

Staffordshire

ISSUE 451 AUGUST 2024

What's On

FILM | COMEDY | THEATRE | GIGS | VISUAL ARTS | EVENTS

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tall stories

THE GRUFFALO

BASED ON THE PICTURE BOOK BY
JULIA DONALDSON AND **AXEL SCHEFFLER**

LIVE ON STAGE

LICHFIELD GARRICK
THEATRE & STUDIO

TUES 24 & WED 25 SEPTEMBER
BOX OFFICE: 01543 412121
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The Gruffalo © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 1999 - Macmillan Children's Books

inside:

A CHORUS LINE

much-loved musical dances into the Midlands region



BEYOND VAN GOGH

stunning sensory extravaganza stops off at the NEC



SCHOOL'S OUT!

places to visit and things to do during the summer holiday



COMING SOON TO THE NEW VIC

Fri 20 Sep - Sat 12 Oct



Fri 15 Nov - Sat 25 Jan



newvictheatre.org.uk
Box Office 01782 717962



Arts Council
ENGLAND



Staffordshire
County Council





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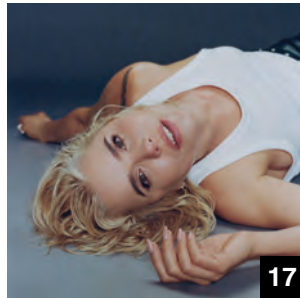
10



13



14



17



20



24



27



35



39



41



45

INSIDE:

First Word

4

Food

13

Festivals

17

Theatre

22

Film

33

Visual Arts

37

Events

43

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What's On

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The Vivienne to join Adam Garcia in regional tour of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

The first-ever winner of RuPaul's Drag Race UK, The Vivienne, will take on the role of the Childcatcher when hit musical Chitty Chitty Bang Bang visits Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre this autumn.

The popular show, which also stars Olivier Award nominee Adam Garcia and Emmerdale actor Liam Fox, stops off in The Potteries from Tuesday 22 to Sunday 27 October as part of a UK tour. For further information and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com/stoke



Guest locos announced for Autumn Steam Gala

The Severn Valley Railway's Autumn Steam Gala returns next month.

Taking place from Thursday 19 to Sunday 22 September, the event will feature a selection of in-service steam locomotives operating a busy timetable.

To find out more about the gala, including which visiting locomotives are appearing across the four days, check out the Railway's website at svr.co.uk

Mary Poppins flying back to Birmingham

Cameron Mackintosh and Disney Theatrical Group's award-winning stage musical production of Mary Poppins is to return to the Midlands next summer.

The hit show, based on the classic 1964 Disney film of the same name, tells the uplifting story of the world's most famous nanny and her adventures with the Banks family, who reside in London's Cherry Tree Lane. Featuring a host of iconic songs, including Jolly Holiday, Step In Time, Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious and Feed The Birds, the production shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 16 July to Saturday 23 August 2025. Tickets are on general sale from Friday 20 September.



New exhibition celebrates local women in the arts

Ironbridge's Footprint Art Gallery is this month hosting an exhibition supporting and celebrating Midlands-based women in the arts.

The Female Collective will be available to view at the venue from Monday 19 August to Sunday 1 September.

For further information, visit the footprintgallery.co.uk/events



Fairytale Of New York heading for Shropshire

A production which has been described as 'the ultimate feelgood Irish-inspired Christmas concert' is returning to Shrewsbury in the autumn.

Visiting the town's Theatre Severn on Saturday 9 November, Fairytale Of New York features an international cast of singers, musicians and dancers.

To find out more and book tickets, visit the venue's website at theatresevern.co.uk



Slade convention returns at Newhampton Arts...

Get set to dig out your flares and platform heels - Slade tribute bands Slade UK and Sladest are visiting Wolverhampton this autumn. The much-admired counterfeit stars will play the city's Newhampton Arts Centre as part of the two-day Slade Fans Convention

(Friday 27 & Saturday 28 September).

To find out more about both bands, visit newhamptonarts.co.uk

Ex-Corrie star Kevin to narrate the story of punk

Actor Kevin Kennedy - best known for playing the character of Curly Watts in Coronation Street - will be the narrator when a new show telling the story of punk and new wave music visits Stoke-on-Trent's Victoria Hall on Friday 7 March.

Touring under the title Pretty Vacant, the production is promising to take audiences on a nostalgic journey from the beginnings of punk in the 1970s, to its later movements in the 1980s and 90s.

For further information and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com/stoke

Cyndi Lauper to visit the Midlands on farewell tour

Cyndi Lauper will make a Valentine's stop-off in Birmingham next year as part of her Girls Just Wanna Have Fun Farewell Tour.

The 71-year-old singer will visit the city's bp pulse LIVE venue (formerly Resorts World Arena) on Friday 14 February. To find out more and book a seat, visit livenation.co.uk



Ben Thornton back in Lichfield

Ben Thornton will star alongside Sam Rabone and Gill Jordan in this year's Lichfield Garrick pantomime production of *Jack And The Beanstalk*. The show will be Ben's fifth panto at the venue. Commenting on the news, the popular actor said: "I can't wait to bring more fun, laughter and chaos to the Garrick stage this year and look forward to seeing lots of familiar faces there! I'll start making the slosh now..." Tickets for the show - which runs from Friday 22 November to Sunday 5 January - can be booked by visiting the theatre's website: lichfieldgarrick.com



Shamilton stars head for the Glee

An improvised version of hit stage show *Hamilton* is visiting Birmingham's Glee Club next month.

Taking the title *Shamilton*, the show stops off at the venue on Sunday 8 September as part of a post-Edinburgh UK tour. To find out more and book your tickets, visit glee.co.uk



CS Lewis classic to visit Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre

A celebrated production of CS Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe* will visit Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next autumn (Tuesday 28 October - Saturday 1 November 2025) as part of a major UK tour. The show

previously stopped off in the Midlands last Christmas, at Birmingham Repertory Theatre. For further information and to book tickets, visit grandtheatre.co.uk



Christmas with the Muppets!

Disney's *The Muppet Christmas Carol* will be screened at Birmingham's Symphony Hall in December, with its musical score being performed live to the film. The much-loved 1992 movie will show at the venue on Friday the 13th. For further information, visit bmusic.co.uk

Peaky Blinders Nights make a return at the Black Country Living Museum

Dudley's Black Country Living Museum is inviting visitors to dust off their flat caps when its *Peaky Blinders Nights* make an autumn return.

Taking place on Saturday 28 September and Saturday 16 November, the popular event features a selection of entertainment inspired by the much-loved BBC television series. Highlights include vintage fairground games, a 'historic bout of strength' at the wrestling ring, the jazz beats of Kal's Kats at the Workers' Institute and the chance to visit some of the locations used in the hit show. For more information and tickets, visit bclm.com



Fab Four on film as new show visits The Potteries

Long-established tribute stars The Bootleg Beatles will stop off in The Potteries next spring (Wednesday 9 April) as part of a new tour celebrating the music of the Fab Four on film.

Accompanied by their orchestra, the counterfeit John, Paul, George & Ringo will take their audience at Hanley's Victoria Hall on a whistlestop tour of Beatles movies *A Hard Day's Night*, *Help!*, *Magical Mystery Tour*, *Yellow Submarine* and *Let It Be*. Tickets for the multimedia stage show are available at bootlegbeatles.com

New Vic announces new season of one-nighters

Audience favourites Soul Brothers Syndicate, The Froncsyllte Male Voice Choir and The Bluejays are set to make a return to Newcastle-under-Lyme's New Vic Theatre over the course of the next few months as part of the venue's autumn/winter season. To check out the theatre's whole programme of one-night shows, visit its website at newvictheatre.org.uk

Autin Dance out on tour...

The award-winning Autin Dance Theatre are touring to a number of Midlands venues this month.

The Birmingham-based interdisciplinary company's list of August appearances include stop-offs in Sandwell, Smethwick, Solihull and at Compton Verney. For full details, visit the dates section of their website at autindt.co.uk

Shropshire venue to host five roof garden shows

Shropshire's largest entertainment venue, Shrewsbury's Buttermarket, will host five special events on its Flamingo Terrace Bar & Roof Garden this month.



Kickstarting with the Abba Terrace Party on Saturday the 3rd, the venue will then present Summer Pop Fest (Sunday the 11th), Harry Styles Rooftop Party (Saturday the 17th), The Glam Rock Outdoor Party (Sunday the 18th) and 90s & 00s RnB Fest (Friday the 30th). For more information and to book tickets, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk



A Place In The Sun Live returns to the Midlands

Channel Four's popular overseas property show, *A Place In The Sun Live*, returns to Birmingham's NEC next month. Taking place at the venue from Friday 20 to Sunday 22 September, the long-established event brings together over 80 exhibitors from around the world, including legal advisors,

estate agents, currency specialists and visa consultants. Fans of the show will also be able to meet presenters Laura Hamilton and Jasmine Harman (pictured), who will share their experiences and insider tips on buying property abroad. For more information, visit aplaceinthesunevents.com/birmingham

Elephants on the march in the Midlands region

The streets, parks and open spaces of Sutton Coldfield, Lichfield and Tamworth are currently home to over 60 beautifully designed elephant sculptures. The free-to-view art trail is raising funds via sponsorship for St Giles Hospice and can be viewed until Sunday 8 September.



The Big Feast returns...

Stoke-on-Trent's Big Feast event returns for its 10th edition this month. Taking place in the city centre on Friday 23 & Saturday 24 August, the popular celebration features 'theatre, music, circus, dance and more'. For further information, visit appetite.org.uk

Hometown festive gig for Midlands soul star Jaki

Midlands-born soul singer Jaki Graham will play a special hometown Christmas show at Dudley Town Hall on Friday 20 December. The concert will be Jaki's first headline show in the Midlands for over three years and will see her joined by her seven-piece touring band. To find out more and book tickets, visit boroughhalls.co.uk

Look out for The Gruffalo!

There's some 'Olympic-sized' fun for fans of The Gruffalo to enjoy in Staffordshire's Cannock Chase Forest this month. As well as a trail to celebrate the 25th birthday of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's-book character, Forestry England is also inviting families to find hidden Gruffalo character signs and enjoy Olympics-inspired challenges. Further information can be found at the website forestryengland.uk



B:Music

Town Hall & Symphony Hall



Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse
Film with Live Orchestra
06 Sept | Symphony Hall



In Conversation with Bella Mackie:
With guest host **Joe Lycett**
08 Sept | Town Hall



Candice Brathwaite:
Manifesto
09 Sept | Town Hall



Carol Vorderman
Live & Outspoken!
24 Sept | Town Hall



Gareth Gates
Sings Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
05 Oct | Town Hall



BGT 2024 Finalist:
Jack Rhodes
31 Oct | Town Hall



Gareth Malone:
Sing-Along-a-Gareth
04 Nov | Town Hall



Pat Metheny:
Dream Box/MoonDial Tour
14 Nov | Symphony Hall



Monty Don
18 Nov | Symphony Hall



Jools Holland
and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra
27 & 28 Nov | Symphony Hall



B:Eats at Symphony Hall for fresh,
seasonal & delicious meals & snacks
11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show

bmusic.co.uk

B:Entertained
at Town Hall &
Symphony Hall!

Trip Advisor success for Tamworth Castle

Tamworth Castle remains in the top 10% of attractions when it comes to pleasing customers, according to new figures released by international travel website Trip Advisor. Commenting on the news, Stephen Gabriel, chief executive for Tamworth Borough Council, said: "This award is well deserved and demonstrates the hard work that our staff and volunteers provide every day."

Lichfield Garrick set to reopen after major refurb

Lichfield Garrick Theatre is currently undergoing a major refurbishment but will reopen on Saturday 31 August, in time for its autumn season.

The refurb is focusing on improving accessibility and enhancing the theatre's front-of-house areas, including box office, bars and toilets.

For more information and updates on the refurbishment project, visit the theatre's website at lichfieldgarrick.com



Alison Hammond back in Brum for more festive fun

Alison Hammond is to appear in Birmingham Hippodrome's pantomime for the second year running.

Birmingham-born Alison will star as the Magical Mermaid in a sure-to-be-spectacular production of Peter Pan, showing at the venue from Saturday 21 December to Sunday 2 February. Hippodrome favourite Matt Slack also features.

Commenting on the news of her Hippodrome return, Alison said: "Birmingham... I'm back! I loved every second of Jack And The Beanstalk last year - we had so much fun, but it went by so fast that I had to come back for another. Birmingham is home to the best audiences, and I can't wait to see them all in Neverland soon!"

For further information about the pantomime and to book tickets, visit the website at birminghamhippodrome.com

08 whatsonlive.co.uk



The Evolution of entertainment comes to Edgbaston

An epic drone show telling the story of time and space is making its debut at Edgbaston Stadium this autumn (Saturday 26 October). Providing audiences with a greener alternative to fireworks, Evolution: The Drone Light Show offers a front-row view of the world's biggest stage (the sky) and features more drones than ever before.

The narrated story starts with the explosive birth of the universe and then journeys through life on earth.

Tailored for all ages, the event also provides accessible seating options and facilities for those with sensory needs.

To find out more and book tickets, visit yuup.co/evolution/Birmingham

World Heritage Festival back at Ironbridge Gorge

The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival returns next month, complete with a host of events, activities and workshops. Taking place from Monday 26 August, the popular festival celebrates the history and culture of the town.

Attractions will include walks, talks, trails, arts, music & poetry, a street festival, a Taste of the Gorge event, a coracle regatta and heritage open days. For further information, visit ironbridgefestival.co.uk



Free-to-attend theatre performances for the holidays

Critically acclaimed arts initiative Black Country Touring (BCT) is providing

Midlands theatre-goers with a host of free-to-attend shows to enjoy during the school summer holiday.

With a focus on bringing professional touring productions to communities across the region, BCT is presenting an extensive programme of family-friendly entertainment at various venues throughout August, as well as film events, workshops, performances for adults and more...

Included in the line-up is Sleepy Seeds (pictured), an interactive family show boasting catchy songs and unusual instruments. The production is one of 28 free Black Country Touring presentations being performed as part of Sandwell Arts Festival. More free theatre can be seen at the Big Kids Theatre Weekend at West Smethwick Park & Pavilion.

To find out more about the line-up of shows, and when and where they're happening, visit bctouring.co.uk



WORLD CLASS ENTERTAINMENT

ATG
TICKETS

Regent Theatre



Michael Flatley's
**Lord of the Dance –
A Lifetime of
Standing Ovation**
Fri 6 – Sun 8 Sep



Peppa Pig is back in her
oinktastic new show
**Peppa Pig's
Fun Day Out**
Wed 18 & Thu 19 Sep



The theatrical event
of its generation
An Inspector Calls
Wed 25 – Sat 28 Sep



The journey has only
just begun
**Tim Peake – The Quest
To Explore Space**
Wed 11 Sep



Set to take audiences back
to the glory days of Disco
Disco Inferno
Sat 21 Sep



David Walliams' hilarious
story come to life!
Awful Auntie
Thu 3 – Sat 5 Oct

Victoria Hall



Pay tribute to Reggae royalty
**An Evening of
Classic Reggae**
Fri 6 Sep



Get ready for the biggest
Motown party of the year
The Magic of Motown
Thu 26 Sep



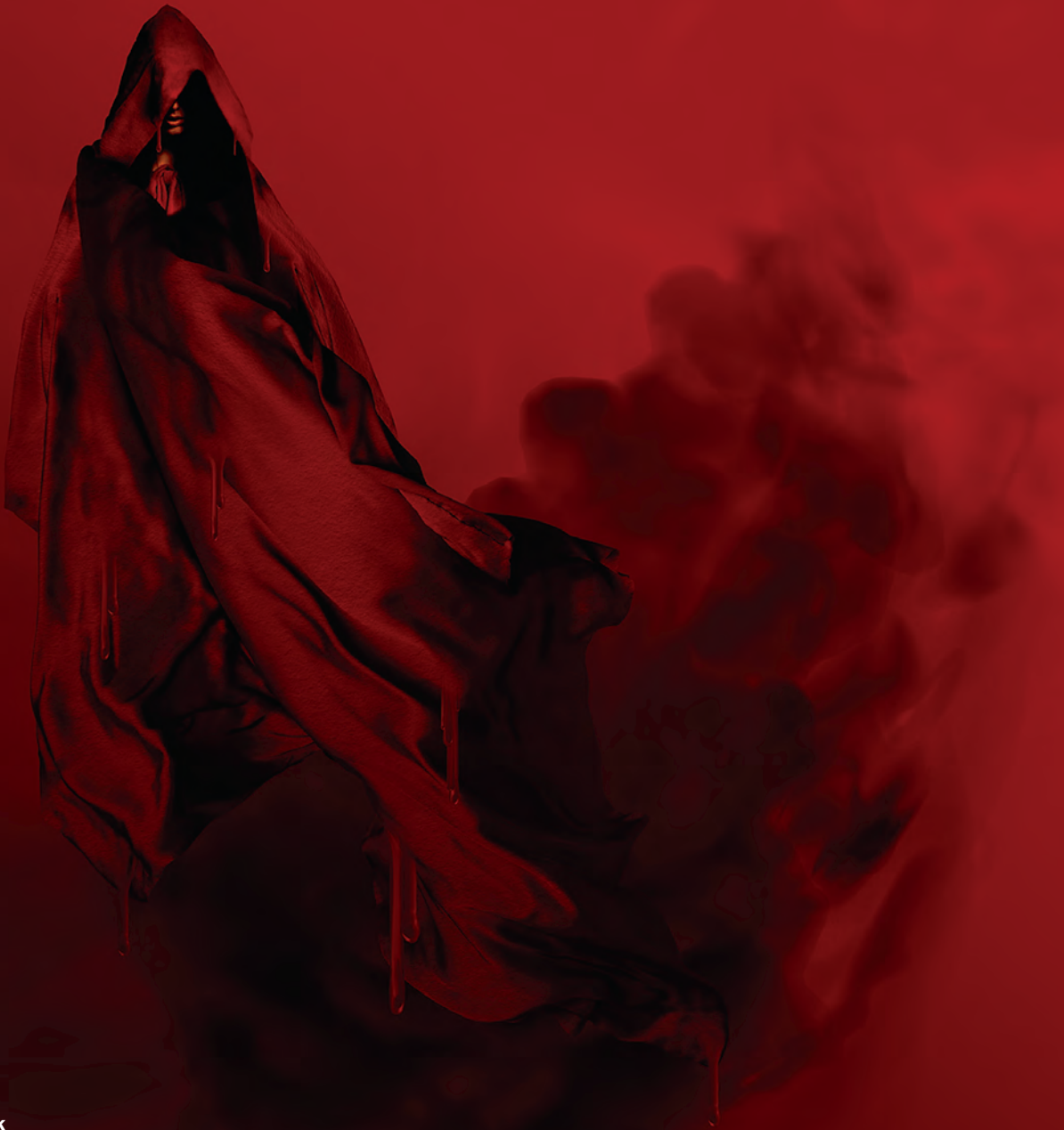
The ultimate tribute
to Moulin Rouge
Come What May
Fri 27 Sep



A blend of Classical
and Metal music
**The Rock Orchestra
by Candlelight**
Sun 29 Sep

HOWLIN' HORROR

**Theresa Heskins talks about staging Angela Carter's
The Company Of Wolves at the New Vic Theatre...**



A cult film in the 1980s, based on a short story from the 1970s, Angela Carter's gothic horror tale *The Company Of Wolves* has just been adapted for the stage and shows at Newcastle-under-Lyme's New Vic Theatre next month. Here, the venue's artistic director, Theresa Heskins, explains what audiences can expect from the show...

Angela Carter's short story *The Company Of Wolves* - a gothic horror reimagining of *Little Red Riding Hood* - makes its stage debut at Newcastle-under-Lyme's New Vic Theatre next month.

The terrific tale of terror, transformation, danger and desire, first published in 1979, earned glowing reviews for its original take on the classic fairytale. The hope now is that the stage version achieves similar critical acclaim. The all-new production uses a variety of theatrical tricks to bring to life all the thrills and chills of the classic story, including inventive staging, hi-tech soundscapes and circus-style acrobatics.

The production is co-directed by New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins and Vicki Amedume MBE, artistic director of contemporary circus company Upswing. The pair have previously collaborated on the New Vic's critically acclaimed productions of *Dracula* (2015), the Olivier Award-winning *The Worst Witch* (2020), and more recently, *The Princess And The Pea* (June 2024).

So why *The Company Of Wolves*? It turns out that Theresa has been waiting for decades to helm an adaptation of the story.

"I've wanted to do it my whole career - 35 years," she says. "It's taken me a long time to realise how to do it, and I'm glad I've waited, because until I met Vicki, I don't think I'd have done the right version."

"It feels as though this is just the right time for Carter's ahead-of-her-own-time brand of rule breaking, provocation and power politics to hit the stage," she adds, warming to the task.

"Another thing that's so interesting about it is that even though it's a well-known novel which is studied at GCSE level, it's never been done on stage in the 45 years since it was written."

The lack of stage version is especially surprising, given that adaptations of GCSE texts come with a guaranteed audience - but Theresa thinks there's a very good reason why it's never been attempted before.

"Because it's impossible!" she laughs. "It's

about people turning from humans into werewolves and back again; why would you attempt to do that on stage? With CGI [computer-generated imagery] it's become possible on screen, but on stage it's really difficult."

Fortunately she has a solution, which involves fusing elements of theatre and circus, a combination at the heart of the New Vic's ongoing partnership with Upswing.

"Vicki's a circus director who directs all sorts of aerial work all over the world, and a former circus performer herself. We're working on something that has lots of trees on stage. The wolves can climb up into the trees and sit on the branches, so we're managing the transition from human to werewolf that way."

The trees are all made out of Chinese poles, vertical poles that circus performers can climb, slide down and position themselves on. The narrow poles are only around two to three inches in diameter but can rise up to 30 feet in height.

"People who are skilled at it can just run up the poles like they're running along the floor - it's extraordinary to see. It's hard to describe as it's so remarkable. We've got four amazing international circus performers coming to play the wolves, and they'll be doing something that, to us mere mortals, looks totally superhuman."

Theresa claims the production will be "as much circus as it is play" - with the caveat being that it's very much *contemporary* circus, not clowns and elephants. But as much as it should be a wondrous spectacle, she expects it to be scary as well.

"The movement will be quite sinister but really exciting too, including the way we're going to use the space - not just the stage but the whole area above the audience as well."

"I could never do that - I've got no head for heights! To see them up there, right at the top of a seven-metre-high pole, hanging upside down, or falling down it, it really does make you gasp. It's really extraordinary."

The dynamic circus content, accompanied by

live sound effects and an evocative soundscape, should make for a dazzling production. But Theresa is also keen to acknowledge the importance of staying true to the drama and text of the original - not least for any students in the audience.

"I always try to stick quite tightly to the book when I'm adapting, as that's the honourable thing to do. If young people who are studying it come along, they will find that it's a really good refresher of the text or introduction to it."

The text is actually a short story that's part of a collection called *The Bloody Chamber*, all of which are adapted fairytales. The book was inspired by Angela Carter's work as a translator of French texts, which included *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (*Little Red Riding Hood*) by Charles Perrault.

"Translating these fairy stories inspired her to write her own more modern and anarchic versions. She talks about putting old wine in new bottles and shaking it up until it explodes."

Which sounds a little like what the new stage production is hoping to do. Theresa admits she's never seen director Neil Jordan's 1984 movie version, but a modest 1980 BBC radio play - adapted by the author - provided the starting point for a labour of love that has finally come to fruition, not to mention taken on a life of its own.

"I think it's going to be spectacular, which I think people will find most appealing. It's a really exciting horror story, so everything you might like about horror on television or on film you'll find in it, but also there's the very spectacular element of the circus. People won't have seen anything like it."

.....

The Company Of Wolves shows at the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, from Friday 20 September to Saturday 12 October

COMING SOON

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Breakfast Burrito



Line up:

31.07: Teveil Walker

07.08: D-Day 80th Anniversary with Beth Belle

14.08: Mini Midday Mantra with Mendi Mohinder Singh

21.08: Honor Isabella

28.08: Nashville Sounds in the Round

04.09: Indigo Marshall

B:Eats at Symphony Hall serves classic dishes with contemporary twists alongside light bites, snacks and drinks.

Enjoy fresh, seasonal, delicious food with a free performance from some of Birmingham's best music makers this summer.

bmusic.co.uk



ALFRESCO DINING

If the sun decides to show itself this month, there will only be one place in which to enjoy a delicious meal and glass or two of something relaxing: the great outdoors! Check out our six alfresco dining recommendations below...

The Boat Inn

Walsall Road, Muckley Corner, Lichfield, WS14 0BU

If you're looking to, er, push the *boat* out, then a trip to Michelin-recommended restaurant The Boat Inn is a must! Inspired by the land and local surroundings, The Boat is a restaurant and micro-farm - headed up by chef Liam Dillon - which prides itself on taking an honest approach to modern British cooking. Its ethos of seasonal, sustainable living is reflected in the casual fine-dining experience it provides for its customers.



Riverside Inn

Cound, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 6AF

Popular Shropshire venue Riverside Inn has recently reopened to the public following a six-figure renovation.

The beautiful grade II-listed building boasts astounding views over the River Sever and fascinating heritage around the former local railway.

The rural riverbank setting offers visitors a great opportunity to explore local walking paths before tucking into some of the pub's tasty food & drink options.



Wyle Blue

19 Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury, SY1 1XB

Just when you think Shrewsbury gem Wyle Blue couldn't get any better, it does! Having recently undergone an extensive refurb, the venue now focuses more on food & drink than retail. But don't worry - a selection of homeware items remain available to purchase! A new indoor bar complements the existing secret garden and courtyard, while the new menu features small plates (burrata, pork belly, salt & pepper squid, arancini and more) and sharing boards.



Fiume

5a Bridgnorth Road, Compton, Wolverhampton, WV6 8AB

This independent, family-run Italian bar, restaurant & café offers cuisine 'with a southern Italian influence and a fresh twist'. The à la carte menu features everything from pasta dishes and pizza to fresh fish and meats. Oh, and make sure you don't leave without trying the tiramisu! Customers have the option of dining alfresco whilst watching canal boats pass by - and dog owners will be pleased to know that they can take along their four-legged friend(s).



Embers

Station Road, Coalbrookdale, Telford, TF8 7DR

Cafe by day, pop-up events space by night, the former Green Wood Cafe has gone from strength to strength since Adam Purnell, aka Shropshire Lad, took the reins last year. Labelled 'the home of accessible, fire-cooked cafe food', Embers is located in a unique space in the woodland and offers an extensive breakfast and lunch menu. Favourites include the Korean shortrib pastrami reuben and the 'kimcheese' toastie. Fireclasses are available to book, too.



Lunar

World of Wedgwood, Barlaston, ST12 9ER

Offering a unique dining experience at the home of Stoke-on-Trent's Wedgwood, Lunar boasts a diverse selection of menus reflecting Staffordshire's rich heritage. Whether you're visiting for a leisurely lunch, an indulgent multi-course meal, or a relaxed Sunday lunch, there's something to delight every palate. Although mainly an indoor venue, a small number of outdoor tables are available for those who're eager to soak up summertime rays.



QUEEN OF BLUES



Elkie Brooks talks to What's On ahead of her
Shrewsbury Folk Festival debut...

With an impressive 60-plus years in the music industry behind her and a phenomenal 20 albums under her belt, Elkie Brooks continues to hold (quite rightly) the title of British Queen of Blues. Kicking off her new tour, The Long Farewell, at Shrewsbury Folk Festival late this month, she recently took time out to chat to What's On about playing live gigs, touring with the stars, and being a black belt in Aikido...

Singer Elkie Brooks is looking forward to headlining Shrewsbury Folk Festival this month, but she recalls that some of her early festivals were far from comfortable.

"Some places that I've done years ago were terrible backstage," says Elkie, whose career has spanned more than 60 years. "I've been in the business a long time, and when I was in bands in the 70s, with Dada and Vinegar Joe, we were always doing festivals. You got used to the backstage, and I used to carry a little screen so that I could just go behind the screen and get changed in the same room as all the lads because they just never sorted out separate facilities.

"And there have been times when I've done these festivals before as a solo artist, where I've actually changed in the van which belonged to our guy who did the PA equipment. That's what it was like in those days."

As a child, Elkie sang at weddings and bar mitzvahs, with her unofficial debut coming at a club in Manchester when she was 13. Her big break came at the age of 15 when she won a local talent competition.

She released her first single, a cover of Etta James' 'Something's Got A Hold On Me', in 1964 and since then has recorded a string of top-10 albums and singles, including Pearl's 'A Singer', which reached number eight in the UK Singles Chart, and 'No More The Fool', which reached number five. Her 1981 album, 'Pearls', sold more than a million copies and charted for 79 weeks, making Elkie the biggest-selling female album artist in the history of the UK pop charts at that time. Known as the British Queen of Blues, her career has seen her working or touring with a host of top stars, including The Beatles, Small Faces, Cat Stevens, Robert Palmer and The Animals - so she's had plenty of time to hone her live festival skills.

"I have to appreciate that my fans will want to hear all my hits, and I'll be doing most of them which are good live. I think I'd get lynched if I didn't do Pearl's 'A Singer', and 'Sunshine After The Rain', and 'Fool If You Think It's Over', and 'Don't Cry Out Loud'. So I'll obviously be doing all those, but I shall be incorporating a few other things as well

which are good live songs to keep everyone going.

"My attitude is one of complete and utter focus and concentration on the music, and if I deter from that I do not enjoy myself. That has always been my attitude. When you've been 19 years old and singing at The Beatles' Christmas Show and having all these screaming girls just screaming all the way through your performance and wanting The Beatles and not really taking any notice of you, you become a bit tough about it all. My attitude is 'I'm going to sing this, and if you want to enjoy it, then please, that would be wonderful, but if you don't, I'm going to do it anyway!'"

Taking place at West Midlands Showground across the bank holiday weekend, Shrewsbury Folk Festival 2024 has a packed line-up which also features Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Gangstagrass and Eric Bibb, as well as a strong presence in terms of women performers; Jacqui McShee, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Kathryn Tickell, Mary Black, Ward Thomas and Mary Gauthier all feature on the bill.

Elkie admits that it wasn't always easy being a female singer breaking onto the scene in the 1960s.

"Back in the day it was more or less what you looked like, and there is still an element of that now. But there have been, and there are, some wonderful singers who were incredibly talented, and their talent has seen them through. My first influences were women like Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Dakota Staton. They were extremely talented, with great voices, great phrasing and great pitching, and that's how they got through.

"To me, the music has always been the most important thing; that's what I care about. I think it's wonderful that so many women are coming through and have always been there."

Elkie's 2024 tour, during which she plays Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn in November, is called 'The Long Farewell' - a wry look at the fact she turns 80 next year.

"I'm thankfully at the moment reasonably fit for my age. I work out most days - I do a good hour. I'm a black belt in Aikido. I took my

black belt when I was 50 and I have continued training.

"So I am quite fit, but then I'll have to judge it year by year. I still might be doing lots of shows in a couple of years' time... I just have to take it as it comes, but it's going to be a very, very long farewell tour, I hope."

Not only does Elkie work on her physical fitness levels, she also ensures she continues training her voice.

"For my 70th birthday my wonderful family bought me this fantastic piano, a baby grand piano, and I sit and play every night - and the neighbours are very happy," she laughs. "I practise most days; very rarely I don't do at least an hour sitting at the piano and singing. I have the routine that I do because if you don't use it, you lose it.

"I would say to people who are starting out and want to be singers in the business that it really helps if you can play an instrument like the piano or the guitar. I'm not bad on keyboards, I can accompany myself and I love it, but I'm absolutely awful at the guitar. You know Phoebe - the woman who tries to play the guitar in Friends? I make her sound like Eric Clapton!"

Elkie is also keeping busy with new material - and festival-goers may receive a sneak preview.

"My son Jay and his wife Joanna manage me, and we're working on an album. We're releasing the album in sections - three or four songs, and then a few months later we'll do a few more, and the album in its entirety hopefully by the end of the year; if not, the beginning of next year. So at the festival I might do some songs from the new album - along with lots of hits."

.....

Elkie Brooks plays the final day of Shrewsbury Folk Festival, which takes place at the West Mid Showground from Friday 23 to Monday 26 August. Elkie then returns to the region with The Long Farewell Tour, performing at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Wednesday 6 November and Birmingham Town Hall on Friday 28 February

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Festivals coming to the region in August & September

Lakefest

Eastnor Castle, Wed 7 - Sun 11 August

Priding itself on putting family first, Lakefest evolved from a giant music and cider festival at Croft Farm Waterpark, Tewkesbury, back in 2011, when performers included The Wurzels and entertainment came in the form of skittles and welly wanging.

Alongside an always-impressive line-up of music acts, the get-together also features fairground rides and a good selection of family-friendly activities.

2024 line-up includes: The Stranglers, The Libertines (pictured), Rudimental, Olly Murs, Jake Bugg and The Twang



Shrewsbury Folk Festival

West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury, Fri 23 - Mon 26 August

A highlight of any folk fan's calendar, this four-day fest brings together centuries of musical tradition in one picturesque setting. Steeped in history, the border town of Shrewsbury provides an ideal backdrop for the festival's mash-up of modern, medieval

and everything in between, where grassroots cultures collide in dynamic fusion styles. Take along the whole family for dance and workshops as well as live music.

2024 line-up includes: Elkie Brooks, Eric Bibb, Bella Hardy, Lady Made, Manran, Ladysmith Black Mambazo (pictured), Mary Black, Peatbog Faeries, Spiers & Boden and The Magpies

Lichfield Festival Of Folk

Various locations across the city, Sun 15 September - Sat 5 October

A friendly event which has developed a devoted following of discerning music fans, the Lichfield Festival Of Folk - or L2F, as it's otherwise known - features not only an impressive programme of music but also free community-based get-togethers, an art & heritage procession, art and songwriting competitions, song sessions and more.

2024 line-up includes: Painted Sky, Granny's Attic (pictured), The Magpies, Danny Bradley, Jim Causley and Miranda Sykes



Moseley Folk & Arts Festival

Moseley Park, Birmingham, Fri 30 August - Sun 1 September

Tucked away behind Birmingham's busy streets, the beautiful Moseley Park is one of the city's hidden gems, transformed each year into an enchanting escape by one of the Midlands' best-loved music festivals. Traditional folk & low-fi acoustic sets blend

seamlessly with dreamy electropop, psychedelia and indie favourites against a magical backdrop of bright hippie colours, lush foliage and a beautiful lake. Alongside the music, the festival - which is now in its 18th year - also features a mixture of activities for all ages to enjoy.

2024 line-up includes: Belle & Sebastian, Levellers, Dexys, Flogging Molly, Kate Rusby, CMAT (pictured), Lisa O'Neill and Beans On Toast

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Festivals coming to the region in August & September

Off The Tracks Summer Festival

Donington Park Farmhouse, Castle Donington, Fri 30 August - Sun 1 September

Voted by the Times as the top 'small is beautiful' festival, the family-friendly Off The Tracks event has been around for three decades and is many things to many people. "It's friendly, relaxing, memorable, exciting, a place to escape and a place to meet new friends," say its organisers. "Once you've been, we bet you'll want to come back! Flee to the countryside, let your hair down, chill out and escape the humdrum of everyday life."

2024 line-up includes: Peatbog Faeries (pictured), Dub Pistols, The Beat feat Rankin Jnr, Banco De Gaia, The Leylines, Black Water County, Dr Trippy and Roving Crows



Bromyard Folk Festival

Bromyard Town Football Club, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 September

Established in 1968 and situated in the beautiful rolling green fields of Herefordshire, Bromyard has become a much-loved celebration of folk music. The event sees some of the finest national and international folk musicians headlining a programme that also includes workshops, ceilidhs, dance displays, children's entertainment and a traditional craft market.

2024 line-up includes: Martin Simpson (pictured), Oysterband, Spiers & Boden, Fay Field Trio, O'Hooley & Tidow, Gnoss, Granny's Attic and Mick Ryan



Centenary Square Summer Series

Centenary Square, Birmingham, Fri 23 - Mon 26 August

This brand-new outdoor concert series will transform Birmingham's iconic Centenary Square into a hub of live music, bookended by headline artists from across the city. With ambitions to be one of the greenest events on the summer calendar, the series will be powered solely by the national grid and free of single-use plastic.

2024 line-up includes: The Streets (pictured), Jungle, Cian Ducrot and Ocean Colour Scene



Páirc Festival

New Irish Centre, Birmingham, Sat 24 & Sun 25 August

Returning for a third year with a two-day celebration of Irish music and culture, Páirc will feature a mix of international headline acts and local talent. The event promises fun for all the family and comes complete with street food, beer and festival merchandise.

2024 line-up includes: Bob Geldof (pictured), Nathan Carter, Boyzlife, The Tumbling Paddies, Riverdance, Whistlin' Donkeys and Ruaile Buaile

Crooked House In The Park

Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sun 25 August

After a sold-out 2023 edition, Crooked House In The Park returns for 2024. Expect 12 hours of house, garage, trance, old skool and drum & bass across six stages from world-renowned DJs, artists and performers, all combined with phenomenal sound and visuals.

On top of this, VIP and VVIP areas, immersive brand activations, on-site games & competitions, and a huge variety of food & drink vendors will be available to elevate your experience.

2024 line-up includes: Claptone (pictured), Wilkinson, Hannah Wants, Eats Everything, Low Steppa, So Solid Crew, Mungos HiFi, David Penn and Sasasas



Camp Festival

Weston Park, Shropshire/Staffordshire border, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 August

Camp Festival is making a welcome return to the Midlands following two successful years. A stand-alone event (but boasting all the unique and essential family-friendly elements of Dorset's original Camp Festival), the four-day get-together is organised by Josie & Rob da Bank and features a fancy-dress parade, 'an action-packed accumulation of screen-free activities in the expansive green spaces' and plenty of musical madness.

2024 line-up includes: Rick Astley, Orbital, Paloma Faith (pictured), The Darkness, Jake Shears, Faithless McFly, The K's, Craig Charles and The Amy Winehouse Band



A SINGULAR SENSATION

Hit musical A Chorus Line dances into Birmingham Hippodrome



Broadway comes to Brum next month when award-winning musical A Chorus Line stops off at Birmingham Hippodrome. The story focuses on a group of dancers as they're put through their paces during an audition. Actor, dancer & choreographer Adam Cooper stars in the currently touring production. What's On recently caught up with him to find out more about this latest version of the hit show, which celebrates its 50th anniversary next year...

The showbiz musical A Chorus Line is one of theatre's success stories. Opening in 1975, it became a stage sensation, picking up a host of awards and playing Broadway for 15 years. Indeed, back in the day, it was the longest-running production in Broadway history.

The musical takes audiences behind the scenes at an audition, where a group of dancers have pinned their hopes on getting a slot in the chorus line. But this is to be no typical audition; director Zach doesn't only want to see their dancing skills, he also wants to learn what makes them tick, so demands they open up on their pasts and their most personal stories.

In the Leicester Curve production visiting Birmingham Hippodrome next month, the role of Zach is played by Adam Cooper, who also took the part when the production - helmed by Curve's artistic director, Nikolai Foster, and choreographed by Ellen Kane - was staged in 2021.

With a CV including being a principal dancer with Royal Ballet, playing the iconic role of the Swan/Stranger in Matthew Bourne's all-male Swan Lake, an appearance in the film Billy Elliot and countless West End shows, Adam says the role is ideal for him.

"The thing about Zach is that he's sort of a version of me in a way - I spend half of my time as a director/choreographer and half as an actor, so I could easily tap into his character.

"He's very different to me. I'm not quite as blunt as he is, and I don't lose my temper as much as he does, but I certainly know where he's coming from in trying to find different ways of discovering what people are really like."

As the would-be chorus-line members open up to Zach, he emerges as a Svengali-like figure, holding the fate of each of them in his hands. But Adam is also determined that audiences get to see the character's softer side.

"Interestingly he's normally played a lot harsher than I play him; the kind of human side of him doesn't come out so much. But that was something I was very keen to do because, for me, that is what director/choreographers are like these days. They are much more sensitive to people's feelings, rather than just 'This is what I want, and we're just going to get on and do it.'

"Zach definitely has that side to him because he's a very driven person. He comes from a background of Broadway, and a lot of them

used to work like that. But because in Nikolai's production Zach is a lot more present on stage than in the original production, I have to react honestly to the stories I'm hearing.

"If someone is telling me a story and it moves me, then I can't ignore that as a character; it would be inhuman of me. That is what is really nice about this production - it makes Zach much more human, a more rounded character, and you see many, many sides to him. It also makes it a much more rounded experience for me to do."

A Chorus Line may depict the glamour of Broadway but it also shows just how hard life can be for a performer.

"You have these big dance calls. I've done auditions with something like 60 people in the room. You're teaching all of them the routine or multiple routines, and then you have to cut people. Then you go into the next routine and you cut some more. It's brutal in that respect. You do something and you stay on or get cut, and that's how the day progresses.

"What's so great about A Chorus Line is that it really shows the sacrifices people have to make in order just to get onto the line, into the audition, let alone get the job. Performers have to have this kind of resilience; you go for an audition and it's a 50/50 whether you're going to get it; and then, if you don't, you go on to the next, and then you go on to the next. It's a way of life that dancers and actors and singers get used to, but it's not nice and requires a lot of guts."

A Chorus Line also showcases the highs of showbusiness - those moments when the performers finally step out into the limelight.

"It's also about hope. These people striving for their dream because that is what they have given their life towards. It's about being a performer, and everybody has to go through hardships on the way to achieving their dreams. Most people have to work really hard and prove themselves."

Adam certainly knows the work involved. Having set his sights on a career on the stage from childhood, he studied at both Arts Educational School and Royal Ballet School before initially performing as a classical ballet dancer with Royal Ballet. He then joined Matthew Bourne's Adventures In Motion Pictures company, before taking on roles in musicals such as Singin' In The Rain, The Wizard Of Oz, Guys And Dolls and White Christmas. He's also directed productions of Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Candide and The

Rake's Progress, and choreographed shows including On Your Toes, The Merry Widow and Carousel.

Now in his 50s, how has he made the transition from principal ballet dancer to West End performer and creator?

"I started out as a tap dancer and a singer, which helps. Between the ages of 11 and 16, I went to a theatre school which did everything, so I was very much an all-rounder. It was only when I got to the age of 16 that I decided to concentrate on ballet and joined the Royal Ballet. Then I left and joined Matthew's company for a few years, and then I thought 'I want to be doing what I set out to do.' I never started in the business to be a ballet dancer; I started dancing to be a theatre performer - I wanted to be Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly - so when the time felt right, I said to my agent 'Can we see if I can get some work in that field?'

"Luckily people took a punt on me, but I probably didn't feel like a proper actor until a few years later when I did Guys And Dolls in the West End with Patrick Swayze, among other people. That was the time I thought 'I'm a bona fide actor' because I was doing a show that was just acting and singing and no dancing required. So it felt like I was proving myself as an actor for the first time.

"I've also worked as a choreographer and director, and I'm lucky because I've never stopped working. I really enjoy it. I love being a part of the whole scene, from whichever direction it comes."

And now Adam is looking forward to sharing that enjoyment of theatre with Hippodrome patrons when A Chorus Line visits the venue next month.

"I hope audiences will feel like they've gone through an emotional evening. It's an emotional show, but it's the most uplifting show as well, because the production is stunning - the numbers, the choreography, the singing, the acting, the band are brilliant.

"I think with this production we've proved it's as good as the original. Now is the chance for it to be shown to a whole new generation, and that's exciting. It's an iconic musical very rarely done, and this production of it is the most exciting, vivid and emotional version that they will see."

.....
A Chorus Line shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 September



Hamilton Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sat 31 August

Hamilton barely needs an introduction. The smash-hit musical celebrating one of America's founding fathers was first performed nearly 10 years ago. Since then, it has become an international sensation, with its style, soundtrack and storytelling changing the landscape of musical theatre.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's lyrics and music are nothing short of genius. Driving the story forward with barely a moment's break, they still allow for changes of pace and intensity throughout the show - and

where else can you see political debate via rap battle?!

The soundtrack is well known to fans, and the cast members are pitch perfect, subtly making the touring version their own. They really do breathe new life into this musical phenomenon.

Almost a decade after its first performance, Hamilton is still riding the wave of success - and for very good reason.

Whether you've never seen the show before or you know it inside out, be in The Room Where It Happens...

Read our five star review at whatsonlive.co.uk

101 Dalmatians The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 20 - Sat 24 August

If you're dotty about dogs, then this is a show you'd be absolutely barking mad to miss.

Based on the same-named 1956 novel by Dodie Smith, 101 Dalmatians tells the story of delightful dog duo Pongo and Perdi, a loving couple whose life with their 15 puppies is pretty much perfect. Until, that is, the little ones are stolen to order for the ever-so-wicked Cruella De Vil, who wants to make herself a spotty coat out of their fur. Faye Tozer steps in for Kym Marsh - who's away filming the next series of television's Waterloo Road - as this new touring production makes a welcome return to the Midlands.



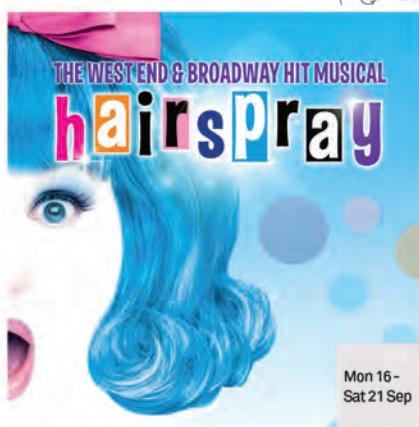
The School For Scandal

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Fri 6 September

When Sir Peter Teazle marries a young country girl, he assumes that her innocence and naivety will ensure she's of little bother to him. But he's reckoned without his new wife's decision to take up with three of the most outrageous scandalmongers in town...

Sheridan's 18th-century comedy here receives the RSC treatment, with the Company promising 'an exuberant feast of big wigs and even bigger laughs' in a show that they've 'styled to the nines with period flair'. Read our five star review at whatsonlive.co.uk

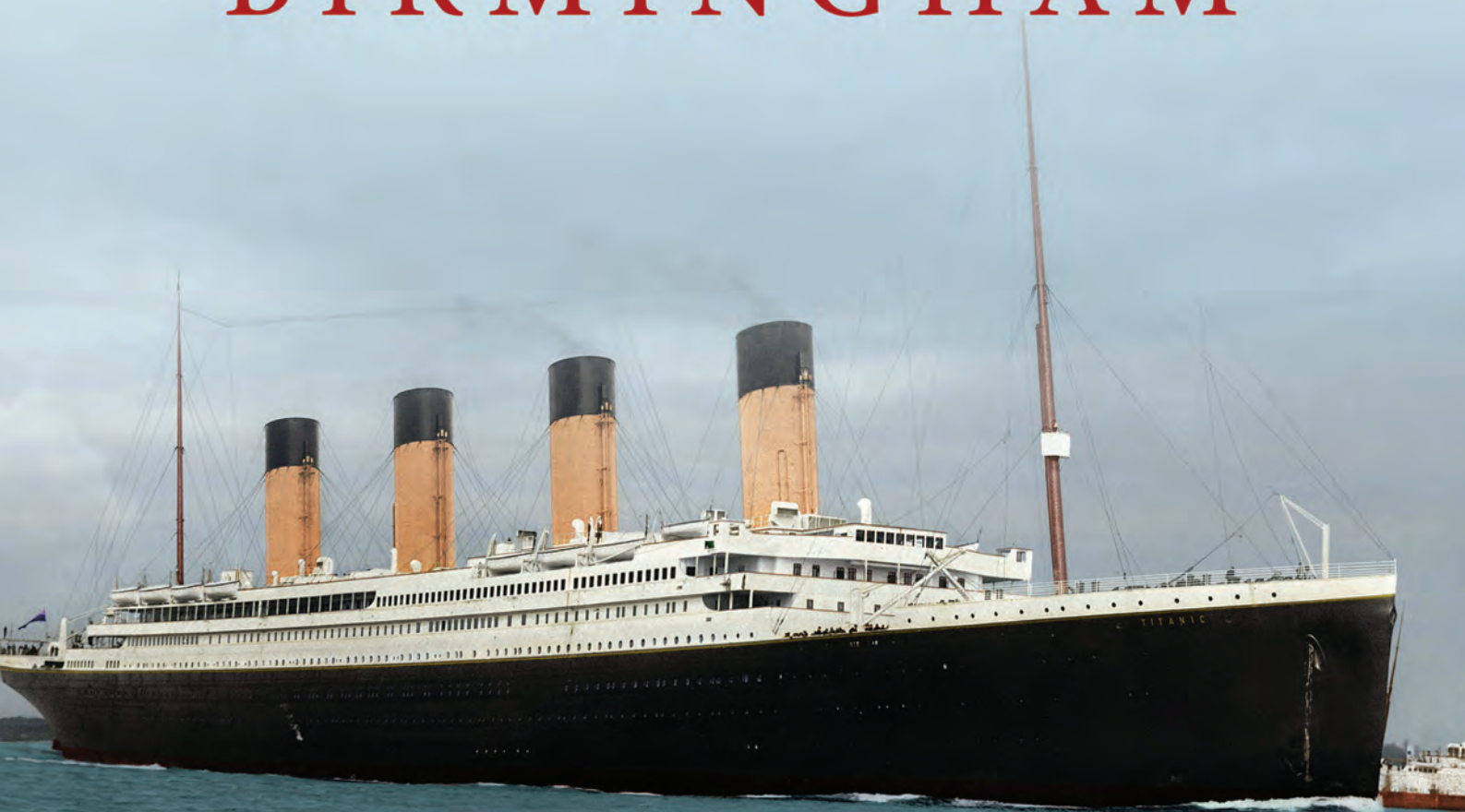




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FULL CIRCLE

Wolverhampton-born Simeon Beckett's CV includes Everybody's Talking About Jamie and Back To The Future. This summer he's back on home turf in the Midlands, performing in the ensemble and as George Eaker in multi-award-winning musical Hamilton at Birmingham Hippodrome (until Saturday 31 August). We caught up with him to find out more...



Where did you go to school, Simeon, and what did you get up to as a youngster?

I grew up in Wolverhampton and went to primary school in Ettingshall, and then to secondary school at Moseley Park. I used to play a lot of football and played for Sunday teams Bentley and Wallstones, so I'd train there once or twice a week and then we'd play matches on a Sunday. I also enjoyed going down to pitches at Goals in Bilston and playing there with friends.

And now you live in London?

I moved in 2013 to train at the Urdang Academy. I did a foundation course for a year and then a three-year dance & musical theatre course, before graduating in 2017.

Can you tell us about the audition process and how you found out that you'd been cast in Hamilton?

The auditions were a mixture of dance,

singing, acting, and then performing all three back-to-back. The first time I actually auditioned for Hamilton was 2017, but in the past it's never worked out timing-wise with other jobs I've had. I found out I'd been cast this time when my agent called me. She started to play some Hamilton music down the phone and asked if I'd like a part in Hamilton, which was pretty cool! That was last year, and I then started rehearsals in late August, into September, before the tour started in November.

Do you have any favourite haunts in Wolverhampton and Birmingham?

A lot has changed since I moved to London - there's been so much redevelopment, and some places don't exist anymore. But one of my favourite things to do is get a haircut at my childhood barbers, Markies Barbers and Prestige Barbers. When you're on tour and working away, you have to try and compromise with those things, but now that I'm home, it's nice that I can have my hair cut by someone I trust and who I've gone to for many years. I also enjoy going to the dance studios that I've taught at before, with people who I used to train with when I first started. It's really nice to go back to those.

What does it mean to be performing at Birmingham Hippodrome?

It means a lot, mainly because it's my local venue and close to all my friends and family, but also because I performed in my first ever theatre show there. I did a show called Breakin' Convention with a dance company called Dance Nuvo, and it was my first time performing in a big theatre in front of hundreds of people. So it's a real full-circle moment for me now that I'm here with Hamilton, and it's so special to have those moments.

Do you have family and friends coming to see the show whilst you're here?

My mum came last week, and it was really nice to have her in the audience; she is so supportive of me. My sister also came to see it, and after the show she asked if it was actually me speaking, or if it's pre-recorded and we mimed, because she had never heard me do an American accent before. When I did it for her again, she was mesmerised by it; I found that really funny!

A lot of my other friends and family have also come to see it, or will come to see it, so it's really nice to have that support while I'm here.

Tell us about your role in the show?

I'm part of the ensemble and I also play George Eaker, who has a duel with Alexander Hamilton's son, Philip, in act two. Hamilton is very much an ensemble show and is carried a lot by the ensemble, I would say. We're hardly ever off-stage. It's a very busy show for me; in fact, it's probably one of the busiest shows I've ever done - it's non-stop! It challenges me every day, which keeps it interesting and fun.

Why should Midlands audiences go to see Hamilton?

Mainly because it's a really fun show. It's one of the best shows out there, not even being biased! The choreography, the music, everything is just great, and I think the message resonates with a lot that's going on in the world right now.

Hamilton is a show that I've always wanted to do, and like I said, I've been auditioning for it since 2017, so it's really nice to be able to say that I've done it now.

.....
Hamilton continues its run at Birmingham Hippodrome until Saturday 31 August



Pretty Woman The Musical

The Alexandra, Birmingham,
Tues 20 - Sat 24 August

Based on the still-adored 1990 movie that turned Julia Roberts into a superstar, the musical stage version of *Pretty Woman* has become quite a phenomenon in its own right, with record-breaking runs on Broadway and in the West End.

Co-written by the film's director, the late Garry Marshall - best known as the man behind 1970s TV hits *Happy Days*, *Laverne & Shirley* and *Mork & Mindy* - the show comes complete with original music & lyrics by pop superstar Bryan Adams (and his long-term collaborator, Jim Vallance).

Two-time Tony Award winner Jerry Mitchell both choreographs and directs the production. Amber Davies, Oliver Savile, Ore Oduba and Natalie Paris take the lead roles.

The Cherry Orchard

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Wed 28 - Sat 31 August; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 10 - Sat 14 September

Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* is not only his final play but also arguably his greatest - although *The Seagull*, *Three Sisters* and *Uncle Vanya* certainly provide some stiff competition with regard to that particular accolade.

An extraordinary mixture of tragedy and comedy, the play is set in a fast-changing world during the early years of the 20th century and the dying days of the Russian aristocracy.

The story finds Madame Lubov - a landowner fallen on hard times - returning to the family estate (which includes an expansive and famous cherry orchard) just as it's about to go under the auctioneer's hammer...

The play is being presented by Here To There Productions, a Shropshire company dedicated to bringing 'challenging and entertaining' shows to rural theatres across the West Midlands.

Julius Caesar

Brueton Park, Solihull, Tues 13 August

When Julius Caesar is assassinated by a group of prominent senators, one of his staunchest supporters, Mark Antony, manages not only to turn the crowd against the conspirators but also to defeat them in



Credit: Charlie Mackenzie-Barrow

battle...

But let's avoid getting too bogged down in the whys and wherefores of Shakespeare's extremely serious tale of conspiracy and bloody murder - given that it's here being presented by zany funsters Oddsocks! The ever-entertaining band of theatricals are promising their audiences thrills and spills aplenty, including the tearing of togas, the swishing of swords, some splendidly preposterous puppetry and the biggest battle scene ever created by five actors. In short, it's time to brace yourself for the kind of laughs you have no right to expect in a production of *Julius Caesar*...

The Merry Wives Of Windsor

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 7 September

Mistresses Page and Ford believe it's high time the fat knight Sir John Falstaff was taught a lesson. After all, the big fella's been courting them both, claiming that each is his one and only true love and caring not a jot that they're both married! A tale of buckbaskets, frolicsome fairies and men dressed as women, this is Shakespeare at his comic best. Expect your sides to be as near to splitting as they're ever likely to be when engaging with the works of Stratford's most famous son.



First Date

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Wed 7 - Sun 25 August

This award-winning Broadway musical about the pitfalls of romantic fix-ups is here receiving its UK premiere.

When blind-date newbie Aaron is set up with serial dater Casey, a casual drink at a busy New York restaurant turns into an unexpectedly high-stakes dinner. With other patrons in the eatery transforming into supportive best friends, manipulative exes and protective parents, the unlucky-in-love dining companions find themselves teetering on the brink of a dating disaster... Michali Dante, Royaka, Lowri Hamer, Tom Kiteley and Joey Warne star.

The Two Gentlemen Of Verona

Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 22 - Sat 24 August

One of Shakespeare's very earliest comedies, *The Two Gentlemen Of Verona* is little known but lots of fun. The plot centres on male friendship and betrayal, as Proteus and Valentine, two lifelong friends, fall out over the Duke of Milan's daughter... This open-air production is created and performed by the RSC Next Generation Act young company, which features 24 people aged between 13 and 18 and drawn from across the country.



Image: Holloway Garden Theatre

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The Wizard Of Oz

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, until Sun 4 August

RuPaul's Drag Race UK winner The Vivienne stars as the Wicked Witch of the West in this classic story from the imagination of L Frank Baum.

A marvellous mix of magic, mayhem and munchkins, the terrific tale tells the story of Kansas resident Dorothy Gale and her unexpected trip over the rainbow to the colourful land of Oz.

Featuring the iconic original score from the Oscar-winning MGM film - including Follow The Yellow Brick Road, We're Off To See The Wizard and (of course) Over The Rainbow - this hit show visits the Midlands direct from the London Palladium and includes additional songs by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.

The Adventures Of Doctor Dolittle

Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton, Tues 13 August; Hartshill Park, Telford, Tues 20 August

Doctor Dolittle is a friend to all manner of furry, four-legged creatures. And what's more, he can even speak to them in their very own languages...



This latest stage adaptation of the ever-popular Hugh Lofting story is performed by Illyria, who have a long and impressive history of presenting highly engaging theatre 'under the stars'.

The Importance Of Being Earnest

Greyfriars, Worcester, Fri 16 August

Oscar Wilde's famous work is a rightly adored slice of farce that sits in the upper echelons of British comic theatre. The story revolves around the attempts of Jack to marry his true love, Gwendolen, in spite of the fact that Algernon is masquerading as Jack's wayward brother Ernest in order to see his exquisite ward, Cecily. Add the ingredient of the redoubtable Lady Bracknell and there's little wonder that disaster looms large on Jack's horizon... Presented by Tethered Wits.

Masters Of Deception

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 31 August

Lance Corporal Richard Jones has followed up 12 years of service in the British Army with a hugely successful career as a magician. The only prestidigitator ever to win Britain's Got Talent, Richard has also headlined a sell-out show in the London West End and will no doubt be packing out theatres across the country with this latest offering. He's joined for the occasion by fellow Britain's Got Talent contestants Matricks Illusion, who reached the show's semi-final two years ago.

I Wish My Life Were Like A Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 30 August

With multiple five-star reviews to recommend it, this comedic musical revue has headed

out on tour having previously enjoyed four Edinburgh Fringe seasons and two London runs. Promising to reveal everything you could ever want to know about musical theatre, the show lifts the lid on awful auditions, debilitating dance routines, mid-performance mishaps and backstage backstabbing - 'plus those magical moments that make it all worthwhile'...



Dial M For Mayhem

Malvern Theatres, Wed 28 - Sat 31 August

A shepherd and his TV-watching sheepdog, a twinkle-eyed AA man, a missing child's pet black rat and an ageing and flatulent soap star: all play their part in this brand-new farce from Middle Ground Theatre Company. Set in 1991, the show follows a group of travelling actors as they battle against the odds to present classic 1950s thriller Dial M For Murder to the remote communities of the Scottish Highlands and Islands.



Pride And Prejudice

Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Mon 26 August

Wonderful comic characters abound in Jane Austen's famous romantic story. The foolish and marriage-obsessed Mrs Bennet is relentless



in her pursuit of suitable men for her five daughters to marry, her increasingly desperate quest generating all manner of muddle and mayhem in the process... This much-loved and oft-performed story is here presented by the well-established Chapterhouse, a company with an admirable reputation when it comes to producing high-quality theatrical fare for performance in the great outdoors.



Summer Holiday Films

Check our website for our regular family screenings including *Inside Out 2* and *Despicable Me 4*.

Rubbish Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet

Sun 13 Oct 2.30pm

Enemies. Balconies. Kissing... sausage rolls!?

Nick Cope's Family Show

Sun 20 Oct 11am

Songs for children and their families

The Baddies

Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm

A laugh-out-loud riot for all the family

Family Singing

Sun 27 Oct & Sun 17 Nov 11:30am

An opportunity for all the family to sing together.

My First Concert: Our Musical World

Thu 31 Oct 1pm

A relaxed, interactive concert for babies, children and their adults.

The Smeds and The Smoos

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Theatre previews from around the region



As You Like It

Biddulph Grange Gardens, Staffs, Fri 23 August; The Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Sat 24 August; Whittington Castle, Shropshire, Sun 25 August

Banished by her usurping uncle to the Forest of Arden and revelling in the naturalness of her surroundings, Rosalind - accompanied by cousin Celia and Touchstone the fool - finds a happiness she didn't know existed...

Expect 'live music, bold characters, audience interaction and plenty of laughs' in Folksy Theatre's new production of Shakespeare's timeless and highly likable comedy.

The company is also presenting outdoor performances of Angelica Sprocket's Pockets at Midlands venues this month (see below).

The Railway Children

Tewkesbury Abbey, Fri 9 August; Hill Close Gardens, Warwick, Sat 10 August; Tamworth Castle, Sun 18 August

Edith Nesbitt's famous tale, which remains best known from the 1971 film version, tells the gentle story of an Edwardian family whose life is unexpectedly turned upside-down.

Days stretch endlessly for Bobbie, Peter and Phyllis in their new home of Three Chimneys, a house near a railway in a Yorkshire village. Mysteriously separated from their father, the children set about the business of carving out a new way of living for themselves, passing their time watching trains on the nearby line, waving to the passengers and enjoying the company of Albert Perks, the station porter. They also get to know an old gentleman who regularly takes the 9.15 train; a man who, if the youngsters did but know it, is set to have a remarkable impact on their future happiness...

The show is presented by Tethered Wits.



Peter Pan

Shrewsbury Castle, Thurs 15 August; Dudmaston Hall, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, Sun 18 August

Second star to the right and straight on till morning - that's the way to Neverland...

This new theatrical production offers young audiences the chance to fly away with the

boy who wouldn't grow up to a magical island filled with adventure...

An Immersion Theatre production, the show comes complete with 'catchy music, heaps of audience interaction, and a laugh-a-minute script'.



The Merry Wives Of Windsor

Shrewsbury Castle, Thurs 8 August

The critically acclaimed Pantaloons bring silly slapstick, abundant anachronisms and memorable music to the picnic table as they put their own innovative and interactive spin on this classic comedy from the quill of the Bard. The production is being presented as part of Shrewsbury Castle's open-air theatre season.



Jeeves And Wooster

Billesley Manor, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tues 6 August; Greyfriars, Worcester, Thurs 8 August; Tewkesbury Abbey, Fri 9 August; Hill Close Gardens, Warwick, Sat 10 August; Tamworth Castle, Sun 18 August

The delightful world of PG Wodehouse is here brought to the stage in Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves. Featuring ill-fated romances, comical escapades and an engaging cast of quirky characters, the production is presented by Tethered Wits, whose other outdoor summer shows, The Railway Children and The Importance Of Being Earnest, are previewed elsewhere in this section.

Live jazz music, performed by an ensemble of talented actor-musicians, further adds to the show's appeal...



Angelica Sprocket's Pockets

Brueton Park, Solihull, Sat 10 August; The Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton, Sat 17 August

Angelica Sprocket's overcoat has pockets galore, and here's your chance to find out exactly what's in them...

A combination of live music, puppetry, audience interaction and 'madness' is Folksy Theatre's recipe for success as they present Quentin Blake's classic children's tale.

A portrait of Tamara Harvey, a woman with short brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a light blue textured wall with shadows of people's heads and shoulders cast onto it.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Tamara Harvey, the co-artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, talks about leadership, collaboration, and directing a new production of Pericles...

Tamara Harvey and Daniel Evans became co-artistic directors of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2023. The pair's first programmed season is now in full swing, with Tamara directing a new production of *Pericles*. What's On chats to her about the play's appeal, and the joys and challenges of her new shared role...

You're co-artistic director with Daniel Evans - what are the benefits and the challenges of collaboration?

The wonderful thing is, I feel that I discover a new benefit every day. We're in a new phase of our co-artistic directorship, because it's the first time that one of us has been in rehearsals. Having been an artistic director on my own at Theatre Clwyd, I know the enormous challenge, both for me and the organisation, when I go into rehearsals. Having Daniel able to hold some of that, and therefore being able to be more focused in the rehearsal room than I think I've been since 2015, when I took the post at Clwyd, is just extraordinary.

It's a cliché to say: leadership can be lonely - and that's just not true when there are two of you. The challenges are as they would be in any new partnership - just figuring out how the other person works, how they make decisions. Daniel and I have known each other for years and have worked together in different ways, but this is the first time we've done this job together. Within each of those challenges there's always something new to be discovered.

What were the driving forces for you as you put together your first season of shows at the RSC?

We really wanted to make sure that we were offering a broad range of work - not just comedy and tragedy, but the political or the personal - and that we're bringing the most exciting artists to our stages, and being led by them in terms of the stories that they felt passionate about telling. One of the things that's really important to us is that we are telling stories that have a resonance and vitality to them, in this moment, in the world. Sometimes that's really obvious - Kyoto clearly engages in a very immediate way with the climate emergency, which is the biggest crisis of our times - and sometimes it's more subtle, or more nuanced, or more joyful. In *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*, Blanche McIntyre, the director, has done a beautiful job in bringing the play into this moment and making it feel like it's absolutely a story of our times. The other thing that we really wanted to do was make sure that we were reaching across borders. I think we both feel very acutely that in this moment in the world, when nations are in some ways becoming more and more isolationist, the arts - and theatre in particular - has a duty to reach across borders and engage with international artists and international audiences.

Can you provide a brief outline of the plot of *Pericles*?

It's the story of a young man who is trying to figure out who he is in the world, and what kind of leader he wants to be. He gets buffeted by the Fates - often by storms at sea - so he encounters all these obstacles, and has to keep getting up again, and keep trying to find his way in the world.

It also becomes the story of a young woman who has to do the same - has to figure out who she is, and how to carve her own path, and equally gets buffeted by the Fates and met with all of these horrific challenges, and somehow similarly finds a way to keep moving forward.

What in particular drew you to the play?

I think that there is something really important now about this story of endurance, and tenacity, and survival against the odds. I'm interested in a story where the man in the end falls down, and the woman keeps going - it's her who reaches a hand and pulls him up. I think in 2024 there is something really powerful about a story that has our protagonist encounter many different forms of leadership, and different types of leaders. I love Shakespeare's late plays because I think there's a kind of confidence that playwrights have late in their careers. You feel it in other playwrights as well, when they've had their big hits, and they kind of stop trying to please people - there's a kind of 'devil may care' in the writing. In this post-pandemic world, the theme of loss and reunion, I think, will always have a potency for those of us who've lived through lockdown.

Why do you think *Pericles* is so rarely performed?

It's funny because these things go in waves - actually *Pericles* has been performed more in the 21st century, I believe, than it was in the 200 years preceding it, so it might be getting a bit of a revival. I think I'd be lying if I said I knew! I'm in week four of rehearsals, so I'm in the heat of it, thinking 'Why isn't this done more often? This is great!'

What's most surprised you during your relatively short time in-post at the RSC?

So many things! I think that one of the things that I hoped - and didn't know for certain - is how open and excited the company, the staff, the freelancers, and the audiences are to the idea of a new chapter, and to the notion of

transformation and evolution.

There's something in the very roots of the company that is radical. Back in the 1870s, when the Flower family said 'We should have a theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon,' that was a deeply radical idea...

There is, absolutely, in the DNA of the company, a willingness to take chances, and to be radical, and to try new things.

How does the collaboration process with Daniel work on a practical level?

I've got two small children, a six-year-old and an eight-year-old, and I think it is still challenging to be a parent or a carer, to have caring responsibilities in the performing arts. Actually, I think it's challenging to do it in any industry.

That's a really important part of the reason that I wanted to do this job with Daniel - I know he also passionately believes in the importance of making it possible for people to have children and work in the arts. Doing it with him makes it possible for me. It's a curious one for me, because I'm quite a private person... Unless we keep talking about it and keep finding ways to navigate these challenges, we'll continue to lose brilliant people from the profession and have a less rich, less complex variety of voices telling the stories on our stages.

What is the most significant change you and Daniel have so far made?

I don't know if it's the most significant, but the simple fact that Greg Doran [the RSC's former artistic director] had this ambition to do Shakespeare's canon across 10 years. We are approaching the programme from a different angle, by saying we're going to be artist-led and choose which stories we tell depending on the stories that artists are most passionate about. That simple difference actually has a sizable effect on what plays we might do, and what stories we might tell.

How would you hope the RSC will look in, say, five years' time?

I hope it will be a space anyone and everyone can walk into, and that every show - and this is no small ambition - feels like a 'must see'.

.....
***Pericles* shows at the RSC's Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon until Saturday 21 September**

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Film highlights in August...

It Ends With Us CERT tbc

Starring **Blake Lively, Justin Baldoni, Jenny Slate, Hasan Minhaj, Amy Morton, Brandon Sklenar** Directed by **Justin Baldoni**

When flower-shop owner Lily Bloom finds romance with the assertive Dr Ryle Kincaid, life definitely takes a turn for the better. But then her first love reappears on the scene, and events leave Lily feeling less than certain that the brilliant neurosurgeon is the right man for her after all...

Published eight years ago, Colleen Hoover's novel of the same name became a cultural phenomenon in 2022 thanks to TikTok and social-media influencers, and it's no surprise that the book's recent success has been followed by this big-screen adaptation. The film has faced its fair share of criticism, though, with fans claiming its lead actors are too old to play the characters depicted in the novel. Author Hoover responded by saying she'd made a wrong choice about their ages when writing the book. Speaking to Today, she said: "I didn't know that neurosurgeons went to school for 50 years! There's not a twentysomething neurosurgeon. As I started making this movie, I'm like 'We need to age them out because I messed up.' So that's my fault."

Released Fri 9 August



Alien: Romulus CERT tbc

Starring **Isabela Merced, Cailee Spaeny, Archie Renaux, David Jonsson, Aileen Wu, Spike Fearn** Directed by **Fede Alvarez**

While scavenging the deep ends of a derelict space station, a group of young space colonisers come face to face with the most terrifying life form in the universe...

The Alien franchise just keeps on giving, a full 45 years after the first film was released to great critical acclaim.

With the exception of James Cameron's 1986 follow-up movie, Aliens, the sequels to and spin-offs from Ridley Scott's 1979 original have been largely disappointing.

With that in mind, it's to be hoped that this latest release emphatically bucks that trend and reminds us all of why the original sci-fi/horror-thriller has remained so universally admired.

Released Fri 16 August

Borderlands CERT 12a (102 mins)

Starring **Cate Blanchett, Ariana Greenblatt, Kevin Hart, Gina Gershon, Haley Bennett, Jamie Lee Curtis** Directed by **Eli Roth**

The latest film to be inspired by a videogame, Borderlands finds two-time Oscar winner Kate Blanchett starring as Lilith, an infamous bounty hunter fighting alien species and dangerous bandits... "There's an absolute sense of mayhem and total insanity and fun that's in the game that is infused in every frame of the film," Director Eli Roth told Entertainment Weekly. "It's got science-fiction, it's got creatures, it's got a bit of Star Wars, it's got a bit of Mad Max, it's got a bit of Barbarella - all these sci-fi influences that I love and I got to throw in one insane blender."

Released Fri 9 August



Blink Twice CERT tbc (102 mins)

Starring **Channing Tatum, Naomi Ackie, Christian Slater, Simon Red, Adria Arjona, Kyle MacLachlan** Directed by **Zoë Kravitz**

When tech billionaire Slater King meets cocktail waitress Frida at his fundraising gala, sparks fly, so he invites her to join him and his friends on a dream vacation on his private island.

Wild nights and sun-soaked days ensue, but then strange things start to happen, leaving Frida seriously questioning her grip on reality...

Billed as a psychological black comedy-thriller, Blink Twice marks the directorial debut of Zoë Kravitz, who played Catwoman in DC's The Batman two years ago.

Released Fri 23 August



The Crow CERT tbc (111 mins)

Starring **Bill Skarsgård, FKA Twigs, Danny Huston, Laura Birn, Jordan Bolger, Karel Dobry** Directed by **Rupert Sanders**

The original film of The Crow, which marks its 30th anniversary this year, was overshadowed by the death of its star, Brandon Lee - the son of legendary martial-arts icon Bruce Lee - who was fatally wounded on set just three days before he was due to finish shooting.

Hailed by many as a masterpiece, the cult classic tells the revenge-fantasy story of a young musician who, after being brutally murdered alongside his beloved fiancée, is brought back to life by a mysterious crow... Bill Skarsgård takes top billing for this eagerly anticipated movie, which its marketing team say is less a remake of the 1994 film, more a second adaptation of James O'Barr's original 1989 graphic novel.

Released Fri 23 August

FOXY LADY

Jenny Ryan, aka The Vixen, gets ready to tour the UK with new cabaret show Out Of The Box



For millions of viewers, Jenny Ryan is best known as The Vixen in ITV's The Chase, a professional quizzer who has shattered the hopes of countless contestants. But there's much more to this trivia queen than first meets the eye, as she reveals in her autobiographical cabaret show, Out Of The Box, which kicks off its UK tour in Lichfield next month. What's On caught up with Jenny to find out more...

What inspired you to create a cabaret show?

Out Of The Box sprang out of my love of music and the fact that, after my stint on The X Factor: Celebrity, people were kind enough to say they wanted to hear more of my voice. The other thing I often get asked about is how I got into my very unusual career. So I thought, why not tell my story through the medium of songs. I hope it will inspire people. I grew up in a single-parent working-class home in Bolton, and becoming a professional quizzer isn't something a careers advisor ever told me was possible.

How did you go about choosing the songs?

The show started with the music. I sat down with my friend and musical director, Eoin Mallon, and we talked about the songs I enjoy singing, that bring me joy. They included some that I performed on The X Factor, some from musical theatre roles I've always wanted to play, and others that reflect moments in my life. Once we put them all together, we realised they told a story and could be linked to different points in my journey. They really reflect the different sides to me, and there are plenty of surprises as well!

You premiered the show at the Edinburgh Fringe last summer. How was that experience?

Edinburgh was fantastic. I tend to go every year - a lot of my friends perform there, as does my partner, so I knew what a risk we were taking. But honestly, I was blown away by the response. We sold out the run and people came from all over to see it. Every night, when I looked out to a full house, I was just astonished that, of all the shows at the festival, people had chosen to come and spend an evening with me.

At the end of the show you take questions from the audience. Do any particular ones stand out?

There are certain evergreen questions that seem to come up every time, such as 'What's Bradley Walsh really like?' But there's always something that knocks me sideways. One of my favourites was someone who asked about my favourite musicals, and which roles I'd like to play. I don't think they were expecting

me to answer King George in Hamilton!

Is singing something you've always enjoyed?

It's always brought me personal joy, singing into my hairbrush and that kind of thing, but I didn't realise until quite late on that I had a good voice. I was always in the back row of the choir and never got cast in the main roles in school productions. I certainly never thought I'd be someone who ended up singing on Saturday night TV and performing my own show! It's been a real revelation.

Do you ever get nervous - for example, when you did The X Factor?

Stage fright seems to happen about an hour before the performance, but then I can put it in a box. For me, the nerves completely subside once I step out there. There's something quite magical about being in that spotlight - it's like a superpower. When I performed at Simon Cowell's house in Malibu in front of dozens of industry professionals, it was an unreal experience, which meant I could almost disassociate and imagine I was in some kind of video game.

Did you have that confidence as a kid?

I did when I knew it was something that played to my strengths. At school I was always the one who was two books ahead of everyone else and had completed her homework first. But in other aspects of my life, I had real imposter syndrome. I thought my role wasn't to be front and centre, and I've had to learn to shut up that voice of doubt. It's okay to be a dork and a pop star. I contain multitudes.

How did you get into quizzing?

University Challenge was my first experience of doing a TV quiz, and during filming I just felt completely at ease. Walking away from that experience, I thought about my grandad, who used to look after me and introduced me to his favourite shows, like Fifteen To One. I realised that I'd inherited his love of both television and quizzing. So I then started applying to go on other quiz shows and eventually got to the point where I became a professional. I was lucky that there's been a real boom in the genre, with shows like Eggheads and The Chase.

Your alter ego on The Chase is The Vixen. Do you see her as a character you play or an extension of yourself?

She's definitely a character. The original vision was for the professionals to be like pantomime villains, so they decided that mine was going to be crafty, smart and a bit fierce - hence, The Vixen. But I think they realised people often like to root for the chasers, so she's mellowed a bit over the years. The costume is very much a shield that lets me behave with a bit more confidence and sass than I do in my everyday life. People often meet me and say 'You're actually really nice!'

How do you relax away from stage and screen?

It's actually quite hard to have hobbies that don't feed into my quizzing. I watch a lot of theatre, TV and films, but those things all connect to my work! Even when I'm on the tube or the bus, I'm looking at the adverts and taking in the information - there's learning everywhere. I think that's why I'm particularly strong on pop culture, because I consume so much of it. I certainly prefer that to questions about maths, which send me into a panic.

Are you excited to be hitting the road with Out Of The Box?

Very excited. After Edinburgh a lot of people asked when we would be taking it round the UK, so hopefully they'll come and see me. We've tried to cover as much of the country as we can, and I'm really excited to visit some familiar places alongside some I've never been to before. It's going to be a lot of fun. Jamie Jones was my dame in panto last year and lives in Lichfield. He even works at the Garrick Theatre, so I'm really excited to see Jamie again. I know he's a local theatre legend.

.....
Jenny Ryan kicks off her Out Of The Box tour at Lichfield Garrick Theatre on Wednesday 11 September. She then returns to the region to play Stourbridge Town Hall on Thursday 3 October and Stafford Gatehouse on Sunday 10 November

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A WORLD OF GLASS

The International Festival of Glass returns to the historic Stourbridge Glass Quarter this month (Friday 23 - Monday 26 August). Marking its 20th anniversary, the event this year takes the theme Past, Present, Future, with its programme recalling highlights from previous editions of the festival and also including dynamic new attractions and exhibitions. Here the Festival team share just a small sample of what's on offer...

Fun for all the family

A visit to the festival is a great way to ignite the interest of the next generation of glass enthusiasts! Once again we will be featuring lots of family-friendly fun at the event, including a glass doodle competition and a family glass-fusing workshop. Not all our activities are glass-focused - visitors can also take part in papermaking, spinning-wheel making and stick frame weaving.



Netflix's Blown Away stars

The Festival is bringing together glass artists from around the world, including some of the glassmaking stars of Netflix hit Blown Away. Stourbridge is the creative home of both Elliot Walker and Maddy Hughes, who will be showing off the skills that made them so popular on the show.



The UK's largest exhibition of contemporary glass

The British Glass Biennale is the flagship exhibition of the International Festival of Glass, showcasing the world-class glass which is being made in the UK and featuring work by 121 selected artists. The return of the People's Prize Award allows families to get involved by voting for their favourite piece, while the Young Collectors' Award will see the winning child receive a piece of contemporary glass to start their very own collection.



Juggling Glass with PanGottic

PanGottic have been a Festival favourite since their first event in 2019, and each display wows the crowds. Routinely pushing the boundaries of street circus performance, they will again be including some sure-to-be-breathtaking glass juggling! We are excited to experience what they bring to this year's Festival.

Arabian Tent & Bar

Alongside celebrating all things glass, the Festival has always been about bringing people together. This year we will be reviving the hugely popular Arabian Tent & Bar, to provide a social hub for visitors. Relax and enjoy a local brew, reminisce over festivals past, and share great experiences from the 2024 edition of the event.



Ruskin's Seven Lamps

Walk The Plank, experts in outdoor celebration, thrilled us all with the first huge Festival finale in 2004, and we are delighted to welcome them back for an evening of music, fire and immersive spectacle. The centrepiece will be a huge fire sculpture by artist Felix Rowberry, with the audience committing their hopes and wishes for the next 20 years to the fire in a ritual act witnessed by all.



Check out ifg.org.uk for all festival events and to purchase tickets

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and a specially curated classical music soundtrack.

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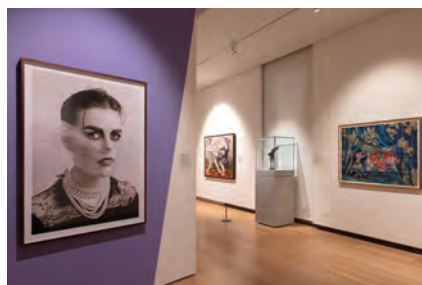
A Spirit Inside

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 1 September

With its themes ranging from mythology and internal contemplation to external and political expression, A Spirit Inside comprises a selection of works produced by women and non-binary artists across a period of 100-plus years.

The featured pieces have been drawn from the Women's Art Collection - Europe's biggest collection of work by female artists - and The Ingram Collection, one of the UK's best collections of modern and contemporary British art.

Artists whose work is featured in the show include Leonora Carrington, Winifred Nicholson, Bridget Riley, Man Fung Yi and Perminder Kaur,

**Shrewsbury Arts Trail**

In and around Shrewsbury town centre, until Sat 31 August

Shrewsbury Arts Trail continues to show throughout this month, taking the theme of 'Time' and including work by, among others, Salvador Dali, David Hockney, Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin.

Workshops, an open exhibition and a brand-new Infinity Cube immersive experience also feature - as does an all-British female sculpture trail, showcasing works by Halima Cassell, Alice Irwin and Almuth Tebbenhoff.

The Hidden Lives Of Plants: Botanical Illustrations From The V&A

Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, until Sun 10 November

Given that the Barber has only recently reopened following nine months of building improvement work, and that it closes again in early 2025, when the second phase of its redevelopment begins, there really is no better time than *right now* to discover the venue's many delights.

Among them, until late autumn, is The Hidden Lives Of Plants, a selection of botanical imagery from London's Victoria & Albert Museum.

The featured works have been drawn from the V&A's collection of almost 1,000 botanical illustrations, ranging from scientific diagrams documenting medicinal plants to merchandising images that adorn seed packets.

**Acts Of Creation: On Art And Motherhood**

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, until Sun 29 September

A Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition that 'plunges into the joys and heartaches, mess, myths and mishaps of motherhood', Act Of Creation features more than 100 artworks - 'from the feminist avant-garde to the present day'. The exhibition explores the lived experience of being a mum, offering a 'complex account' that engages with contemporary concerns about gender, caregiving and reproductive rights.





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Visual Arts previews from around the region

**Titanic Exhibition** NEC, Birmingham, until Sun 25 August

Visitors to this fascinating exhibition will find themselves coming face to face with objects and artefacts from one of the most famous and tragic events in 20th-century British history.

The Titanic was a passenger liner that sank in the North Atlantic Ocean on 15

April 1912 during its maiden voyage. Using remarkable footage of the wreckage, the exhibition offers a rare chance to discover more about the crew, engineers and passengers who set sail on what was supposedly an 'unsinkable' ship.

Victorian Radicals

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Thurs 31 October

Birmingham's impressive collection of Pre-Raphaelite art is here displayed in the city for the first time in more than five years.

Taking the subtitle 'From The Pre-Raphaelites To The Arts & Crafts Movement', Victorian Radicals features vibrant paintings and exquisite drawings presented alongside jewellery, glass, textiles and metalwork. The show provides visitors with the chance to discover the story of the Pre-Raphaelites - Britain's first modern art movement - and learn about their influence on artists and makers well into the 20th century.

**Joy... Inspired By Nature**

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Sun 22 September

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum's free-to-enjoy summer exhibition comes complete with giant flowers, bursts of rainbow colours, and sounds and smells that awaken inner tranquillity.

Joy... Inspired By Nature sees acclaimed artists Nicola Richardson and Marianne Tavinor create 'an eye-popping

wonderland that playfully reconnects us to nature'.

The exhibition features two special commissions: a scentscape by Gemma Costin and a soundscape by Ashley James Brown. Local artist Abeda Begum joins the team in crafting the final installation.

Dion Kitson: Rue Britannia

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until Sun 8 September

A major solo exhibition, Dion Kitson's Rue Britannia sees the artist remodelling everyday objects to isolate and elevate ubiquitously 'ordinary' sights, such as a burst football or discarded plastic bottle.

The exhibition also includes Council House Of Kitson - a new installation featuring a pebble-dashed façade and footage documenting Dion's father.





QUEEN OF THE WEST END

One of musical theatre's best-known stars, Kerry Ellis has spent the past 25 years appearing in a number of iconic shows both in the West End and on Broadway. She's also toured extensively with Queen's Brian May and dazzled fans around the world with her solo tours. Kerry recently shared her joy at once again hitting the road this autumn...

It's been quite a journey for the kid who grew up wanting to be a pop star. And this autumn, Kerry Ellis will reflect on how far she's come in her new solo show, *Queen Of The West End*, which stops off at four Midlands venues over the next couple of months.

"It all started for me when I was a young girl," she recalls. "I must've been three or four when I went to the Judith Thomas Dance School. They'd hold classes in a little church hall, and I'd go there with other children to learn my first steps.

"There wasn't a grand plan back in those days. To be honest, there's never been a

grand plan, and there still isn't now. I was probably sent there because my parents wanted to give me something positive to do. Well, either that or they wanted a bit of childcare and someone else to wear me out! Whatever their motivation, I loved dance from the moment I stepped through the door at Judith Thomas. I just took a shine to it, and that passion never left me. I loved it then and I still do now."

Dancing grabbed Kerry and made her feel alive. She wanted to be a pop star as well as a star of musical theatre.

"I didn't really have any singing lessons. I guess I had a couple when I was about 12,

when my dad took me to a teacher called Olive, but that was all. Olive was actually a choir singer. She kind of tapped into this classical singing thing that I didn't even know existed. It was completely new for me. I'd always been a big 'belty' singer before I went to see her, screaming in my bedroom to Queen, Meatloaf or Bonnie Tyler. But Olive opened up a whole new soprano thing."

Kerry had a double cassette of *Les Misérables*, which was hugely influential. She knew the show from start to finish and would sing along with the cassette. It was the same with *Miss Saigon*. She grew to love the nation's biggest shows.

“My path wasn’t calculated, not in the slightest. I was listening to music, loving it and rehearsing it. Everything stemmed from there.

“I loved singing, I loved dancing, and I loved the world of entertainment. I’d do anything I could. I was rehearsing myself without realising it. I was stretching my voice and seeing what I was capable of, without knowing. I think dance gave me discipline, and being part of that dance school, when I was younger, was really important. I’d have to turn up three or four days a week, I’d have to be physical, I’d have to be on that ballet bar at quarter past three. There was a discipline with dance that stood me in brilliant stead later in my career.”

Kerry was a dreamer as a kid, and her parents were incredibly supportive. They bought into her goal of performing on Broadway and in the West End.

At 19, she got a job singing on a nine-month cruise around the Caribbean. When she returned, she did a quick tour of *Magic Of The Musicals*, with Marti Webb and Dave Willetts, and then went into *My Fair Lady*. She was the understudy for Eliza Doolittle, who was played by Martine McCutcheon.

When Martine became unwell, Kerry stepped up. “Because Martine was such a superstar, there was loads of media interest. When she was off, it was a big story, big news. We didn’t have social media then, but it was in all the newspapers.

“I found myself in the papers for the first time too, because I was the person taking on that role while Martine was off. It was quite an awakening to the West End. It really was a big deal. I was still young enough not to be phased by it, and in a sense there was no pressure on me because nobody knew who I was. I just needed to do the job. I just needed to deliver.

“I had no dress run, no costume run, nothing. It was ‘in at the deep end’. It was such an adrenaline rush. Afterwards I got to go on quite a few times because Martine became unwell again and eventually had to leave the show. Alex Jay and I split the role, and for a little while we got to be Eliza over a period of time.”

The show changed Kerry’s life forever. The offers flooded in.

“A lot happened in *My Fair Lady*. There was a performance when I went on for one of the ensemble dance tracks and sang a few lines.

What I didn’t know was that Brian May was in the audience with the casting director for *We Will Rock You*. Brian saw something in me, I don’t know what, and I don’t know how or why he picked me out.

“They found out I was the understudy for the lead, so they came back when I was playing Eliza. Again, that was all totally unbeknownst to me. They enjoyed my performance and asked me to audition for *We Will Rock You*, as Meat.

“I didn’t find out about any of that until after I’d got the job - all I knew was that I’d got an audition for *We Will Rock You*. There were a lot of auditions - I think I had seven in all. Brian and I joke about that to this day. He always says he knew I was going to be in the show, he knew I was the one, so I ask him why he made me go through seven auditions if he was so sure about me!”

We Will Rock You was a whirlwind of madness and craziness because it was new for Brian and Roger Taylor. There was a frenzy of huge celebrities and big, iconic people surrounding the show. The whole thing was a one-off. Nothing like that had really happened before.

“During rehearsals, Brian and Roger would be around a lot. They’d be in the rehearsal room and would watch everything, so we got to know them very well. Robert De Niro had some money in the show, so he came over to watch one of the run-throughs too. Then a stream of celebrities came to watch the show as soon as it opened. We met so many people, from Emma Thompson to Beyonce, from Britney Spears to P!nk. My hero, Liza Minnelli, came along too.

Kerry then moved into *Miss Saigon*. “*Miss Saigon* was a show that I’d loved growing up. The role of Ellen wasn’t massive, but it was a well-respected, leading female role. It was a big tick off the list. You want to be part of these big, iconic shows. That’s what drove me early on, and *Miss Saigon* was another bucket-list production. I’d listened to it on a double cassette as a teenager and seen it at Drury Lane before my career began. So when it went full circle and I got to start in a show that I’d seen as a youngster, the whole experience was pretty magical.”

She also starred in *Les Misérables* - the show she’d gone to see as an impressionable 13-year-old.

“Fast forward to 2005 and I was in that show, on that stage. I’d come full circle. I was doing

all of those iconic songs that I’d always wanted to sing.

“There’s something special about the big hits, like *Memory*, in *Cats*, or *I Dreamed A Dream*, in *Les Mis*. People are waiting for you to sing them. They literally buy their ticket just for that. So to have that moment with those iconic songs is magical. I do look back very fondly and gratefully at that.

Wicked was another game-changer. It took Kerry to Broadway and helped her fulfil another big ambition in life.

“Broadway was everything I thought it would be - good and bad. When I went there, I’d been doing the show in London for nine years, and it was a really tough show. Anyone who’s been in *Wicked* will tell you how difficult it is. Vocally speaking, it’s unlike anything I’d ever sung before. It’s so much more difficult. I’d never been challenged by anything as much as I was by *Wicked*. I went through good moments, tough moments where I blew my voice out, and moments where I had to re-train myself to sing the show because it was so difficult.

“The Broadway gig came up and I literally finished the show in London on the Saturday, flew on the Sunday, then was in rehearsals on the Monday. Two days later, I was opening the show on Broadway and I was absolutely knackered. I was there for six months and it was wonderful; it was absolutely a dream come true.”

There’s been a lot, lot more, of course, and Kerry will unpack the highlights of her career in *Queen Of The West End*. “There’s a lot more to come. I can’t wait for my solo tour this autumn, and there’s another new record just around the corner, as well as lots more concerts on the horizon.

“So what’s coming in the future? I don’t know. The future is not yet written, is it? But I know one thing: I’m having the time of my life, and I can’t wait for whatever comes my way.”

Kerry Ellis presents *Queen Of The West End* at: Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Saturday 12 October; Dudley Town Hall, Wednesday 16 October; Lichfield Garrick, Wednesday 30 October; and Malvern Theatres, Saturday 23 November



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COOKING WITH ROSEMARY

Rosemary Shrager never meant to become a chef - or a bestselling author, come to that. The haute cuisine teacher on *Ladette To Lady*, and judge of *Soapstar Superstar*, originally had her sights set on becoming an interior designer - a career in line with one of her more-recent side ventures as a kitchen planner.

A hankering to work with food whilst at art school led Rosemary to seek a role in the kitchen, and she soon found herself working with Jean Christophe-Novelli and Pierre Koffman. Rosemary then set about establishing her career as a chef - firstly in a freelance role and then as a head chef at Moyns Park, the home of the Mountbatten family.

Television came next, including appearances on reality TV shows *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!*, *The Real Marigold Hotel*, and *Let's Dance For Comic Relief*. When lockdown hit, Rosemary took to running cook-alongs and master classes via Zoom. At the same time she decided to dip her toes into writing fiction - a career move which has most definitely paid off. This month, her fans can catch her at Shrewsbury Flower Show, where she'll be showcasing her culinary skills on both days of the event. We recently fired over some questions for her to answer...

What's your earliest food memory, Rosemary...

One of my earliest is my mother carving into a whole ham! It was delicious, and a lovely experience with her. A lovely homebaked ham.

Is there a particular person who has influenced you most as a chef?

Pierre Koffman. Without a doubt. He had faith in me and always was my food hero - and still is.

Who would you relish the opportunity to cook for?

I always love cooking for my family the most. We rarely see each other because of work commitments, but they are my favourite people to cook for. Family, and friends too.

Is there a current chef you particularly admire?

Elliot Grover from 45 Park Lane. There are also wonderful new chefs coming up through the ranks and making a statement - like Ellis Barry, who is based in Anglesey.

What's your favourite meal to prepare?

I love making pies!

...And for someone else to cook for you?

I always love it when someone makes me cucumber sandwiches! There's nothing like another person making me cucumber sandwiches, especially with some egg thrown in for good measure!

Did your appearances in reality shows *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!* and *The Real Marigold Hotel* change your approach as a chef in any way?

It showed and educated me more with spices and flavours when I travelled for *Real Marigold*.

And how did the experience change you on a personal level?

It educated me about new people and new cultures. Wherever we travelled, everyone was just happy to share their food. It was such a sharing situation.

You've made quite a name for yourself away from the kitchen, writing very well-received whodunnits. Is this a genre that's particularly interested you, or was there something else behind your decision to follow in the footsteps of other literary sleuths?

The idea of writing *Cosy Crime* was put to me during Covid and I fell in love with it! The characters are based on people I've met, and I'm obviously Prudence in real life!

Kitchen design also features in your extensive portfolio. What culinary accessory could you not do without?

The bin under my chopping board! It's a pull-out and is so useful! I also have an integrated vacuum packer, which I love!

And which three ingredients should everyone always have in their store cupboard?

Olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper. That's four!

Favourite comfort food?

Peanut butter - always crunchy! It's so tasty and satisfying, and it's lovely with an apple!

Finally, what are you planning to cook up at Shrewsbury Flower Show?

Cheat's crispy duck and smoked haddock with a poached egg.

.....
Shrewsbury Flower Show takes place in the town's Quarry Park on Friday 9 & Saturday 10 August



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Events previews from around the region



Shrewsbury Flower Show The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Fri 9 & Sat 10 August

As one of the UK's premier events of its kind, Shrewsbury Flower Show attracts top exhibitors from all over the country. As well as its abundance of glorious blooms, the show also features talks, demonstrations, performances and plenty more besides. Celebrity foodies are always on hand to whet visitors' appetites, while gardening experts offer up green-fingered hints and tips. This year's line-up includes horticulturist and ITV regular Camilla Bassett-Smith, BBC



Two Gardeners' World presenter Sue Kent, chef and TV presenter Rosemary Shrager, and the owner of mobile kitchen The Street Diner, Jon Labella. The show also includes craft and food stalls selling artisan products, and a programme of arena entertainment featuring Chasing Mumford (Friday evening) and Take That Live - Tribute (Saturday evening). A spectacular fireworks display rounds off proceedings on both evenings of the event.

Game On! The Science Of Sport

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, weekdays until Fri 30 August

Packed full of interactive demonstrations, this 25-minute live show - taking place outdoors in Thinktank's Science Garden - not only illustrates the ways in which athletes use Newton's three laws of motion but also explores how the laws can apply to people's everyday lives.



The Battle Of Evesham

Crown Meadow, Evesham, Sat 3 & Sun 4 August

Step back in time to the 13th century as the Battle of Evesham is re-enacted! Boasting a medieval festival and camp, the free-to-attend event sees hundreds of re-enactors fighting 'to the death' on both days. A Battle of Evesham 'grand parade' - featuring mounted knights in full armour - will wind its way through the town on the Saturday morning. Falconry and equestrian displays, treasure trails and children's activities also feature.



Get The Picture: Summer Of Design

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, until Mon 2 September

Visitors to the British Motor Museum can dive into the world of car design this month, thanks to a range of fun family activities. Attractions include resident car designers Dottie & Dougie hosting daily family tours. There's also the Car Details Garage, offering the 'creatively inclined' the chance to design their very own vehicle. Visitors can then put what they've learned to the test via a special family trail, sketching different design features based on the cars around the museum.





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Events previews from around the region



We're Going On A Bear Hunt Birmingham

across Birmingham city centre, until Fri 6 September

Wild In Art's latest sculpture trail, featuring 10 beautifully designed and decorated bears, is now available to view in central, er, Birmingham...

Presented in support of Birmingham

Children's Hospital Charity, the giant bears can be found in locations across the city centre, the intention being that the trail will help highlight some of central Brum's 'iconic spots and hidden gems'.

Minsterley Show

Cruckton, nr Shrewsbury, Shropshire, Sat 17 August

Shropshire's 'oldest and most prestigious one-day agricultural show' returns for the 148th time, bringing with it its usual array of horticulture and livestock competitions. Main-ring entertainment, presented throughout the day, will include parades, supreme horse championships and performances by this year's headliners - The Knights of Albion.

A food hall, horticultural marquee and arts & crafts marquee further add to the show's wide-ranging programme.



Shropshire Petal Fields

Chadwell Lane, Newport, Fri 9 - Sun 18 August

Shropshire's successful flower-field experience returns to Newport this summer. Families can enjoy a beautiful backdrop of delphiniums, cornflowers, sunflowers and wildflowers, with plenty of focal points available for photo opportunities (think vintage tractors and huge butterfly wings!). Visitors can also make the most of being outdoors - in hopefully fine weather - by enjoying a picnic and sampling a scoop (or several!) of ice cream from the Shropshire Ice Cream Company's vintage caravan. Dog-friendly days take place on the 14th 17th & 18th. The chance to purchase freshly cut flower bouquets on-site, and a café serving drinks and refreshments, further add to the Petal Fields' appeal.



Telford Balloon Fiesta

Telford Town Park, Shropshire, Fri 23 - Sun 25 August

A popular event in the borough's calendar, Telford Balloon Fiesta provides an impressive visual spectacle, with more than 30 balloons of varying shapes and sizes taking to the Shropshire skies. The fun kicks off on the Friday, courtesy of Night Glow Spectacular, which sees the

arena lit up by illuminated balloons displayed against the darkening sky. New for 2024 are the Kids Comedy Show and Lego workshop. A Kids Zone, have-a-go activities, food and drink vendors and stalls to wander around, also feature.

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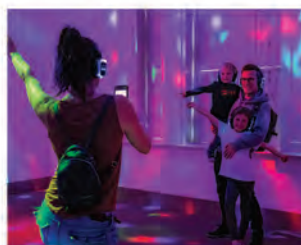
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Events previews from around the region



Summer Flying Theatre: Bravo, Bravo

Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford, every Wednesday to Sunday until Sun 1 September

Award-winning physical theatre company Highly Sprung Performance spring into action at the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands this month. Their flying theatre show, Bravo, Bravo, pays tribute to one of the Royal Air Force's most iconic aircraft - Bravo November - and its

invaluable contribution to the Royal Air Force. Highly Sprung's performers will be soaring through the air in their own flying machine and gliding with precision across the stage in a production that's promising to be 'a visual and emotional spectacular'.

Vintage Transport Extravaganza

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster, Sat 10 & Sun 11 August

Severn Valley Railway's popular transport show makes a welcome return mid-month. The event sees an array of vehicles from all eras on display across the railway's six stations, including steam-powered traction engines, buses, motorbikes and tractors.



Dragon Tails - A Summer Of Dragons

Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire, until Sun 1 September

Tamworth Castle's resident dragon, Ruby, has invited some of her dragon friends to lay their eggs for visitors to find. Every week during August there will be a different Elemental Egg to discover, as each hatches a new species of dragon.

Plus, on selected dates, the castle will host the Dragon Tamers Survival School, where families can meet a baby dragon and acquire dragon-charming skills.

Falconry At The Castle

Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham, every Tues & Thurs until Thurs 29 August

The ancient art of falconry is alive and flourishing at Sudeley Castle this month. Alongside birds-of-prey demonstrations presented by an expert falconer, the event also provides visitors with the chance to enjoy up-close encounters with the falcons.



Tower Tours Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, various days and times

Lichfield Cathedral has relaunched its Tower Tours following an extensive fundraising and restoration project. For the first time since Storm Desmond damaged the central spire in 2018, visitors can climb the winding spiral staircases and follow hidden passageways to reach the top

of the central tower. The tour experience also includes the newly renovated Tower Room. The space has been transformed into an interactive exhibition that allows visitors to explore the heritage and significance of the cathedral.

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Events previews from around the region



Summer Lates Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, every Friday in August

Black Country Living Museum is taking full advantage of the lighter nights by once again hosting its Summer Lates evenings. The popular initiative, which sees the venue staying open until 8pm every Friday during August, offers visitors the chance to enjoy

‘fairground rides, live music, some ‘bostin’ Black Country food, retro drinks, and good old-fashioned fun’... Entry after 4pm on Summer Lates days costs £8.50. Even better, if you have a valid UnChained Annual Pass, you can get in free of charge.

Summer Fiesta

Weston Park, Shropshire,
Sun 25 & Mon 26 August

Weston Park’s Summer Fiesta returns for its fourth year, bringing with it a line-up of local artisan food & drink producers, unique crafts, street food, fairground rides, and live music from the Dirty Rockin Scoundrels. The whole estate will be open to explore, offering visitors the chance to take long walks around the parkland, relax in the formal gardens, run wild in the woodland adventure playground or enjoy a journey around Temple Wood on the miniature railway.



Dinosaurs On The Doorstep

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum,
until Sun 8 September

Come face to face with the dinosaurs that used to roam the UK - from harmless herbivores to terrifying tyrannosaurs. Giant dinosaur skeletons, real fossil bones and original fossils from 150 million years ago are all on display. There’s also a dinosaur discovery camp - complete with shelter and campfire - a quiet space to read about all your favourite dinosaurs, and a hands-on Dino Activity Station.



Image credit: FiveSix Photography

Spend the summer holiday with Dippy the Dinosaur

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, throughout August

Gifted to London’s Natural History Museum in 1905, Dippy the diplodocus - a lifesize plaster-of-Paris replica of a diplodocus carnegii skeleton - is currently in the middle of its Coventry residency at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum. School summer holiday visitors to the venue can enjoy a number of Dippy-related

activities. These include Dippy VR, in which they can find out about the 175-million-year journey of the Herbert’s ichthyosaur skull and experience the power of interactive storytelling... There’s also Dippy Facts & Fossils, a drop-in experience providing a great opportunity to get hands-on with some fascinating fossils.



THE DOLLY SHOW

A 'rollicking and joyous' new stage show featuring the music of Dolly Parton is currently touring the UK. Here *You Come Again: The Dolly Parton Musical* focuses on the character of Kevin, a diehard Dolly fan who finds much-needed solace in his own imagined version of the legendary country singer. What's On recently caught up with Steven Webb, who plays Kevin, to find out more...

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

Apart from the obvious thing of hearing all of Dolly Parton's biggest hits and your favourite Dolly Parton songs, there's a bucketload of stage magic and illusion. But I think the unexpected thing is that audiences can really relate to it. Even though it's a singular story about a singular person, every single person went through some of the same things during lockdown. There are a lot of nuances and little reminders that will take audiences back to that time. In my experience, every time I speak to people about it, it's like we've compartmentalised it. It's almost like it didn't happen, so it's cathartic and therapeutic going back to that time. But it isn't all doom

and gloom; it's very light and it's about a journey and navigating through that.

Who is Kevin and what's his role in the story?

He describes himself as a has-been-who-never-was comedian. So he's an aspiring comedian and he works at a comedy club, but he's one of those people who are naturally hilarious when he's not trying to be. Then, when he *tries* to make you laugh, it's met with silence, and I think that there's something so endearing about people like that. He wants to be funny, but when he tries, he's not funny at all. He works at a comedy club in London, and his narcissistic

boyfriend has just broken up with him. They were isolating together, and now he has to be sequestered to his parents' attic back in Halifax, where he keeps all his childhood memorabilia. It used to be his den, and it's especially full of his old Dolly Parton memorabilia, being that he's a superfan.

How does Dolly herself come into the picture?

Kevin starts to self-medicate and is having a bit of a rough time. He loses his job, he's lost his relationship, and he's surrounded by all these childish things. He's a bit down and out, and feels like he has nothing. Then, through necessity and magic and music, he

puts on Dolly's Here You Come Again album. She materialises and almost stages an intervention to help him through this time, using tough love. She doesn't solve anything for him, she just gives him pointers. There's a line in one of her songs, Better Get To Living, which is about how all healing has to start with you. The show is about that journey of self-recovery and self-discovery and listening to that inner, positive voice.

Does Kevin's narrative mirror your own in any way?

Hugely - to the point where, when I first read the script, I nearly had to lawyer-up because I felt like I'd been surveilled throughout the pandemic! I'm four years sober now, and I got sober in April 2020, a few weeks into lockdown. Like a lot of people, I was self-medicating because we were forced to sit with ourselves and look at ourselves. What is really beautiful is that our director, Gabriel [Barre], allowed me to bring a lot of my own experiences to the character and the show, so we've sort of worked with my personal journey and put quite a lot of that in there. It's incredibly therapeutic and cathartic for me to go back to that time, as I think it will be for the audience

Are you a Dolly Parton fan?

Again, hugely! And I have a very specific parallel with this character. Back in 2002, I think it was, I was going through a rough time with a boyfriend. Dolly was doing a one-night show at the Hammersmith Apollo in London, and I just got myself a ticket and went on my own. It was an unbelievable experience because you had so many different groups and types of people in the audience. You had drag queens, housewives, and just this massive mix of people. But what struck me most was seeing how many other people were there alone. You don't often get that at concerts, and it was the most incredible experience. We all obviously went there for a reason, and we got what we came for because there was something magical about Dolly's message and her strength and her power. It truly helped me, and that's what I mean about when I read the script for Here You Come Again; it felt a bit like reading my own Truman Show.

Why do you think Dolly is such an icon for the LGBTQ community?

I think it's because she's always refused to be confined to the parameters presented to her. Even some of her earlier songs, like Dumb Blonde and Just Because I'm A Woman, are

about taking a swipe at the gender divide and the inequalities of the world. She has this unflinching, non-conformist attitude, and she's managed to maintain that message. For the queer community, we see someone who demands respect, ignores gender expectations and promotes love and tolerance whilst remaining true to, and promoting, her faith. She's proof that kindness is key. She's such a role model in that way.

And why do you think she's so widely adored?

Because she's maintained consistency. She's never bowed down. She makes her own way of doing things because, as I said, she never follows the rules, yet she manages never to p**s anyone off. Also, she doesn't allow anyone to get in there first with any possible negatives. She's always the first to get in there herself, so for any small thing that anyone may not like about Dolly Parton, they can't bring it up because she's already covered it. She's already pointed it out herself. She's just this almost perfect human being, and she's an inspiration in the way she carries herself and how she lives her life.

Do you have a favourite song in the show?

It's probably a tie. Two Doors Down is one of my favourite Dolly Parton songs of all time. In the show it's just a joyous moment; a kind of imaginary party in Kevin's head, where even Boris Johnson makes an appearance because, as we all know, he loves a party during lockdown! But I think my absolute favourite would be Why'd You Come In Here Lookin' Like That, because it's a remixed techno clubby version. I don't want to give anything away, but you'll be able to see me like you've never seen me before. Let's just say that I'm currently trying to find a way to balance in six-inch heels!

If you got to meet Dolly, what's the one thing you'd want to ask her?

I don't think I'd ask her anything. I would just thank her for what she's given to the world and continues to give to the world.

You spent a long time appearing in The Book Of Mormon. So what's it like now, finding yourself in a brand-new musical?

It's wonderful, and it's such a different experience. When I joined The Book Of Mormon, which I ended up being in for nearly seven years, it was three years into its run, so it was already the hot ticket in town. I

knew what I was going into, and I came in halfway through a contract, so I rehearsed on my own. I learned the entire show in 12 days on my own, and I didn't get to actually do it with the cast until the first day I was on. That process was terrifying and quite isolating. But with this, we're starting from the ground up, being in a room where, even though the show has been done before in the States, not everything is set in stone. It's been anglicised, and it's organically taking on a new shape. It's the most collaborative room I've ever been in, and everyone is allowed input. It's not just 'This is what you do' or 'This is where you stand' because it's tried and tested. It's a fully collaborative effort. Watching Tricia Paoluccio embody and transform into Dolly every day is uncanny. You feel the warmth of Dolly every single day. It's incredibly magical.

What do you see as the key message of Here You Come Again?

Apart from what I said earlier, about how all healing has to start with you, as Dolly sings in those lyrics, I think it's about finding the volume control on your inner voices. We all have a positive and a negative voice inside us, and as adults I think our default setting is to have the negative voice louder than the positive. So it's about finding those dials and levelling them, if not allowing the positive voice to become louder.



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Here You Come Again shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 September



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Your week-
by-week
listings guide
August 2024

thelist



Birmingham Weekender - Fri 23 to Mon 26 August

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

What's On

Thurs 1 - Sun 11 August



Justin Timberlake - Utilita Arena
Birmingham

Wed 7 August

Mon 12 - Sun 18 August



Second Hand Dance - Midlands
Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Sun 18 August

Mon 19 - Sun 25 August



Autin Dance: The Giant Wheel -
West Park Rd, Smethwick

Wed 21 August

Mon 26 - Sat 31 August



Joe Pasquale - Wolverhampton
Grand Theatre

Tues 27 August

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Barber Institute of Fine Arts

CLAUDETTE JOHNSON: DARKER THAN BLUE The Turner Prize nominee's first solo exhibition in the Midlands, including several new works. Johnson's art challenges perceptions of identity, sexuality and wider political and social constraints, particularly those affecting Black diasporic communities, until Sun 15 Sept

UNSTILL LIFE Exhibition exploring global mobility and consumerism in still-life paintings which convey changing attitudes towards globalisation, capitalism and consumer culture over time, until Sun 26 Jan 2025

WOMEN IN POWER: COINS FROM THE BARBER COLLECTION Spanning nearly 2,000 years and more than 2,500 miles, the exhibition focuses on historical women who have appeared on coins, until Sun 26 Jan 2025

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

VICTORIAN RADICALS Exhibition presenting works by 19th-century artists, designers & makers, from the Pre-Raphaelites to the arts & crafts movement, until Thurs 31 Oct

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

LOUISE BOURGEOIS: NATURE STUDY Explore the exceptional career of Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), one of the most influential artists of modern times, until Sun 6 Oct

REUNITED: THE LAMENTATION ALTERPIECE After 30 years of its central panel being housed in the National Gallery of Scotland's collection, this is a chance to see a rare masterpiece, reunited, until Fri 28 Feb 2025

THE TAOTIE After an 18-month residency, Gayle Chong Kwan presents an exhibition of her new work alongside the venue's renowned Chinese collection, until Tues 31 Mar 2026

Coventry Music Museum

OUR TOWN A tribute to This Town through the eyes of a supporting artist, including memorabilia and costumes. The museum also features a new tribute to The Specials' Terry Hall.

The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

THRIFT RADIATES HAPPINESS Photographic display of images of the Birmingham Municipal Bank, whose headquarters were once located at the Exchange, until Oct 2024

AFRICANIZE Project addressing the lasting effects of historical power imbalances, using museum objects and art as catalysts for meaningful conversation, until Fri 1 Nov

WE NEED 2 TLK: EXODUS CROOKS A new work by Midlands-based artist Exodus - intersecting with a University of Birmingham Archive Project - which seeks to expand public engagement with the work of celebrated Jamaican British academic & cultural theorist Professor Stuart Hall, until Sat 2 Nov

Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

COVENTRY'S JEWISH COMMUNITY Exhibition exploring a community history that dates back to the 12th century, until Mon 30 Sept 2024

COLLECTING COVENTRY Exhibition reflecting the museum's collection practice, via a catalogue of objects accumulated since the founding of the Herbert in 1949 and Coventry Transport Museum in 1980, until Sun 27 April 2025

WARWICKSHIRE'S JURASSIC SEA Discover the amazing creatures that lived in Coventry & Warwickshire during the time of the dinosaurs, until Sat 21 Feb 2026

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

NATIONAL TREASURES: ARTEMISIA IN BIRMINGHAM & JESSE JONES: MIRROR MARTYR MIRROR MOON As part of the National Gallery's bicentennial celebrations, Ikon hosts Artemisia Gentileschi's masterpiece, Self Portrait As Saint Catherine Of Alexandria. Jesse Jones explores the entwined histories of Gentileschi, Saint Catherine and the pagan philosopher Hypatia, until Sun 8 Sept

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

LEAMINGTON SPA AND THE BLACK ATLANTIC Exhibition highlighting Leamington's historic links to exploitation and enslavement, the legacy of which is still visible in the town today, until Sun 15 Sept

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

PAULINE FARRAR: TALKING POINTS Pauline returns to MAC with a new installation co-created with members of the venue's women's group, Making It Together. Their shared work touches on issues of isolation, disability, and the power of gardening as a rejuvenative tool for wellbeing, until Mon 26 Aug

WHO CARES? WITH KAYE WINWOOD Community exhibition in collaboration with Balsall Heath

CATS, who support families with disabled children and young people, representing the caregivers' creative journey via objects, words and images, until Sun 22 Sept

TEREZA BUSKOVA: HIDDEN MOTHERS Installation following a project which aimed to empower women - especially migrant mothers facing isolation - and drew inspiration from Victorian photography, until Sun 29 Sept

New Art Gallery, Walsall

A PLACE TO RETURN TO West Midlands-based artist Daniella Turbin combines long-distance walking with photography, drawing and writing, until Sun 6 Oct

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD Major exhibition of new and previously unseen work by Barcelona-based artist Carlos Bunga. Through painting, drawing, video and sculpture, Bunga explores themes of home, transformation, possibility and adaption, until Sun 27 Oct

Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

FROM TOWN TO TOWN Exhibition providing a taster of the rich history of Nuneaton Town Football Club. Featuring football shirts, photographs and programmes, and revisiting key moments in the club's history, until Sat 10 Aug

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

STOKE CONNECTED A free showcase of the innovative and creative work of Digital & Creative students from Stoke-on-Trent College, until Sun 1 Sept

NO GOING BACK Display of photographs and memorabilia by North Staffs Miners Wives, to mark the 40th anniversary of the Miners' Strike, until Sun 2 March 2025

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

FACES & FIGURES: PORTRAITS FROM THE RBSA COLLECTION 1785-2023 Exhibition looking at changing approaches to the representation of the face and figure over 200 years, offering fascinating insights into the cultural life of Birmingham, until Sun 25 Aug

JOHN SALT, HON. RBSA (1937-2021) A rare opportunity to see the remarkable work of Birmingham-born and trained artist John Salt. After settling in the US in 1967, Salt became one of the pioneers of the photorealist movement, Tues 13 Aug - Sun 25 Aug

Rugby Art Gallery

A HISTORY OF RUGBY IN 50 OBJECTS Exhibition featuring 50 objects from

the museum's collection which represent a moment, person or event that helped shape the town

BATIK GUILD Celebrating the International Year of Batik, until Sat 10 Aug

A QUESTION OF TIME Compilation of work from final-year students studying fine art at Coventry University. Students' work will be displayed in rotation, until Sat 7 Sept

JASON AND HIS ARGONAUTS Exhibition of works from 'super-cool digital artist' Jason Wilsher-Mills, including 2D images, 3D sculpture and 'digital surprises', until Sat 7 Sept

PICTURING RUGBY Paintings, etchings and sketches of Rugby over the years, selected from the museum's collection, until Sat 5 Oct

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

FOOTBALL: DESIGNING THE BEAUTIFUL GAME Large-scale international touring exhibition from London's Design Museum, exploring how design has been used to push football to its technical and emotional limits, until Sun 1 Sept

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

WALKS THROUGH WORCESTERSHIRE Explore the county through the brushwork of one of the city's finest artists, Harry Adams, who was born in Worcester in 1868, until Sun 3 Nov

DINOSAURS ON THE DOORSTOP Come face to face with the dinosaurs that used to roam the UK, encounter real fossil bones from 100 million years ago, and find out who ate whom!, until Sun 8 Sept

Elsewhere:

STOLEN MOMENTS: PORTRAITS IN JAZZ Exhibition of photographs by Garry Corbett, offering a window into Birmingham's vibrant jazz scene, until Fri 13 Dec, Bramall Hall, University of Birmingham

SEEKING THE LIGHT A celebration of colour and strong, geometric shapes, in an exhibition of works by Alexandra Kingswell, Thurs 1 - Sat 31 Aug, Coventry Cathedral

CONTEMPORARY GLASS SOCIETY: NEW HORIZONS Exhibition featuring contemporary glasswork that challenges and explores the boundaries of the medium, showcasing traditional and modern techniques, Fri 23 Aug - Sun 17 Nov, Stourbridge Glass Museum

HORSE IN ART EXHIBITION Featuring works by the Society of Equestrian Artists, in a broad spectrum of styles, from classical to contemporary, Fri 30 Aug - Wed 2 Oct, Rose Paterson Art Gallery, Weston Park

Gigs

KATHY BROWN Thurs 1 Aug, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

SHAKATAK Thurs 1 Aug, The Jam House, B'ham

THE UNRAVELLING

WILBURYS Thurs 1 Aug, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

QUEEN BY CANDLELIGHT

Thurs 1 - Fri 2 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

THE JAM'D Fri 2 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MASTERS OF SABBATH Fri 2 Aug, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

40M PRESENTS - PINK FLOYD

TRIBUTE Fri 2 Aug, The Dark Horse, Moseley, Birmingham

THE MIDNIGHT CITY SOUL

BAND Fri 2 Aug, The Night Owl, Birmingham

HAAL + GRAYWAVE +

VERTIGO FLOWERS Fri 2 Aug, The Flapper, Birmingham

HEATHEN APOSTLES Fri 2 Aug, The Victoria, B'ham

CURTIS STIGERS Fri 2 Aug, Birmingham Town Hall

THE KATE GEE BAND Fri 2 Aug, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

THE TERRAPLANES BLUES

BAND Fri 2 Aug, Temperance, Leamington Spa

DIZZY LIZZY Fri 2 Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

TUBEWAY DAYS Fri 2 Aug, hmv Empire, Coventry

THE DREADNOUGHTS +

GREENMAN RISING Fri 2 Aug, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

TINA TURNER TRIBUTE -

SASS BROWN Fri 2 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

PINK - BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA Fri 2 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

SPACE COWBOY -

JAMIROQUAI TRIBUTE Fri 2 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Fri 2 Aug, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

SCOPYONS + EUROPE UK Fri 2 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE DWARVES Fri 2 Aug, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

THE NEVERLY BROTHERS Fri



Curtis Stigers - Birmingham Town Hall

2 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

MÖTLEY CRÜDE + SNOG +

OZZBEST Fri 2 Aug, The

WATERMELON CHRONICLES Fri 2 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE ALMIGHTY JOHNSONS

Fri 2 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

PYROFOX + THE HAGLEY

WOOD VAMPIRES + APATHY AVENUE Fri 2 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

URBAN INTRO Fri 2 - Sat 3

Aug, The Jam House, Birmingham

HIGH FADE + MOLLY GONE

MAD Sat 3 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VANITAS + NETHERHALL +

EARTHBOUND + AMETHYST Sat 3 Aug, The Flapper, Birmingham

APACHE INDIAN Sat 3 Aug, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham



CLOUDBASE + THE RUDE

AWAKENING + HOLLYWOOD BROWN Sat 3 Aug, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

IAN SIEGAL + THOMAS

HEPPELL Sat 3 Aug, Temperance, Leamington Spa

MARC CHECKLEY Sat 3 Aug, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

ICONIC 80S V 90S Sat 3 Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

UB42 Sat 3 Aug, The Rialto, Coventry

VIVA MORRISSEY Sat 3 Aug, Arches Venue, Coventry

DIRTY DC Sat 3 Aug, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

ABBA - SWEDE DREAMZ Sat 3 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

KYLIE TRIBUTE - SUZY

HOPWOOD Sat 3 Aug, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

THE BRITANNIA BEAT Sat 3 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

FAT LIP Sat 3 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

ELTONESQUE Sat 3 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MADCHESTER EXPERIENCE Sat 3 Aug, The Station, Cannock

COLDPLAY BY CANDLELIGHT Sat 3 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

SIGHT N SOUND Sat 3 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

UPFRONT ROCK Sat 3 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ETERNITY ROAD Sat 3 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

STALAG 13 + MOULD Sun 4 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MCLUSKY Sun 4 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LUCY PARKER Sun 4 Aug, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

SMOKE OVER ELSEWHERE Sun 4 Aug, Subside Bar, Birmingham

THE GARRY ALLCOCK TRIO Sun 4 Aug, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

AMY LOU Sun 4 Aug, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

NEARLY DAN Sun 4 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

FRANCK CARDUCCI & THE FANTASTIC SQUAD Sun 4 Aug, The Station, Cannock

RICH PARSONS Sun 4 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

Classical Music

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL The 'world's longest running music festival' featuring Anna Lapwood, Marta Fontanals-Simmons, Robert Plane, Francesca Chiejina, Jocelyn Freeman & Toby Spence, amongst others... until Sat 3 Aug, various venues across Worcester

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL

Thurs 1 Aug, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

TOM BELL ORGAN RECITAL: LIVRE DU SAINT SACREMENT Thurs 1 Aug, Pershore Abbey

CELLO & PIANO RECITAL

Featuring artists from the Royal College of Music, Thurs 1 Aug, Great Malvern Priory

ASHLEY WAGNER ORGAN RECITAL

Fri 2 Aug, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

MUSIC IN THE ROUND Featuring Corrine Frost (cello) & Janine Parsons (piano), Fri 2 Aug, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHOIR OF GREAT BRITAIN Featuring Dan Ludford-Thomas (music director). Programme features a wide repertoire - from sacred to secular, ancient to modern, Sat 3 Aug, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BAROQUE TRIO Featuring Harvey Stansfield (chamber organ), Charlotte Constantine (recorder) & Mary Walton (baroque cello), Sat 3 Aug, Shrewsbury Abbey

ASHLEY WAGNER ORGAN RECITAL

Programme includes works by Brahms, Arlen, Bach & Dove, Sat 3 Aug, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Sun 4 Aug, Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley, Stourbridge

Comedy

JAKE LAMBERT, TOM TOAL, SOL BERNSTEIN, LIAM TULLEY & ANNABELLE DEVEY Fri 2 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAREN BAYLEY, JASON STAMPE, JOE ZALIAS & JON PEARSON Sat 3 Aug, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

JAKE LAMBERT, TOM TOAL, SOL BERNSTEIN & ASHISH SURI Sat 3 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KYRAH GRAY, ANNETTE FAGON,

SHABZ KARIEM & SLIM Sun 4 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

PEPPA PIG'S FUN DAY OUT

Expect giggles and snorts aplenty as Peppa takes trips to the zoo and beach with family and friends, until Thurs 1 Aug, The Alexandra, Birmingham

STRICTLY ERIC 2024 Join Eric as he takes on the best ballroom dancers that 'Strictly' has to offer, until Sat 3 Aug, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

WE WILL ROCK YOU Amateur version of the hit stage show presented by Stoke Youth Musical Theatre Company, until Sat 3 Aug, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

WHEN VINCENT MET JOHN Nick Wilkes' new play about a hypothetical meeting between John Lennon and Vincent van Gogh, until Sat 3 Aug, Swan Theatre, Worcester

LEGALLY BLONDE Amateur version of the coming-of-age musical, until Sun 4 Aug, Rugby Theatre

HAMILTON Lin-Manuel Miranda's multi-award-winning musical tells the story of America's Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton, until Sat 31 Aug, Birmingham Hippodrome

AS YOU LIKE IT A 'joyful' 80-minute version of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, until Sun 1 Sept, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Nr Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL A new production of Sheridan's biting comedy of manners, promising an 'exuberant feast of big wigs and even bigger laughs', until Fri 6 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR Richard Goulding and Samantha Spiro star in a new production of Shakespeare's tale of mischief and double dealing, until Sat 7 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

PERICLES Tamara Harvey makes her RSC debut directing a rarely performed tale of love, hope and miracles, until Sat 21 Sept, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE WIZARD OF OZ Starring The Vivienne as the Wicked Witch

of the West, Tues 30 July - Sun 4 Aug, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE GONDOLIERS Illyria present an outdoor version of Gilbert & Sullivan's lighthearted operetta, Thurs 1 Aug, Brueton Park, Solihull

WHAT HO, WODEHOUSE Don't Go Into The Cellar present a brand-new comedy adapted from some of PG Wodehouse's early writings, Thurs 1 Aug, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

DINOSAUR ADVENTURE LIVE: TROUBLE ON VOLCANO ISLAND Immersive and action-packed show for younger audiences, Thurs 1 Aug, Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

SCIENCE MUSEUM: THE LIVE STAGE SHOW Brand-new stage production aimed at igniting curiosity, fuelling imagination and inspiring younger audiences, Thurs 1 Aug, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE WITCH AND THE EGG One performer and a flock of shadow puppets tell an engaging and heartwarming story about friends, foolishness and flying away, Thurs 1 Aug, Bleakhouse Library, Oldbury

ANANSI AND THE LOST SUN A 'funny, inspiring and entertaining' West African tale mixing puppetry and traditional West African music, Thurs 1 Aug, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

MADAGASCAR A MUSICAL ADVENTURE JR. Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur immersive stage version of the hit Dreamworks film, Thurs 1 - Fri 2 Aug, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FAME! Wing It Theatre present an amateur production loosely based on the much-loved 1980s film of the same name, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 Aug, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS The Three Inch Fools present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's shortest comedy, Fri 2 Aug, Charlecote Park, Warwickshire

WILDE ABOUT OSCAR Jonathan Goodwin's one-man show, packed with stories and laughter, Fri 2 Aug, Greyfriars House & Garden, Worcester

THE GIANT KILLERS Four actors bring to life the inspiring true story of football's greatest-ever underdog, Fri 2 Aug, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE EXTRAORDINARY TIME - TRAVELLING ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN Top comedians and improvisers tell extravagant stories based on the adventures of Baron Munchausen. Expect pirates and princesses, unicorns and dragons, swordfights and spacemen, Fri 2 Aug, Glebefields Library, Tipton

DRACULA: REVAMPED Pride And Joy Theatre fuse strong language, stroboscopic light effects, violent scenes and adult themes in a

'musical spectacular that will leave you gasping', Fri 2 - Sat 3 Aug, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE SECRET DIARY OF HENRY VIII The Three Inch Fools tackle the question of how to keep your head in a Tudor court, Sat 3 Aug, Charlecote Park, Warwickshire

FORESTS RoguePlay Theatre combine acrobatics and dance in a highly visual family-friendly show which challenges forestry practices, the destruction of rainforests and the displacement of indigenous people, Sat 3 Aug, Lavender Hall Park, Solihull



FORESTS RoguePlay Theatre combine acrobatics and dance in a highly visual family-friendly show which challenges forestry practices, the destruction of rainforests and the displacement of indigenous people, Sun 4 Aug, Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, Birmingham

NOT THIS TIDE! Pegasus Performing Arts fuse authentic song and poetry in a performance that follows the story of Jack as he is called to serve his country and fight in the trenches during the Great War, Sun 4 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon

Light Entertainment

VICTOR AND ALBERT'S VARIETY NIGHT Join identical twins Professor Victor and Dr Albert for an evening of riotous comedy, original songs, games, mayhem and a sprinkling of magic, Thurs 1 Aug, Great Bridge Library, Tipton

MUSICAL THEATRE OPEN MIC A bi-monthly event hosted by some of the country's top working professionals, Fri 2 Aug, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

QUEEN BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring a cast of West End singers and a live rock band, until Fri 2 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

THE REAL KEN DODD, THE MAN I LOVED Exclusive documentary film revealing the private man behind the comic genius, Sat 3 Aug, Malvern Theatres

THE MUSIC OF COLDPLAY BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring a cast of world-class vocalists and a live band, Sat 3 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

Events

DREAMING THE IMPOSSIBLE Young people from churches and youth organisations come together to worship, until Thurs 1 Aug, Staffordshire County Showground

WILDPLAY Featuring the mud kitchen, bug hunting, den building and rope trails, until Thurs 1 Aug, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

BESIDE THE SEA - SUMMER HOLIDAY CRAFTS Holiday-themed crafts. Decorate a lighthouse, create a seagull puppet and make a kite, until Thurs 1 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

HALESOWEN BOSTIN BLACK COUNTRY BEACH Enjoy 'seaside' fun as Halesowen's beach returns, until Sat 10 Aug, Somer's Square, Halesowen

BADDESLEY CLINTON BOOK FAIR until Sun 18 Aug, Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire

HAF SUMMER ARTS CLUB Enjoy a new arts & crafts adventure for four days every week, courtesy of talented local artists from across the region, until Thurs 22 Aug, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

STONE AGE HUNTERS Go back in time to the Stone Age and prepare to help your tribe, until Fri 23 Aug, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

TITANIC EXHIBITION: BIRMINGHAM Exhibition exploring the story of the Titanic and featuring remarkable footage of the wreckage and real objects and artefacts recovered from the seabed, until Sun 25 Aug, NEC, Birmingham

LEGO WEDO WEDNESDAYS Each Wednesday this summer holiday, create your own invention using Lego kits, until Wed 28 Aug, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

BACK IN TIME: AGE OF THE DINOSAURS - HANDS-ON HISTORY SESSION Every Wednesday get up close to real fossils from the museum's natural history collection, until Thurs 29 Aug, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

FALCONRY AT THE CASTLE See birds of prey demonstrating their incredible acrobatic skills every Tuesday and Thursday, until Thurs 29 Aug, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

A DISCOVERY SUMMER HOLIDAY CLUB Explore, learn about and enjoy nature, until Thurs 29 Aug, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

KNIGHT SCHOOL Dress up and join the fun every Wednesday and Thursday throughout the summer, until Thurs 29 Aug, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

GAME ON! THE SCIENCE OF SPORT Celebrate the Olympics by learning all about the science behind some of your favourite sports, until Fri 30 Aug,

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

PLAY AND MAKE ZONE Discover the world of STEM via a selection of crafts which you can enjoy at your own pace, until Sat 31 Aug, Coventry Transport Museum

LOOK UP Featuring sensory play, arts & crafts, performances, and an immersive outdoor installation created by Gobbledegook Theatre, until Sat 31 Aug, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

SUMMER OF COLOUR Daily crafting activities, until Sat 31 Aug, Rugby Art Gallery & Museum

COTSWOLD FLOWER FESTIVAL Enjoy flower fields, the maize maze, craft activities and more, until Sat 31 Aug, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

JOYFUL JURASSIC CRAFTS Featuring crafts celebrating nature and Jurassic environments, until Sat 31 Aug, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

SUMMER FUN FEST Live entertainment every Saturday, with a new theme each week, until Sat 31 Aug, Drayton Manor Resort, Staffordshire

DRAGON TAMERS SURVIVAL SCHOOL Find out about the mythical beasts as you are guided through the castle, until Sun 1 Sept, Tamworth Castle

DINO DISCOVERY Join the team of intrepid Dino Rangers as they search for the lost dinosaurs, until Sun 1 Sept, Lower Drayton Farm, Staffordshire

SUDELEY'S 70S SUNDAYS Take part in a series of 'groovy 1970s activities' every Sunday throughout the summer holidays, until Sun 1 Sept, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

WHERE'S MY SHADOW? QUEST Help Noble, the trusty guard dog, search for his shadow in the grounds and gardens, until Sun 1 Sept, Witley Court and Gardens, Worcestershire

HANDS ON HISTORY Selection of activities for youngsters to enjoy, including sword school, storytelling and junior jousting, until Sun 1 Sept, Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire

THE BEACH Featuring sand, decking, deck chairs, children's activities, refreshments and more, until Sun 1 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

FLYING THEATRE: BRAVO, BRAVO! An immersive family show from Highly Sprung that features performers flying through the air, until Sun 1 Sept, The Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford



Thursday 1 - Sunday 4 August

BESIDE THE SEA - SUMMER FAMILY

TRAIL Holiday-themed trail around the castle, until Sun 1 Sept, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

ANIMAL BRICKTACULAR Embark on an 'extraordinary' safari to discover hundreds of real-life animals and 40 stunning lifesize brick sculptures, until Sun 1 Sept, Twycross Zoo, Atherstone

ANIMAL MAGIC Special workshops where visitors can create magical animals from clay, until Sun 1 Sept, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

JURASSIC PLAYGROUND Featuring specially designed artworks 'in a world of sensory spaces'. Inspired by Dippy, the Natural History Museum dinosaur currently on loan at the Herbert, until Sun 1 Sept, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

SUMMER FAMILY FUN Packed line-up of interactive exhibits and workshops along the railway, until Sun 1 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

AMAZING MERMAID ADVENTURE Meet amazing creatures, learn to see them through merpeople's eyes, and discover what you can do to show your love for our oceans, until Sun 1 Sept, National SEA LIFE Birmingham

VICTORIAN SEASIDE EXPERIENCE Enjoy a traditional Victorian 'day at the beach', complete with donkeys and a stage show, until Sun 1 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

THE GREAT SUMMER ADVENTURE Family fun featuring a maize maze and foam party, until Mon 2 Sept, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

FARMARAMA Beach party with gigantic paddling pools and a huge sand area, until Mon 2 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire

A SUMMER OF PLAY AT CHARLECOTE PARK 'Jam-packed' summer of play, with new activities every week, until Mon 2 Sept, Charlecote Park, Warwickshire

GET THE PICTURE - SUMMER OF DESIGN Dive deep into the world of car design via a range of activities, until Mon 2 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

SUMMER FUN Through the holidays, children can listen to stories and enjoy creative activities and fun family trails, until Thurs 5 Sept, The Commandery, Worcester

DISCOVER THE STORY OF HAMNET Explore hidden stories of love, loss and Tudor healing in the beautiful surroundings that inspired Maggie O'Farrell's novel, Hamnet, until Thurs 5 Sept, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Stratford-upon-Avon

MARCH OF THE ELEPHANTS Free public art trail featuring 60 elephant sculptures, until Sun 8 Sept, Lichfield, Tamworth and Sutton Coldfield

LEGO® DREAMZZZ™ Awaken your imagination with a dream creature hunt, until Sun 8 Sept, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

FAMILY TRAIL - BACK IN TIME: AGE OF THE DINOSAURS See if you can match the dinosaurs to their silhouettes, until Sun 8 Sept, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

DINOSAURS ON THE DOORSTEP See giant dinosaur skeletons, touch real fossil bones and check out original fossils from 150 million years ago, until Sun 8 Sept, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

MULTI-HOUSE FAMILY TRAIL Discover the remarkable stories of the women in Shakespeare's family, until Sun 3 November, Shakespeare's Birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage & Shakespeare's New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

RACING LEAGUE Action-packed evening of team racing and a variety of interactive games and experiences, Thurs 1 Aug, Wolverhampton Racecourse

ART MASTERCLASS: FELTING NATURE SCENES Explore nature through pressing together and combining colourful merino wool fibres, Thurs 1 Aug, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

CURATOR'S TOUR Guided tour of Acts Of Creation: On Art And Motherhood with MAC's curator, Roma Piotrowska, Thurs 1 Aug, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE FESTIVAL OF QUILTS Show featuring workshops, textile galleries, shopping opportunities and a display of hundreds of competition quilts, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Aug, NEC, B'ham

DINOS AND RHINOS Dino and rhino-themed activities, Thurs 1 - Sat 31 Aug, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BEYOND VAN GOGH Immersive experience bringing together more than 300 of Van Gogh's paintings with cutting-edge technology and a specially curated musical soundtrack, Thurs 1 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

LET'S GROW: FLOWERS! Help build the 'Rubbish Garden' - a garden full of life made from recycled and recyclable materials, Fri 2 Aug, Coventry Cathedral

SUMMER LATES Featuring Black Country food, retro drinks, fairground rides and live music. Until 8pm, Fri 2 Aug, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

WOODLAND TRIBE Unleash your inner builder, using real tools, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

MALVERN ROCKS Featuring over 100 performances in 12 venues across the town, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Aug, various venues across Malvern, Worcestershire



Beyond Van Gogh - NEC, Birmingham

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

COMMUNITY DAY A day of sharing stories and learning about the countries and traditions of South Asia, Sat 3 Aug, New Art Gallery, Walsall

MIDSUMMER FLOWER ARRANGING Create your own special summer flower arrangement, inspired by one of Shakespeare's most famous works, Sat 3 Aug, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Stratford-upon-Avon

COVENTRY PRIDE Celebrating the local LGBTQ+ community, Sat 3 Aug, Coventry City Centre

FIATS AND FRIENDS Celebrate 125 years of Fiat with Fiat Motor Club GB, Sat 3 Aug, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

OSWESTRY SHOW One of the country's leading one-day agricultural shows, Sat 3 Aug, Oswestry Showground, Shropshire

CREPE CITY SNEAKER FESTIVAL Join the UK's top sneaker vendors as they showcase the rarest and most desirable pairs of trainers, Sat 3 Aug, NEC, Birmingham

SAME DIFFERENCE FESTIVAL @ NAC Inclusive festival for young people, families and carers, Sat 3 Aug, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

MUCH WENLOCK OLYMPIC THEMED GUIDED TOUR Themed and guided walking tour of Much Wenlock, the birthplace of the Olympic Games, Sat 3 Aug, Much Wenlock Museum, Shropshire

LUNT ROMAN FESTIVAL 2024 Marvel at displays from living history re-enactment groups, take part in an interactive battle drill, and explore the Roman village, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Aug, Lunt Roman Fort, Baginton, Warwickshire

BRICK WEEKEND Join UK Lego train club LUKR for a weekend of Lego fun at Highley Engine House, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Aug, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

PAINT THE DAY 2024 Capture a scene - in just one day - within a three-mile radius of the venue and using a medium of your choice, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Aug, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

DINE 'N' DEVOUR FOOD & ARTISAN FESTIVAL Eat your way through a 'mouthwatering array' of street food, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Aug, Centenary Square, Birmingham

LIMITLESS FESTIVAL 2024 Packed programme of activities, sports, events, seminars and workshops, Sat 3 - Wed 7 Aug, Staffordshire County Showground

BREWHOUSE ON TOUR Featuring a wide range of creative activities, along with live performances from professional theatre companies, Sat 3 - Sun 25 Aug, various locations across Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire

BARBER FAMILY FESTIVAL Free drop-in activities inspired by the exhibition Hidden Lives Of Plants: Botanical Illustrations From The V&A, Sat 3 - Sun 11 Aug, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

CINDERELLA PRINCESS BALL Featuring Cinderella and special guests Rapunzel, from Tangled, and Ariel, from The Little Mermaid, Sun 4 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

NATIONAL GUNDOG ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP DOG SHOW SOCIETY Sun 4 Aug, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

CIRCUS SKILLS Interactive circus fun with Thomas Trilby throughout the day, Sun 4 - Thurs 8 Aug, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

Music Festivals

Y NOT FESTIVAL Line-up includes Snow Patrol, Jamie T, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds & Kaiser Chiefs, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Aug, Pikehall, Derbyshire



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Gigs

FANNY LUMSDEN Wed 7 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KAONASHI Wed 7 Aug, The Flapper, B'ham

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE Wed 7 Aug, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SUPERTONIC Thurs 8 Aug, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE GROVE DAISY ROAD + THE FAZELEYS + FREYA IRIS Thurs 8 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ELLA FITZGERALD AND FRANK SINATRA CELEBRATION Thurs 8 Aug, Birmingham Town Hall

TRAGEDY - ALL METAL TRIBUTE TO THE BEE GEES + JT. VALENTINE + IMPERIAL AVENUE Thurs 8 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA Thurs 8 Aug, Tamworth Castle Grounds

ROOMMATES + DECADE AND A DAY + HOURGLASS Fri 9 Aug, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

ALEX HARRY Fri 9 Aug, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

OASIS Fri 9 Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

THE QUO Fri 9 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Fri 9 Aug, Dudley Town Hall

DEFINITELY MIGHT + ADORED Fri 9 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE SUPERSKAS Fri 9 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

ULTIMATE GREENDAY Fri 9 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

COUNTRY SUPERSTARS AND THE DOLLY & KENNY EXPERIENCE Fri 9 Aug, Tamworth Castle Grounds

BIG SHIP ALLIANCE REGGAE SHOW Fri 9 Aug, The Station, Cannock

PEASHOOTER Fri 9 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

DESPERADOS Fri 9 Aug,



Justin Timberlake - Utilita Arena Birmingham

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MICROBABY Fri 9 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ORANGE RIVER REMEDY Fri 9 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

STONELOAD + MOTHER THUNDER Fri 9 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

B'SPOKE Fri 9 - Sat 10 Aug, The Jam House, Birmingham

LOVE! THE BEATLES Fri 9 - Sat 10 Aug, Temperance, Leamington Spa

AMY WINEHOUSE - A TRIBUTE Sat 10 Aug, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

DAY FEVER Sat 10 Aug, O2 Institute, B'ham

CARTOONHEAD + SAFEST SPACES Sat 10 Aug, The Asylum, Birmingham

BADFACE + TEALDEER + MASSASAUGA + NEW PULSE + YOUTH IN OBLIVION Sat 10 Aug, The Flapper, B'ham

CLOBBER + PERP WALK Sat 10 Aug, Dead Wax, Birmingham

RICHIE SPICE + I-WAYNE + T'JEAN + KJAH LAMAR Sat 10 Aug, Forum, Birmingham

GLOBAL REGGAE BAND Sat 10 Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

TWIN LIZZY +

MOTORPACE Sat 10 Aug, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE MACHINE RAGES ON Sat 10 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

MATT WOOSEY TRIO Sat 10 Aug, West Malvern Social Club

THE ROCK OF AGES EXPERIENCE Sat 10 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY Sat 10 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE GEORGE MICHAEL LEGACY + 80S MANIA Sat 10 Aug, Tamworth Castle Grounds

CANTALOOP Sat 10 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

PAUL PARKER & ALL THE RIGHT FRIENDS Sat 10 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE WITCHING TALE + KAVUS TORABI Sun 11 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BIG SHIP ALLIANCE Sun 11 Aug, The Night Owl, Birmingham

CREDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW Sun 11 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

TRAGEDY - ALL METAL TRIBUTE TO THE BEE GEES Sun 11 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

JOHNNY CASH EXPERIENCE Sun 11 Aug, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

TAYLOR SWIFT THE ERAS OUTDOOR PARTY Sun 11 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION Featuring Ben Bloor (organ), Tues 6 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

LUNCHTIME RECITAL WITH CHARLOTTE KINNEAR Fri 9 Aug, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

Comedy

GURLEEN PANNU Fri 9 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PETER KAY Fri 9 Aug, Utilita Arena Birmingham

DOMINIC WOODWARD, ABI CARTER SIMPSON, JAKE STEERS & CARL JONES Fri 9 Aug, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

JOSH PUGH, JO ENRIGHT, EDDY BRIMSON & DOUG CARTER Fri 9 Aug, hmv Empire, Coventry

RICHARD MORTON, KAREN BAYLEY, SEAN PERCIVAL & DEMITRIS DEECH Fri 9 Aug, South Redditch Sports & Social Club

ALISTAIR BARRIE, MERYL O'ROURKE, AVIER JARQUIN & DANIEL FOXF Fri 9 - Sat 10 Aug, The Glee Club, B'ham

GORDON SOUTHERN, JOSEPH EMSLIE, MATT STELLINGWERF & PAUL REVILL Sat 10 Aug, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

Theatre

THE EXPLORERS FRONTLINE Dance present a multi-sensory adventure during which audiences get to help bring to life two stories through dance, colour, sound and teamwork, Mon 5 Aug, Wednesbury Library

MR SHADOW Lighthearted family show in which funny little tales unfold, Mon 5 Aug, Bleakhouse Library, Oldbury

LAIKA THE SPACE DOG Lori Hopkins' story about an ordinary dog who went on an extraordinary journey into space, Tues 6 Aug, Stone Cross Library, West Bromwich (11am)

LAIKA THE SPACE DOG Lori Hopkins' story about an ordinary dog who went on an extraordinary journey into space, Tues 6 Aug, Hamstead Library, Great Barr (2pm)

JEEVES AND WOOSTER Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of PG Wodehouse's whimsical play - complete with live jazz music, Tues 6 Aug, Billesley Manor, Stratford-upon-Avon

MEDEA Malvern Theatres Young Company present an amateur version of Euripides' heartbreaking tale of a mother's betrayal, despair and ultimate revenge, Tues 6 - Fri 9

Aug, Malvern Theatres

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Worcester Operatic Dramatic Society (WODS) present an amateur version of the kooky musical, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Aug, Swan Theatre, Worcester

FIRST DATE: A COMEDY MUSICAL UK premiere of the award-winning Broadway musical, Wed 7 - Sun 25 Aug, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR Slapstick and music combine as The Pantaloons put their own innovative and interactive spin on Shakespeare's classic comedy, Thurs 8 Aug, Shrewsbury Castle

JEEVES AND WOOSTER Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of PG Wodehouse's whimsical play - complete with live jazz music, Thurs 8 Aug, Greyfriars, Worcester

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of E Nesbit's heartwarming tale, Fri 9 Aug, Tewkesbury Abbey

JEEVES AND WOOSTER Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of PG Wodehouse's whimsical play - complete with live jazz music, Fri 9 Aug, Tewkesbury Abbey

THE GREATEST ROBOT EVER Hawk Dance Theatre tell the story of Glitch, a little robot about to embark on a journey of self-discovery, Fri 9 Aug, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY Amateur musical based on Roald Dahl's much-loved children's story, Fri 9 - Sat 10 Aug, Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

ANGELICA SPROCKET'S POCKETS Folksy Theatre present an outdoor version of Quentin Blake's classic children's tale, Sat 10 Aug, Bructon Park, Solihull

NATURE ELLY Barnpot Theatre present an interactive show for younger audiences featuring animal puppets and original music, Sat 10 Aug, West Smethwick Park, Birmingham

LAIKA THE SPACE DOG Lori Hopkins' story about an ordinary dog who went on an extraordinary journey into space, Sat 10 Aug, Langley Library, Oldbury (11am)

FAMILY MAGIC SHOW WITH THE GREAT BALDINI Featuring magic, puppetry, escapology - and the hunt for a child with royal heritage, Sat 10 Aug, West Smethwick Park Pavilion, Smethwick

LAIKA THE SPACE DOG Lori Hopkins' story about an ordinary dog who went on an extraordinary journey into space, Sat 10 Aug, Blackheath Library, Rowley Regis (2pm)

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN Tethered Wits present an outdoor staging based on E. Nesbit's heartwarming tale, Sat 10 Aug, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick

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JEEVES AND WOOSTER Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of PG Wodehouse's whimsical play - complete with live jazz music, Sat 10 Aug, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick

THINGAMABOB Join intrepid inventor Matt Pang for a blend of circus, invention and humour, Sat 10 Aug, West Smethwick Park, Birmingham



THE SLEEPING SEEDS Fox & Rocha present a fun family show exploring what we grow, where we grow and how we grow... Sat 10 Aug, Bearwood Allotments, Birmingham

ROMEO AND JULIET Ilyria present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's tale of love and revenge, Sat 10 Aug, Hanbury Hall, Droitwich

CANINE TEETH A stand-up monologue exploring the complexities of societal expectations, resilience and personal fulfillment, Sat 10 Aug, Cradley Heath Library, Cradley Heath

THE TEMPEST Lying Lips Theatre Company fuse storytelling, Amazonian music and movement inspired by Butoh, to present an innovative version of Shakespeare's magical tale, Sat 10 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of E Nesbit's heartwarming tale, Sat 10 Aug, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick

SAMPAD SHIRLEY TAKEOVER Celebrate South Asian Heritage Month with a free programme of music, dance and spoken word, Sun 11 Aug, Shirley Park, Solihull

THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU Meet an eclectic group of animals as they discuss their life experiences and the challenges they face in a rapidly changing world dominated by human beings. Performed by Scarlet Oak Theatre, Sun 11 Aug, Lightwoods House, Smethwick

ALICE AND THE LIBRARY TREE B'Opera's 'magical interactive family show' provides a quickfire introduction to opera and classical music - all sprinkled with fairy dust. Perfect for children aged four to nine, Sun 11 Aug, West Smethwick Park, Birmingham

JUST BE YOU Mobilise Arts present a family-friendly work of musical theatre exploring the themes of wellbeing, nature and identity, Sun 11 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

TELL ME A STORY Handmade Theatre take audiences on a journey down memory lane, exploring the stories of people, places and objects we hold dear... Sun 11 Aug, West Smethwick Park, Birmingham

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? Children's theatre featuring three raggedy puppets, each determined to play by their own rules and show the grown-ups who is boss, Sun 11 Aug, West Smethwick Park, Birmingham

Dance

FOLK DANCE REMIXED: STEP HOP HOUSE A fresh, quirky, colourful and magical collision of traditional and hip-hop dance and music, Sun 11 Aug, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

Light Entertainment

VICTOR AND ALBERT'S VARIETY NIGHT Join identical twins Professor Victor and Dr Albert for an evening of riotous comedy, original songs, games, mayhem and a sprinkling of magic, Mon 5 Aug, Stone Cross Library, West Bromwich

IRELAND THE SHOW Dance, music and comedy combine in a show celebrating all things Irish, Thurs 8 Aug, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA A collective of 12 classically trained artists perform hits from AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, Metallica, Iron Maiden and more... Thurs 8 Aug, Tamworth Castle

COUNTRY SUPERSTARS AND THE DOLLY & KENNY EXPERIENCE Open-air concert featuring award-winning impersonations of Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Billie Jo Spears, Willie Nelson, Tammy Wynette, Garth Brooks and more... Fri 9 Aug, Tamworth Castle

WONDERS OF OUR UNIVERSE Join astrophysicist Ian Hall FRAS for a visual exploration of the cosmos, delivered in a storytelling style accompanied by a soundtrack, Sun 11 Aug, Stourbridge Town Hall

DEFYING GRAVITY Open-air production in which Britain's Got Talent finalists Richard and Adam host a celebration of women who have made their mark on the West End, Sun 11 Aug, Tamworth Castle

Events

MUSEUM TOUR A guided behind-the-scenes tour of the museum, Mon 5 Aug, Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham

NATIONAL PONY SOCIETY SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIPS Featuring qualifiers

for the Horse Of The Year Show plus national finals, Tues 6 - Thurs 8 Aug, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

BRITISH SHOWJUMPING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS Featuring competitions, outdoor performances, hospitality and a retail shopping village, Tues 6 - Sun 11 Aug, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

UNITED RETRIEVER CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW Wed 7 Aug, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

LOUISE BOURGEOIS MIXED MEDIA WORKSHOP Work with watercolours, drawing inks and wire to create a mixed-media artwork inspired by Louise Bourgeois: Nature Study, Wed 7 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

FAMILY FUN DAY: WONDERS OF THE ICE AGE Learn about Ice Age animals and how they adapted to live in a cold climate, Wed 7 Aug, Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham

JOHN LAWSON'S SUMMER CIRCUS Featuring clowning and aerial acrobatics, Wed 7 - Mon 12 Aug, Webbs at Wychbold, Droitwich

OPEN AIR CONCERTS Series of open-air concerts, presented by a different act each night, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Aug, Tamworth Castle Grounds

PICKLEBALL ENGLISH OPEN 2024 Thurs 8 - Wed 14 Aug, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

SUMMER LATES Featuring Black Country food, retro drinks, fairground rides and live music, until 8pm, Fri 9 Aug, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

AFTER HOURS Enjoy the venue's exhibitions and check out the menu in the restaurant, Fri 9 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

CAUDWELL CHILDREN'S ULTIMATE FAMILY FUN EXPERIENCE Open day with entertainment including a sensory bus, penalty shoot-out and animal meet and greet, Fri 9 Aug, Caudwell International Children's Centre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SHREWSBURY FLOWER SHOW One of the country's premier flower show events, attracting top exhibitors from all over the country, Fri 9 - Sat 10 Aug, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

ROLLER DISCO BIRTHDAY PARTY Celebrating 10 years of FarGo, Sat 10 Aug, FarGo Village, Coventry

TAYLOR SWIFT FAMILY CELEBRATION Featuring bracelet making, glitter tattoos, a family disco and tribute act Miss America, Sat 10 Aug, Millenium Point, Birmingham

BIRTHDAY BBQ AND NATURE FUN DAY Celebrating 10 years of running the centre as a local charity, Sat 10 Aug, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

DISCOS FOR GROWN UPS: POP-UP 70S 80S 90S DISCO PARTY You're never too old to strut your stuff! Sat 10 Aug, Birmingham Town Hall

THE DARTS SHOWDOWN Featuring Andrew Gilding, Ryan Searle, Jamie Hughes and Jamie Caven, Sat 10 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

STEAM GALA Experience the sights, sounds and smells of the Industrial Revolution, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Aug, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

FLYING SEAGULLS CIRCUS Join Flying Seagulls at their painted Wagon Stage for a mix of showmanship, creativity and family fun, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

PLANETARIUM - EXPLORE NEW WORLDS Immerse yourself in the wonders of the universe in a state-of-the-art, 360° digital dome, Sat 10 - Sun 18 Aug, Shrewsbury Prison

VINTAGE TRANSPORT EXTRAVAGANZA Vehicles from all eras will be on display at each station, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Aug, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

VIKING RE-ENACTMENT A Viking hoard set up their village and carry out a selection of day-to-day activities, including cooking, weaving and leather work, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Aug, Stafford Castle

ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS FAIR Browse through unique and high-quality items from various eras of history, Sun 11 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

WEDDING FAIR Featuring 30-plus exhibitors and live entertainment, Sun 11 Aug, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

SAMPAD SHIRLEY TAKEOVER - FRESH AIR THEATRE Sampad present dance, music and a selection of workshops, Sun 11 Aug, Shirley Park, Solihull

NATIONAL WELSH PONY CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW Sun 11 Aug, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

TAYLOR SWIFT THE ERAS OUTDOOR PARTY Tributes to Taylor Swift, Dua Lipa and Ariana Grande, Sun 11 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Music Festivals

LAKEFEST Line-up includes The Stranglers, Rudimental, The Libertines and Olly Murs, Wed 7 - Sun 11 Aug, Eastnor Castle Deer Park, Herefordshire

BLOODSTOCK OPEN AIR Line-up includes Ophé, Architects, Amon Amarth, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Aug, Catton Hall, Derbyshire

FARMER PHIL'S FESTIVAL Line-up includes Celtic Social Club, Dodgy, T.Rex The Music of Marc and Mickey, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Aug, Near Gatten Farm, Ratlinghope, Shropshire

Gigs

SHEER MAG Mon 12 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MUSHROOMHEAD + SILENZER + DYMYTRY Mon 12 Aug, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FRAIL BODY Tues 13 Aug, The Asylum, Birmingham

CHRIS ISAAK Tues 13 Aug, Birmingham Town Hall

KOWALSKI'S ACOUSTIC CLUB Wed 14 Aug, The Dark Horse, Moseley, Birmingham

THE SWAPS + TOMAS DONCKER + AMIT DATTANI Wed 14 Aug, Temperance, Leamington Spa

BROKEN CALLING Wed 14 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

AMIKA + HUNTER BAVARO + ANGEL VILE Thurs 15 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JUDY BLU BAND Thurs 15 Aug, The Jam House, Birmingham

SPACED OUT Thurs 15 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DEE CRACKS + ADEM + QUESTION THE MARK + BACK TEETH Thurs 15 Aug, The Dark Horse, Moseley, Birmingham

THE MAGPIE ARC Thurs 15 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

KID BRUNSWICK Thurs 15 Aug, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent



BIG SKY ORCHESTRA Fri 16 Aug, The Dark Horse, Moseley, B'ham

HEAVY SOL BAND - TRIBUTE TO THE JAM & PAUL WELLER Fri 16 Aug, The Night Owl, Birmingham

PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES + ROTUNDA + MANGLED + THE HUMAN ERROR Fri 16 Aug, Castle &

Falcon, Birmingham

ARIJIT SINGH Fri 16 Aug, Utilita Arena Birmingham

VEHICLE Fri 16 Aug, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

LEIGHTON TONGUE Fri 16 Aug, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

THE BOY GEORGE EXPERIENCE Fri 16 Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

ROBBED ZOMBIE + SIX SINS TILL SUNDAY Fri 16 Aug, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE MATHEMATICS SHOW - ED SHEERAN TRIBUTE Fri 16 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

KAISER MONKEY KILLERS Fri 16 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

FLEETWOOD BAC Fri 16 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

ARMORED SAINT + TAILGUNNER Fri 16 Aug, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

RED HOT CHILI POTTERS Fri 16 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

POPPY BLOND + COCOH + SAM POOLE + SAY Fri 16 Aug, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

TUBEWAY DAYS Fri 16 Aug, The Station, Cannock

THE ENDINGS Fri 16 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

BACK TO THE BORDER Fri 16 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE INNOCENT CRIMINALS Fri 16 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

ELECTRIC SWING CIRCUS + HEAVY BEAT BRASS BAND Sat 17 Aug, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

BUGMILK Sat 17 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

VINCEN GARCIA Sat 17 Aug, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE 900 Sat 17 Aug, The Flapper, B'ham

THE ZEPPELIN 3 Sat 17 Aug, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

THE DETOURS Sat 17

Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

HOLOCENE Sat 17 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

ULTIMATE RNB Sat 17 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE SMITHS LTD Sat 17 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

SUFFER + OLD WHARF + STITCHED + RAW CONFLICT Sat 17 Aug, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE PET SHOP BOYS TRIBUTE Sat 17 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MORETALICA Sat 17 Aug, The Station, Cannock

THE MIGHTY BOING Sat 17 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

HARRY STYLED Sat 17 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SONIC BOOM BAND Sat 17 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE FABULOUS BORDELLOS Sat 17 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

HOT ROCKETS + THIRTEENTH TURN Sat 17 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

A DIFFERENT THREAD Sun 18 Aug, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

TOMAS DONCKER AND MARLA MASE Sun 18 Aug, Temperance, Leamington Spa

CURVED AIR Sun 18 Aug, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

HEAVEN 17 Sun 18 Aug, The Robin, Bilston



THOMAS DOLBY Sun 18 Aug, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

RICH PARSONS Sun 18 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

TOTAL REX Sun 18 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION Featuring Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (organ), Tues 13 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Fri 16 Aug, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

ALEX WYATT PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Medtner, Beethoven & Franck, Sat 17 Aug, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ORCHESTRAS OF GREAT BRITAIN: FORCE OF DESTINY CONCERT Featuring Harish Shankar (conductor). Programme includes works by Verdi, Simons, Ravel & Shostakovich, Sun 18 Aug, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

LEWIS SPEARS Fri 16 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PETE SELWOOD, THOMAS GREEN, VINCE ATTA & JO ENRIGHT Fri 16 - Sat 17 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROGER MONKHOUSE, PAUL PIRIE, CARL JONES & COMIC TBC Sat 17 Aug, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

Theatre

JULIUS CAESAR 2024 One of the most famous political coups in history gets the Oddsocks treatment, Tues 13 Aug, Brueton Park, Solihull

THE ADVENTURES OF DOCTOR DOLITTLE Illyria present an outdoor version of Hugh Lofting's classic family show, Tues 13 Aug, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

DANGEROUS DAVE Marvel as Dave's sidekick, Herbert Lemon, fights his way out of a wet paper bag and climbs the slippery pole of peril to plunge into a domestic food processor, Wed 14 Aug, Central Library, West Bromwich

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST The Tethered Wits Academy present Oscar Wilde's timeless tale of identity, wit and cucumber sandwiches, Wed 14 Aug, Tewkesbury Abbey

FORESTS RoguePlay Theatre fuse acrobatics and dance in a highly visual family-friendly show which challenges forestry practices, the destruction of rainforests and the displacement of indigenous people, Wed 14 Aug, Elmdon Park, Solihull

FORESTS RoguePlay Theatre fuse acrobatics and dance in a highly visual family-friendly show which challenges forestry practices, the destruction of rainforests and the displacement of indigenous people,

Thurs 15 Aug, Dorridge Park, Solihull
PETER PAN Immersion Theatre present an outdoor version of JM Barrie's timeless tale, Thurs 15 Aug, Shrewsbury Castle

THE SOUND OF MUSIC - STAGE EXPERIENCE Amateur production based on Rodgers & Hammerstein's iconic musical, Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Aug, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST The Tethered Wits Academy present Oscar Wilde's timeless tale of identity, wit and cucumber sandwiches, Fri 16 Aug, Greyfriars, Worcester

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST Rain Or Shine Theatre Company present an outdoor version of Oscar Wilde's comic masterpiece, Fri 16 Aug, Severn Valley Country Park, Alveley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

BUGSY MALONE Amateur version of the oft-performed musical comedy, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Aug, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

BYMT UNBOUND 'Bewitching' new musical by British Youth Music Theatre, in partnership with Birmingham Hippodrome, featuring a 1980s-fuelled pop-rock score, Fri 16 - Sun 18 Aug, Birmingham Hippodrome

LES MISÉRABLES Student version of the iconic musical, Sat 17 Aug, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE WEDDING OF TOUCHSTONE & AUBREY Savvy Theatre Company intertwine clowning, mask work, audience participation and a smattering of Shakespeare's text in a celebratory work of theatre, Sat 17 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE GONDOLIERS Illyria present an outdoor version of Gilbert & Sullivan's lighthearted operetta, Sat 17 Aug, Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire

ANGELICA SPROCKET'S POCKETS Folksy Theatre present an outdoor version of Quentin Blake's classic children's tale, Sat 17 Aug, The Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

CASTAWAY Acclaimed aerial performers Highly Sprung present an outdoor performance exploring the impact of today's throwaway society on our waterways, Sat 17 Aug, Tudor Grange Park, Solihull

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Illyria present an outdoor version of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's most-famous Sherlock Holmes story, Sat 17 Aug, Winterbourne House and Garden, University of Birmingham

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN Summer School production of the Mel Brooks musical, Sat 17 Aug, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of E Nesbit's heartwarming tale, Sat 17 Aug, The Tuckwell Amphitheatre, Cheltenham

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST Rain Or Shine Theatre Company present an outdoor version of Oscar Wilde's comic masterpiece, Sat 17 Aug, Witley Court, Worcestershire

CASTAWAY Acclaimed aerial performers Highly Sprung present an outdoor performance exploring the impact of today's throwaway society on our waterways, Sun 18 Aug, Lavender Hall Park, Solihull

JEEVES AND WOOSTER Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of PG Wodehouse's whimsical play - complete with live jazz music, Sun 18 Aug, Tamworth Castle Grounds

ANNIE Five Star Theatre present an amateur version of the rags-to-riches musical, Sun 18 Aug, Benn Hall, Rugby

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST The Tethered Wits Academy present Oscar Wilde's timeless tale of identity, wit and cucumber sandwiches, Sun 18 Aug, Dean Close School, Cheltenham

TWISTED TALES Box House Theatre Company's outdoor show in which a cast of six actors are confined to the space of a gym mat whilst showcasing four folk tales that all end with a twist, Sun 18 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN Tethered Wits present an outdoor version of E Nesbit's heartwarming tale, Sun 18 Aug, Tamworth Castle Grounds

PETER PAN Immersion Theatre's outdoor version of JM Barrie's timeless tale, Sun 18 Aug, Dudmaston Hall, Nr Bridgnorth, Shropshire

Dance

SECOND HAND DANCE: THE STICKY DANCE Three dancers 'shimmy through the audience, sparking connections and turning the rules upside down in a tactile dance performance', Sun 18 Aug, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Light Entertainment

LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS Featuring showstopping musical numbers, opera classics and traditional prom favourites. Performers include Tara Marisa Kelsey (mezzo soprano), Simone Francesco Liconti (Italian tenor), Wayne C Baddeley (show pianist), Jobe Sullivan

(instrumentalist) and Raghad Haddad (violinist), Sat 17 Aug, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

CANDLELIGHT: THE BEST OF BOLLYWOOD AND TOLLYWOOD ON STRINGS Discover the music of Bollywood and Tollywood in the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 17 Aug, Birmingham Cathedral

CANDLELIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN A live, multi-sensory musical experience featuring Queen's greatest hits, Sat 17 Aug, Birmingham Cathedral

Events

GAYDON GATHERING Open to all motoring enthusiasts and all sorts of vehicles, Tues 13 Aug, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

BESIDE THE SEA - SUMMER HOLIDAY CRAFTS Try your hand at holiday-themed crafts, Tues 13 - Thurs 15 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

BIG ART HOLIDAY CAMP Each day children will explore a new material and way of making, working together to take over the studio space and create an exhibition inspired by contemporary artists, Tues 13 - Fri 16 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

EVENING OPENING: DUDMASTON AFTER HOURS Visit Dudmaston after hours and see the garden and galleries in a different light, Wed 14 Aug, Dudmaston, nr Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

ZOOLAB: 'NOT SO' CREEPY CRITTERS Get up close and hands-on with live creatures, guided by an expert ZooLab ranger, Wed 14 - Thurs 15 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

JAGUAR BREAKFAST MEET Open to all Jaguar owners and enthusiasts, Thurs 15 Aug, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

ROARING WITH DINOSAURS Featuring baby dinosaurs and a full-size walking and roaring velociraptor, Thurs 15 Aug, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

STAFFORD MUSIC & FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring live music, street food, retail stalls and more, Thurs 15 Aug, Market Square, Stafford

SUMMER ACCESS DAY Showcasing the range of accessible activities and initiatives on offer at the museum, Fri 16 Aug, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

GARDENS CINEMA: LABYRINTH Outdoor screening of Jim Henson's Labyrinth, presented by Mockingbird Cinema and Flatpack, Fri 16 Aug, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

REEL & MEAL: MEAN GIRLS SINGALONG Open-air screening of this year's Mean Girls movie, served with classic American fast food, Fri 16 Aug,



Second Hand Dance: The Sticky Dance - Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

SUMMER LATES Featuring Black Country food, retro drinks, fairground rides and live music, until 8pm, Fri 16 Aug, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE WESTERN MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW One of the UK's leading country music weekends, Fri 16 - Sun 18 Aug, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

SUMMER FESTIVAL FAYRE IN THE CLOISTER Featuring an array of handmade products, Sat 17 Aug, Worcester Cathedral

GARDENS CINEMA: THE BOY & THE HERON Presented by Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham Anime Festival and Flatpack. Pre-film performance from Sekine Quartet, Sat 17 Aug, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

FUNK ON THE FARM Featuring live music, food & drink and a maize maze, Sat 17 Aug, National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire

OUTDOOR CINEMA - SINGALONG MAMMA MIA! Sing along to ABBA classics while watching Mamma Mia! outdoors, Sat 17 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

REEL & MEAL: WEST SIDE STORY Pick from an array of Puerto Rican-inspired street food before settling down to enjoy this outdoor screening, Sat 17 Aug, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

SINGIN' ON THE TRAIN Eight male voice choirs perform at stations throughout the day, Sat 17 Aug, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

OUTDOOR CINEMA - WONKA Fun-packed family film presented in the open air, Sat 17 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

THE HARRY STYLES OUTDOOR ROOFTOP PARTY Tribute act Harry Styled brings Harry's iconic hits to life, Sat 17 Aug,

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM ANIME & GAMING CON Bringing together voice actors, idols, youtubers and celebs, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Aug, Edgbaston Stadium, B'ham

SUITCASE STORYTELLER An interactive dive into storybooks, using props, music, drama and more, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Aug, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

OSWESTRY BALLOON CARNIVAL Raising funds for Nightingale House Hospice, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Aug, Cae Glas Park, Oswestry, North Shropshire

VAUX ALL Celebration of all things Vauxhall, Opel and Bedford, Sun 18 Aug, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

THE GLAM ROCK OUTDOOR ROOFTOP PARTY Live performance by Total Rex, Sun 18 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE BBNF MIDLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS Showcasing 'the best natural bodybuilders in the Midlands', Sun 18 Aug, Crescent Theatre, B'ham

Festivals

TRENTHAM LIVE Line-up includes Jess Glynne, Busted, Deacon Blue & Manic Street Preachers, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 Aug, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

CAMP BESTIVAL Line-up Rick Astley, Paloma Faith, Faithless & Orbital, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 Aug, Weston Park, Shropshire/Staffordshire border

OLD BUSH BLUES FESTIVAL Line-up includes Sugar Mama, Catfish & Hollie Rogers, Fri 16 - Sun 18 Aug, The Old Bush, Callow End, Worcester

JUST SO FESTIVAL Line-up includes Thingumabob & The Thingumajigs, Lazlo Baby, David Gibb Big Band, Fri 16 - Sun 18 Aug, Rode Hall, Cheshire



Jungle - Centenary Square, Birmingham

Gigs

IRESS + KULK Tues 20 Aug, The Victoria, Birmingham

NOAH KAHAN Tues 20 Aug, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ANGELO STARR Thurs 22 Aug, The Jam House, Birmingham

SIDETRACKED Thurs 22 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SOUTHALL + KYLE DANIEL Thurs 22 Aug, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE PLEASURES Thurs 22 Aug, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

AMY G SINGS DUA LIPA & ARIANA GRANDE Thurs 22 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

DYING ADDICTION Fri 23 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

L1NKN P4RK + DRIPPED EMPIRE + CONTINENTS Fri 23 Aug, The Asylum, Birmingham

ROAD CLOSED Fri 23 Aug, The Victoria, Birmingham

THE STREETS Fri 23 Aug, Centenary Square, Birmingham

THE VERTIGO BAND Fri 23 Aug, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

THE JERSEY BEATS Fri 23 Aug, Albany Theatre, Coventry

SUPERFUZ Fri 23 Aug, 45Live, Kidderminster

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Fri 23 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE DRIFTERS Fri 23

Aug, The Robin, Bilston

FRED ZEPPLIN Fri 23 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

DIRTY MONKEYS Fri 23 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

AMY A TRIBUTE Fri 23 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

CALL OF THE KRAKEN Fri 23 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SKABURST Fri 23 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE BLUE YELLOWS + ROWAN LAWSON BAND Fri 23 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

WYCH ELM + MÅGNATAS COURT + STAY AT HOME & DIE Sat 24 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

AKA NOEL GALLAGHER Sat 24 Aug, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

JUNGLE Sat 24 Aug, Centenary Square, Birmingham

JAMIE TURNER Sat 24 Aug, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

SHOVEL DANCE COLLECTIVE + VIBRACATHEDRAL ORCHESTRA + DUNNING AND UNDERWOOD Sat 24 Aug, Malvern Cube

THE SEARCHERS & HOLLIES EXPERIENCE Sat 24 Aug, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

WHITE TYGER + STOP, STOP Sat 24 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

AIRTIGHT 80S Sat 24 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

KILLERSTREAM Sat 24

Aug, The Quarter at Pot Bank, Stoke-on-Trent

STORM FEST Sat 24 Aug, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

BLONDIE UK Sat 24 Aug, The Station, Cannock

UNFORGIVEN Sat 24 Aug, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE MOTEL 6 Sat 24 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BLACK HEART ANGELS Sat 24 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

BOURBON HITCHER + STEVE VINCENT Sat 24 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

ARCTIC MANCKEYS Sun 25 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

OWLSTOCK Sun 25 Aug, The Night Owl, Birmingham

CIAN DUCROT Sun 25 Aug, Centenary Square, Birmingham

JENNIFER BOLTON AND FRIENDS Sun 25 Aug, Tower Of Song, B'ham

IAGO BANET Sun 25 Aug, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

JAKE BYRNE Sun 25 Aug, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

TOTAL REX Sun 25 Aug, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

RICHARD DAWSON + ALISON COTTON + ELIZA MARSHALL Sun 25 Aug, Malvern Cube

LABOUR OF LOVE - UB40 TRIBUTE Sun 25 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

EXPERIENCE BECK - JEFF BECK TRIBUTE Sun 25 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

COUNTRY LEGENDS SHOW + RYAN EVANS Sun 25 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE WILDFIRE Sun 25 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

LIAM DIXON Sun 25 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

Classical Music

MARION BETTSWORTH ORGAN CONCERT Tues 20 Aug, Hereford Cathedral

LUNCHTIME RECITAL Featuring Sophia Sanderson (flute) & Richard Walker (piano), Tues 20 Aug, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

LIAM CONDON ORGAN RECITAL Tues 20 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

KAZUKI CONDUCTS MOZART & MUSSORGSKY Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Paul Lewis (piano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Mozart, Holmès & Mussorgsky, Wed 21 Aug, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NATIONAL YOUTH STRING ORCHESTRA Featuring Damian Iorio (music director). Programme includes works by Webern, Bartók & Tchaikovsky, Sat 24 Aug, CBSO Centre, B'ham

Comedy

LOU CONRAN (PICTURED), CAREY MARX, JACK GLEADOW & JONNY AWSUM Fri 23 - Sat 24 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham



SEAN PERCIVAL, JACK CAMPBELL, PAUL COX & JON PEARSON Sat 24 Aug, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

Theatre

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Mon 19 Aug, Lanchester Park, Solihull (10am)

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Mon 19 Aug, Meriden Park, Solihull (2pm)

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Tues 20 Aug, Kinghurst Park, Solihull (10am)

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Tues 20 Aug, Marston Green Park, Solihull (2pm)

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE Chapterhouse Theatre present an outdoor version

of Jane Austen's romantic classic, Tues 20 Aug, Tuckwell Amphitheatre, Cheltenham

THE ADVENTURES OF DOCTOR DOLITTLE Illyria present an outdoor version of Hugh Lofting's classic family show, Tues 20 Aug, Hartshill Park, Telford, Shropshire

PRETTY WOMAN THE MUSICAL Amber Davies stars as Vivienne, Oliver Savile as Edward and Ore Oduba as Happy Man/Mr Thompson in a musical version of the iconic Hollywood rom-com, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Aug, The Alexandra, Birmingham

101 DALMATIANS THE MUSICAL Starring Faye Tozer as Cruella De Vil, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Aug, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

FAME: THE MUSICAL Malvern Theatres Young Company present an amateur version of David da Silva's high-octane musical, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Aug, Malvern Theatres

LAIKA THE SPACE DOG Lori Hopkins' story about an ordinary dog who went on an extraordinary journey into space, Wed 21 Aug, West Smethwick Park

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Wed 21 Aug, Jacey Park, Solihull (10am)

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Wed 21 Aug, Green Lane Park, Solihull (2pm)

LITTLE WOMEN Chapterhouse Theatre present an outdoor version of Louisa May Alcott's coming-of-age story, Wed 21 Aug, Tuckwell Amphitheatre, Cheltenham

FIREMAN SAM: THE GREAT CAMPING ADVENTURE New live show for younger audiences, Wed 21 Aug, Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

AUTIN DANCE: THE GIANT WHEEL A moving performance inspired by 'the beauty, power and impact of people from different walks of life coming together'... Wed 21 Aug, West Park Rd, Smethwick

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Thurs 22 Aug, Lavender Hall Park, Solihull (10am)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST Rain Or Shine Theatre Company present an outdoor version of Oscar Wilde's comic masterpiece, Thurs 22 Aug, Brueton Park, Solihull

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Thurs 22 Aug, Bentley Heath Recreation Ground, Solihull (2pm)

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA A Next Generation Act production,

Thurs 22 - Sat 24 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Fri 23 Aug, Dickens Heath Village Green, Solihull (10am)

AS YOU LIKE IT Folksy Theatre present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, Fri 23 Aug, Biddulph Grange Gardens, Staffordshire

THE SLEEPING SEEDS Fox & Rocha present a fun family show exploring what we grow, where we grow and how we grow... Fri 23 Aug, Tipton Library, Dudley

THE CHELMSLEY TALE Family-friendly theatrical storytelling event, celebrating the origins of Chelmsley Wood, Fri 23 Aug, Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, Birmingham (2pm)

HAMLET The Lord Chamberlain's Men fuse music, dance and theatre in an open-air version of Shakespeare's most famous tragedy, Fri 23 Aug, Bantock House & Gardens, Wolverhampton

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY A Stafford Gatehouse Summer School production, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Aug, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE OTHER SIDE Ascension Dance present a free outdoor performance exploring the idea of bridging divides and differences, Sat 24 Aug, Knowle Park, Solihull (11am)

LITTLE WOMEN Chapterhouse Theatre's outdoor version of Louisa May Alcott's coming-of-age story, Sat 24 Aug, National Trust Erdig Hall, Wrexham

AS YOU LIKE IT Folksy Theatre present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, Sat 24 Aug, The Dorothy Clive Gardens, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE OTHER SIDE Ascension Dance present a free outdoor performance exploring the idea of bridging divides and differences, Sat 24 Aug, Olton Jubilee Park, Solihull (3pm)

TWELFTH NIGHT Outdoor version presented by Jenny Wren Productions, Sat 24 Aug, Priory Park, Malvern

ERROL'S GARDEN Interactive musical for children aged three to eight, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Aug, Albany Theatre, Coventry

THE SLEEPING SEEDS Fox & Rocha present a fun family show exploring what we grow, where we grow and how we grow... Sun 25 Aug, Caldmore Community Garden, Walsall

AS YOU LIKE IT Folksy Theatre present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, Sun 25 Aug, Whittington Castle, Shropshire

ACTORS IN SEARCH OF A BARD Music,

song and dance combine in a playful production bringing together some of Shakespeare's most famous characters, Sun 25 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Light Entertainment

VOICES CHOIR CONCERT: SUMMER OF LOVE The Sutton Coldfield Voices Choir and Black Country Voices present a programme of summer-themed arrangements from a variety of musical genres, Tues 20 Aug, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ELTON JOHN BY CANDLELIGHT Fri 23 Aug, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

WHERE'S ME MATES? Mark James promises 70 minutes of non-stop laughter, magic and mirth, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Aug, Malvern Theatres

Events

LINOCUT WITH MIKE ASHTON Rare opportunity to learn about linocutting, Mon 19 Aug, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, Shropshire

SUMMER SCHOOL Activities include t-shirt decorating, mini-Olympics, geocaching and more, Mon 19 - Fri 23 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

MICLAB YOUTH CLUB FEAT ROB BENNETT Discover your inner STEM expert with interactive tours, talks and tasks, Tues 20 Aug, Coventry Transport Museum

BESIDE THE SEA - SUMMER HOLIDAY CRAFTS Try your hand at holiday-themed crafts, Tues 20 - Thurs 22 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

ANIMATION CAMP Learn how to make an animation film, Mon 19 - Thurs 22 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

CREATE BUILD LEARN LEGO WORKSHOPS: MINECRAFT 'Fun and engaging' themed lego workshop, Wed 21 Aug, Forge Mill Needle Museum, Redditch

LET'S GROW: POEMS Create nature poems on leaves, which will then be added to the Rubbish Garden tree, Thurs 22 Aug, Coventry Cathedral

MALVERNS CLASSIC Family-friendly festival celebrating mountain biking, both old and new, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Aug, Eastnor Deer Park, Herefordshire

DRAGON SLAYER Featuring 'daring new equestrian stunt work, theatrical projection-mapping and live action', Thurs 22 - Mon 26 Aug, Warwick Castle

MUSEUM AFTER HOURS: JURASSIC JAM Evening of music and cocktails to celebrate the Dinosaurs On The

Doorstep exhibition, Fri 23 Aug, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

SUMMER LATES Featuring Black Country food, retro drinks, fairground rides and live music, until 8pm, Fri 23 Aug, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE BIG FEAST A weekend full of theatre, music, circus, dance and more, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Aug, Stoke-on-Trent City Centre

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF GLASS The UK's only glass festival. See pages 34 & 35 for details, Fri 23 - Mon 26 Aug, Stourbridge

BIRMINGHAM WEEKENDER With free performances, fantastical installations, pop up experiences and new commissions, Fri 23 - Mon 26 Aug, across Birmingham City Centre

MELT IT! - THE FILM OF THE ICEMAN A work-in-progress screening followed by a Q&A, Sat 24 Aug, The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham

GEEK OUT 2.0 Featuring table-top gaming, live virtual gaming, cosplay, stalls and more, Sat 24 Aug, FarGo Village, Coventry

TROT ON REGARDLESS - A HISTORY OF THE MOUNTED POLICE Join Stefan Wild as he trots through a brief history of police horses patrolling West Midlands streets, Sat 24 Aug, West Midlands Police Museum

ANGELS OF THE NIGHT BAT TALK AND WALK A walk around the meadows and riverside with local bat expert James Bisset, Sat 24 Aug, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

GRAVITY SHOW A showcase of hundreds of Europe's 'most mind-blowing show cars', Sat 24 - Sun 25 Aug, NEC, Birmingham

VINTAGE WEEKEND Featuring reenactment groups, classic vehicles, vintage stalls, live singing and other attractions, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Aug, Telford Steam Railway, Shropshire

BRINKLOW FESTIVAL Lots of activities and entertainment including live music and the popular scarecrow trail, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Aug, Brinklow, Warwickshire

FOOD & CRAFT FAYRE Featuring a host of suppliers, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Aug, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

KNIGHTS' TOURNAMENT Rival knights compete in 'the ultimate test of strength and skill', Sat 24 - Mon 26 Aug, Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire

JURASSIC-MANIA 2024 A weekend of all things dinosaur, Sat 24 - Mon 26 Aug, Hoo Zoo & Dinosaur World, Telford, Shropshire

JAPANESE TAIKO DRUMMING FAMILY DROP-IN Led by the nationally renowned performers and coaches of Taiko West Drumming Institution, Sun 25 Aug, Compton Verney, Warks

DOODLE WITH DUDDLE Family draw-a-long event with illustrator and Gigantosaurus creator Jonny Duddle, Sun 25 Aug, Hoo Zoo & Dinosaur World, Telford, Shropshire

EDITION DOG SHOW 2024 The UK's only show dedicated to dog health, wellbeing and happiness, Sun 25 Aug, NAEC Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire

WOODVILLES MEDIEVAL LIVING HISTORY CAMP Join 'The Woodvilles' for an interactive living-history show, Sun 25 - Mon 26 Aug, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

PAST TIMES LIVING HISTORY A fact-filled and family-friendly show about the Tudors, Sun 25 - Mon 26 Aug, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

SUMMER FIESTA Featuring a line-up of local artisan food & drink producers, unique crafts, street food, live music and more, Sun 25 - Mon 26 Aug, Weston Park, Shropshire

KNIGHTS & PRINCESS SCHOOL Family-friendly medieval mayhem, featuring foam sword-training games and medieval princess shows, Sun 25 - Thurs 29 Aug, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

Festivals

SUNSHINE FESTIVAL Line-up includes Levellers, The Selecter & Livin' Joy, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Aug, Fish Meadow, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire

BEERMAGEDDON FESTIVAL Line-up includes Lawnmower Deth, Trashatouille & Concussion, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Aug, Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

BACK 2 FESTIVAL Line-up includes Bananarama, Wet Wet Wet & The South, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Aug, Thoresby Park, Nottinghamshire

CAMPER CALLING Line-up includes Travis, Jessie J, Groove Armada DJ Set & Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Aug, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

SHREWSBURY FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Elkie Brooks, Eric Bibb, Lady Nade & Manran, Fri 23 - Mon 26 Aug, Greenhous West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

AFRICA MUSIC FESTIVAL Line-up includes Koffi Olomide, Alick Macheso, Makhadzi, Nkosazana Daughter, Leemckrazy, Mambo Dhutere & Spyro, Sat 24 Aug, Abbey Park, Leicester

PAIRC FESTIVAL Line-up includes Bob Geldof, Nathan Carter & Boyzlife, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Aug, New Irish Centre, Birmingham

CROOKED HOUSE IN THE PARK Line-up includes Claptone, Wilkinson & Hannah Wants, Sun 25 Aug, Beacon Park, Lichfield



Malvern Autumn Show

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TINY DANCER
CROCODILE ROCK
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Gigs

BACK ON THE ROAD Mon 26 Aug, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE Mon 26 Aug, Centenary Square, Birmingham

THUS LOVE + MAN/WOMAN/CHAINS AW Tues 27 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ARI ABDUL Tues 27 Aug, O2 Institute, B'ham

YOURS TRULY Tues 27 Aug, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MÄNRAN Tues 27 Aug, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

SHUTUSUP!! Wed 28 Aug, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE NO COVERS CLUB Wed 28 Aug, The Dark Horse, Moseley, B'ham

ABSOLUTE REGGAE Wed 28 Aug, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TALKING TO TOMORROW Thurs 29 Aug, The Victoria, Birmingham

CLARKE AND DIGANCE Thurs 29 Aug, Bromsgrove Folk Club

THE BAR STOOL PREACHERS + SEPTIC & THE TANKS + JAKE MARTIN Thurs 29 Aug, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

FACEUP! + BROKEN JAW Thurs 29 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

PETER DOHERTY Thurs 29 Aug, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? - TINA TURNER TRIBUTE Thurs 29 Aug, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

JULIAN TAYLOR Thurs 29 Aug, Shrewsbury Abbey

BLIGHT TOWN + LOVE RARELY + TNL VZN Fri 30 Aug, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

GYPSY JACK Fri 30 Aug, The Victoria, B'ham

THE SMOKIN ADE WAKELIN Fri 30 Aug, Tower Of Song, B'ham

HOKUM & HOCH Fri 30 Aug, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

SYSTEM EIGHTIES Fri 30 Aug, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield



Yours Truly - O2 Academy, Birmingham

JEFFREY LEWIS & THE VOLTAGE Fri 30 Aug, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

ROBYN HITCHCOCK Fri 30 Aug, West Malvern Social Club

BACK 2 THE OLDSKOOL Fri 30 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE GERRY CINNAMON EXPERIENCE Fri 30 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

KICKIN' VALENTINA + THE MIDNIGHT DEVILS + WHITE TYGÉR Fri 30 Aug, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE ABSOLUTE STONE ROSES Fri 30 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MUGSTAR Fri 30 Aug, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

THE CARPENTERS MASQUERADE Fri 30 Aug, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

QUO INCIDENCE Fri 30 Aug, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

THE ANTARCTIC MONKEYS Fri 30 Aug, The Station, Cannock

THE NEIL DIAMOND SONGBOOK Fri 30 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE MASSIVE 90S + 00S RNB FESTIVAL Fri 30 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

BREAK THE RECORD Fri 30 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HOTROX Fri 30 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

KAMIKAZE TEST PILOTS + WORRIED Fri 30 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

ELLE-J WALTERS BAND Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, The Jam House, B'ham

MEARFEST FLAME Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

HIGH HORSES Sat 31 Aug, The Dark Horse, Moseley, Birmingham

SOULFLY Sat 31 Aug, O2 Institute, Birmingham

VIRIDITY + LAY SIEGE + KAKIHARA + ELIMINATE THE MIDDLE CLASS Sat 31 Aug, The Flapper, Birmingham

THE DARKSIDE OF PINK FLOYD Sat 31 Aug, The Crescent, Birmingham

HELLA ROCK FESTIVAL Sat 31 Aug, hmv Empire, Coventry

SYNTH Sat 31 Aug, River Rooms, Stourbridge

METEORA - LINKIN PARK TRIBUTE + LIMP BISCUIT Sat 31 Aug, The Robin, Bilston

STEREOTONICS Sat 31 Aug, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

BORN GAGA Sat 31 Aug, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DISCHARGE Sat 31 Aug, The Station, Cannock

THE BIG INDIE TRIBUTE NIGHT Sat 31 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

BOBCAT BILLY'S MOONSHINE MISSION Sat 31 Aug, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ROCK SOLID Sat 31 Aug, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

BORN ZERO + A THOUSAND CUTS Sat 31 Aug, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

Classical Music

PHOEBE TAK MAN CHOW ORGAN RECITAL Mon 26 Aug, All Saints Church, Leamington Spa

CARLETON ETHERINGTON ORGAN RECITAL Mon 26 Aug, Great Malvern Priory

LUNCHTIME RECITAL Featuring Gema Lu (piano) & Edgar Langley (guitar). Tues 27 Aug, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION Featuring Freiburg Domsingknaben Choir & Boris Böhm (director), Tues 27 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

CARMINIA ENSEMBLE Programme includes works by Tallis, Whitacre, Rutter, Lauridsen & Britten, Thurs 29 Aug, Great Malvern Priory

Comedy

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, TOM WARD & THE NOISE NEXT DOOR Thurs 29 Aug, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH MILLICAN Fri 30 Aug, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PETER BRUSH, SEAN PERCIVAL, TOM WARD & THE NOISE NEXT DOOR Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, The Glee Club, B'ham

QUINCY, HASAN AL-HABIB, NAOMI COOPER & DAVE LONGLEY Sat 31 Aug, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

GARY POWNDLAND Sat 31 Aug, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

Theatre

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE Chapterhouse Theatre present Jane Austen's romantic classic, Mon 26 Aug, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

OUT OF THE DEEP BLUE Autin Dance Theatre tell the magical story of Eko, a sea giant who rises from the depths of the ocean and encounters a young girl named Violet, Mon 26 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire



A MONSTER CALLS Amateur version of Patrick Ness' play about grief, loss

and healing... Mon 26 - Sat 31 Aug, Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre, Kenilworth

OUT OF THE DEEP BLUE Autin Dance Theatre tell the magical story of Eko, a sea giant who rises from the depths of the ocean and encounters a young girl named Violet, Wed 28 Aug, Elmdon Park, Solihull

THE SLEEPING SEEDS Fox & Rocha present a fun family show exploring what we grow, where we grow and how we grow... Wed 28 Aug, Bromwich Hall, West Bromwich

PEPPA PIG'S FUN DAY OUT Expect giggles and snorts aplenty as Peppa takes a trip to the zoo and beach with family & friends, Wed 28 - Thurs 29 Aug, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

DIAL M FOR MAYHEM Middle Ground Theatre Company present the world premiere of a brand-new farcical comedy, Wed 28 - Sat 31 Aug, Malvern Theatres

THE CHERRY ORCHARD New version of Anton Chekhov's classic tragicomic drama, Wed 28 - Sat 31 Aug, Swan Theatre, Worcester

AUTIN DANCE: THE GIANT WHEEL A moving performance inspired by 'the beauty, power and impact of people from different walks of life coming together'... Thurs 29 Aug, Solihull Town Centre

I WISH MY LIFE WERE LIKE A MUSICAL A comedic musical revue revealing everything you could possibly want to know about musical theatre, Fri 30 Aug, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DANGEROUS DAVE Marvel as Dave's sidekick, Herbert Lemon, fights his way out of a wet paper bag and climbs the slippery pole of peril to plunge into a domestic food processor, Fri 30 Aug, Smethwick Library, Birmingham

ALONG CAME A MAGPIE Heartwarming performance about navigating the intricacies of friendship. Suitable for children aged two to six, Fri 30 Aug, Macready Theatre, Rugby

ROMEO AND JULIET Illyria present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's tale of love and revenge, Fri 30 Aug, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

NOW. HERE. THIS. Thought-provoking musical which follows a group of four friends as they embark on a journey of self-reflection, Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE Roar-some interactive family show, complete with a post-show meet & greet, Fri 30 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Albany Theatre, Coventry

SIX: TEEN EDITION Performed by East Staffordshire Youth Theatre, Sat 31 Aug, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

ALL THE WORLDS The Cotswold



Joe Pasquale - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Players present a unique mix of Shakespeare, new writing and song in a production based on the famous As You Like It speech 'All the world's a stage', Sat 31 Aug, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

EVERY BRILLIANT THING Inspiring story about achieving hope by focusing on life's smallest miracles, Sat 31 Aug - Sat 7 Sept, Criterion Theatre, Coventry

Light Entertainment

JOE PASQUALE: THE NEW NORMAL - 40 YEARS OF CACK If you've ever wondered why chicken breasts don't have nipples, then this is the show for you, Tues 27 Aug, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BINGO AT TIFFANY'S Join award-winning character comedian Tracey Collins as she hosts an evening of bingo games, singalongs and glamorous dancing, Fri 30 Aug, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE CARPENTERS MASQUERADE Fri 30 Aug, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE RONNIE SCOTT'S STORY Direct from London's world-famous jazz club, the show combines live jazz, narration, rare archive photos and video footage, Fri 30 Aug, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

TINA TURNER BY CANDLELIGHT A night of Tina Turner hits, performed by Dixir Daye and her live band, Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

BOTTOMS UP: BURLESQUE & CABARET

Expect sultry striptease, witty wisecracks and saucy songs, Sat 31 Aug, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

THE BOOGALOO BABES: MOTOWN MAGIC ON THE GREEN Solihull's very own vintage harmony trio present a programme of songs from across the decades, Sat 31 Aug, Dickens Heath Village Green, Solihull

MISS RACHEL UK TRIBUTE TOUR Interactive live show for younger audiences, complete with educational content, puppetry and 'on-brand' animation, Sat 31 Aug, Dudley Town Hall

CANDLELIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO ABBA A live, multi-sensory musical experience featuring the hits of ABBA, Sat 31 Aug, Birmingham Cathedral

CANDLELIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO COLDPLAY A live, multi-sensory musical experience featuring the hits of Coldplay, Sat 31 Aug, Birmingham Cathedral

TINA TURNER BY CANDLELIGHT Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, Lichfield Cathedral

MASTERS OF DECEPTION 'Military mind-reader' Richard Jones and Disney+ stars Matricks Illusion present an evening of cutting-edge magic and psychological illusion, Sat 31 Aug, Lichfield Garrick

DEFYING GRAVITY Britain's Got Talent finalists Richard and Adam host a celebration of women who have made their mark on the West End, Sat 31 Aug, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR Step back in time to the golden era of music with an evening of back-to-back hits from the 1950s and 60s, Sat 31 Aug, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Caribbean cuisine, Wed 28 Aug, Worcester Racecourse

DINO DISCO Travel back in time to the age of the dinosaurs and go to a roar-some dino disco, Wed 28 Aug, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

FUNDRAISING EVENT: BEER AND BAT WALK Atmospheric stroll through the Hartlebury Castle grounds, Fri 30 Aug, Hartlebury Castle, Worcs

THE MASSIVE 90S + 00S RNB FESTIVAL Featuring five hours of Old School 90s & noughties RnB anthems, Fri 30 Aug, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SUMMER LATES Featuring Black Country food, retro drinks, fairground rides and live music, until 8pm, Fri 30 Aug, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

DRAGON SLAYER Featuring 'daring new equestrian stunt work, theatrical projection-mapping and live action', Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, Warwick Castle

THE ASTON MARTIN HERITAGE FESTIVAL The Aston Martin Heritage Trust celebrates 30 years of the DB7, Sat 31 Aug, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

FAMILY RAVE WITH BIG FISH LITTLE FISH 'The original family rave' visits Compton Verney for the first time, Sat 31 Aug, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

FUTURE FEST Featuring live music acts, a DJ, immersive shows, activities for the kids and more, Sat 31 Aug, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

SANDWELL COURTYARD FAIR Meet the local makers, sellers and craftspeople of Sandwell, Sat 31 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, West Bromwich

LOCOMOTIVE 4566'S 100TH BIRTHDAY Featuring a variety of activities for visitors of all ages, Sat 31 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

Festivals

SUPERSONIC FESTIVAL 2024 Line-up includes Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, Upchuck, Agriculture & Emma Ruth, Fri 30 - Sat 31 Aug, various locations, Birmingham

MOSELEY FOLK & ARTS Belle & Sebastian, Levellers, Dexys (pictured) & Flogging Molly, Fri 30 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Moseley Park, Birmingham



Events

A MARVELLOUS CIRCUS DAY Featuring circus-skills workshops and performances, Mon 26 Aug, The Commandery, Worcester

RUM & REGGAE RACENIGHT Enjoy a summer's evening of racing, rum and

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2024

SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE LITERARY FESTIVAL

Saturday September 21st
Victoria House, Leamington Spa, CV32 4PT

FESTIVAL OPENS 9:45AM

Inspirational talks & workshops
plus interview with
'My Name is Leon' author Kit de Waal

Guests

Alison May, Anne Harrison, Anthony Ferner, Becky Holmes, Billy Ivory, Fran Hill, Gwyneth Box, James Catchpole, Kit de Waal, Simon Whaley, Sophie Hannah, Dr Susan C Law, Tom George.

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Open mic, Warwickshire YPL May Vaughan, competition winners, raffle and author Q&A session.

Tickets

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Festival & workshop **£18**

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| 4 | PICCADILLY ARCADE
JESTER BY AMANDA QUELLIN | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | NEW STREET
BIODIVERSITY BEAR BY JODIE SILVERMAN | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | MAILBOX STEPS
WE ARE BEAR-MINGHAM
BY EKATERINA SHEATH | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | JOHN BRIGHT STREET
A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE
BY RACHAEL & PHILLIPPA CORCUTT | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | STATION STREET STEPS
CLARENCE THE CLIMATE BEAR
BY MARY & JANICE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | BULLRING
MOTHER PAW'D BY JESSICA PERRIN | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | SELERIDGES
SPECTRUM BY CHRISTINE JOPLING | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3 JULY – 6 SEPTEMBER 2024

BIRMINGHAM

WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT

There is an extra special reason to visit central Bear-mingham this summer after Central BID Birmingham installed its latest stunning sculpture trail.

Ten beautifully designed bears are on display across the city centre for families to enjoy, take photographs and support Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity at the same time.

The stunning trail will remain in place throughout the summer school holidays. It is inspired by the award-winning

animation, based on the much-loved picture book *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury.

Central BID Birmingham is the Business Improvement District for the city centre retail and leisure area, and is working with art producer Wild in Art, and the world's leading independent publisher of children's books, Walker Books, to embark on this latest creative partnership for the summer of 2024.

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