when we say that Larder is a fantastic option. Its six-course tasting menu costs £80 per person and features: Tunworth scone & cherry jam; lobster ravioli; stuffed Morel mushroom; 'all the lamb' - rack of lamb, glazed belly, shoulder sausage roll, liver parfair and all the trimmings; lemon, white chocolate & yoghurt and apple tarte tatin & vanilla ice cream.



## Fiume

[fiumerestaurant.com](http://fiumerestaurant.com)

If Italian is your thing, then why not give Wolverhampton-based Fiume a try? Offering tasty cuisine with 'southern Italian influence and a fresh twist', the independent family-run bar, restaurant & café is widely considered to be one of the best places to eat in the region. Boasting a picturesque canalside setting, the restaurant offers a menu featuring pastas, pizzas, fresh fish, meats and a wide selection of artisan cocktails.



## The Clock Tower

[clocktoweratnetley.com](http://clocktoweratnetley.com)

Located at Netley Hall, in the heart of the Shropshire countryside, The Clock Tower takes inspiration from the Roaring '20s, boasting lavishly decorated interiors that include unique Waterford crystal chandeliers, exquisite tapestries and a stunning stained-glass ceiling. Described as 'a dining experience' rather than just a restaurant, The Clock Tower is offering Valentine's Day dinners, singles parties and proposal packages.



## Three Horseshoes Country Inn & Spa

[3shoesinn.co.uk](http://3shoesinn.co.uk)

Dust off those dancing shoes for a special night of mystery and romance at the Three Horseshoes Country Inn, near Leek in Staffordshire.

The event, which takes place on Saturday 11 February and costs £47 per person, includes a three-course meal, live music and disco. Dress code is black tie, so get your glam on and prepare to sparkle, shimmy and shine. Fancy making a night of it? Boutique bedrooms are also available to book.



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7.30pm evening  
**Cabaret Theatre**  
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Tickets: £15-17



2 March, 7pm  
**Altered Skin:  
Fatherhood**  
Tickets: £10



15 February, 7.30pm  
**Once upon a  
Wednesday**  
presents  
**Peter Chand**  
Tickets: £8



10-12 March, 10.30am,  
1.30pm & 4.30pm  
**Indefinite Articles:  
Pinocchio**  
Tickets: £12-14 or  
£48 Family



16 March, 8pm  
**Angela Barnes:  
Hot Mess**  
Tickets: £16



21 - 25 February, 2.30pm,  
6.30pm & 7.30pm  
**BASE: The Wizard  
of Oz The Panto**  
Tickets: £13-14  
(£50 family)



22 March, 2pm  
**Neil Sands:  
When You're  
Smiling**  
Tickets: £15

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14 [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)

Classical music from across the region...



**BBC Philharmonic** Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 3 February

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic are no strangers to Stoke-on-Trent, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concert-goers with works from their impressive repertoire. This latest presentation sees conductor Leslie

Sukanandarajah (pictured) being joined by soloists Tobias Feldmann (violin) and Jonathan Scott (organ) for a programme that features the Overture to Mozart's Magic Flute, Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Saint-Saëns' third symphony.

**Ex Cathedra: Byrd's Great**

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 5 February

"Music is a force for good," says Jeffrey Skidmore (pictured), founder & conductor of early music ensemble Ex Cathedra.



"We are reminded constantly of this in our work: it can change lives, uplift, inspire; it can bring people together, and it knows no boundaries! It is a universal language that is fundamental to human existence."

The power of music is much in evidence in the compositions of William Byrd, the 400th anniversary of whose death is here being marked by Ex Cathedra.

"Byrd's Great is a lavish programme of liturgical choral music," says Jeffrey. "It's accompanied by cornetts and sackbuts, a viol consort and the sound of the Tudor organ."

The concert also features a rare performance of Thomas Tallis' iconic 40-part motet, Spem in alium.

**The Armenian State Symphony Orchestra**

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 23 February

"I view myself as being a vessel for the composer's intentions," explains former BBC Young Musician winner Jennifer Pike - who claimed the coveted title at



the tender age of 12. "It isn't the performer who everyone should be coming to enjoy, it's the composer's music."

Jennifer is bringing her violin to town to accompany the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra. Possibly Europe's youngest national orchestra, the ASSO is here performing under the baton of founder & Artistic Director Sergey Smbatyan.

The programme features Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol, Khachaturian's Violin Concerto, and Tchaikovsky's masterful fourth symphony.

**Jarualda Quartet**

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow, South Shropshire, Wed 8 February

"Our name is a fusion of all our names," explains the Jarualda Quartet, "because our interdependence is at the core of our ethos. We are all equally important, and a good quartet is always about more than the sum of its parts."

Comprising violinists Alex Postlethwaite & David Joyce, viola player Jane Park and cellist Ruth Henley, Jarualda boasts a wealth of experience, with all four of its members being much in demand as soloists, chamber musicians and section principals.

The quartet's Ludlow concert programme features works by Beethoven, Henley and Ravel.

**Birmingham Philharmonic**

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Sun 12 February; St Mary's Church, Cleobury Mortimer, South Shropshire, Sun 19 February

One of the UK's most widely acclaimed non-professional symphony orchestras, the Birmingham Philharmonic here present a programme of work which takes their audience on a 'grand tour' of Europe; from Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture - an evocation of the stormy west coast of Scotland - to his high-spirited fourth symphony, inspired by Italy. Sandwiched between these two compositions is a seldom-heard Romanian wind decet from Enescu and a lilting serenade for strings from the Midlands' very own Edward Elgar. Michael Lloyd conducts.

**Latino Classico**

Blackburn Theatre, Prestfelde School, Shrewsbury, Fri 17 February

When Colombian pianist Ivan Guevara and English cellist Graham Walker met 25 years ago, they began playing Latin songs using classical instruments. Recognising the combination's potential, the pair invited other musicians to join them - and Latino Classico was born. The award-winning ensemble - who draw on the familiar bolero and tango as well as less-well-known rhythms such as the pasillo and joropo - have recorded six albums across the years, the most recent of which, Havana Classic, was released in the summer of 2022.

SPRING 2023  
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**VERA VAN HEERINGEN**

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 SAT 18 MARCH



**TRICHOTOMY**

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 THU 23 MARCH



**JACK RUTTER**

Folk & acoustic singer/songwriter  
 SAT 1 APRIL



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Thursday 30 March • 7.30pm • £34.00



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 tickets.princeofwales.live



Live music from across the region...

## Stone Broken

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Sat 11 February

“We’re really thrilled to tour the UK again this month, and look forward to performing in a lot of those towns we didn’t get to play on our last tour.” So says Rich Moss, frontman of Walsall-based four-piece Stone Broken. “We were constantly beset by problems following Covid, and during our last run I ended up getting ill, so we had to reschedule some shows. It was all a bit piecemeal, so hopefully this new 13-date tour will give us an uninterrupted run to bring our new music to fans. We will be planning something a little different in these shows, so this will definitely be a great chance for fans to experience a new aspect and delivery from Stone Broken.”



Credit: Andy Ford

## Andy Cutting

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 5 February

Melodeon practitioner par excellence Andy Cutting has bagged no fewer than three BBC Radio Two Folk Awards for best musician. Initially coming to prominence with the innovative Blowzabella, and well known for his partnership with fiddle player, guitarist & singer Chris Wood, Andy not only boasts a thorough grounding in the English tradition but also takes his influences from the music of Central France. His shows are a delightful blend of self-deprecating wit and staggering musicianship.



## Bronwen Lewis

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 24 February

It’s a decade since Bronwen Lewis appeared in television talent show *The Voice*. In the years which have followed, she’s formed her own record label, become a Tik-Tok sensation - going viral during lockdown

with homegrown takes on well-known tracks - and defied music-industry efforts to get her to stop singing in Welsh. Bronwen visits Shrewsbury with *More From The Living Room*, a show which will see her recreating the magic of her virtual gigs live on stage...

## Doghouse Derelicts

Albert’s Shed, Shrewsbury, Fri 17 February

Tim Hutton and Dave Budgen’s love of Americana, hip-hop, funk and rock music of all hues is very much in evidence in the output of Doghouse Derelicts, a project which they hatched while travelling around the country together as members of electronic music band Dub Pistols. “We haven’t played the industry game at all,” Tim recently told [advantagesofage.com](http://advantagesofage.com). “With Doghouse Derelicts, it’s all been about concentrating on creating and releasing tunes and playing live, and after a few years of doing that, people are finally coming to us. Our dreams are big, and we’re worthy of them!”

## Nik Svarc Trio

The Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield,  
Wed 15 February

One of the most technically gifted guitarists of his generation and widely admired for his evocative style of playing, Nik Svarc is a highly accomplished teacher whose roll-call of ex-students includes Ed Sheeran. This Lichfield concert sees him teaming up with Garry Jackson (electric and double bass) and Dave Walsh (drums) to present a programme that brings together a variety of influences, in the process uniting modern groove with improvisation.

## Lissie

Birmingham Town Hall, Mon 20 February

Showcasing a rebellious spirit that saw her kicked out of high school in her senior year, Illinois indie-pop singer-songwriter Lissie Maurus has a singing voice which was once described as being liberally soaked in sunshine and tequila. She came to prominence after landing a national tour opening for Lenny Kravitz and scoring a major success with her first full-length album, *Catching A Tiger*, released in 2010. Her Midlands stop-off comes in support of latest offering *Carving Canyons*, a record ‘inspired’ by her experience of isolation during lockdown and the unexpected termination of a romantic liaison.



# HISTORY QUEEN

Historian & bestselling author Kate Mosse is heading out on tour with a brand-new show that celebrates the lives of some of history's 'trail-blazing and heroic women'. The tour follows on from Kate's recent and highly acclaimed book, *Warrior Queens And Quiet Revolutionaries: How Women (Also) Built The World*. What's On recently caught up with her to find out more...

**What inspired you to turn your bestselling book, *Warrior Queens And Quiet Revolutionaries: How Women (Also) Built The World*, into your first-ever live show, Kate?**

I'm in my 60s now, and I like to have new challenges. You've got to be brave, haven't you? I love being a writer, but you can't just think, I'll keep doing the thing that I've always done. You've got to push yourself and keep trying.

**Are you looking forward to performing the show 'live on stage'?**

Yes! I've really enjoyed book events in the past. I'd been really disappointed during lockdown not to be out and about meeting readers. *Warrior Queens And Quiet Revolutionaries*, the book, is a celebration of nearly 1,000 incredible women from all periods of history and all corners of the globe. The tour will be the same. It was my lockdown project, researching all these amazing women and turning detective for my own family history, too - and I wouldn't have had time to do it otherwise. And then I thought, "I would just really enjoy sharing these stories with bigger audiences."

**What are you hoping to achieve with the show?**

A really great night out at the theatre. It's for everybody. It's for girls and boys, men and women, dads and their daughters, mums and their sons, friends and neighbours. There will be music, props, a proper set, pictures, and me! I've never done anything like this before, so of course I'm a little daunted. But I'm going to give it my best shot. During the course of the show, as well as plenty of fun facts and did-you-knows, I'll tell the life stories of some of the most interesting, most inspiring, most astonishing women from the book. Some of the stories are tragic, some are

hilarious, and some make you gasp out loud because you can't quite believe them.

**Have you had experience of live performance before?**

Yes. Although this is the first time I've done a one-woman show as a performer, I often comper or host big events at theatres and literary events, and I enjoy interviewing writers, actors, directors and performers. I wrote my first full-length play last year, an adaptation of one of my own novels called *The Taxidermist's Daughter*. It was an honour that it opened the 60th anniversary season at Chichester Festival Theatre.

**Do you feel an affinity with the theatre?**

Definitely. I was taken to the theatre by my parents from a very young age. One time in particular, when I was six, I remember walking up into the auditorium of Chichester Festival Theatre, holding their hands and in my best party dress. Sitting in the auditorium that first time, as the lights went down, I remember thinking: "Oh, *now* I understand. This is where magic happens!" And I've never lost that feeling - whether I'm backstage and about to go on to interview somebody, or, when it was my own play, sitting in the audience as the lights went down. I still feel that flutter of expectation that anything could happen.

**What are you looking forward to about the tour?**

I can't wait to see the faces of the audience. When I write a book, I put it out there and the reader takes it from my hands, and then the book's completed. It's the same with the theatre tour. The show only exists when the audience is in the auditorium. Otherwise it's just me and the wonderful stage manager and the sound & lighting guys, talking into silence. I love the idea that a theatre show

will be different every night, because the people who are there are different every night.

**What else?**

I really love the UK. That sounds really old-fashioned, and I don't mean it in a creepy, weird, flag-waving kind of way, but rather that we have a wonderful country. I'm hugely looking forward to travelling around Britain, going to places I don't know and seeing cities and towns that I might have heard of but never visited.

**What will be the main themes of the show?**

It's a love letter to history - it's why this is a show for anybody who loves history or is interested in family history. But it also asks the questions: What is history? Who makes it? Who gets to decide what matters? Why do some people end up in the history books and others don't?

I want to unravel the way that history gets written. Another theme is asking what, if anything, links all of these women? Are there special characteristics that come up time and again, regardless of place or time or the work a woman is doing? And I want the audience to feel that they are part of that conversation with me.

Finally, it's a celebration. I want people to feel inspired, empowered and delighted to have spent the evening in the company of so many trailblazers from the past.

**Can you tell us about one of the various women you'll be featuring in the show?**

One of the women is the great British footballer - Preston's finest - Lily Parr. She's a legend, who scored more than 1,000 goals in her time. Her story is really illustrative of how once-famous women are deliberately left out of history. When people

say fans don't want to watch women playing football, that's just not true. Women's football was the biggest sport in the early 20th century, particularly when most men were away in the trenches during the First World War. At that time, there was a famous Boxing Day match between the leading women's teams. Lily Parr played for Dick Kerr's Ladies team, and they played in the Boxing Day match in 1920 that was watched by 48,000 people. It was the biggest-ever crowd for a women's match... until the Lionesses won the Euros Final in 2022, of course!

**What else will feature in the show?**

I will be asking the audience as they leave to nominate the one woman from history they would have put in my book. That way, together, the audience and I will be building a massive library of women - many more even than the thousand I mention in my book. I'm hoping many of these will be important women locally who I won't have heard of before. Putting women back into history, getting women's names better known, is about repetition; saying their names over and over again. After all, we know that women and men built the world together. This is not about ignoring all the wonderful men who've done incredible things - and some of the monsters! - but rather putting the women back in. The more I go around the country, the more varied and regional the nominations will be.

**Will the nominated women have to be famous?**

Not at all. People can nominate anybody they want. Some might be in the book, but many others will be less known outside their local community. Some will nominate people like 'my mum', which will be wonderful because at the heart of my book is my own family story. I'm using my great grandmother's life as an example of how women do disappear from history. It's why the title is Warrior Queens And Quiet Revolutionaries. It's often the women nobody knows who most changed the world for the people around them. Family history is important, we know that it's just given less attention. We know about queens and the pirate commanders, but we don't know about all those quiet, gentle, campaigning women who also made the world a better place.

.....

**Kate Mosse visits Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 28 February; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 7 March; New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Mon 13 March; Worcester Swan Theatre, Sat 18 March; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Thurs 6 April; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 11 April**



# WHAT'S ON IN FEBRUARY

## HALF TERM TREAT

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**FRI 17 FEB**

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THE NIGHT**

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Comedy previews from across the region...

## Josie Long

Old Rep, Birmingham, Fri 24 February;  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 27 May;  
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton,  
Fri 15 September

Josie Long's award-winning comedian pal, Nish Kumar, has referred to her as 'the David Bowie of stand-up', a description he's used on account of the 40-year-old comic's impressive capacity for reinventing herself. London-born Long admits she is very much a political animal, but recognises that banging on too much about politics is a near-certain way to alienate an audience. Hence the fact that her latest touring show, Re-Enactment, focuses on 'changes wrought by time, passion, moving to Scotland, and loving the world under - let's face it - difficult circumstances'.

Jokes include: "When I was a kid, I asked my mum what a couple was and she said, 'Oh, two or three'. And she wonders why her marriage didn't work out..."



## Axel Blake

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 11 February  
& Fri 14 April; Symphony Hall, Birmingham,  
Sat 22 April

Simon Cowell and David Walliams were suitably effusive in their praise of Axel Blake when he won the 2022 series of Britain's Got Talent. "We have discovered a star," opined Cowell, while Walliams declared: "A comedy superstar was born tonight." Boasting an impressive line in observational humour - combined with a razor-sharp wit and a disarming charm - the Dunstable-born Axel is hitting the road with In Style, his first-ever nationally touring show.



## Daniel Sloss

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 17 February

Scottish comedian Daniel Sloss was certainly out of the traps good'n'fast when it came to launching his stand-up career, first clasping the microphone in earnest at the tender age of just 16. His October 2009 debut in London's Soho Theatre made him the youngest stand-up ever to perform a solo

season in the West End.

In the decade-plus which has followed, he's not only trotted the globe strutting his stuff but also starred in his very own television series, enjoyed several sell-out Fringe seasons and published his first book, while his Netflix specials are streaming in 190 countries and 26 languages.

With so much going on, it's a wonder Daniel ever finds the time to write any new material!

## Russell Kane

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Fri 17 February

Past publicity blurb for this fella says 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! Russell has 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 his latest touring show, The Essex Variant!.



## Carl Hutchinson

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 11 February;  
Stourbridge Town Hall, Thurs 27 April; Crewe  
Lyceum Theatre, Thurs 14 September; Stafford  
Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 22 September; Old  
Rep, Birmingham, Sat 7 October; Theatre  
Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 8 October; Royal  
Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 4 November

Observational comedian Carl Hutchinson makes a welcome return with a show that covers all manner of common-or-garden topics.

Prior to becoming a full-time stand-up, Carl was a maths teacher. "There are certainly comparisons between the two professions," says the popular Geordie funnyman, "but the definite advantage with comedy is that if you have a bad gig, you can rest assured that you don't have to see the same audience the next day at 10am!"





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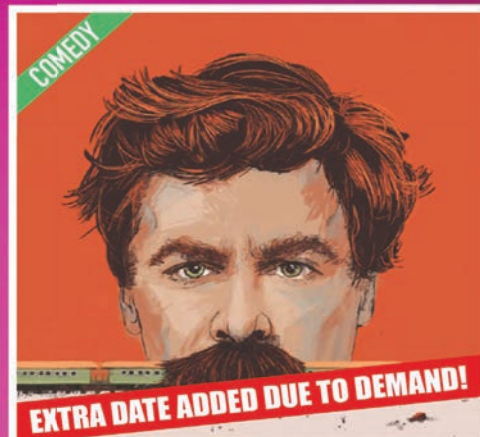
# FANTASTIC SHOWS IN THE CITY CENTRE!



**CATHERINE COHEN**  
FRI 10 FEB



**JOSIE LONG**  
FRI 24 FEB



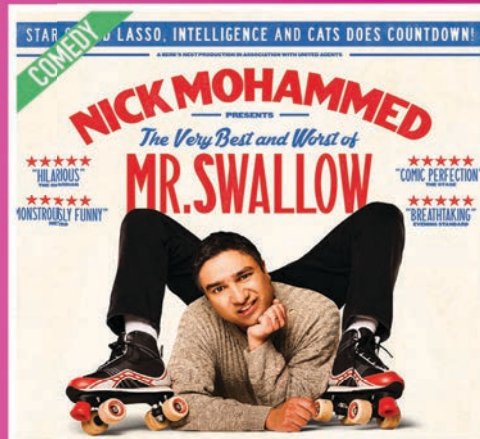
**MIKE WOZNAK**  
SAT 25 FEB (CAP) 2.30PM



**SIMON BRODKIN**  
SUN 5 MAR



**BASSEM YOUSSEF**  
FRI 10 MAR



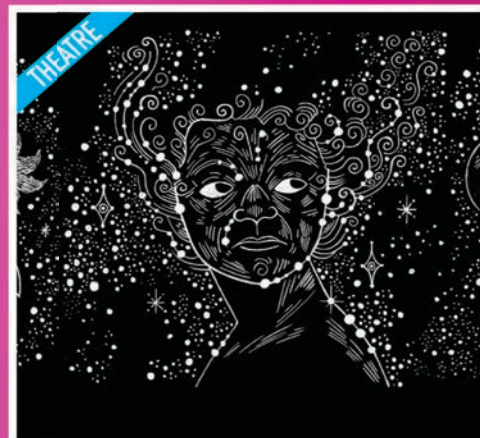
**NICK MOHAMMED**  
THU 13 APR



**THE JUNGLE BOOK**  
FRI 14 APR



**GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS**  
SUN 16 APR



**TAMASHA: STARS**  
TUE 30 MAY - SAT 3 JUN

Comedy previews from across the region...

## Jimeoin

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Tues 28 February; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 1 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 8 March

Fancy a straightforward comedy night with a straight-talking (well, actually, a bit of a rambling) comedian? If so, then the sublime Jimeoin is the man for you. A gimmick-free one-man comedy machine, Jimeoin's proved he's got what it takes on all manner of top television shows, including Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow and Jason Manford's Comedy Rocks. Check him out when he visits the region this month with his currently touring show, The Craic!



## Mark Steel

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 16 February; Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 17 February; Stourbridge Town Hall, Sun 2 April; Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 13 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 28 May; Telford Theatre, Fri 23 June

"I've come to terms with the fact I'm a heap of contradictions," says Mark Steel. "Trying to stay young while being unable to log into any website. Trying to be respectable and mainstream, until I can't help breaking into a steaming rant that would get me locked away somewhere secure if it wasn't on a stage. And this is stand-up, so whatever has happened in the room, in the town or in the world that day will almost certainly be in the show."

A well-established performer on the UK comedy circuit, Mark's CV includes the BAFTA-nominated Mark Steel Lectures for BBC Two and BBC One's Have I Got News For You. He visits the Midlands with his latest touring show, An Evening And A Little Bit Of A Morning With Mark Steel.



## Babatunde Aléshé

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 10 February & Sat 4 March; O2 Institute, Birmingham, Thurs 23 March

Babatunde Aléshé was scheduled to appear at the Glee Club back in November but had to cancel due to another commitment - namely, joining Ant & Dec, Boy George, former health secretary Matt Hancock and a host of other familiar faces in the Australian jungle for the 2022 series of I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of

Here!. From struggling to carve out a living in the rough, tough world of stand-up, Babatunde's comedy cup is suddenly overflowing with opportunities.

As well as his jungle adventure (he spent 18 days in there, finishing in seventh place), the award-winning laughter merchant has also starred in Celebrity Gogglebox and appeared on television shows including Soccer AM, The Weakest Link and Richard Osman's House Of Games. He's visiting the Midlands as part of a highly anticipated debut tour.



## Ginny Lemon & Sister Sister

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 4 February; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 8 February; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Fri 17 February

"I try not to describe it, really," admits Ginny Lemon in talking about her act. "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!"

Ginny is here joined by fellow RuPaul's Drag Race UK star Sister Sister for an evening in which they're promising to try and bring audiences 'the most disappointing drag show they've ever seen'.

## Dara Ó Briain

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 24 & Sat 25 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 30 March - Sat 1 April

Charismatic, fast-talking and very, very funny, Dara Ó Briain is a familiar face on the telly thanks to shows like Mock The Week and Have I Got News For You.

Jokes include: "If we were truly created by God, why do we occasionally bite the insides of our mouths?" and "Even though you're still allowed to smoke in your own house, do you have to stub it out when a burglar breaks in, as your house is now his workplace?"

Dara stops off in the region with his new touring show, So, Where Were We?.



# A Cosmic Adventure

**Motionhouse's latest show is full of fun and surprises...**





**Leamington-based Motionhouse is renowned for producing quality dance productions that blend powerful narratives, athletic physicality and digital imagery to great effect. The company's latest offering is Starchitects, a show which follows a group of children as they travel to other worlds. What's On recently caught up with Motionhouse founder & Artistic Director Kevin Finnan to find out more...**

Internationally renowned dance-circus company Motionhouse has gone stellar with its latest show, Starchitects, which takes performers and audiences to another dimension.

The production combines dance, aerial acrobatics and digital projections to tell the story of a group of children who embark on an adventure in outer space.

Created in partnership with Pembrokeshire-based Bluestone Park & National Resort, Starchitects was in residence at the park in early 2020. It proved so popular that the company has now decided to take it on an international tour.

"Bluestone had seen our work and wanted us to make a show for them, which I thought would be really interesting," says Motionhouse's co-founder and artistic director, Kevin Finnan. "I was a bit unsure at first, as we've never made a family show. The secret to a show for families and audiences new to dance is that it has to appeal equally to adults and children. So we set out to make the show as visually arresting and physically thrilling as the rest of our work, and also to include an element that was really targeted at families. I'm delighted by it, and having now done it, I'm committed to doing more family shows - they're great fun."

Bluestone had asked that the show feature outer space, but Kevin needed to give it an additional element that families would relate to.

"Whenever I make a show, I ask myself: What is the fundamental thing that I'm saying in this? My connection with making a show for families was the fact that what I do in the studio is play all the time. I play with ideas and I play with set and I play with the dancers.

"Through this play, we try to work out what our piece is going to be. And just like with our company, an essential thing for children is play. It's a fundamental part of who we are and how we become creative.

"Once we started making it with that idea in mind, we all had tremendous fun creating the

show. It's a really popular show among the dancers as well as our audiences."

Starchitects features a group of children whose games see them travelling to other worlds.

"The group of children are playing and observing the moon from their bedroom, and the moon disappears. So they go in search of the moon. They build themselves a rocket and go off and explore space. Exploring is a great thing for young people. They land on a planet and it's fully mysterious, and they meet strange creatures and have lots of adventures, and then they make their way back home to celebrate the experience."

The show features well-known games such as hide & seek, Grandma's footsteps and the floor is lava - activities which are not only popular with children but also evoke nostalgic memories for adults.

"The key to creating a show like this is that it's readable for a wide range of people. The adults who come along enjoy it just as much as the children - and in some cases, I suspect, even more!

"I had no idea how it was going to be received, but I knew I had done a really good job making it and we were pleased with it. Once we got it going and saw the interaction with the audience, it was very uplifting because the relationship with the audience has just been a real joy."

Birmingham Hippodrome is hosting a range of activities connected to Starchitects when the show visits the venue early this month. These include a relaxed matinee on 3 February, a curtain raiser by Birmingham Hippodrome Education Network, a post-show discussion on the evening of the 3rd, and a curtain raiser by Motionhouse Youth on the 4th. There is also the opportunity for families to take part in activities after the Saturday afternoon show.

Although the production was devised for families, Kevin says it will appeal to people of all ages.

"It doesn't matter how old you are. If the show contains visual spectacle, amazing things that

the dancers are doing, high-skilled dance and aerial work and interaction with film, then all of those elements mean that it works for everyone. The magic and mystery of that kind of show appeals on a visceral level, from the very youngest children to the 80-year-olds. So at Birmingham Hippodrome we've got a couple of matinees and an evening performance where we're hoping older children and adults will come, because if you like our work then you'll enjoy this show."

Motionhouse is a Birmingham Hippodrome Associate Company. In 2012, it collaborated with the venue and Australian theatre ensemble Legs On The Wall to produce The Voyage, which launched the London 2012 Festival in the Midlands, celebrating the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Last spring Motionhouse launched the Birmingham 2022 Festival, which accompanied the Commonwealth Games, with a work titled Wondrous Stories, presented in the city's Centenary Square.

"We had a really great reception for Wondrous Stories. It was the 10-year anniversary since we'd done The Voyage and to come back and do Wondrous Stories in 2022 was a real gift. We were really excited about doing it, and we were very pleased with the results."

Kevin is now hoping audiences in the city and beyond will become fans of Starchitects.

"This is a show which the whole family can enjoy. The show reaches out to the audience and plays with the audience and engages with the audience. For me, there has always got to be something at the core of a show which is meaningful, and I think that it is really good for us all to remind ourselves that being playful is an important part of our lives. It nourishes and fulfils us, and we should celebrate it."

**Starchitects shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on Friday 3 & Saturday 4 February and then visits Lichfield Garrick on Wednesday 5 & Thursday 6 April.**



'PERFECTION'

DAILY TELEGRAPH



'A TOTAL HOOT'

BROADWAY WORLD

IAN MCKELLEN

JOHN BISHOP



# MOTHER GOOSE

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JONATHAN HARVEY

DIRECTED BY

CAL MCCRYSTAL

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# HONKINGLY GOOD

Panto in February? Oh yes there is...



**Sir Ian McKellen talks about starring alongside comedian John Bishop in a new version of Mother Goose, which stops off at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this month...**

"I'm married to John Bishop," announces Sir Ian McKellen. "At least until February anyway, when we get to Wolverhampton and that beautiful theatre!"

The much-loved 83-year-old actor, whose long and impressive CV includes playing Lord Of The Rings wizard Gandalf and Marvel Comics supervillain Magneto on the big screen, is heading for the Midlands to star in pantomime as Mother Goose.

And he's doing so alongside popular funnyman John Bishop, who'll be taking the part of Mother Goose's husband, Vic. "I've only played Wolverhampton once, so I'm very excited to return to that gorgeous theatre," continues Sir Ian. "I played the venue in 1971 with Hamlet, and it was a long tour. By that, I mean a very long tour - and it was such a long time ago! Much of it now I can't remember, but to this day, the image of

the Grand's gorgeous auditorium remains in my mind. The auditorium wraps itself around you when you're on stage. And then there are those plush red seats. It is indeed very grand!"

By the time the pantomime production reaches Wolverhampton, Sir Ian will have been playing Mother Goose for more than two months. He spent the festive season starring in the role in London's West End, where he enjoyed rave reviews.

"There are lots of sorts of Dames," he explains. "There are men in frocks who look nothing like women - and that's very funny - right through to the other end, who are really convincing women, like RuPaul and Danny La Rue; hugely entertaining and altogether the most glamorous things you've ever seen." So what can Sir Ian reveal to an expectant Black Country panto audience about his take

on Mother Goose?

"I asked Jonathan Harvey, who has written this pantomime - and who has written so beautifully for Coronation Street - to create me a strong woman. He created the part that I played in Coronation Street for 10 episodes, and I knew that he would come up with something equally brilliant for my Mother Goose. Think Coronation Street housewife; she's a strong woman but she's flawed... "Mother Goose is a very special part.

Although all pantomimes have a Dame, this story actually revolves around the Dame, which isn't true of most other pantomimes. Mother Goose is the Dame of Dames!"

**Mother Goose shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Wednesday 22 to Sunday 26 February.**



## The Bodyguard

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 27 February - Sat 4 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 9 - Sat 13 May; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 4 - Sat 30 December

This blockbusting West End musical is of course based on the similarly blockbusting 1990s Hollywood movie starring Kevin Costner and Whitney Houston. When ex-secret service agent Frank Farmer is hired to protect superstar Rachel Marron from an unknown stalker, sparks soon begin to fly between the pair. Each expects to hold the whip-hand in the relationship; neither expects to fall in love... Featuring classic numbers

One Moment In Time, I Wanna Dance With Somebody and the legendary I Will Always Love You, the show received mixed reviews from the critics when it opened in 2012, but has since proved to be a real hit with its audiences. Pussycat Doll Melody Thornton stars as Rachel for Stoke and Wolverhampton dates. Birmingham casting is yet to be announced.

## The Mirror Crack'd

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 14 - Sat 18 February

The sleepy village of St Mary Mead is changing. A new housing estate is causing disquiet among the residents, and a rich American film star has bought the Manor House.

When a vicious crime takes place, the indomitable Miss Marple suddenly finds herself with yet another baffling murder-mystery on her hands... Susie Blake - whose screen credits include Victoria Wood's As Seen On TV, Coronation Street and Mrs Brown's Boys - takes the starring role as Agatha Christie's legendary spinster sleuth. Sophie Ward and Joe McFadden also star.



## Six The Musical

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 28 February - Sat 4 March and Tues 20 - Sun 25 June

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.

Sitting somewhere between a Girls Aloud gig and a traditional musical, the one-act production has been a runaway success since premiering at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017. The production sees the cast being ably supported by all-female band The Ladies In Waiting.

## The Verdict

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 14 - Sat 18 February; Malvern Theatres, Tues 6 - Sat 10 June

Barry Reed's 1980 novel is best known from the Oscar-nominated film adaptation starring Paul Newman and James Mason... When washed-up lawyer Frank Galvin takes on a medical malpractice case that no one thinks he can win, he finds unexpected salvation from his addiction to drink... Presented by the much-admired Middle Ground Theatre Company, the production stars former Casualty, Queer As Folk, Cutting It, Waterloo Road and Emmerdale actor Jason Merrells.





Matthew Bourne's  
**SLEEPING BEAUTY**  
A GOTHIC ROMANCE

NEW/ADVENTURES

Tue 7 - Sat 11 Feb



Jumprov

Sat 11 Feb & Sat 11 May



Verve Poetry Festival

Wed 15 - Sun 19 Feb



BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Sir Peter Wright and Galina Samsova's  
**Swan Lake**

Wed 15 - Sat 25 Feb



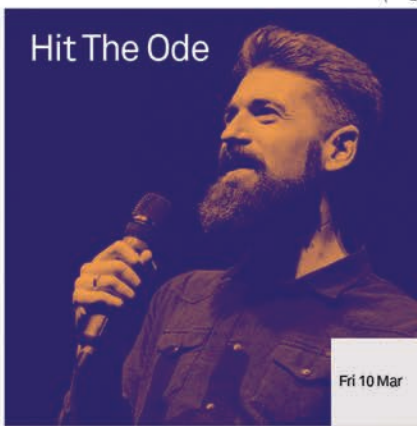
HOW NOT TO DROWN

Tue 7 & Wed 8 Mar



The Lincoln Center Theater Production  
Lerner & Loewe's  
**My Fair Lady**  
Directed by Bartlett Sher

Wed 8 - Sun 19 Mar



Hit The Ode

Fri 10 Mar



DIRECT FROM THE WEST END!

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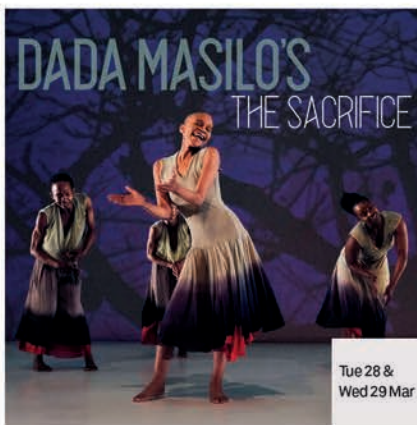
★★★★★  
'GREAT FUN. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR ALL AGES'  
WHAT'S GOOD?GOOD

Fri 24 - Sun 26 Mar



I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T A CLUE

Sat 25 Mar



DADA MASILO'S  
THE SACRIFICE

Tue 28 & Wed 29 Mar



**DARA O BRIAIN**

So... Where Were We?  
TOUR

Thu 30 Mar - Sat 1 Apr



**THE SPONGEBOB MUSICAL**  
UK PREMIERE TOUR

Tue 11 - Sat 15 Apr



## Spitting Image Live

The Rep, Birmingham,  
Wed 1 February - Sat 11 March

Satirical roastings are very much the name of the puppet game when Spitting Image Live takes up residency at Birmingham Rep this month. Inspired by the widely adored television series of the 1980s, the new stage show has been written by a trio of comedy giants in Al Murray, Matt Forde and Sean Foley, with Rep Artistic Director Sean also helming the production.

With a subject-to-change puppet cast that includes King Charles, Rishi Sunak, Harry & Meghan, Greta Thunberg, Nicola Sturgeon, Prince Andrew, RuPaul, Tom Cruise and Vladimir Putin, the potential for wickedly funny, laugh-out-loud mischief-making of the highest order surely knows no bounds.

## The Shawshank Redemption

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 20 - Sat 25 February; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 6 - Sat 11 March

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 yet again 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 a living hell, the nothing-to-lose lifer hatches a daring and ingenious plan to escape... Joe Absolom and Ben Onwukwe star.

## Girl From The North Country

The Alexandra, Birmingham,  
Tues 7 - Sat 11 February

Irish playwright Conor McPherson's Depression-era jukebox musical is perhaps best known for featuring a selection of songs by legendary troubadour Bob Dylan - who is unquestionably the most famous son of the town where the play's action unfolds: Duluth in Minnesota.

At the story's heartland is the character of Nick Laine, the proprietor of a rundown guesthouse. With the bank threatening to foreclose on the property, Nick is desperate to find a way to save his family from homelessness. The late-night arrival of a self-

styled man of the cloth and a down-on-his-luck boxer kickstarts a chain of events which deeply impacts everybody in the house, from Nick and his family through to the guests who are staying there...

McPherson's play has garnered plenty of praise since debuting in London in 2007, not least from Bob Dylan himself, who confessed that the ending left him feeling touched and tearful.



## The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 21 - Sun 25 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 14 - Sat 18 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 28 March - Sat 1 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 13 - Sat 17 June

"I'm so thrilled that my characters are stepping into a new life on the stage," says Deborah Moggach in talking about the theatrical version of her bestselling novel. "They've been waiting impatiently for the curtain to rise, and none of them are getting any younger. So welcome again to the Marigold Hotel!"

Best known from its 2011 film version starring Judi Dench and Maggie Smith, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* tells the story of an eclectic group of British retirees as they

embark on a new life in India and, more precisely, as residents of the hotel of the title... Hayley Mills, Andy De La Tour and Rula Lenska star in Birmingham alongside Paul Nicholas, who is then joined for the remainder of the tour by Belinda Lang, Tessa Peake-Jones and Graham Seed.

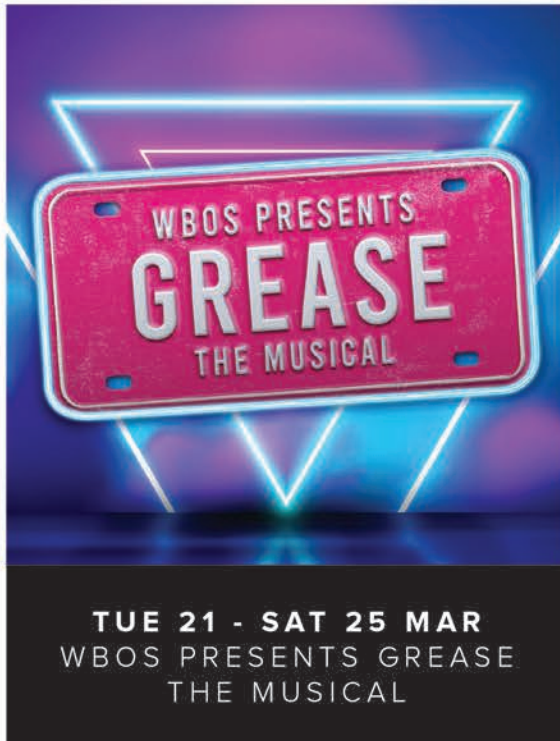
## Pride And Prejudice (\*sort of)

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 7 - Sat 11 February; The Rep, Birmingham, Mon 17 - Sat 22 April; Malvern Theatres, Tues 30 May - Sat 3 June

Having bagged the 2022 Olivier Award for best new comedy, *Pride And Prejudice* (\*sort of) is all the rage at the moment - and quite right too. A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, the show has proved a winner with critics and audiences alike, with celebrity fan Stephen Fry describing it as an evening of 'hilarity, romance, madness and utter theatrical joy'. Alongside the raucously irreverent but admirably affectionate retelling of Austen's rollercoaster romance, the show also boasts a host of pop classics, including *Young Hearts Run Free*, *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* and *You're So Vain*. Seriously, what's not to like?



# WHAT WILL YOU SEE NEXT?



WBOS PRESENTS  
**GREASE**  
THE MUSICAL

**TUE 21 - SAT 25 MAR**  
WBOS PRESENTS GREASE  
THE MUSICAL

WORLD PREMIERE • PRIOR TO WEST END



**The Best Exotic  
Marigold  
Hotel**

by **DEBORAH MOGGACH**  
BASED ON THE NOVEL THAT INSPIRED THE HIT FILM


DIRECTED BY **LUCY BAILEY**

**TUE 28 MAR - SAT 1 APR**  
THE BEST EXOTIC  
MARIGOLD HOTEL



**Ugly Duckling**

**SUN 2 APR**  
NORTHERN BALLET  
PRESENTS UGLY DUCKLING



**SIR JACK'S  
HISTORY  
BOYS**

**CELEBRATING  
WOLVES' 2003  
RETURN TO THE  
BIG TIME.**

Hosted by Johnny Phillips, featuring Matt Murray  
and further heroes to be announced.

Images by Express & Star

**MON 22 MAY**  
SIR JACK'S HISTORY BOYS

**CIVILISATION TEETERS ON THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS...  
WHO CAN PULL IT BACK FROM THE BRINK?**



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**AVALON**



Theatre previews from around the region



## An Inspector Calls

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,  
Tues 28 February - Sat 4 March

When Inspector Goole calls unexpectedly on the prosperous Birling family, his startling revelations not only shatter the foundations of their lives but also challenge them to examine their consciences...

Written by JB Priestley at the end of the Second World War and set in 1912, An Inspector Calls deals with problems of social injustice and class distinction - issues which remain all too familiar to this very day. This currently touring production, which premiered 30 years ago, has won a total of 19 major awards, been seen by more than four million theatregoers worldwide, and is the most internationally lauded production in the National Theatre's history.

## Ladies' Day

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,  
Fri 3 - Sat 25 February

Work, love and life are just one long, hard slog for fish-filleting foursome Pearl, Jan, Shelley and Linda.



Will their fortunes change when they head to Ladies' Day at York Racecourse? "Pearl is retiring," explains Amanda Whittington, who wrote the play. "She's almost the ringleader of the group, so they decide to have a day out at the races. We see them transform from their fish-factory outfits - the overalls, the hair nets - into their finery. They don't really know anything about horse racing but cotton on to the fact that they've got an accumulator bet that keeps on winning..."

"Really, it's about four - in the best sense of the word - ordinary women with ordinary lives, and it's about friendship, love, marriage, work, and who we are. There are a lot of laughs, but also there's hopefully a lot of stuff that people will relate to and empathise with."

## BU21

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,  
Fri 3 - Sat 11 February

Hard-hitting and critically acclaimed, BU21 is set in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. Taking place in west London, in the wake of an incident in which a passenger plane has been brought down over Fulham, the play focuses on six survivors attending a therapy

group to talk about the impact which the incident has had on their lives. The show is based on real testimonies gathered from a variety of terrorist incidents, including the 7/7 bombings, 9/11, the Paris attacks and the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack.

## Winter Holiday

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,  
Thurs 16 - Sat 18 February

Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn here stages the world premiere of a family story written 90 years ago.

One of a series of books by Arthur Ransome that includes the better known Swallows And Amazons, Winter Holiday sees a group of youngsters taking advantage of a lake freezing over to enjoy an exciting sledge race to 'the North Pole'.

The show is being produced by local theatre-maker Chris Eldon Lee and features a cast of adults playing the youngsters.

## Wodehouse In Wonderland

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 6 - Wed 8 February; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Fri 28 & Sat 29 April

This engaging celebration of the life and work of Jeeves & Wooster creator PG Wodehouse is set in the author's New York State home in the 1950s.



As Wodehouse works away at the latest

adventures of Bertie Wooster, he finds himself being interrupted by those around him, including a young would-be biographer. Cue an opportunity to share stories about his life, entertain the audience with a selection of his much-loved fictional characters, and sing songs composed by Broadway legends Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Ivor Novello...

But there is also a darker story beneath all the fun...

Robert Daws (Outside Edge) stars.

## SHE

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,  
Thurs 16 February

The Seven Ages of Man speech in Shakespeare's As You Like It provides the inspiration for this thought-provoking new work. Featuring two versatile actors



playing a wide range of roles, the production comprises seven short plays charting the experiences of different women, from childhood through to old age. The creatives behind the show are the Somerset-based Theatre Accord. The company was founded seven years ago by former Birmingham Rep artistic associate director Anthony Clark, who also wrote the play.

With the exception of Anthony, SHE's whole creative team is female - a fact which bears testament to the company's avowed commitment to progressing inclusivity and representation in the theatre.

# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Momoko Hirara. © Manvir Rai /  
Richard Payne

Director Carlos Acosta

Sir Peter Wright and Galina Samsova's

## Swan Lake

15 – 25 February

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ENGLAND

## Theatre previews from around the region



## Strictly Ballroom

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 13 - Sat 18 February

Strictly Come Dancing favourites Kevin Clifton and Maisie Smith star in this new Craig Revel Horwood-directed musical, based on Baz Luhrmann's iconic 1992 film of the same name.

"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."

## The Tempest

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 4 March

Strange beings with superhuman powers, a thrilling fantasy plot, breathtaking special effects and an underlying moral message about the triumph of

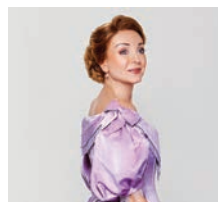


reconciliation over revenge. If these sound more like the ingredients of the latest Marvel or DC cinematic blockbuster than a 17th-century stage play, the comparison perhaps gives some idea of how The Tempest might have been received in Shakespeare's day. One of few plays by the Stratford bard to follow an entirely original story, it's the most obviously spectacular of his works, boasting a devastating storm, elaborate masque and objects that vanish 'with a quaint device'. When a royal ship is forced onto the rocks of an enchanted isle, the castaways are separated from one another and find themselves slipping under the control of the mysterious Prospero. Matters are further complicated by the presence of supernatural spirit Ariel and the grotesque man-beast, Caliban... Alex Kingston stars in this brand-new RSC production.

## The King And I

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 28 February - Sat 4 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 30 May - Sat 3 June

Midlands-born Call The Midwife star Helen George here plays the part of Anna Leonowens, upon whose real-life experiences The King And I is based. In



1862, Anna was employed by King Mongkut of Siam to serve as governess to his 67 children. Anna wrote of her experiences in two books, The English Governess At The Siamese Court and The Romance Of The Harem. Published in the 1870s, the books became significant sources of information about Siam and its culture for Western readers.

The stage musical tells Anna's story, showing the way in which she wins the trust of the barbaric but inquisitive King as she makes her presence felt in the royal court. Boasting spectacular sets, breathtaking costumes, all the splendour of Rodgers & Hammerstein's memorable score and a royal palace's-worth of awards, The King And I is a show that's well worth catching. Californian actor Darren Lee stars as the King of Siam.

## Macbeth

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 6 February

Having been spurred into action by the prophecies of three supernatural women - and egged on by his conniving wife - Macbeth's desire to be king of Scotland sees him slaughtering first Duncan and then Banquo. As the pressure mounts and his grip on sanity weakens, he decides to commit even more atrocities - including the murder of women and children...

## The Way Old Friends Do

The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 17 February - Sat 4 March

Sherlock, Dracula, Doctor Who and League Of Gentlemen favourite Mark Gatiss directs this brand-new comedy about devotion, desire and dancing queens.

The late 1980s sees two Birmingham school friends tentatively coming out - one as gay, the other as an Abba fan.

Fast forward 30 years, and the pals reunite to form the first-ever Abba tribute band to wear drag. But the life-on-the-road experience is no walk in the park, particularly given the influence of a distractingly attractive stranger... The show features the voices of Miriam Margolyes and Paul O'Grady.

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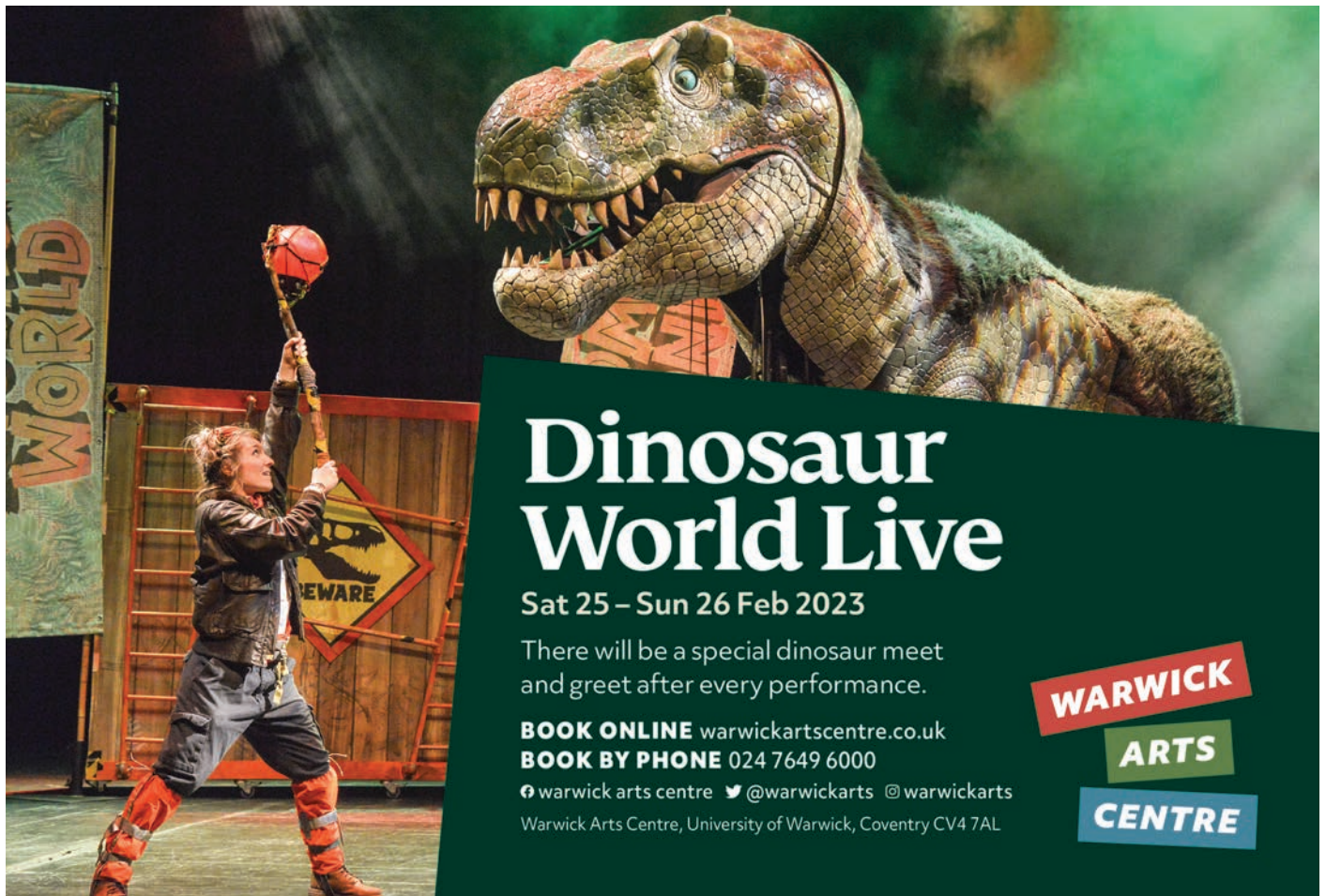
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## Dinosaur World Live

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 25 & Sun 26 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 24 - Sun 26 March

Dinosaurs are once again roaming the earth this month, thanks to this well-reviewed, family-friendly interactive show. 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 production may well leave a T-Rex-sized imprint on your child's memory for many a day to come.

## Fireman Sam

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 21 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 23 February; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 14 April

Now an impressive 36 years into his firefighting career, Fireman Sam is still putting out blazes in Pontypandy and lighting up children's eyes with delight. In this long-touring adventure, perpetual troublemaker Norman Price decides to become the star of the circus. But with a tiger on the loose and faulty lights threatening everybody's safety, it's soon time for Fireman Sam to reach for his trusty hose and come to the rescue.



## The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Halesowen Cornbow Hall, Mon 20 February

If you have children aged between two and seven and you're looking for ways to entertain them this half-term holiday, then you should certainly contemplate a visit to Cornbow Hall to check out this interactive family show.

The ensemble behind the production is Lost The Plot Theatrical, a six-year-old company whose mission statement is to produce shows which 'captivate, inspire and respect'. This latest offering - telling the much-loved tale of three billy goats who journey across a

rickety bridge in search of greener pastures - features catchy songs, funky dances to clap along to, and, wait for it, a rapping Troll!

## Zog Live On Stage

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 24 - Sat 26 February; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Tues 7 - Thurs 9 March; Telford Theatre, Tues 23 & Wed 24 May; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 25 - Sun 30 July

With their other shows including Tiddler And Other Terrific Tales, Stick Man and Tabby McTat, it's fair to say that Freckle Productions know a thing or two about presenting stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler books.

One of their most popular, and here making a welcome return to the stage, is Zog - the delightful story of a young dragon who is determined to win himself a gold star while attending dragon school.

Zog is so determined, in fact, that he tries a little bit too hard and finds himself bumping, burning and roaring his way through years one, two and three. Somewhat the worse for wear from his experiences, he not only finds himself being patched up by the plucky Princess Pearl but also coming face-to-face with his biggest challenge yet... a duel with the knight, Sir Gadabout the Great!



## Ministry Of Science

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 9 February; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 23 February; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 30 May; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Wed 31 May; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Thurs 1 June

Liquid nitrogen clouds, exploding oxygen & hydrogen balloons, fire tornadoes, hydrogen bottle rockets, ignited methane and even a self-built hovercraft are all part and parcel of the Ministry Of Science's anarchic approach to science communication.

As well as taking a look at the inventors and engineers who've shaped and inspired the modern world, the show's presenters will be conducting clever demonstrations aplenty. The resultant loud bangs should certainly keep everybody on their toes!



## Pinocchio

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Tues 21 February; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Fri 24 February; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent, Fri 10 - Sun 12 March

The legendary tale of the wooden boy with a disappointing propensity for telling porky pies - to the detriment of his fast-growing proboscis - is here presented by the splendidly imaginative Indefinite Articles. Expect a fast-moving and thoroughly engaging show featuring puppetry, shadows, illusion and specially composed music... And, unlike Pinocchio, we say that without a word of a lie...

# A lesson in elocution

Lesley Garrett visits the Midlands in Lerner & Loewe's lovely musical, My Fair Lady...





## Lesley Garrett is no stranger to the Midlands and next month returns to the region in a multi-award-winning production of Lerner & Loewe's ever-popular 1956 stage musical, *My Fair Lady*. What's On recently caught up with Lesley to find out more about the show...

Soprano and actor Lesley Garrett has performed in numerous shows, operas and concerts across the globe, so it is perhaps not surprising to discover that the current tour of *My Fair Lady* is not her first time in the ever-popular musical.

Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's 1956 show is based on George Bernard Shaw's drama, *Pygmalion*, and features classic songs like *I Could Have Danced All Night*, *Wouldn't It Be Lovely*, *Get Me To The Church On Time* and *On The Street Where You Live*.

The play and musical tell the story of Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle and Professor Henry Higgins, who makes a bet with a friend that he can teach Eliza to speak English so perfectly she could pass for a lady. But as he embarks on elocution lessons for Eliza, Higgins fails to foresee how the bet will affect them all.

Lesley is currently playing Higgins' housekeeper, Mrs Pearce, in the award-winning Lincoln Center Theater version of the show - but she first appeared in *My Fair Lady* when she was a teenager.

"I've been in three productions of *My Fair Lady* in my life," she says. "The first time was exactly 50 years ago, in my school hall, and I played Eliza. The second time I played Eliza was 20 years later at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the wonderful Jonathan Pryce as Mr Higgins. So now I just thought how wonderful it would be to completely come full circle and play the role of Mrs Pearce."

"Also I should say that I wanted to be part of one of the best productions of any musical I've ever seen or taken part in in my life. It's an absolutely exceptional production with a stunning director and a really wonderful cast. It's such a pleasure and a privilege to work with such an extraordinary group of people. Every single person is so talented and so dedicated."

Directed by Bartlett Sher, the Lincoln Center Theater production was premiered in New York in 2018 and then played London's Coliseum in 2022.

Alongside Lesley on the UK tour are Michael D

Xavier as Higgins, Charlotte Kennedy as Eliza and Adam Woodyatt as Eliza's father, Alfred P Doolittle.

"The score is a masterpiece," Lesley continues. "It's one of the most perfectly crafted pieces of music that I know, and to have the opportunity to be part of that musical tapestry every night is an enormous privilege." Playing Mrs Pearce also gives Lesley a role to relish.

"Bartlett Sher was determined to go back to the original play, *Pygmalion* - and that play affords all women a fantastic opportunity to express their feminism. Bernard Shaw was miles ahead of his time and a staunch feminist, and if you go back to the play, that's very clear.

"The play is all about strong women, and none stronger than Mrs Pearce. I call her Fierce Pearce. She runs the household like a commander of a ship and she tells Higgins what for. She's the first one actually to point out that he can't treat Eliza as he likes. For him, it's just an experiment, but Mrs Pearce sees there will be consequences for Eliza."

Sher initially wanted Mrs Pearce to be played as a Scottish woman, which meant some homework for Lesley.

"In the original *Pygmalion*, Pearce was a Scottish actor, and the wonderful Maureen Beattie played the part in London, and she is Scottish from the top of her head to her toes. So Bart asked me to learn, in my summer holiday, how to speak with a Scottish accent, and I worked so hard at it. And then, after one day of rehearsals, he said to me 'Gee, Lesley, could we just hear your Yorkshire accent?' So I did it in my Yorkshire accent and he said 'That's fantastic, we gotta have that!' And after I'd spent all my summer learning it!"

Lesley's career has been hugely successful and very varied. A classically trained soprano, she has performed at venues including the Royal Opera House and Glyndebourne, and alongside renowned orchestras such as the Hallé and the Royal Philharmonic, while also appearing in a host of much-loved musicals, *The Sound Of Music* and *Carousel* among them. A familiar face on television as a singer,

she has been a contestant on *Strictly Come Dancing* and *Celebrity MasterChef*, and was a voice on the BBC Children In Need single, *Perfect Day*.

"I have always, throughout my career, said that I don't have dividing lines between different genres of music, which many people like to have. I grew up with both opera and musicals. I was very privileged to grow up in South Yorkshire. I was born in a pit village called Thorne, and all my family were miners or railway workers. We all sang every kind of music you can imagine, all the time. It was a very powerfully musical community, and there were many musicians in my family. So for me it's never been a conflict between opera and musicals - and for the people I grew up with, it was never a conflict either. At school, at Thorne Grammar, we'd do Benjamin Britten's *Little Sweep* one term and *My Fair Lady* the next. We just mixed it all up.

"It wasn't until I went to London that I realised they were very jealously divided camps and you had to belong to one or the other. I'm afraid I've never subscribed to that. I just get on with it - I've always been a bit of a rebel!"

"What I love about musicals is the fact you do eight shows a week, and by doing that you develop your character because you think 'I could play this a different way tonight.' And because performances are so consecutive, you get that throughout, which I absolutely love."

Lesley is no stranger to Birmingham.

"I always love coming back to Birmingham. I've performed in Symphony Hall many times. And I was at the Midlands Arts Centre with a fabulous show for Welsh National Opera called *Rhondda Rips It Up!*, about the suffragettes.

"In Birmingham the audiences are very appreciative and very open to trying different things. And it's so diverse. I like the way that all communities in Birmingham give arts a go."

**My Fair Lady shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wed 8 to Sun 19 March**

## Dance previews from across the region



### Motionhouse: Starchitects

Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 3 & Sat 4 February; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 5 & Thurs 6 April

Leamington-based dance company Motionhouse make a welcome return with a show they premiered in autumn 2022. Telling the story of five youngsters who dream of reaching the moon from their bedroom, Starchitects is the company's first-ever production created specifically for children and families. "Full of thrilling surprises, the show is

engaging for audiences of all ages," says Motionhouse's executive director, Louise Richards. "It's a visual spectacle combining the dance-circus fusion and digital projections that the company is renowned for, with a fun and imaginative, easy-to-follow storyline - making it a perfect outing for the whole family. "The theme of the show - space travel - lends itself well to creative educational and participatory activities to stimulate children, supporting their development and encouraging their creativity."

### Northern Ballet's Ugly Duckling

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 16 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 2 April

Leeds-based Northern Ballet has developed a reputation for producing work which is every bit as much about storytelling as it is about dancing - a fact very much in evidence in its much-loved production of this famous Hans Christian Andersen story. The 40-minute show has been specially designed for young children, the aim being to provide them with an enjoyable and absorbing introduction to the experience of live ballet, music and theatre.



### Birmingham Royal Ballet's Swan Lake

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 15 - Sat 25 February

Birmingham Royal Ballet here presents a spectacular production of a timeless classic. Set to Tchaikovsky's mesmerising score, Swan Lake tells the story of Odette, a beautiful princess who, caught under the wicked spell of the evil Von Rothbart, must spend the daytime hours

as a swan, returning to human form only when night falls... A sumptuous visual feast, BRB's show presents an evening of ballet which is ideal not only for the seasoned dance-goer but also the first-time trier.





## Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 7 - Sat 11 February

Described as a fairytale for all ages, Matthew Bourne's gothic reworking of the Charles Perrault classic has accumulated a host of rave reviews since making its debut at London's Sadlers Wells. The decade of the 1890s - a period synonymous with decadent opulence and stories of fairies and vampires - is the starting point for

this haunting tale of good versus evil, which begins with the birth of Princess Aurora. The action then shifts to the early 20th century - as the princess makes the transition to adulthood - before then jumping forward once again, this time to the modern day, and her awakening from 100 years of slumber...



## Tap Factory

Malvern Theatres, Thurs 2 February; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 8 February; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sun 26 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 28 February

Complete with 12 oil barrels, one stepladder, four bins and a bucket, Tap Factory has been dancing its way around five continents for the last decade.

This month's Midlands stop-offs come on the

back of 500-plus performances worldwide and form part of a tour to celebrate the show's 10th anniversary.

Featuring an explosive combination of acrobatics, music and comedy, the main attraction is undoubtedly the fast-moving feet of the show's eight male tap dancers, whose dazzling performances sit at the very heartland of this furiously frenetic festival of family-friendly fun.

## Spirit Of The Dance

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 8 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 9 February; The Courtyard, Hereford, Sat 18 February

Spirit Of The Dance has been delighting theatre-goers (more than 20 million of them in total) for 21 glorious years - statistics that bear testament to the show's hugely deserved 'blockbuster' status.

As well as Irish dance (of course), Scottish, flamenco, Latin, salsa, street dance, hip-hop, techno can can and American tap are all present and correct, presented in a showcase of high-energy, military-precision dancing that inevitably leads to thunderous rounds of applause and standing ovations.





# THE SACRIFICE

**Choreographer & dancer Dada Masilo talks to What's On about her brand-new show, a work inspired by African dance and song, traditional cleansing rituals - and the meerkat...**

Acclaimed South African choreographer and dancer Dada Masilo brings together European and African influences in her latest show, which comes to Birmingham Hippodrome late next month.

The Sacrifice blends contemporary dance with the unique rhythms and moves of Tswana, a traditional African dance inspired by one of the continent's most iconic small animals - the meerkat!

Soweto-born Dada was 12 when she started contemporary dance and ballet classes at The Dance Factory in Johannesburg. She was inspired to take her training further when she saw the world-famous Belgian company Rosas perform. She applied to their school in Brussels and was one of 30 dancers selected out of 800 candidates to study there.

It was in Brussels that Dada began choreographing, although initially her interests lay mainly in performing. However, on her return to South Africa, she struggled to find productions which brought together the different international elements of dance and music which she had enjoyed so much.

"To begin with I didn't want to be a choreographer because it's too difficult," she says. "But we had to create work as part of our training. Then, when I came back to South Africa, there were no choreographers making work that I wanted to perform.

"I wanted to do the narrative, the dance drama. I wanted to tackle that, and nobody was creating that kind of work. So I thought 'Well, if no-one is doing it, then it has got to be yourself,' and that is how I started to choreograph."

Dada has since created a series of hugely successful works which take Western classics and fuse them with elements of storytelling, movement and music from her own African heritage.

Over the past decade, her re-interpretations of Carmen, Romeo And Juliet, Swan Lake and Giselle have been critically acclaimed both in South Africa and internationally.

"I was trained to fuse different traditions, cultures and rituals, and that is what I have done in all my work. I try to make everything global, so that if you are a person that is in Europe or a person who is in Africa, you still understand what is happening. The privilege for me is in bringing the whole thing together so that it's not African or European, it's become something else."

Dada both creates the work and performs in all of her productions.

"For me it's easier to be both choreographer and dancer because I'm not sitting out watching what I want people to do, I'm doing it too. I want to feel what everyone else is feeling. Then I know, for example, that when I'm tired, everybody is tired. I need to be there; it is what I love to do."

For The Sacrifice, blending traditions meant a great deal of study for Dada and her company of dancers. The Tswana dance, traditionally performed at festivals, originated among the people of Botswana and is also popular in South Africa and Namibia. Although Dada and her cast knew of the dance, it took a lot of work for them to master its intricate movements.

"Tswana is a dance from my heritage which is inspired by the meerkat. The meerkat is a very small, very fast animal, and I was drawn to that because I love to move very fast. In the past, I've fused contemporary dance with flamenco, ballet and many other things, but not with a specific dance from my own culture, so this is an opportunity to do that.

"I had to learn Tswana from scratch. I spent three months with a teacher, just by myself, and then we brought in the company for about a month. It was incredibly difficult, but I always love learning something new."

Dada also sought the advice of the elders of her community to ensure the piece remained respectful of her people's traditions.

"There is a section where we call out all our surnames, basically calling the ancestors and saying the ancestors have come, and I had to ask the elders whether that was alright to do.

I needed to get their permission."

The Sacrifice is inspired by Stravinsky's The Rite Of Spring, but Dada and her team have developed a new soundscape which is firmly rooted in African music.

"I was really amazed at the complex rhythms in Stravinsky, and that was our starting point. But there are so many versions of The Rite Of Spring set to Stravinsky's music that I wanted to create a new score. I have four musicians, a percussionist, a violinist, a keyboard player and a singer, and they listened to Stravinsky's music. Then, after that, I said 'Okay, what can we do with those references?' and they created the score, which is rooted in South Africa, while I created the movement vocabulary. We worked closely together, as the live music is such an important part of the show."

The UK tour is presented by Dance Consortium, a group of 18 large-scale theatres with a mission to bring the best international dance to stages across the UK and Ireland.

"I'm forever grateful that we can take our work to different people in different countries. It's also great to talk to different audiences and find out how they feel and what they think the work is about because a lot of the time they will feel something different.

"We create and perform the work and they will react to it, but we cannot dictate how they will respond - that's for them. But I would love for audiences of The Sacrifice 'to feel'. I would love for them to know its sadness but also to feel the joy and the love.

"It's great to return to the UK. With this tour, we are going to quite a lot of new places, so I'm really excited about being back in Birmingham."

**Dance Consortium presents Dada Masilo's The Sacrifice at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 28 & Wednesday 29 March**

## Film highlights in February...



### **The Whale** CERT tbc (117 mins)

Starring **Brendan Fraser, Sadie Sink, Ty Simpkins, Hong Chau, Samantha Morton, Sathya Sridharan**

Directed by **Darren Aronofsky**

Brendan Fraser certainly suffered for his art while making *The Whale*. Not only did he pile on the pounds, he also spent six hours each morning in the makeup chair, wore prosthetics that weighed up to 300 pounds, and made his way through five bags of ice per day to stay cool.

Thankfully his suffering was not in vain,

with his performance set to be one of the most talked-about turns of the year - and maybe even an Academy Award winner. The Darren Aronofsky-helmed film sees Fraser taking on the role of an obese and housebound English teacher named Charlie, who educates his students online - with his camera blacked out - and is eager to salvage his relationship with his estranged daughter. The movie world-premiered at last autumn's Venice International Film Festival, where it received a six-minute standing ovation.

**Released Fri 3 February**

### **She Is Love** CERT 15 (80 mins)

Starring **Haley Bennett, Sam Riley, Marisa Abela, Roas Robson, Craig Russell**

Directed by **Jamie Adams**

"Very rarely have I left a shoot feeling a longing to be back on that set, continuing to explore scenes," says director Jamie Adams in talking about *She Is Love*. "But when you have a lead cast including the exceptional creativity of Haley Bennett, Sam Riley and Marisa Abela, the alchemy of that, the honesty, sincerity and originality that that collaboration creates, is something so rare and special."

Coming face-to-face after being estranged for over a decade, divorced couple Idris and Patricia opt to revisit the past and traverse a treacherous path together, emerging from the trauma very much open to new beginnings.

**Released Fri 3 February**



### **Knock At The Cabin** CERT 15

Starring **Dave Bautista, Ben Aldridge, Jonathan Groff, Rupert Grint, Nikki Amuka-Bird, William Ragsdale**

Directed by **M Night Shyamalan**



Visionary director M Night Shyamalan - whose previous films include *The Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable* - makes a welcome return with this psychological horror movie. While vacationing at a remote cabin, a young girl and her parents are taken hostage by four armed strangers on a mission to save the world (one of whom is played by Harry Potter star Rupert Grint). Armed with tools you would expect to find in your garden shed, the gruesome foursome demand that the family make an unthinkable choice to avert the apocalypse...

Expect plenty of blood, accompanied by a healthy side-order of gore.

**Released Fri 3 February**

### **Puss In Boots: The Last Wish** CERT PG (102 mins)

With the voices of **Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek, Harvey Guillén, Florence Pugh, John Mulaney, Wagner Moura** Directed by **Joel Crawford and Januel Mercado**

The swashbuckling feline who became a scene-stealing star of the *Shrek* movies here makes a welcome return in an adventure that sees him embarking on an epic journey into the Black Forest. Once there, *Puss In Boots* hopes to find the mythical Wishing Star and restore the eight of his nine lives he's previously lost...

Antonio Banderas returns as the voice of Puss, with Olivia Colman and Ray Winstone lending vocal support as Mama Bear and Papa Bear respectively...

**Released Fri 3 February**



### **Women Talking**

CERT 15 (104 mins)

Starring **Rooney Mara, Judith Ivey, Emily Mitchell, Kate Hallett, Liv McNeil, Claire Foy** Directed by **Sarah Polley**

Sarah Polley's film - runner-up for the People's Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival - has been so well received that she's now thought to be in contention for the best-director gong at next month's Academy Awards.

Adapted from Miriam Toews' novel of the same name and loosely based on real-life events, the film details the plight of a group of women in an isolated ultraconservative religious community, whose faith is seriously challenged when they realise that they have been drugged and abused by the men with whom they share their lives...

**Released Fri 10 February**



## The Son CERT 15 (123mins)

Starring **Vanessa Kirby, Hugh Jackman, Anthony Hopkins, Laura Dern, Hugh Quarshie, William Hope**  
 Directed by **Florian Zeller**

A cautionary tale that follows a family as it struggles to reunite after falling apart, *The Son* centres on the character of Peter (Hugh Jackman), whose hectic life with his infant and his new partner, Beth (Vanessa Kirby), is upended when ex-wife Kate (Laura Dern) appears at the door to discuss their teenage son, Nicholas (Zen McGrath), who has been missing school for months and is deeply troubled.

Peter strives to take care of Nicholas as he would have wanted his own father (Anthony Hopkins) to have taken care of him. But by reaching for the past to correct its mistakes, he finds himself in danger of losing his son in the present...

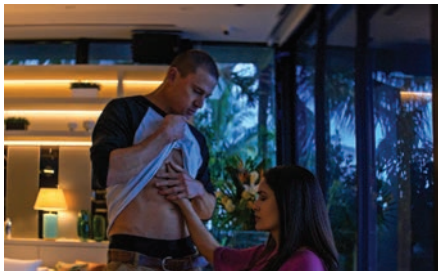
**Released Fri 10 February**



## Magic Mike's Last Dance

CERT tbc

Starring **Channing Tatum, Salma Hayek, Nancy Carroll, Caitlin Gerard, Gavin Spokes, Christie-Leigh Emby**  
 Directed by **Steve Soderbergh**



Channing Tatum is back, in what's being described as the steamiest *Magic Mike* movie of the trilogy.

With a bad business deal leaving him broke, erotic dancer Mike is trying to make ends meet by taking bartender gigs in Florida. But when a wealthy socialite takes a shine to him and offers him the chance of a last hurrah, doing what he does best, in London, Mike finds himself embroiled in a brand-new adventure...

Steven Soderbergh returns as director, having helmed the first *Magic Mike* film back in 2012.

Brace yourself for a dance-sequence finale lasting more than half an hour...

**Released Fri 10 February**

## Ant-Man And The Wasp: Quantumania CERT tbc (125 mins)

Starring **Paul Rudd, Evangeline Lilly, Jonathan Majors, Kathryn Newton, William Jackson Harper, Michelle Pfeiffer**  
 Directed by **Peyton Reed**

The latest movie from the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), *Quantumania* is yet another outing for two of the comic-book company's historically less famous characters.

Paul Rudd once again reprises the role of Scott Lang and his ant-sized alter-ego, while Evangeline Lilly also makes a return as Ant Man's superhero sidekick, whose real identity is Hope van Dyne.

This latest adventure sees the tiny twosome accompanied into the Quantum Realm by Hope's parents - Hank Pym & Janet van Dyne - and Lang's daughter, Cassie. Time-travelling 30th-century warlord Kang the Conqueror is set to show his hand as MCU's latest supervillain.

**Released Fri 17 February**



## What's Love Got To Do With It? CERT 12a (108 mins)

Starring **Lily James, Emma Thompson, Oliver Chris, Shazad Latif, Asim Chaudhry, Nosheen Phoenix** Directed by **Shekhar Kapur**



Documentary-maker Zoe (Lily James) hasn't had a lot of luck on dating apps, much to the dismay of her eccentric mother, Cath (Emma Thompson).

When childhood friend and neighbour Kaz (Shazad Latif) elects to access his parents' help and marry a bright and beautiful bride from Pakistan, Zoe decides to film his hopeful journey from London to Lahore to wed a stranger. In the process of doing so, she begins to wonder if she might have something to learn from Kaz's profoundly different approach to finding love...

The film's screenplay is written by Jemima Khan, the ex-wife of Pakistan's former prime minister and cricket captain, Imran Khan.

**Released Fri 24 February**

# SPELLBINDING!

**Sir Matthew Bourne talks about his version of Sleeping Beauty, visiting the Midlands this month as part of its ongoing 10th anniversary tour...**





**A firm favourite in the New Adventures company repertoire, Sir Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* continues to delight audiences with its sumptuous sets, stunning costumes and wonderful storytelling. What's On recently caught up with the award-winning choreographer, who here provides a personal insight into his most spellbinding production.**

*Sleeping Beauty* is interesting because I felt I had to find an original way of approaching this piece. I love the music, but it did feel very grand and very famous and very difficult to approach in many ways.

So I read everything around *Sleeping Beauty* - the fairytale versions, there a several, and various books about fairytales that give insight into the story. I watched lots of versions of the ballet. The thing that's interesting about the story is that it covers a long period of time with the 100-year sleep of Aurora. But it was really the time period that influenced me the most. The ballet was created in 1890, so I said, 'Why don't we set the piece to begin in 1890?' Then we go forwards in time to Aurora's 21st birthday, which is in 1911. So then, with the 100-year curse [added], we are brought up to the present day. Unfortunately, that was 12 years ago! So now we're sort of 112 years later, but we get around it by being a little vague about the time period when she wakes up!

What's great about recreating a classical ballet is that you've got this incredible score which was all written to dance to. The music becomes your script and tells you what the feeling and the emotion of each scene should be.

We use the same piece of music at the beginning of act one and act two, to represent the baby Aurora and then the grown-up Aurora. The baby is very naughty, a real handful, and so is more-grown-up Aurora in a way; she's a real wild child. By using the same piece of music, I thought that would tie them together. It's different than in the ballet, but it sounds absolutely right.

Lez Brotherston, who is the designer I've

worked with on most of the shows that we do, does similarly detailed research to me. He likes the sense of history in pieces, so this piece really appealed to him, resulting in an enormous number of costumes and wigs! It's not only the reality of those time periods, but also fantasy, with fairies and wings and characters that are flights of fancy. Lez came up with amazing costumes for the fairies, all designed around different bird feathers. It gives him a chance to really be inventive and creative with those costumes, and they're not referencing anything historical...

Something I've also noticed with Lez's design is that he loves to be true to history. It's a wonderful thing because it makes you understand why people held themselves in a certain way - because of a corset, or whatever it might be - and how that affects movement.

When we originally developed the piece, we decided to set up the love story of Aurora and Leo. Leo is an invented character of ours and is her first love. He works in the gardens of the royal estate. When Aurora is cursed by Carabosse to sleep for 100 years, I realised that the question is, how can they be together in 100 years' time? By turning the Lilac fairy, who is called Count Lilac in our version, into a vampire, he is able to give Leo the gift of eternal life. For me, that was a very romantic idea and perfect for this story because it allows Leo to be there when she wakes up. Of course there are consequences, as he's now a vampire, but we sort of play with the idea that you can have a good vampire or a bad vampire, and that this story is very much about good versus evil.

Whenever I saw the classical ballet, there was always sort of a baby in the cot. She is

the main character in the piece - Aurora - so I thought it would be great if we could give her a personality. One of the interesting ideas that Lez and I came up with early on was to use puppets. Could we represent Aurora with a puppet? I love to inject a bit of humour into the early part of a show so that people relax. They may be coming to a dance work for the first time, or thinking that they're not going to get the story - but then if they laugh, they're happy. In order to achieve the effect we want, several dancers are covered in black bodysuits, manipulating puppet Aurora, bringing her to life, and through the lighting you can't even see that they're there. It's incredible, really.

It's wonderful to see the different generations of dancers pass on their knowledge of the show. That's why I also like a mix in a cast - people who've done a show before and new people who bring a fresh light to it. Unlike other companies, we get our dancers to work together on a role. They will share their experience of it, and the new person will bring some new ideas that will go into the role as well. So it becomes very rich because of the input of lots and lots of people.

The story is about the power of love; it's about love across time that's indestructible. That's why I call it a gothic romance... the overriding emotion is love, and how two people [manage to] be together despite everything.

**Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tues 7 to Sat 11 February**

## Divided Selves: Legacies, Memories, Belonging

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry,  
Sat 18 February - Sun 24 September

Ideas of community and collective identity come under consideration in the Herbert's first exhibition of the year.

Subtitled Legacies, Memories, Belonging - and presented across four galleries - Divided Selves explores the process by which war and geo-politics have divided the world into nation states. The show also contemplates the concept of nation through shared stories, histories and cultural narratives, and considers the idea of collective identity via a selection of large-scale, immersive works. The exhibition includes pieces from the Herbert's Peace And Reconciliation collection, loans from the British Council Collection, and new commissions and works borrowed directly from the participating artists and their galleries.

Image: Architecture of Disappearance Model (t) - Sofia Karim

# LIVING HISTORY

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## Grayson's Art Club

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, until Sun 16 April

This critically acclaimed major exhibition comprises more than 100 artworks selected by Turner Prize winner Grayson Perry, his wife Philippa, and guest celebrities during season three of the popular TV series, Grayson's Art Club. Using art as a way of 'bringing together the nation' by encouraging people to celebrate their collective creativity, the Channel Four show features work submitted by the public in a wide variety of mediums, including photography,

painting, textiles and sculpture. "The great thing about the Art Club exhibition," says Grayson, "is that everybody who comes will find something they like because it's so varied. And then they will identify with it and go: 'Ooh, I think I could have a go at that.' "That's what I think the joy of Art Club is; that people can see themselves in the different characters, and then they might have found their creative outlet."



## Horror In The Modernist Block

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until Mon 1 May

High-rise towers. Concrete buildings. In an exhibition featuring the work of 20 contemporary artists, these modernist structures are viewed through the lens of the horror genre with which they are often associated in dystopian fiction. Using as its starting point Birmingham - a city renowned for its brutalist architecture - the show also contemplates the architecture of Ikon's galleries, taking viewers on a journey that highlights how the design and features of a building can shape not only people's movement and perception, but also their deepest fears.

## Katrina Palmer: What's Already Going On

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, until Sun 12 March

"Part of what's always driven me is the edges of things," explains Katrina Palmer. "I did a lot of work where I was often defining holes and voids and spaces, and making people walk around the edges of near boundaries and things like that. Rather than focusing on objects directly, I was looking at standing to the side of spaces. "That's what I've carried on doing in this show. There'll be a corridor that takes you around the edges of the space, and any objects are kept at a distance, so you have to peer through walls to see them."

## Making Mischief: Folk Costume In Britain

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 11 February - Sun 11 June

The UK's rich tapestry of local and seasonal folk customs - and in particular the central role played in these customs by the wearing of costumes - is the subject of this brand-new exhibition.



Not only celebrating grassroots traditions but also challenging the preconception that folk customs are fixed and nostalgic, Making Mischief brings together more than 40 costumes and highlights a number of evolving practices, such as the rise of all-female Morris groups. Loans from the Museum of British Folklore, the English Folk Dance & Song Society and the English Folk Costume Archive are featured alongside works from Compton Verney's own collection.

## Pop Parade

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 31 December

Showing throughout the year, Pop Parade is a celebration of Wolverhampton Art Gallery's impressive collection of Pop Art - the largest in the UK outside of London.

The gallery began collecting in the late 1960s, at a time when the art form - which took its inspiration from popular culture - was still new and controversial.

The show features work by artists including Andy Warhol, Peter Blake, Pauline Boty, Eduardo Paolozzi and David Hockney.

# LIVING LIFE TO THE MAX

Hayley Mills talks about starring in *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*



## Hayley Mills visits Birmingham this month to play Evelyn Greenslade in Deborah Moggach's *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. What's On recently caught up with the star of stage and screen to talk about the critically acclaimed show and her own illustrious career...

### **What attracted you to *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, Hayley?**

I absolutely loved the script and there wasn't a shadow of a doubt about wanting to do it. I love the play, the writing, the part, and I'm mad about the director, Lucy Bailey. It's a wonderful play, and Deborah Moggach is a great writer. Like most people, I was familiar with the title and the story. I had seen the film, and there's something about the story that just gets you. It's very truthful, and it deals with lots of different issues - such as getting older, being on your own - whilst being tremendously hopeful. It's a reminder that where there's life, there's hope.

### **In what ways do you relate to Evelyn Greenslade, the character you play?**

She's such a beautifully written character, and I can relate to her age, plus the fact we all look back on our lives realising that we've made mistakes. One of my least favourite songs is Frank Sinatra's *My Way*. I absolutely hate it. It's so smug! Who can really say: 'Regrets, I have a few, but then again too few to mention'? You'd have to be completely switched off and in your own very selfish bubble.

### **Dame Judi Dench played Evelyn in the film version. Is it daunting to follow in her footsteps?**

If I dwelled upon it, then yes - but I don't. I briefly thought about watching the film again, but I decided 'No, I can't do that.' She is such a wonderful actress, and I couldn't begin to play it the way she does. That's what is so fascinating about this business I'm lucky to be in: Everyone brings their own experiences and understanding to a role. But Judi is a consummate actress. I could watch her all day, even reading the telephone directory!

### **Why do you think this story resonates with people so much?**

I think we see ourselves in it. If we're lucky, we're all going to get old. Then there's seeing all these characters from different backgrounds, with their own losses and regrets, come to India and start again. It's a reminder that starting a new life is always possible. I don't necessarily mean finding

another love or another marriage; it's more about finding a new lease of life, new interests, a new joie de vivre. We can all get into a rut without realising it, until we're jolted out of it, like these people who are forced to go to India for a variety of different reasons - either because they can't afford to stay in England, they don't want to go into a care home or their families can't take them in because they don't have room. They're uprooted into this completely different culture. In the beginning it's a shock, but it turns out to be the making of them. It's such an inspiring story, and it's exactly the right time to tell it now because it's about the indomitable human spirit.

### **Can you relate to the theme of starting over, or have you had a pretty steady ride?**

Come on! Life is not a steady ride for anybody. My goodness, there are peaks and valleys, ups and downs, feast and famine. That's part of life, and you have to weather the storms.

### **Are there enough stories told about the older generation?**

No, there aren't. People think 'Old people are boring' or 'I'm not interested in their stories because all the people they talk about are going to be dead.' But I'm in my 70s and I don't feel as if I am that age, and I realise that's how other old people feel too. We don't feel old at all! We just look it, and that's why we all avoid the mirror!

### **Have you worked with any of your co-stars before?**

I haven't. I've known Rula [Lenska] for many years from bumping into each other, but I've never worked with her. I've seen Paul Nicholas' work over the years, but I've never worked with him either. It's great fun meeting people you've admired over the years and finally getting to be in a show together.

### **You've had such a varied career. What have been your highlights?**

The first film I ever made was *Tiger Bay*, with my father [Sir John Mills], and that was a masterclass in film acting. I didn't go to drama school, which I probably should have

done later, but I was incredibly lucky to work with some incredible actors, my father included. I'm also very proud of some of the plays and musicals I've done over the years. I love to take on a challenge because it frightens the life out of me; that idea of 'I don't know if I'm going to be able to do this.'

### **What are you most enjoying about taking *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* around the country?**

It's great fun when you're lucky enough to be in with a good company, which this is. We're excited about being in a show that gives people a lot of pleasure, and I love turning up in a new town or city and finding my digs, exploring the theatre, the opening night in a new venue - it's very exciting! I like investigating new places, going for walks, having nice lunches. Being on the road and away from home can be hard, and I always travel with my own pillow, but touring is also really rewarding.

### **What do you hope audiences take away from seeing the show?**

I hope they'll feel infused with optimism and hope about the future, as well as the belief that life really is what you make it. There are so many things dragging us down in the world today. We're going through dire straits, but then when you look back over history you see what people went through in the First and Second World Wars, the Depression, what have you. The world has gone through some very tough times, but I believe in the goodness of the human race. I believe in our incredible ingenuity. We just all have to play our part and do what we can.

.....

**Hayley Mills stars in *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tues 21 - Saturday 25 February.**

**The production (without Hayley) then shows at: Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 14 - Sat 18 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 28 - Sat 1 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 13 - Sat 17 June**



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Events previews from around the region



**The Arenacross Tour** Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Sat 4 February

Europe's leading indoor freestyle motocross & race show returns to Birmingham this month as part of a five-round tour of the UK. Described as 'a high-octane mix of indoor motocross racing and freestyle motocross (FMX)', the show sees some of the world's

fastest professional motocross racers competing for the Arenacross title, whilst FMX riders will be showing off their mind-blowing skills with a variety of tricks and jumps (up to 60ft in the air!).



**Boatlife** NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 February

If you enjoy a life on the ocean waves, then you really should drop anchor at this ever-popular annual show. As well as featuring more than 100 different boats, the four-day get-together also offers visitors the chance to check out a wide range

of exhibitors, learn the basics of paddle-boarding and kayaking and immerse themselves in all things fishing in the new Marine Power Suzuki Angling Zone. A number of boating professionals will also be on hand to share their tales of life at sea.

**Bunkered Live**

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 24 - Sun 26 February

There's nothing, er, *below par* about Bunkered Live, a show that's dedicated to providing the golfing enthusiast with everything they could possibly need ahead of the new season. Visitors can test their skills across 15 indoor challenges, pick up tips and tricks from the experts, and join the Bunkered editors as they chat about the game in the brand-new Bunkered Clubhouse.



**Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show**

NEC, Birmingham, Tues 21 - Sun 26 February

The UK's biggest leisure vehicle show returns to the NEC this month. Event highlights include 400-plus exhibitor stands, expert help and advice, and the industry's latest model and product launches. More than 700 vehicles will be on site, including the new-for-2023 touring caravans, motorhomes, campervans and caravan holiday homes, plus tents of all shapes and sizes, all pitched under one roof. Free activities include campervan test-driving sessions, towing tuition and motorhome manoeuvring. TV presenter Aldo Kane, comedian Paul Merton and travel writer Marcus Leach are amongst this year's celebrity guest speakers.





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Events previews from around the region



**The Pirate Takeover** Alton Towers Resort, Sat 11 - Sun 26 February

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

The popular visitor attraction is being taken over by the infamous pirates of Mutiny Bay, who'll be taking families on their very own pirate adventures - complete with favourite

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

**STEM Week**

RAF Museum Midlands, Sat 18 - Sun 26 February

RAF Museum Midlands is hosting a range of fun activities to celebrate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) Week during the February half-term holiday. Visiting families can utilise their STEM skills by launching their own rocket, driving spheros through a maze and creating their very own cargo drop contraption. Plus, on the 22nd, 23rd & 24th, the University of Wolverhampton's STEM team will host an interactive family-friendly show entitled A Volatile History Of Chemistry.



**Birmingham International Tattoo**

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Sat 11 - Sun 12 February

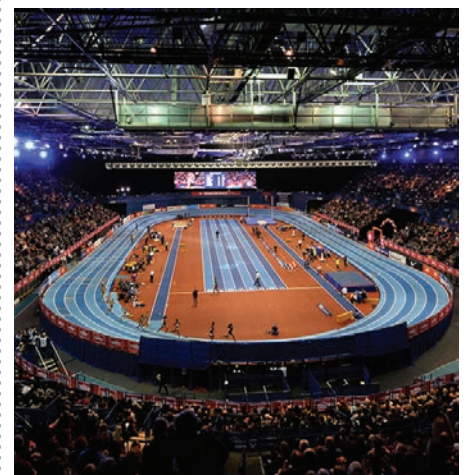
The Birmingham International Tattoo debuts at its new home of Resorts World Arena this month, presenting a special celebration of the life of Her Majesty The Queen and her 70 years of service, and also marking the accession of King Charles III to the throne. Bringing together marching bands from Poland 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.

**UK Athletics Indoor Championships**

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sat 18 - Sun 19 February

The UK Athletics Indoor Championships is the official Trial for the European Indoor Championships in Istanbul in March. With places on the Great Britain & Northern Ireland team up for grabs, the stage is set for another exciting outing for West Midlands athletics fans to enjoy.



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Events previews from around the region



**Living Dangerously Half Term**

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 18 - Sun 26 February

Half-term visitors to the Black Country Living Museum can learn all about the devastating disasters and downright bad luck that plagued manual workers back in the 19th & 20th centuries, before the age of health & safety legislation.

Historic characters will be on hand to explain the hazards associated with coal mining, the perils of nailmaking and factory

work, and the disasters which could befall a person in their very own home. There's also an opportunity to take part in an entertaining and educational activity trail. Along the way, you can help a roaming journalist get their headline, assist the village nurse in treating injuries, and play your part in bringing order to chaos in the company of a local police officer.



**Shropshire Kids Festival** Telford International Centre, Sat 18 - Sun 19 February

Catering for youngsters up to 14 years of age, Shropshire Kids Festival boasts hundreds of activities, all under one roof. Giant inflatables, bouncy castles and sports-related fun all feature, whilst visitors looking

to broaden their cultural experiences can join in with drama performances, choreographed dance routines and arts & crafts workshops.

**Tattoo Freeze**

Telford International Centre, Sat 4 - Sun 5 February

Now in its 13th year, this specialist event offers members of the general public the chance to get themselves tattooed by one (or more!) of the hundreds of talented tattooists who'll be in attendance across the weekend. The two-day get-together also features tattoo competitions, live music, circus workshops and numerous trade stands selling everything from clothing to cupcakes.

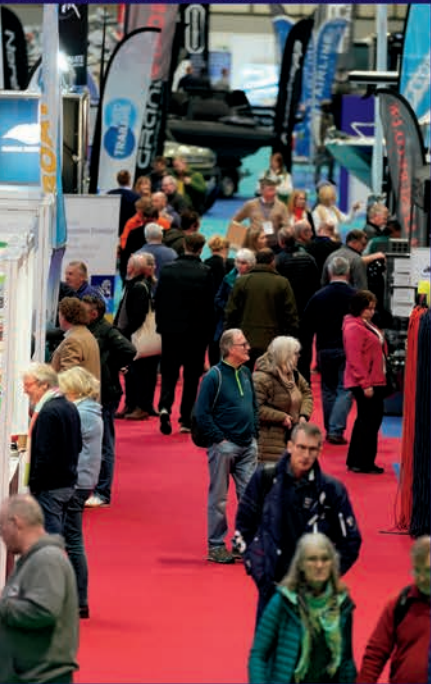


**Living History Weekend**

The Commandery, Worcester, Sat 11 - Sun 12 February

Step back in time as The Commandery hosts its popular annual living-history event. From encampments, musicians and dancers, to traditional crafts and military displays, the whole site will come alive for two days mid-month. Reenactors will be on hand throughout the Grade-I listed building & gardens to demonstrate and display historical weaponry.





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Events previews from around the region



**Colourful February Half-Term Activities**

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, Sat 11 - Sun 26 February

Families can enjoy a range of colour-themed activities at the British Motor Museum during the half-term holiday.

Children can take a stroll through the museum with the Colour Creator Trail, build a colourful 'ArtBot', or enjoy a family Colour In The Collection tour (taking place at weekends on 11 & 12, 18 & 19 and 25 & 26

February, at 11.30am and 1.30pm). There are also Science Of Colour shows to enjoy, presented by the museum's resident scientists, Professor Pickle and Doctor Pumpkin. The shows take place on weekdays (from the 13th to the 17th and the 20th to the 24th, at 11am, 12pm, 1pm & 2pm).



**Dippy In Coventry: The Nation's Favourite Dinosaur**

Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry, Mon 20 - Sat 25 February

To celebrate the start of Dippy the Diplodocus' three-year residency at the Herbert, the venue is hosting a variety of roarsome activities for little ones and their families to enjoy over half term.

Daily drop-in sessions of dino-themed craft activities will be available throughout the week, providing children with the chance to model dinosaurs from clay and make their

own volcanoes. A free trail through the museum's galleries explores the connection between fossils and folklore - with displays dotted around the building - while a special exhibition of fossils drawn from both the Herbert and Warwickshire Museum collections will be available to view from the 21st to the 23rd.

**New Life On The Farm**

National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent, Sat 18 - Sun 26 February

National Forest Adventure Farm is gearing up for the arrival of spring.

Visitors can drop in to the sheep maternity ward and witness lambing live, and also have a go at bottle-feeding some of the new arrivals. Other activities to enjoy include scarecrow making, tractor fixing and taking a trailer ride around the farm.



**Big And Small Science Busking**

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, every Sat between Sat 18 February - Sat 25 March

Families can explore 'minibeasts' and 'megabeasts' this half term in Thinktank's Find Your Future gallery.

Visitors will be able to conduct their own biodiversity surveys to find minibeasts that live in the native grasslands, and use a digital microscope to explore the microscopic world in more detail. Then they can head over to the museum's natural science collection to learn more about the megabeasts of the past. The museum's theatre will also be running interactive science demonstrations in the Big And Small Family Show.



# Gender Mender

**Alex Kingston talks about playing the Royal Shakespeare Company's first female Prospero in *The Tempest***



## ER and Doctor Who star Alex Kingston has returned to Stratford's Royal Shakespeare Theatre for the first time in three decades to lead the cast of *The Tempest* as the RSC's first female Prospero. It's a demanding role, but one better suited to a woman, she tells What's On...

The *Tempest* is arguably one of Shakespeare's most popular plays.

The entirely original plot (unique in the Bard's work) and exciting backdrop of wild storms, foreign islands and ethereal spirits enchanted audiences from the off. The play even appeared first when his works were initially collected and published in 1623.

The *Tempest* has been a popular draw at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) down the years too, with the likes of Patrick Stewart, Antony Sher, Derek Jacobi and, most recently, Simon Russell Beale taking on the lead role of Prospero.

To that list we can now add Alex Kingston, the first woman to play the part in a full RSC production. The well-known star of stage and screen - her CV features TV shows such as *Doctor Who*, *A Discovery Of Witches* and *ER* - says she was "amazingly flattered" when director Elizabeth Freestone offered her the role, partly because she thinks it's a character that actually works better as a woman.

"I've never been particularly interested in tackling one of Shakespeare's great male roles or felt the need to play Hamlet and so on," she says. "I'm perfectly happy playing the female parts, as well as looking for female writers who are writing new work with big fabulous stonking parts for women.

"But when this was offered to me, it felt right, because it feels more natural that this role should be female."

The play sees Prospero and his (from now on, *her*) daughter Miranda marooned on an island full of strange sounds, wondrous sights and various dangers. Alex believes that turning it into a mother-daughter relationship raises the dramatic stakes and enables the story to make more sense.

"In the past, when people have talked about the play, they've asked why Prospero needs to get off the island and how it's all about his need for power, but the fact is that they *have* to get off the island - they're in a desperate situation. It's a woman and her daughter, who has entered very fully into puberty, and there's a testosterone-filled young man who's trying to rape her and admits he'd try again if he could.

"So they cannot stay on this island - if something were to happen to me, and Miranda was left alone, what would her future be? So the stakes become much higher.

"That's not to say they wouldn't be high with

a man playing the part, but somehow they get muddled because the father-daughter relationship is different to a mother-daughter relationship. We're using that to our advantage and playing to all those strengths."

Alex regularly refers to Prospero as 'me' throughout our conversation, an indication of just how engaged she's become with the role, which she admits is hugely demanding.

"It's intense playing a role like Prospero - basically from when I walk into the rehearsal room to when I finish at night, I'm on, so it's actually quite tiring.

"I did a play prior to the pandemic when I was on stage all of the time, so I understand that level of having to be 'on' and in focus. You are carrying the play, but when you add in the Shakespearean text, which is another level of intensity, it's quite tiring. I'm having to build up my stamina."

But as much as the text may be old-fashioned, the play's themes - the struggle for power, sibling rivalry, family ruptures - have rarely been more pertinent, as the recent autobiography of an everyman formerly known as Prince aptly demonstrates.

"Absolutely! And feeling like you're being usurped and pushed out... But if you're going to talk about a dysfunctional family, when Prospero arrives on the island with Miranda, Caliban is a little boy, and I adopt him and bring him into the family. Ariel in a way is another one of my children, so it's like I've got three teens who are all very different and all stretching and misbehaving.

"One of them has done something really horrendous to another of them, and we have to face that reality and how we're going to deal with it. These are things that people today, throughout the world, are dealing with right now - including the royal family with all their trials and tribulations.

"So Shakespeare speaks to now. The text might sound different because it's not the way we speak today, but the emotions, the feelings, the journeys are no different to the journeys we are on now."

Another, and more overtly contemporary, element of the production is its focus on the climate crisis, both in terms of the content of the play - the setting is a delicate eco-system blighted by the sort of rubbish that washes up on islands all over the world - and the way it has been put together. Set designer Tom

Piper embraces the Theatre Green Book, an industry-wide initiative for making productions sustainably, with the bulk of the set made from re-used materials and many of the costumes sourced and upcycled from the RSC's in-house Costume Workshop.

"Whenever Elizabeth works on a production, she likes to stay connected to, and incorporate, the environmental issues that we are facing today, so we're trying to be as environmentally friendly and eco-conscious as we can.

"In the past, when a play had finished, the set would be torn down and thrown into a skip and taken away - it's sort of shocking when you think about it. The set we're using is made from wood that's been repurposed and rebuilt from sets in previous productions, and we're repurposing costumes from the past to turn into our clothes as much as possible."

She laughs when I suggest she could end up wearing the same material she wore when she last trod the boards at the RSC in 1991, and admits she can't believe how long it's been since she last performed there.

"It's extraordinary because on one level it feels so familiar, as if I was only here a few weeks ago, but then I take stock and realise it was a very, very long time ago. In fact, Peter De Jersey, who plays the King of Naples, was in the same company as I was [in 1991], so we were both looking at each other saying, where has all that time gone?"

It's obvious that being back is a big deal to Alex - and it's "super exciting", she says, to be playing a ground-breaking role.

"I'm very aware that I'm stepping into the shoes of some incredible male theatrical titans who have played this role before, but I hope that our interpretation, and my presence as a female Prospero, will sit comfortably alongside those titans of the past.

"To be at the RSC, Shakespeare's birthplace, and to be the first woman to play this character here... that's very special for me."

---

**The *Tempest* shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 4 March**

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BOLESWORTH

Your week-  
by-week  
listings guide  
February 2023

# the list



Flotsam & Jetsam - Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Wed 22 February

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

## What's On

Wed 1 - Sun 5 February



History's A Drag -  
Telford Theatre  
**Wed 1 February**

Mon 6 - Sun 12 February



Sara Pascoe - Victoria Hall,  
Stoke-on-Trent  
**Thurs 9 February**

Mon 13 - Sun 19 February



Shropshire Kids Festival -  
Telford International Centre  
**Sat 18 - Sun 19 February**

Mon 20 - Tues 28 February



Curious Investigators -  
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury  
**Thurs 23 February**

## VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

### The Barber Institute Of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

**PAYING RESPECTS: MONEY AND MORTALITY** A compelling exhibition featuring highlights from the Barber's superlative coin collection, which includes world-class caches of Byzantine, Trapezuntine and Sasanian currency, as well as significant holdings of Roman and medieval coins, until Sun 25 June

### Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

**COVENTRY UNIVERSITY STUDENT SHOWCASE** Work by fine art, illustration & photography students created in response to Ikon's Horror In The Modernist Block, Mon 21 - Sun 26 Feb

### Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

**CRAFTSPACE: {QUEER} + {METALS}** The multiplicity of queerness is here explored via metalwork and metalsmithing, in an exhibition that makes visible the ways in which LGBTQIA+ creatives are shaping, disrupting and contributing to contemporary culture, until Sun 2 April

### New Art Gallery, Walsall

**BILLY DOSANJH, THE EXILES** Billy draws on his lived experience and the rich and vibrant stories told by his family and community to explore what happens when cultures merge... until Sun 5 February

**BREAKING THE MOULD** Major touring exhibition challenging the male-dominated narratives of post-war British sculpture by presenting a diverse and significant range of ambitious work by women, until Sun 16 April

### WEST MIDLANDS OPEN RESIDENCY AWARD: COURTNEY WELCOME

Exploration of race politics, identity and social justice via painting, installation, assemblage and performance, until Sun 5 March

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

**SNAPPERSQUAD 'NATURAL WORLD' EXHIBITION** Featuring works by an independent group of photographers from across North Staffordshire & South Cheshire, until Sun 16 April

### Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

**CHARLES DARWIN: THE MAKING OF A MARVELLOUS MIND** Exhibition exploring Charles Darwin's

childhood and upbringing in Shrewsbury, until Sun 26 March

### Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**DEARTOMORROW: DEAR WOLVERHAMPTON** Community-led exhibition 'exploring letters to the future and imagining the beauty of what could be in the face of climate change', until Sun 12 Feb

**FINE LINES: CONTEMPORARY DRAWING BY STEVE EVANS** Including a small selection of influential works from the artist's private collection and works on paper from the gallery's permanent art collections, until Sun 12 March

**SHEMZA: ACROSS GENERATIONS** Featuring the work of renowned British Pakistani Modernist artist Anwar Jalal Shemza alongside the contemporary practice of Apha Shemza, the artist's granddaughter, until Sun 16 April

### Elsewhere:

**GROWN UP IN BRITAIN: 100 YEARS OF TEENAGE KICKS** Exhibition celebrating a century of teenage life, from the Roaring '20s to the youth of today, until Sat 12 Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**BIRDS AND FLIGHT + ARTISTS' BOARD** until 18 Feb, VAN Gallery, Middle Level, Darwin Shopping Centre, Shrewsbury

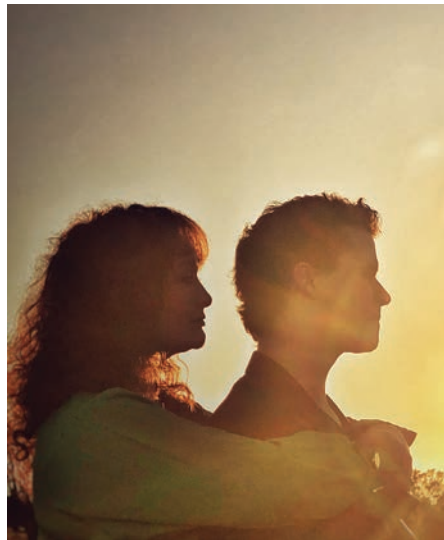
**DIAPHONICS** Andrius Arutiunian's first solo exhibition, in which the artist explores the notion of diaphony (both in musical and political frames) through various spells, sonic objects and resonances, until Sat 25 Feb, Centrala Gallery, Digbeth, Birmingham

**NEW YEAR OPEN** Showcasing a range of subjects and media, until Sat 4 March, Willow Gallery, Oswestry

**PED4IR MÔM PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP** Featuring the works of four photographic artists - Hanna Baguley, Joan West, Sharon Eynon & Siân Monument - all based on the isle of Anglesey, until Sat 4 March, Willow Gallery, Oswestry

**VANLEY BURKE: A GIFT TO BIRMINGHAM** Exhibition comprising 17 portraits representing the stories of members of Migrant Voice - a migrant-led organisation with a hub in Birmingham, until Fri 31 March, Handsworth Library

**PORTRAIT MINIATURES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GRANTCHESTER COLLECTION** Showcasing over 40 miniatures from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, many of which will be shown in public from the first time, until Sun 31 Dec, Compton Verney, Warwickshire



Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman - Welshampton Parish Hall & Harley Village Hall

## Gigs

**LOWKEY** Wed 1 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SOUNDS OF THE 60S** Wed 1 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS** Wed 1 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? - TINA TURNER TRIBUTE** Wed 1 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**TARJA + BENEATH THE EMBERS + TEMPERANCE** Thurs 2 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**SWEET CAROLINE - NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE** Thurs 2 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY** Thurs 2 Feb, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

**LOST IN MUSIC** Thurs 2 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TOVE STYRKE** Fri 3 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**DVSN** Fri 3 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE** Fri 3 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**GREEN STREET CAFÉ + PASSIVE FIX + HOME SCHOOLING + ANOMALY + LUCA SIMIAN** Fri 3 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BELINDA CARLISLE** Fri 3

Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**RUBY BRIDGE** Fri 3 Feb, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**LAST DAYS OF DISCO** Fri 3 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**THE BOHEMIANS - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Fri 3 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**ULTIMATE COLDPLAY** Fri 3 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**ESSENTIALLY CHER** Fri 3 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**LOST IN MUSIC** Fri 3 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**VIBE CHEMISTRY & DEVILMAN** Fri 3 Feb, The Hangar, W'hampton

**RED HOT CHILLI POTTERS** Fri 3 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**JIVE TALKIN' - BEE GEES TRIBUTE** Fri 3 Feb, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

**OUR MAN IN THE FIELD + HELEN WALFORD** Fri 3 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**ROBERT LAMBERTI - GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE** Fri 3 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**VOICE OF THE HEART - THE CARPENTERS TRIBUTE** Fri 3 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**BORN NEXT DOOR** Fri 3 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**DIRTY ROCKIN'**

**SCOUNDRELS** Fri 3 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**ROWSIE + THE DELTA SOUND** Fri 3 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**NIRVANA UK** Sat 4 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

**OH! WHAT A NIGHT - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI** Sat 4 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**FRED ZEPPELIN** Sat 4 Feb, 45Live, Kidderminster

**GO YOUR OWN WAY - FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE** Sat 4 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**CIRCA WAVES** Sat 4 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**KAZABIAN + ARCTIC MONKEYZ** Sat 4 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**CHASING MUMFORD** Sat 4 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**SOLAR MOHICANS** Sat 4 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**SONIC BOOM** Sat 4 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**STRAY WEATHER + DEATH IS A GIRL + BENEATH THE SHORELINE** Sat 4 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN** Sat 4 Feb, Welshampton Parish Hall, North Shropshire

**THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW** Sat 4 - Sun 5 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**MAN FI GET BUN** Sun 5 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**KALASHNIKOV SKINK + BAD EXCUSES + THE OPTIMISTS** Sun 5 Feb, 45Live, Kidderminster

**80'S MANIA** Sun 5 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**ANDY CUTTING** Sun 5 Feb, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**NATHAN CARTER** Sun 5 Feb, Telford Theatre

**KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN** Sun 5 Feb, Harley Village Hall, South Shropshire



## Classical Music

**THE PLANETS: CBSO AND KAZUKI YAMADA** Also featuring Alexandre Kantorow (piano) & the CBSO Youth Chorus. Programme includes works by Holst & Tchaikovsky, Wed 1 - Thurs 2 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**BBC PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Leslie Sugaanandarajah (conductor), Tobias Feldmann (violin) & Jonathan Scott (organ). Programme includes works by Mozart, Beethoven & Saint Saens, Fri 3 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**EX CATHEDRA: BYRD'S GREAT** Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor), Linarol Consort of Renaissance Viols and His Majesty's Sagbutts & Cornetts. Programme comprises works by William Byrd and Thomas Tallis, Sun 5 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**NIKITA LUKINOV PIANO CONCERT** Sun 5 Feb, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire

**LINDA CLAYTON (SOPRANO) & MARIJA SCOTT (PIANO) RECITAL** Sun 5 Feb, Abbey Church, Shrewsbury

## Comedy

**PAUL SMITH** Wed 1 - Fri 3 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PAUL PIRIE, ROGER MONKHOUSE, ALEX CAMP & DAVE TWENTYMAN** Thurs 2 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**EMMANUEL SONUBI, PETE FIRMAN, JULES O'BRIEN & RAUL KOHLI** Thurs 2 Feb, Lichfield Sports Club

**GARY DELANEY** Thurs 2 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**JOSH PUGH** Fri 3 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DARREN HARRIOTT** Fri 3 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**TOM ALLEN** Fri 3 Feb, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire



**DAVID O'DOHERTY** Sat 4 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**TOM ALLEN** Sat 4 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**MAISIE ADAM** Sat 4 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TOM ALLEN** Sun 5 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

## Theatre

**THE TEMPEST** Alex Kingston plays Prospero in Shakespeare's elemental tale of survival and forgiveness, until Sat 4 March, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE BENCH: A TALE FROM PARADISE HEIGHTS** Joe O'Byrne's comedy of love, life and loss. Suitable for over-16s only due to its adult language and themes, Thurs 2 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**GREASE THE MUSICAL** Amateur production presented by Brine Leas School, Thurs 2 - Fri 3 Feb, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**DICK WHITTINGTON** Amateur production presented by Startime Variety, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 Feb, Halesowen Cornub Hall

**CINDERELLA AND HER NAUGHTY BUTTONS** Adult panto. Not suitable for under-16s, Fri 3 Feb, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

**DIA-BEAT-ES** Join Paul as he drops beats on the past 26 years of his drug filled life, mixing in the 'highs' and 'lows' of being a lifelong diabetic... and part time DJ, Fri 3 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THE RAGGED TROUSERED PHILANTHROPISTS** Neil Gore brings Robert Tressell's humorous and absorbing book to life in a one-man magic-lantern show, Fri 3 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE MUSIC HALL MYSTERY** Rain Or Shine present an evening of music, mishaps, adventure, tomfoolery and comedy, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb, Theatre on the Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

**BU21** Matt Bond's hard-hitting and critically acclaimed play, set in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, Fri 3 - Sat 11 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**LADIES' DAY** Amanda Whittington's heart-warming story of female friendship, Fri 3 - Sat 25 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**THE LITTLE MERMAID - ADULT PANTO** Brand-new and 'naughty' version of the famous story, featuring Divina de Campo in the title role, Sun 5 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

## Dance

**MOTIONHOUSE: STARCHITECTS** Family show featuring gravity-defying choreography and digital projections which revisits 'the magic of our childhood imagination', Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**GIOVANNI PERNICE: MADE IN ITALY** Brand-new production which sees the Strictly star joined by 'some of the best dancers and singers from the

ballroom and theatre world', Sat 4 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE NUTCRACKER** Presented by Varna International Ballet & Orchestra, Sun 5 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

## Light Entertainment

**HAPPY HOUR LIVE - THE ROUND SHEEP TOUR** Stage version of the popular podcast featuring JaackMaate, Stevie White and Robbie Knox, Wed 1 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**HISTORY'S A DRAG** RuPaul drag stars Vanity Milan (pictured) and Elektra Fence star in a show that promises to be 'sexy, savage, sugar & spice and everything nice', Wed 1 Feb, Telford Theatre



**THE OPERA BOYS: A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS** Featuring brand-new musical medleys, Wed 1 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE OPERA BOYS: A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS** Featuring brand-new musical medleys, Fri 3 Feb, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**LOOKING FOR ME FRIEND** 'Funny & touching' tribute to Victoria Wood, Fri 3 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE OPERA BOYS: A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS** Featuring brand-new musical medleys, Sat 4 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**ALADDIN - P\*SSSED UP PANTO** Special one-off performance that's 'not for the faint-hearted', Sat 4 Feb, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

**GINNY LEMON & SISTER SISTER: YOU KEEPING ME HANGIN' ON TOUR** The two RuPaul's Drag Race UK stars are determined to present 'the most disappointing drag show you've ever seen', Sat 4 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

## Talks & Spoken Word

**AN EVENING WITH SIR GEOFF HURST** Friend & agent Terry Baker hosts a Q&A with England's 1966 World Cup Final hat-trick hero, Wed 1 Feb,

Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**PRUE LEITH: NOTHING IN MODERATION** Join the Great British Bake Off judge as she takes audiences through the ups and downs of being a successful restaurateur, novelist, businesswoman and judge... Wed 1 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JASON FOX - LIFE AT THE LIMIT** Join Jason as he shares the remarkable story of his daring exploits in a distinguished career as an elite operator in the UK Special Forces (SBS), Thurs 2 Feb, Telford Theatre

**SUSIE DENT** The Countdown star takes audiences on a journey into the curious, unexpected and downright surreal origins of the words we use every day, Sat 4 Feb, Walsall Arena

## Events

**WOLVERHAMPTON LITERATURE FESTIVAL** Returning for its seventh year and featuring authors, poets, writers, storytellers, puppeteers, podcasters, vloggers and publishers, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Feb, various venues in Wolverhampton

**PENDANT MAKING WORKSHOP** Create your own unique glass jewellery in this experimental glass fusing workshop, Sat 4 Feb, Stourbridge Glass Museum

**WALSALL CREATIVE FACTORY** Stories with Queen Bee and the fairies, fairy and bee-crown-making, original poetry from David Calcutt, mehndi, and more, Sat 4 Feb, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

**THE ARENACROSS TOUR 2023** Europe's leading Indoor freestyle motocross & race show returns, Sat 4 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**CINDERELLA IN PANTOMIME** Expect laughter and audience participation as Cinderella finds her very own Prince Charming, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Feb, Cadbury World, Bourneville

**TATTOO FREEZE** Get tattoos from some of the very best artists in the industry, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Feb, Telford International Centre

**FEBRUARY HALF TERM** Something for all ages, from outdoor trails and sensory play areas, to leisurely strolls with the family surrounded by wildlife, Sat 4 - Sun 26 Feb, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

**CAMPER MART 2023** Bringing together some of the best VW converters, retailers and traders, all under one roof, Sun 5 Feb, Telford International Centre

**DARWIN SHREWSBURY FESTIVAL** Celebrate the town's favourite son with a schedule of inspiring tours, brain-teasing lectures, Darwin's birthday toast and more, Sun 5 - Sun 12 Feb, various venues across Shrewsbury



### THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

A trip-trapping musical adventure; perfect for half term  
**Monday 20 February**



### HIGH JINX

The magic, illusion and circus show; fast-paced family fun  
**Friday 24 February**



### CLAUDE BOURBON

A breathtaking progressive blues guitar virtuoso  
**Friday 10 March**



### THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES

The ultimate guitar fest featuring 50 years of iconic hits  
**Saturday 11 March**



### COME WHAT MAY

Ultimate Moulin Rouge tribute starring *Strictly's* Robin Windsor  
**Friday 24 March**



### SINATRA: RAW

An award-winning show starring the acclaimed Richard Shelton  
**Friday 31 March**



### MARK STEEL

'An Evening and a Little Bit of a Morning' comedy tour show  
**Sunday 2 April**



### THE JUNGLE BOOK

Critically-acclaimed musical adaptation of the family favourite  
**Tuesday 4 April**



### THE LITTLE MERMAID

An underwater musical adventure; brand new adaptation  
**Thursday 13 April**



### THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS

The Cruisin' for a Bluesin' Tour; brilliant award-winning show  
**Friday 21 April**



### CARL HUTCHINSON

Back with his brand new 'Watch Till The End' comedy tour show  
**Thursday 27 April**



### NASHVILLE BAD BOYS OF COUNTRY

A brand new show celebrating the big Country and Western hits  
**Friday 28 April**

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Dudley Town Hall - Stourbridge Town Hall - Halesowen Cornbow Hall

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FEB - MAY 2023

- Wed 15 Feb Nick Svarc Trio  
@ The Cathedral Hotel
- Fri 24 Feb King Pleasure & the Biscuit Boys  
@ Lichfield Guildhall
- Sun 12 Mar David Ford  
@ Lichfield Guildhall
- Wed 15 Mar Gaz Hughes Trio  
@ The Cathedral Hotel
- Sat 25 Mar Aaron Catlow & Brooks Williams  
@ Lichfield Guildhall
- Wed 19 Apr New Vintage  
@ The Cathedral Hotel
- Fri 5 May Taxi For Jesus  
@ Lichfield Guildhall
- Sat 20 May The Equators  
@ Lichfield Guildhall



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Natalie Black - The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

### Gigs

**THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW** Mon 6 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**CLINTON KANE** Tues 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JULIAN SIEGEL JAZZ ORCHESTRA** Tues 7 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE DIANA ROSS STORY** Tues 7 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**REBECCA BLACK** Wed 8 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**FAIRPORT CONVENTION** Wed 8 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**SHARON SHANNON TRIO** Wed 8 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**IAN MCNABB** Thurs 9 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**STEPHEN LYNCH** Thurs 9 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS** Thurs 9 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**COLIN HAY** Thurs 9 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

**THIS CARPENTERS MASQUERADE** Thurs 9 Feb, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**KRIS BARRAS BAND + DEA MATRONA** Thurs 9 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**GIRLSCHOOL + ALCATRAZZ** Thurs 9 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**FLEETWOOD SHACK** Thurs 9 Feb, Telford Theatre

**KARNIVOOL + THE OCEAN** Fri 10 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SAINTÉ** Fri 10 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LUCAS D AND THE GROOVE GHETTO** Fri 10 Feb, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**GIRLSCHOOL + ALCATRAZZ** Fri 10 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE ROCKET MAN - ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE** Fri 10 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**SEX PISTOLS EXPOSÉ** Fri 10 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**ABSOLUTE REGGAE** Fri 10 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**GIGSPANNER BIG BAND** Fri 10 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**NATALIE BLACK - ADELE TRIBUTE** Fri 10 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**RUFFNECKS** Fri 10 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE** Fri 10 Feb, Telford Theatre

**SLACKRR + SWEET DIEGO** Fri 10 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**CARLY RAE JEPSEN + LEWIS OFMAN** Sat 11 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**HAMMERFEST XIV** Sat 11 Feb, O2 Academy,

Birmingham

**JOHN CALE** Sat 11 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**ANTARCTIC MONKEYS + CITYLIGHTZ** Sat 11 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**STONE BROKEN** Sat 11 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**LAID - JAMES TRIBUTE** Sat 11 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**HOMETOWN GLORY - ADELE TRIBUTE** Sat 11 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**HATS OFF TO LED ZEPPELIN** Sat 11 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**LET SPIN** Sat 11 Feb, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**THE ENDINGS** Sat 11 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**CALL OF THE KRAKEN** Sat 11 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**KID KLUMSY + THE MAD BADGERS + BITCHIN HOUR + VISCERAL NOISE DEPARTMENT + THE WHITE RIBBONS + MR BADAXE** Sat 11 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**FEVER DREAM + YONAKA** Sun 12 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**ANCHOR LANE** Sun 12 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**EVERLY BROTHERS AND FRIENDS - TRIBUTE** Sun 12 Feb, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

### Classical Music

**ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider (conductor/violin).

Programme includes works by Bruch & Strauss, Mon 6 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CSO RUSH HOUR CONCERT** Featuring Lee Reynolds (conductor), Tom Redmond (presenter) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Brahms, Silvestri, Elgar, Dani Howard, Hindson & Gabriela Smith, Wed 8 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**JARUALDA QUARTET** Programme includes works by Beethoven, Henley & Ravel, Wed 8 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**CSO: LICENCED TO THRILL** Featuring Michael Seal (conductor), Lance Ellington & Anna-Jane Casey (vocalists) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes iconic James Bond theme tunes, Fri 10 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**MARTIN PAYNE ORGAN RECITAL** Sat 11 Feb, The Abbey Church, Shrewsbury

**CATHERINE COHEN** Fri 10 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**ROB DEERING, DAVE LONGLEY & MICK FERRY** Fri 10 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**MILTON JONES, EMMANUEL SONUBI, GAVIN WEBSTER & WAYNE BEESE** Sat 11 Feb, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**AXEL BLAKE** Sat 11 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**PATRICK MONAHAN** Sat 11 Feb, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

**ROBIN MORGAN** Sun 12 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**URZILA CARLSON** Sun 12 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**STEWART LEE** Sun 12 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

### Theatre

**MACBETH** New version of Shakespeare's classic tale, Mon 6 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



**WODEHOUSE IN WONDERLAND** One-man show based on the life and writings of PG Wodehouse. Robert Daws stars, Mon 6 - Wed 8 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE VALLEY OF FEAR** Blackeyed Theatre present a new version of Arthur Conan Doyle's final Sherlock Holmes novel, Tues 7 - Thurs 9 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY** The music of Bob Dylan provides the soundtrack to Conor McPherson's universal story about family and love, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**GASLIGHT** Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Players present an amateur version of Patrick Hamilton's Victorian thriller, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Feb, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**HOBSON'S CHOICE** The Stafford Players present an amateur version of Harold Brighouse's comedy, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** Cabaret Theatre Company present an amateur version of the award-winning musical comedy, Wed 8 - Sat 11 Feb, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST CLOC** Musical Theatre present a brand-new version

### Comedy

**SARA PASCOE** Wed 8 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



**HARRIET DYER, MORGAN REES & JOSH REYNOLDS** Wed 8 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**TEZ ILYAS, MICK FERRY & JOSH PUGH** Thurs 9 Feb, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**SEAN COLLINS** Thurs 9 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**MIKE BUBBINS** Thurs 9 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**BABATUNDE ALÉSHÉ** Fri 10 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

★★★★ "AN ATMOSPHERIC GEM OF A SHOW"

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SUSIE BLAKE SOPHIE WARD JOE McFADDEN

*Agatha Christie*

THE **MIRROR**  
CRACK'D

A NEW ADAPTATION BY  
RACHEL WAGSTAFF



THE **ALEXANDRA** TUE 14 - SAT 18 FEB 2023

EST. SINCE 1901

[atgtickets.com/birmingham](https://atgtickets.com/birmingham)

of the classic fairytale, Wed 8 - Sat 11 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**VAMPIRES ROCK** Steve Steinman's hit show, featuring rock anthems from the likes of Queen, AC/DC, Meat Loaf, Bon Jovi and Guns N' Roses, Thurs 9 Feb, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**HAMLET** Two actors and one musician take audiences on a rollercoaster ride through a bitesize retelling of Shakespeare's famous tragedy, Thurs 9 - Fri 10 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**RENT** Split Mask Theatre Company present Jonathan Larson's story about a group of impoverished young artists struggling to create a life for themselves in Manhattan's East Village, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Feb, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

## Kids Shows

**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE** Educational show for children featuring liquid nitrogen clouds, oxygen & hydrogen balloons, fire tornados and a self-built hovercraft... Thurs 9 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Light Entertainment

**PHONEY TOWERS** Tribute show performed in the style of Fawley Towers, Fri 10 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE** Expect fun, feathers and fabulous costumes in 'an extravaganza of artistes, cabaret and circus stars, comedians and champagne showgirls', Fri 10 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SING-A-LONG-A THE GREATEST SHOWMAN** The show comes complete with lyrics on the screen so that you can join in as loud as you want while a live host teaches you a unique set of dance moves, Sat 11 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**CIRCUS SPECTACULAR** Featuring international circus acts, magic and 'lots of laughs'... Sat 11 Feb, Telford Theatre

**THE BEST AND MOST SARCASTIC MAGIC SHOW YOU WILL SEE TODAY (PROBABLY)** Colin Tee presents an evening of comedy, magic and illusion suitable for all the family, Sat 11 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**COME WHAT MAY** An 'all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza' celebrating the greatest movie musicals of all time, Sat 11 Feb, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**THE GIRLS BATHROOM - LIVE** Join Sophia and Cinzia as they discuss boys, friendships, relationship dramas, single life and careers.

Based on the hugely successful podcast, Sun 12 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

## Talks & Spoken Word

**WOLVES ICONS - THE 70S** An evening of footballing stories from three Molineux stars of the 1970s - John Richards, Kenny Hibbitt and Steve Daley, Tues 7 Feb, Telford Theatre

**DANNY BAKER: AT LAST... THE SAUSAGE SANDWICH TOUR** Brand-new performance concluding Danny's trilogy of anecdotes, Wed 8 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**AN EVENING WITH BRIAN BILSTON** Poetry and wordplay with the bestselling poet & novelist. Part of Wolverhampton Literature Festival, Thurs 9 Feb, Bilston Town Hall

**EMMA KENNY'S THE SERIAL KILLER NEXT DOOR** Psychological therapist and crime commentator Emma discusses what creates a serial killer, Thurs 9 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**GEORGE MCGAVIN: IT'S A WILD LIFE - TALES FROM TELEVISION** Join the much-loved zoologist, entomologist and broadcaster as he shares stories of the wild and wonderful places he's visited, Thurs 9 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**DANNY BAKER: AT LAST... THE SAUSAGE SANDWICH TOUR** Brand-new performance concluding Danny's trilogy of anecdotes, Sat 11 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**DARWIN MEMORIAL LECTURE** Dr Jude Piesse examines Darwin's family garden at The Mount, Shrewsbury, and its impact on his life and work, Sun 12 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Events

**TILE DECORATING WORKSHOP** Learn and apply the traditional technique of tube-lining as you decorate your very own ceramic tile, Wed 8 Feb, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge

**ALDERFORD BY CANDLELIGHT** Enjoy a three-course menu in the Lakeside Kitchen, with live music, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Feb, Alderford Lake, Shropshire

**LOVIN' THE HOTSHOP** Make a heart-shaped paperweight for a Valentine's gift, Sat 11 Feb, Stourbridge Glass Museum

**WALK AND DRAW** Make speedy sketches of artworks in the gallery and in its surrounding areas, Sat 11 Feb, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

**FREDDO'S BIG TOP STAGE SHOW** Featuring Freddo the Clown, The Great Fredeedo and Spin Master Freddo, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Feb,



Vampires Rock - Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Cadbury World, Bournville, B'ham

**BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO** Celebrating the life of Her Majesty

The Queen and her 70 years of service to the nation, and also marking the accession of King Charles III to the throne, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Feb, Resorts World Arena, B'ham

**THE PIRATE TAKEOVER** The infamous

pirates of Mutiny Bay take over the resort, Sat 11 - Sun 26 Feb, Alton Towers, Staffordshire

**VALENTINE'S ARTISAN AND FOOD FESTIVAL** Featuring artisan makers, great taste awards, street food and much more, Sat 11 Feb, Himley Hall, Dudley

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Production

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by Patrick Hamilton  
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Stoke Repertory Theatre | Leek Road  
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This amateur production of 'Gaslight' is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd [www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk)



## Valentine's at MAC

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a delicious meal in our KILN cafe followed by a screening of the classic 90s romantic drama *Ghost*.

Sharing Platter

♥ Pork Belly or Beetroot & Feta Risotto ♥  
Sharing Trio Dessert

Tue 14 Feb | From 6.45pm | £73 per couple

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Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH





Yungblood - Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

### Gigs

**TUBULAR BELLS LIVE IN CONCERT** Mon 13 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**CARA DILLON** Mon 13 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**THE MUSICAL BOX - THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY** Tues 14 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**KATATONIA + SOLSTAFIR + SOM** Tues 14 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**DYLAN** Wed 15 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ROBERT JON & THE WRECK** Wed 15 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**NIK SVARC TRIO** Wed 15 Feb, The Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

**THE DEBORAH CAREW SWING TRIO** Wed 15 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**BLACK VEIL BRIDES** Thurs 16 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CAVETOWN + RICKY MONTGOMERY** Thurs 16 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**HALF-ALIVE** Thurs 16 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**RIMZEE** Fri 17 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**STICKY FINGERS** Fri 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE HISTORY OF ROCK** Fri 17 Feb, Sutton

Coldfield Town Hall  
**THE ELO SHOW** Fri 17 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**ANTARCTIC MONKEYS** Fri 17 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE ILLEGAL EAGLES** Fri 17 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE** Fri 17 Feb, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**CLOUDBUSTING - THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH** Fri 17 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**DOGHOUSE DERELICTS** Fri 17 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**THE WEEKENDERS** Fri 17 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**THE ENDINGS + THE DUSTBIRDS** Fri 17 Feb, Oscar's, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**WASTED LIFE + RISE UP + JIFNOTCIF** Fri 17 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**ALIVE - PEARL JAM TRIBUTE** Sat 18 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**YUNGBLUD + NECK DEEP** Sat 18 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**ELVIS - THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE** Sat 18 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**THE SEARCHERS AND HOLLIES EXPERIENCE** Sat 18 Feb, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**ROY G HEMMING** Sat 18 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**BLACK STAR RIDERS + MICHAEL MONROE + PHIL CAMPBELL AND THE BASTARD SONS** Sat 18 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**XHOSA COLE** Sat 18 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**DRESSED TO KILL - KISS TRIBUTE** Sat 18 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE ELO EXPERIENCE** Sat 18 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**WHITESNAKE UK** Sat 18 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**THE REVIEW** Sat 18 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**THE DARKER MY HORIZON** Sat 18 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**OH WHAT A NIGHT! - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI** Sat 18 Feb, Telford Theatre

**BENEATH THE RUIN + RAISED BY WOLVES** Sat 18 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**MOGWAI + BRAINIAC** Sun 19 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CHRIS BROWN** Sun 19 Feb, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

**THE SOUND OF SPRINGSTEEN** Sun 19 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

### Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by JS Bach, J Francaix, N Gade, CS Lang & CHH Pary, Mon 13 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**CBSO PLAYS BARTOK'S CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA** Featuring Roderick Cox (conductor), Alban Gerhardt (cello) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Ravel, Saint-Saëns & Bartók, Thurs 16 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**LONDON FILM MUSIC ORCHESTRA: A TRIBUTE TO HANS ZIMMER & JOHN WILLIAMS BY CANDLELIGHT** Fri 17 Feb, Lichfield Cathedral

**THE CHOIR OF GREAT ST MARYS CAMBRIDGE** Fri 17 Feb, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**LATINO CLASSICO** Fusion of Latin American with classical instrumentation & virtuoso technique, Fri 17 Feb, Blackburn Theatre, Prestfelde School, Shrewsbury

**ECHO RISING STARS: VANESSA PORTER** Programme includes works by Porter, Robert Marino, Johann Sebastian Bach, Avner Dorman, Maurice Ravel, Ivan Trevino, Steve Reich & Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic, Sun 19 Feb, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Enescu & Elgar, Sun 19 Feb, St Mary's Church, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire

### Comedy

**BASKETMOUTH** Wed 15 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RAY BRADSHAW** Wed 15 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MARK STEEL** Thurs 16 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**DANIEL SLOSS** Fri 17 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**SOPHIE DUKER** Fri 17 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PAUL SMITH** Fri 17 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



**ADA CAMPE, LINDSEY SANTORO & DUNCAN OAKLEY** Fri 17 Feb, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**BRENNAN REECE** Sat 18 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**LOL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 18 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**RHYS JAMES** Sun 19 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

### Theatre

**STRICTLY BALLROOM: THE MUSICAL** Kevin Clifton & Maisie Smith star in a new toe-tapping musical based on Baz Luhrmann's award-winning film, Mon 13 - Sat 18 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



**AIDA** Ellen Kent Opera presents Verdi's tale of war, jealousy and revenge. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Tues 14 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE MIRROR CRACK'D** Susie Blake, Joe McFadden & Sophie Ward star in a new version of Agatha Christie's famous novel, Tues 14 - Sat 18 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**THE VERDICT** Jason Merrells, Richard Walsh & Reanne Farley star in Barry Read's courtroom thriller, Tues 14 - Sat 18 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**TITANIC THE MUSICAL** Get Your Wigle On present an amateur version of the award-winning musical, Wed 15 - Sat 18 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE GIRLS' GUIDE TO GOOD SEX** Kickback Theatre present an immersive theatrical journey that aims to celebrate 'experience, identity and romance... or just casual flings', Wed 15 - Sun 19 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**PETER PAN - A MAGICAL PANTOMIME ADVENTURE** Featuring The X Factor's Christopher Maloney as Hook and Gogglebox star Sandi Bogle as the Magical Mermaid, Wed 15 - Wed 22 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**SHE** Theatre Accord present a thought-provoking piece charting the experiences of different women from childhood to old age, each with an intriguing twist, Thurs 16 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham  
**EARWIG** Fast-paced production

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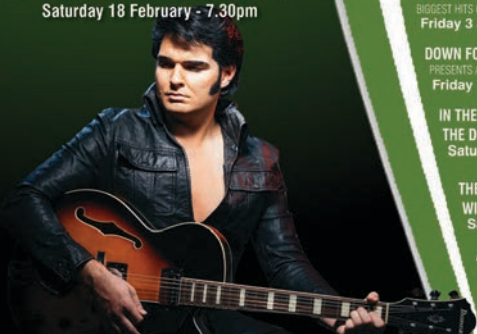
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## ELVIS - THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

PERFORMED BY BEN THOMPSON  
Saturday 18 February - 7.30pm



**DISCOS FOR GROWN UPS**  
POP UP 70S BOSS & 90S DISCO PARTY  
Friday 3 February (8pm)

**OH WHAT A NIGHT!**  
FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS TRIBUTE  
Saturday 4 February (7.30pm)

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**  
A BRAND-NEW VERSION FROM CLOUC MUSICAL THEATRE  
Wednesday 8 - Saturday 11 February

**THE HISTORY OF ROCK**  
A CELEBRATION OF ROCK MUSIC THROUGH THE DECADES  
Friday 17 February (7.30pm)

**SHANIA - 25 LIVE COME ON OVER**  
SHANIA TWAIN TRIBUTE WITH LIVE BAND  
Thursday 23 February (7.30pm)

**LIVE AT THE TOWN HALL**  
WITH REGINALD D HUNTER, LISA DIMELAN,  
ROBERT WHITE, WAYNE BEESE (MC)  
Friday 24 February (8pm)

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE**  
Saturday 25 February (7.30pm)

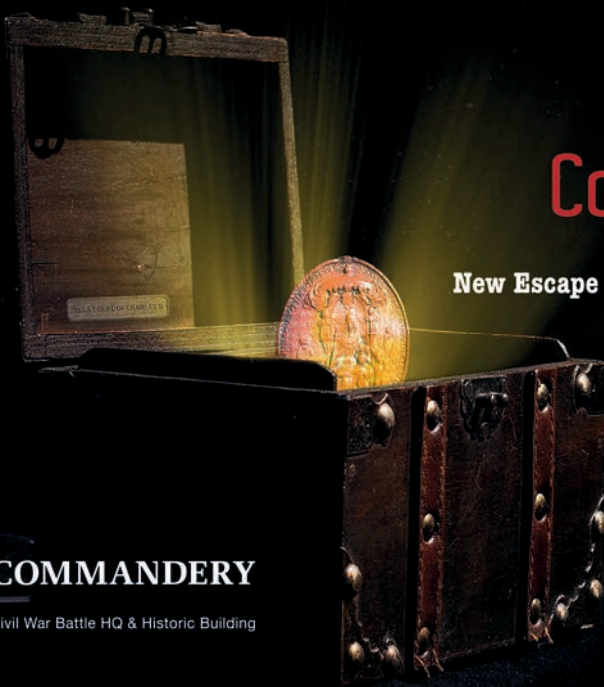
**CALLING PLANET EARTH**  
A MUSICAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE  
BIGGEST HITS OF THE 80'S  
Friday 3 & Saturday 4 March (7.30pm)

**DOWN FOR THE COUNT**  
PRESENTS A CENTURY OF SWING  
Friday 10 March (7.30pm)

**IN THE NAME OF LOVE:  
THE DIANA ROSS STORY**  
Saturday 11 March (7.30pm)

**THE SERIAL KILLER NEXT DOOR**  
WITH EMMA KENNY  
Saturday 8 April (7.30pm)

**A NIGHT IN KILKENNY\***  
STARRING THE KILKININYS  
Saturday 15 April (7.30pm)



# Commandery Quest

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exploring what it meant to be deaf in the early 20th century, during a time of art deco decadence, Thurs 16 Feb, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**TEACHERS LEAVERS '22** Blackeyed Theatre Company present the world premiere of John Godber's comedy about education, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THE SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS' WINTER HOLIDAY** Love Lee Productions present a retelling of Arthur Ransome's family adventure, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**A CHORUS LINE** Brownhills Musical Theatre Company present an amateur version of the Tony Award-winning musical, Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

**THE WAY OLD FRIENDS DO** The world premiere of a new comedy about devotion, desire and dancing queens, Fri 17 Feb - Sat 4 March, The Rep, Birmingham

## Dance

**NORTHERN BALLET'S UGLY DUCKLING** Live ballet, music and theatre combine in a retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale, Thurs 16 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

## Light Entertainment

**BLOODY MARY** Stand-up special in which teen Queen Mary Tudor tackles divorced parents, sibling rivalry and religious purges... Wed 15 Feb, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**POTTER VISION** Immersive recreation of Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone, told with the use of limited props, Thurs 16 Feb, Telford Theatre

**ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING** Boo the villains and cheer on your favourites as some of the country's top ring stars clash in an action-packed spectacle, Fri 17 Feb, Telford Theatre

## Talks & Spoken Word

**VERVE POETRY FESTIVAL** Featuring a programme 'that encourages audiences to see their favourite poets and try something new - to join in, create, listen and learn', Wed 15 - Sun 19 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**GARTH MARENNGHI'S TERRORTOME BOOK TOUR** Join the horror literature author

for the launch of his long-lost multi-volume horror epic, TerrorTome, Thurs 16 Feb, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**JASON FOX - LIFE AT THE LIMIT** Join Jason as he shares the remarkable story of his daring exploits in a distinguished career as an elite operator in the UK Special Forces (SBS), Sun 19 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

## Events

**PLANETARIUM LATES: EQUINOX** A 360-degree full-dome Pink Floyd experience, performed by Andy Holt, the creator of Equinox, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**BOATLIFE** A show with something for everyone, from RIBS and narrowboats to fishing boats and powerboats, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**BURTON CAMRA: BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL** Featuring hundreds of cask & craft beers, ciders, perries and gin, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 Feb, Burton Town Hall, Staffordshire

**TILE DECORATING WORKSHOP** Learn and apply the traditional technique of tube-lining as you decorate your very own ceramic tile, Fri 17 Feb, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge

**A TRIBUTE TO ABBA BY CANDLELIGHT** Discover the music of ABBA 'by the gentle glow of candlelight', Fri 17 Feb, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

**GANDEYS CIRCUS** Gandey's Circus returns with brand-new Big Top show Glitterati, Fri 17 Feb - Sun 5 Mar, Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire

**BIG AND SMALL SCIENCE BUSKING** Conduct your own biodiversity survey to find minibeasts that live in the native grasslands, and explore the natural science collection to find out about some 'megabeasts' from the past, Sat 18 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**BIG AND SMALL FAMILY SHOW** Featuring live and interactive science demonstrations, Sat 18 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**CREATIVE FACTORY COMMUNITY DAY** Make a giant collaborative drawing with Bridge Group (for all ages and abilities), make a stop frame animation with Geeks Club (for ages 10-plus) and make a bird mobile with the Toddler Group (for ages two to four), Sat 18 Feb, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

**UK ATHLETICS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS** Places on the Great Britain and Northern Ireland teams are up for grabs in what promises to be another exciting fixture for athletics fans to enjoy, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Feb, Utilita Arena Birmingham



Shropshire Kids Festival - Telford International Centre

**SHROPSHIRE KIDS FESTIVAL** Bringing together hundreds of activities in one place, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Feb, Telford International Centre

**FEBRUARY HALF-TERM PLAY-WITH-CLAY** Self-led drop-in clay workshops for kids, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent

**NEW LIFE ON THE FARM** Welcome new life and help Farmer Fogg fix his farm in time for spring, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

**DINOSAUR BREAKOUT** Some of Europe's largest walking dinos have escaped and are on the loose around the theme park! Can you find them? Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Drayton Manor Resort, Staffordshire

**FREDDO'S BIG TOP STAGE SHOW** Featuring Freddo the Clown, The Great Fredeedo and Spin Master Freddo, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Cadbury World, Bournville, B'ham

**LAMBING LIVE** Catch a glimpse of the newborn lambs and learn more about the sheep via daily talks from the Park Hall team, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Park Hall Farm, Shropshire

**A TRIP TO THE MOON** Enjoy a screening of the world's first sci-fi film, Le Voyage Dans La Lune, complete with a traditional musical accompaniment, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

**STARDOME** Learn about the cosmos, stellar evolution and the search for alien life via a 'fascinating and immersive' 360° planetarium show, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Enginuity, Ironbridge

**MARbled PLANETS** Choose your planet, pick your colours and create your very own swirling celestial body, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Enginuity, Ironbridge

**STEM WEEK** Challenge your science skills, put your tech talents to the test, enhance your engineering abilities and add some magic to your mathematics with a range of activities and workshops, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, RAF Museum Midlands

**THE WIZARDS OF BOD** Spot the Wizards of Bodenham hiding amongst the trees during a woodland trail, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

**LIVING DANGEROUSLY** Take part in an activity trail, meet historic characters and discover the dangers that befell people of the past, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**FLIGHTS OF FANCY** Model a variety of creatures from air dry clay, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

**ARNOLD CLARK CUP** Four of the world's top 20 teams battle it out for the trophy as the tournament returns to England, Sun 19 Feb, Coventry Building Society Arena

**WEDDING OPEN DAY** Check out Weston Park as a wedding venue, Sun 19 Feb, Weston Park, Shropshire

**CRAFT, HOBBY + STITCH INTERNATIONAL** Annual industry event providing visitors with the chance to network, forge new business connections and check out the latest must-stock products, Sun 19 - Mon 20 Feb, NEC, Birmingham



Esprit D'Air - O2 Academy, Birmingham

## Gigs

**BANNERS** Mon 20 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham  
**LISSIE** Mon 20 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall  
**TONY CHRISTIE** Mon 20 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme  
**HITS OF MOTOWN** Mon 20 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury  
**THE LITTLE MIX SHOW** Mon 20 Feb, Telford Theatre  
**SOMEBODY'S CHILD + KYNSY** Tues 21 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham  
**BEAST IN BLACK** Tues 21 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham  
**HARRY STYLES TRIBUTE SHOW** Tues 21 Feb, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre  
**MEEKZ** Wed 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham  
**AVATAR + VEIL OF MAYA + MASTIFF** Wed 22 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton  
**THE ACADEMIC** Thurs 23 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham  
**ESPRIT D'AIR + DIAMOND BLACK** Thurs 23 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham  
**VOODOO SIX + SCARLET REBELS + ROYAL BLISS** Thurs 23 Feb, KK's

Steel Mill, W'hampton  
**THE HELLFLOWERS** Thurs 23 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury  
**KELSEA BALLERINI** Fri 24 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham  
**CHERRY B + CREEDITE + JOSH MCQUEEN + THE MASQUERADE + JAYLER** Fri 24 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham  
**SPACE + NIXON TATE** Fri 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham  
**INHALER** Fri 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham  
**THE INTERPRETERS** Fri 24 Feb, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield  
**ROCK FOR HEROES** Fri 24 Feb, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley  
**WONDER OF ELVIS** Fri 24 Feb, The Robin, Bilston  
**ULTIMATE RNB** Fri 24 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent  
**THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS** Fri 24 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent  
**KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS** Fri 24 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall  
**BRONWEN LEWIS** Fri 24 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury  
**WAX FUTURES + SAY LESS** Fri 24 Feb,

Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**SOMEONE LIKE YOU - ADELE TRIBUTE** Fri 24 Feb, Telford Theatre

**KOTONIC + SEBASTIAN AND ME** Fri 24 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**DRY CLEANING + DEHD + THUS LOVE** Sat 25 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE** Sat 25 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**DECADES BAND** Sat 25 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**TOM PETTY LEGACY BAND** Sat 25 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

**NEARLY DAN - STEELY DAN TRIBUTE** Sat 25 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE CHEATLES** Sat 25 Feb, Factory Floor @ the QUARTER, Stoke-on-Trent

**INTO THE SHADOWS** Sat 25 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROB LAMBERTI - GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE** Sat 25 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**SKABURST** Sat 25 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**EGO FRIENDLY** Sat 25 Feb, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**STICKY WICKET** Sat 25 Feb, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

**CAPTAIN KAISER + FANTAZMAZ + GRAFFITI CLUB** Sat 25 Feb, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**T. REXTASY** Sun 26 Feb, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

**GIGSPANNER BIG BAND** Sun 26 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROACHFORD + ACANTHA LANG** Sun 26 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**BLAZIN' FIDDLES** Tues 28 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Classical Music Theatre

**CBSO PLAYS PROKOFIEV & SIBELIUS** Featuring Ilan Volkov (conductor), Isata Kanneh-Mason (piano) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Sibelius, Prokofiev & Waley-Cohen, Wed 22 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Featuring Michael Seal (conductor). Programme comprises Stravinsky's Petrushka (1947 version), Wed 22 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ARMENIAN STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Featuring Sergey Smbatyan (conductor), Jennifer Pike (violin). Programme includes works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Khachaturian & Tchaikovsky, Thurs 23 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF MOSCOW** Featuring Vladimir Fedoseyev (conductor) & Pyotr Akulov (piano). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky & Rachmaninov, Thurs 23 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**PIANO DUETS WITH STEPHENIE & LLOYD BUCK** Fri 24 Feb, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**ST DAVID'S DAY CONCERT** Featuring Brymbo Male Voice Choir, Rhos Orpheus Male Voice Choir, Lisa Dafydd (soprano), Hefin Duo, Charlotte & Bethan (harp & flute) & Dilwyn Price (compere), Sat 25 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Comedy

**MC HAMMERSMITH** Thurs 23 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**JOSIE LONG** Fri 24 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**COMEDY IN THE MET - COMICS TBC** Fri 24 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**REGINALD D HUNTER, LUISA OMIELAN, ROBERT WHITE & WAYNE BEESE** Fri 24 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**LLOYD GRIFFITH** Sat 25 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**MIKE WOZNIAC** Sat 25 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**LUISA OMIELAN (PICTURED), JONNY AWSUM, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & WAYNE BEESE** Sat 25 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge



**THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF** Lost The Plot Theatre presents a trip-trapping musical adventure, complete with catchy songs and funky dances, Mon 20 Feb, Halesowen Cornbow Hall

**THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION** Joe Absolom and Ben Onwukwe star in the stage adaptation of Stephen King's 1982 novella, Mon 20 - Sat 25 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL** Hayley Mills, Paul Nicholas and Rula Lenska star in a comedy about taking risks, finding love and embracing second chances. Based on the film of the same name, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**THE WIZARD OF OZ THE PANTO BASE** present Tom Whalley's 'wicked' panto, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Feb, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**'ALLO 'ALLO Ambient Night** Productions present a play based on the hit BBC TV comedy series of the same name, Wed 22 - Thurs 23 Feb, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

**SLEEPING BEAUTY** Presented by Market Drayton Amateur Operatic Dramatic Society (MDAODS), Wed 22 - Sat 25 Feb, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire

**MOTHER GOOSE** Sir Ian McKellen & John Bishop star in a new version of the classic fairytale, Wed 22 - Sun 26 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**JOSHUA (AND ME)** Rachel Hammond's one-woman show about being a sibling to someone who is autistic, Thurs 23 Feb, The Hub @ St Marys, Lichfield

**CINDERELLA: THE SHOE MUST GO ON** Presented by All Stretton Amateur Dramatics Society, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Feb, All Stretton Village Hall, Church Stretton, South Shropshire

**GREASE** Amateur version presented by Starcross Youth Theatre, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS** Join a raggle-taggle band of travelling circus performers as they embark on their most daring feat yet: to recreate the adventures of Phileas Fogg as he races around the world, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 Feb, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**BZZZZ** Warm & witty solo play about empowerment and modern-day dating, Sat 25 Feb, The Hub @ St Marys, Lichfield

**NATURE ELLY** A farmyard puppet show where audience members aged two to five are invited to discover the secrets of the mystery animal hiding in the haystack, Sat 25 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**DIVORCED, BEHEADED, DIED: AN AUDIENCE WITH KING HENRY VIII** An

'audience with' scenario, as His Majesty recounts the events of his long reign and invites his loyal subjects (the audience) to question him on any related subject, Sat 25 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE BODYGUARD** Ex Pussycat Doll Melody Thornton stars alongside Ayden Callaghan (Emmerdale, Hollyoaks) in this new production based on the smash-hit film, Mon 27 Feb - Sat 4 March, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

### ANOTHER LOVER'S DISCOURSE

Palestinian artist Riham fuses interviews, video, music, performance and film footage to explore the complexity of love and relationships, Tues 28 Feb - Wed 1 March, The Rep, Birmingham



**SIX** From Tudor queens to pop princesses, the six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their tales, remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak into an 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power, Tues 28 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE KING AND I** Call The Midwife's Helen George stars as Anna in a new version of Bartlett Sher's iconic musical, Tues 28 Feb - Sat 4 March, The Alexandra, Birmingham

## Kids Shows

**FIREMAN SAM LIVE!** Join Sam, Penny, Elvis, Station Officer Steele and Norman in an all-singing, all-dancing, action-packed show for younger audiences, Tues 21 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**FLOTSAM & JETSAM** Original music and puppetry combine in this adventure story about two very different creatures who must learn to work together, Wed 22 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**THE DINOSAUR ADVENTURE LIVE** Interactive stage show immersing audiences in a prehistoric world of dinosaurs, Wed 22 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**POP PRINCESSES** A musical spectacular starring four fairytale princesses who just love to sing, Wed 22 Feb, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE** Educational show for children featuring liquid

nitrogen clouds, oxygen & hydrogen balloons, fire tornadoes and a self-built hovercraft... Thurs 23 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**FIREMAN SAM LIVE!** Join Sam, Penny, Elvis, Station Officer Steele and Norman in an all-singing, all-dancing, action-packed show for younger audiences, Thurs 23 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CURIOS INVESTIGATORS** Adventure aimed at children aged between three and seven, Thurs 23 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE TORTOISE & THE HARE** Retelling of the classic children's fable, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

**ZOG LIVE ON STAGE** Stage version of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's book, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

### THE DINOSAUR ADVENTURE LIVE

Interactive stage show immersing audiences in a prehistoric world of dinosaurs, Sat 25 Feb, Telford Theatre

## Dance

**BRB SWAN LAKE** A revival of Sir Peter Wright and Galina Samsova's glorious production of the most romantic ballet of all time, Wed 15 - Sat 25 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ASIAN SPRING** Celebration of South Asian dance, including Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Bollywood and Raas Garba, Sun 26 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

## Talks & Spoken Word

**KEITH BRYMER JONES: BOY IN A CHINA SHOP** Join the judge of Channel Four's The Great Pottery Throwdown for an evening of conversation in celebration of his first memoir, Wed 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**SPOKEN LYRIK PRESENTS LOVE LYRIKS** Poetry show bringing the 'lyriks that you love' to the stage, Thurs 23 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**DANNY BAKER: AT LAST... THE SAUSAGE SANDWICH TOUR** Brand-new performance concluding Danny's trilogy of anecdotes, Fri 24 Feb, Walsall Arena

**KATE MOSSE: WARRIOR QUEENS & QUIET REVOLUTIONARIES** The international bestselling author combines storytelling, music and imagery to explore influential women throughout history, Tues 28 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



Flotsam & Jetsam - Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

## Events

**HALF-TERM SPECIAL** Explore the wonders of the Churnet Valley countryside, stopping off at stations along the way, Mon 20 - Thurs 23 Feb, Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

**STAR WARS JEDI ACADEMY** Learn the Jedi Code, drill in the six attack & parry zones with special trainee combat light sabres, work on your self-discipline and test your agility with the laser-beam challenge, Mon 20 - Fri 24 Feb, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

**CARAVAN, CAMPING AND MOTORHOME SHOW 2023** The UK's largest showcase of motorhomes, campervans, caravans, caravan holiday homes and luxury lodges, Tues 21 - Sun 26 Feb, NEC, B'ham

**WITCHES AND WIZARDS** Join Q20 Theatre as they take you on an adventurous journey through the magical world of witches and wizards, Wed 22 Feb, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

**FLICKS IN THE STICKS - DC LEAGUE OF SUPER-PETS** Hot dogs, pizza, popcorn and crafts, followed by a film ,

screening, Wed 22 Feb, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms

**FAMILY FRIENDLY SESSIONS: PLAY WITH CLAY** Get hands-on with clay in these one-hour sessions aimed at children aged three-plus, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Feb, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

**BUNKERED LIVE** Get direct access to the best golf brands, PGA pros and top-class tuition, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM WORLD INDOOR TOUR FINAL** Showcasing the world's best athletes as they compete to take home the Series title, as well as secure wildcards for the World Athletics Indoor Championships, Sat 25 Feb, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**BIG AND SMALL SCIENCE BUSKING** Conduct your own biodiversity survey to find minibeasts that live in the native grasslands, and explore the natural science collection to find out about some 'megabeasts' from the past, Sat 25 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**WEDDING OPEN DAY** See the venue set out and meet the team, who will be on hand to talk through offers and options, Sun 26 Feb, Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton



Curious Investigators - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

# THE BUTTERMARKE

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## SHREWSBURY

THURS 9 FEBRUARY

**THE MYTH OF SERIAL KILLER PROFILING**

WITH PROFESSOR JACKSON

HOMETOWN GLORY PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

BACK BY DEMAND!

FRI 10 FEBRUARY

**ADELE**

IN CONCERT

STARRING NATALIE BLACK & HER LIVE BAND

**Spiritual Psychic Night**

with Karen Sherlock

(Channel 4's Celebrity Ghost Trip)

THURS 16 FEBRUARY

**Cloudbusting**

The Music of Kate Bush

FRI 17 FEBRUARY

Love & Anger Tour

**Whitesnake**

SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2023

SAT 25 FEBRUARY

**George**

Rob Lambert

PRESENTS PERFECTLY GEORGE

"People are always mistaking me for Robert Lambert!"

GET ON STAGE WITH SHAUN WILLIAMSON

THE STAR OF EASTENDERS EXTRAS & LIFE'S TOO SHORT

FOR A FUN FILLED NIGHT OF KARAOKE

**BARRIOKE**

FRI 3RD MARCH

**JOHNNY 2 BARD**

ALL THE CLASSIC HITS!

FRI 10 MARCH 2023

SUN 19 MARCH

Jamie Flanagan As **michael bublé**

**Spiritual Psychic Night**

An audience with **Marilyn & Tia**

THE THREE WISHES FROM HERE! ORD

THURS 23 MARCH

THE BIG 80s PARTY

**erasure**

THE ULTIMATE ERASURE TRIBUTE

FRI 24 MARCH

THE WILDROS M&T TRIBUTE TO

**JEAN GENIE Bowie**

SAT 25 MARCH

"ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC!"

SAT 1 APRIL

**THE TOTAL STONE ROSES OASIS**

WRESTLING

SUN 2 APRIL

BRAND NEW SHOW FOR 2023

MEGASLAM 28ZZZ LIVE HOUR

FRI 7 APRIL

**chemical dance**

tribute to the chemical brothers

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

**daft punk experience**

**Sunbirds**

FRI 14 APRIL

FEATURING DAVE HEMINGWAY FROM THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH & THE HOUSEMARTINS

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A CELEBRATION OF 80'S & 00'S R&B  
SATURDAY 15TH APRIL  
THE BUTTERMARKET  
SHREWSBURY



EXPERIENCE THE WORLD'S #1 TRIBUTE SHOW  
★★★★★  
★★★★★  
★★★★★  
★★★★★  
20-23 APRIL  
BROADWAY BABY  
THIS IS LONDON  
WHATSONSTAGE  
**FAULTY TOWERS**  
Original  
the Dining Experience  
Interactive Theatre



**Maet Live**  
& THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS  
MEAT LOAF'S GREATEST HITS LIVE!  
FEAT. ITV'S CRAIG HALFORD  
BACK BY DEMAND!  
PERFORMED BY EUROPE'S NUMBER 1 MEAT LOAF TRIBUTE  
SATURDAY 6 MAY 2023



**COLDPLACE**  
The World's Leading Tribute to Coldplay  
"Thanks for flying the Coldplay flag, Coldplace are pure quality!"  
Phil Harvey (Coldplay)  
FRIDAY 12 MAY



DIRECT FROM THE WEST END  
MULTI-AWARD WINNING KELLY O'BRIEN  
SAT 13 MAY  
**The Dolly Show**  
CELEBRATING THE LIFE & MUSIC OF DOLLY PARTON



**THE CHRIS SLADE  
TIMELINE**  
SPECIAL AC/DC  
FRI 19 MAY  
LIVE IN CONCERT



**TAKE THAT PARTY!**  
SAT 20 MAY  
Dan Hadfield as Gary Barlow  
"He's Brilliant!" - Gary Barlow



THE BEST PINK TRIBUTE IN THE WORLD  
BACK BY DEMAND!  
**Vicky Jackson**  
TRIBUTE ARTIST  
& HER FULL LIVE BAND!  
FRI 26 MAY



**MASSAOKE  
80s Live**  
SAT 3 JUNE



FRI 9 JUNE  
**elo AGAIN**  
THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO JEFF LYNNE AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA



THE INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL... AFTER HER OWN WAY  
**Celine**  
this is  
FRI 16 JUNE



Gordon Henderson  
as **ELVIS**  
THE KING'S VOICE  
SAT 17 JUNE 2023



SATURDAY 15 JULY  
**ABBA**  
ALL DAY OUTDOOR GARDEN PARTY



**noah's ark**  
FRI 15 SEPTEMBER



**GUNS N' ROSES**  
FRI 22 SEPTEMBER



\*\*\* A BREATHTAKING SHOW OF PURE ROCK \*\*\*  
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\*Ticket offer expires 3pm 22 March 2023. Saving based on one day full price tickets for two people. Children under 16 go free.