

Worcestershire

ISSUE 453 OCTOBER 2024

What's On

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inside:

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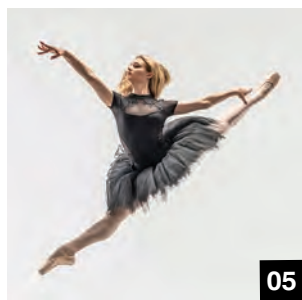


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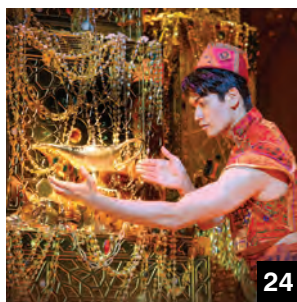
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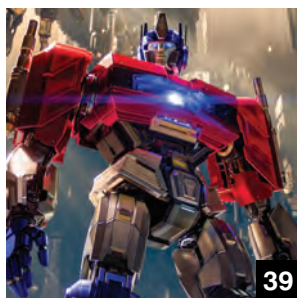
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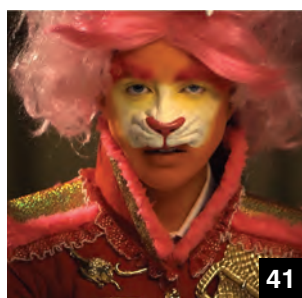
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What's On

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Witley Court illuminated for a 'Grimm' Halloween

A brand-new Halloween event is set to transform Worcestershire's Witley Court & Gardens this month. Taking place from Saturday 26 to Thursday 31 October, Illuminated Witley Court is a family-friendly event which will see visitors step into the world of the Brothers Grimm, 'with strange and enchanted beings from their classic fairytales inhabiting a trail through the ornamental gardens to the luminous ruins of the house'. For more information and to book tickets, visit english-heritage.org.uk



Hot wheels! Monster Trucks back in the region

Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live is coming to the Midlands next year.

The show's publicity reveals that the 2025 edition - taking the theme Glow-N-Fire - will not only feature 'the level of fun and excitement that fans have come to expect', but also offer 'an added fiery twist'. The touring show visits Birmingham's Utilita Arena on Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 April. For further information and to purchase tickets, find the event on livenation.co.uk



Santa Trains to return at Severn Valley Railway

Severn Valley Railway will once again be running its ever-popular Santa Trains this Christmas.

Departing on selected dates from Kidderminster town station, the trains will take passengers on a scenic journey to Arley, where families can enjoy a professional panto show and say hello to Father Christmas. To find out more about the heritage railway's festive-season attractions, visit the website at svr.co.uk



Thirty years of sweet success for cake show

Cake decorating and sugar craft show Cake International will celebrate its 30th birthday at the NEC in Birmingham at the start of next month (Friday 1 - Sunday 3 November). Highlights of this year's get-together include academy workshops, live demonstrations and a Best In Show competition. To find out more and book tickets, visit the event's website: cakeinternational.co.uk



Fisherman's Friends to play Moseley Folk in 2025

Fisherman's Friends will make their Moseley Folk & Arts Festival debut in 2025. The much-loved shanty singers, who hail from Port Isaac in Cornwall, are the first headline act to be announced for next year's get-together, which takes place from Friday 29 to Sunday 31 August. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit the website: moseleyfolk.co.uk

Midlands date for Michael and Alfie next spring

Singers Michael Ball and Alfie Boe will celebrate their 10th year of making music together in 2025 - by making music together! The much-loved duo visit Birmingham's bp pulse LIVE venue on Friday 11 April in

support of their new album, Together At Home, which is released next month (Friday 8 November). To purchase tickets for the show, visit livenation.co.uk

Prue Leith in conversation at Compton Verney

Great British Bake Off judge Dame Prue Leith will visit Warwickshire's Compton Verney on Wednesday 4 December to talk about her new book, Life's Too Short To Stuff A Mushroom. For more information about the event and to purchase tickets, visit comptonverney.org.uk

Light & sound installation at Tewkesbury Abbey

Sound & light specialists Luxmuralis are inviting Midlanders to take a journey through outer space at Tewkesbury Abbey this month (Tuesday 22 - Sunday 27 October). The company will be projecting images onto the walls of the 900-year-old abbey to showcase the vastness of the universe. Sessions last for 45 minutes but visitors are welcome to stay for as long as they like. To find out more about the installation and book tickets to see it, visit rosetheatre.org

The return of Resonate

A Coventry & Warwickshire-based programme of events designed 'to spark ideas, curiosity and creativity' in people of all ages is making a return this month. Originally created by the University of Warwick to celebrate Coventry's year as UK City of Culture, Resonate is returning with a wide-ranging autumn programme, exploring a selection of topics 'which are important to society, from language to law'. For further information about the project, visit resonatefestival.co.uk

Join the audience at comedy awards

Birmingham theatre The Alexandra is offering Midlandsers the chance to be part of the TV audience for BBC One's nationwide search to find the best new comedy talent. The BBC New Comedy Awards event takes place on Wednesday 30 October. The free audience invitations are strictly limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis, so be sure to arrive early to avoid disappointment.

Baddesley Clinton after dark...

The National Trust is inviting visitors to take an after-dark walk around its Baddesley Clinton property this Halloween. The guided tour of the Warwickshire venue takes place on Friday 25 & Saturday 26 October, and then again on Friday 1 & Saturday 2 November. While en route, participants should brace themselves for tales of 'revenge, alleged murder, priest holes and unexplained happenings'. To find out more, visit nationaltrust.org.uk



Ibiza classics at the cathedral

A 40-piece orchestra will join forces with vocalists this month to perform 'the biggest Ibiza tracks' live in Coventry Cathedral. The show takes place on Saturday 26 October, with tickets available via the venue's website.



BRB's second company to return with a brand-new show

Birmingham Royal Ballet's second company, BRB2, which 'brings together some of the world's very best young dancers', returns next year with a brand-new show. Created by BRB Director Carlos Acosta, *Diaghilev And The Birth Of*

Modern Ballet premieres at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 6 May. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com



Bjorn Again at Warwick Arts

Abba tribute act Bjorn Again have announced an Autumn 2025 tour, including stop-offs at two Midlands venues. The long-established counterfeit stars - the only Abba tribute act to be endorsed by the Swedish supertroupeurs themselves - will visit Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Saturday 27 September and then return to the region, at Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre, on Sunday 19 October. Tickets for the shows can be booked at cuffeandtaylor.com

Peaky Blinders ballet among the hit shows heading to the Midlands

Hit West End productions *SIX*, *Calamity Jane* and *Mary Poppins* are among the highlights of Birmingham Hippodrome's 2024/25 programme of shows.

The three much-loved musicals are joined in the line-up by, among other shows, *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* and numerous dance productions, including Carlos Acosta's *Cuban Eclectico* and the critically acclaimed *Peaky Blinders: The Redemption Of Thomas Shelby* (pictured).

Commenting on the months ahead, the theatre's artistic director and CEO, John Gilchrist, said: "We're so pleased to be announcing a fantastic line-up of shows coming to our stages this autumn and beyond. With award-winning musicals and dynamic dance performances, as well as brand-new works, there's really something for everyone."

Tickets for all shows can be booked via the venue's website at birminghamhippodrome.com



Coventry murder trial recreated at The Albany

An 1831 murder trial will this Halloween be recreated on the stage of Coventry's Albany Theatre.

Organised by local social historians Adam Wood and Jo Phillips, Trial Of Mary Ann Higgins provides the audience with the chance to hear the evidence word for word - and then to come to their own conclusion about what happened.

More information about the Thursday 31 October event is available by visiting the venue's website: albanytheatre.co.uk

Celebratory concert at Worcester Cathedral

Worcester Cathedral's Voluntary Choir is this month marking its 150th anniversary - and is calling on former choir members to join in with the celebrations.

An important part of the city's musical and cultural life - with hundreds of children and adult choristers singing in the cathedral on Sunday evenings - the choir is recognising the landmark birthday with a sung eucharist and gala lunch on Sunday 13 October.

For more information about the event - and how to get involved if you're a former choir member - visit worcestercathedral.org.uk

Stratford Literary Festival returns this month

Stratford Literary Festival returns this month with, as usual, an array of well-known faces (Friday 25 - Sunday 27 October).

High-profile contributors to the event include politician Jess Phillips, broadcaster Adrian Chiles, BBC Gardeners' World presenter Carol Klein, Strictly favourite Anton Du Beke, dog expert Graeme Hall and journalist Jonathan Dimbleby.

To check out the full line-up and purchase tickets, visit stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk

Music for all in Worcester

An organisation dedicated to promoting music and arts in the Worcestershire community is this month participating in the largest free musicmaking weekend of the year.

As part of UK charity Music For All's Learn To Play event, charitable company Severn Arts will be at The Arches in Worcester on Saturday 12 October, offering interested parties the chance to try out a wide range of musical instruments completely free of charge.



A seasonal feast at the Good Food Show Winter

The Good Food Show Winter makes a welcome return to Birmingham's NEC next month.

Running from Thursday 21 to Sunday 24 November, the show is 'packed with exciting features and new additions, ensuring there's something for everyone'.

Celebrity chefs making a contribution to the

event include, among many others, Tom Kerridge, James Martin, Nadiya Hussain, Michel Roux and John Torode.

There's also a Christmas Kitchen, Good Food Kitchen and the Let's Talk Good Food Stage for even more foodie inspiration. For further information, visit goodfoodshow.com/winter, where you can also buy tickets.

Search is on for Lights Of Leamington stories

A local community-interest company has been awarded a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help finance an oral-history project.

Whittle Productions is aiming to record and preserve stories and memorabilia connected to the Lights Of Leamington Festival, which took place in the town's Jephson Gardens from 1951 to 1961.

The company is asking people who have any memories to share about the event to get in touch. To find out how, visit the website lightsofleamington.co.uk

Medieval Halloween fun at Sudeley Castle

The 15th-century Sudeley Castle, located in Winchcombe in the heart of the Cotswolds, is hosting medieval-style Halloween events for visitors of all ages this month (Saturday 26 October - Sunday 3 November).

Attractions range from 'a mythical daytime trail and spookier nighttime route', to exclusive guided ghost-hunt tours.

For full details about the venue's various Halloween-inspired events, visit the website at sudeleycastle.co.uk

The Bear Who Went To... Warwickshire libraries!

A new play telling the incredible story of a bear who lined up alongside soldiers during World War Two premieres at Coventry's Albany Theatre this month.

The Bear Who Went To War shows at the venue from Wednesday 30 October to Saturday 2 November.

Following the Albany run, the play's writer, Alan Pollock, will host associated storytelling and music sessions in a number of the region's libraries. These include Stockingford, Nuneaton, on Wednesday 6 November and Coleshill on the morning of Saturday 9 November. Alan will then visit Nuneaton library on the afternoon of the 9th.

Long arm of the law at Coventry Council House

The Coventry Police Museum has found a new permanent home at Coventry Council House. First opened in 1957 at what is now Coventry Central Police Station, the venue closed in 2020 but re-emerged as a 'pop up' museum during Coventry's UK City of Culture celebrations. The museum reopened at the beginning of last month.

B:Music

Symphony Hall



HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

**Hungarian Radio
Symphony
Orchestra**
with **Jeneba
Kanneh-Mason**

30 Nov 2024

**Lviv National
Philharmonic
Orchestra**
Beethoven's Second
Symphony

08 Oct 2024

**Vasily Petrenko
& The Royal
Philharmonic
Orchestra**

29 Mar 2025

**Prague Symphony
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BEARLY BELIEVABLE

A new play telling the incredible true story of a bear who lined up alongside soldiers during the Second World War premieres in Coventry this month. Writer Alan Pollock tells What's On how *The Bear Who Went To War* came about, and explains what audiences can expect...

Ladies and gentleman of the jury, let me finally put to rest the argument about whether truth can be stranger than fiction... The evidence?...

A real-life bear fought alongside a regiment of Polish soldiers during the Second World War.

Yes, you read correctly. A Syrian brown bear cub was adopted by soldiers who fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino near Rome in May 1944. Not only that, he remained their companion throughout their decisive Italian campaign, during which time he carried artillery shells and even rose to the rank of Corporal.

After the war, the bear emigrated to the UK, made an appearance on *Blue Peter*, and saw out his days at Edinburgh Zoo, where he died in 1963.

Playwright Alan Pollock discovered the fascinating tale while conducting research for another project, and admits he could scarcely believe his ears when he first heard. "Reactions vary when you tell people," he says. "Some people have heard the story, but most haven't, and half of those go 'Sorry, can you repeat that?'"

The proud Coventrian is best known for penning the critically acclaimed *One Night In November*, a play about the Coventry Blitz. Premiered in 2008, it has been revived twice and is still the most successful new work produced at the city's Belgrade Theatre.

"It transformed my life, really," says Alan. "People apparently still come into the theatre every autumn asking whether it's on. I wish the answer was yes, but I think we've probably seen the last of it for now."

Following his 2011 play *Too Much Pressure*, a 2-Tone musical also based in the city ("the critics didn't love it, but I think it was a decent show and we had a blast doing it"), Alan wanted to write a play about the rebuilding of Coventry after the Second World War. As part of his research, he interviewed a number of the city's Polish immigrants.

"I talked to a 90-year-old lady called Yanina, and while she was telling me her own story, she dropped in the story of the bear. I literally couldn't believe her; 'What do you mean - there was a bear who was a Private in the army?!'"

"I started to research it and found out it was real; it did happen. It was one of those

moments when I thought, I have to write this, because it's a quintessential Midlands story.

"Although the soldiers and the bear ended up in Edinburgh, lots of Polish people ended up in the Midlands - Coventry, Leicester, Newark, Nottingham and so on."

Making that geographic connection was especially important as Alan is the co-founder of From The Heart Theatre Company, which he set up to be a Midlands version of Northern BroadSides, a Halifax-based outfit that specialises in work with a northern focus.

"I wanted to tell Midlands stories, with Midlands voices, to Midlands audiences, and I just thought, we've got to do this."

But that was easier said than done. He wrote a successful children's picture book that was published in 2019, but the stage version of *The Bear Who Went To War* has dragged its heels in comparison; it's been in development since July 2018.

"It's been 11 years since I heard the story and six years since I wrote the first draft of the play, which I did in Gdansk in Poland, just to get the flavour," chuckles Alan, who has managed to keep the same director (Kirstie Davis) and composer (Rebecca Applin) on board throughout the show's protracted gestation.

The book was aimed at six-year-olds, so children who read it at the time will be nearing their teens now - but Alan is quick to point out that the stage version is for an older audience anyway.

"The play is for ages seven and upwards. It's not much scarier than the book, but you'll be slightly more aware of the war in this version. It's very much for a family audience - the kind of people who might read a Michael Morpurgo novel. If you like his books, then you're gonna love this - it's basically *War Horse* with a bear!"

Which is obviously the line that should be on posters advertising the show, not least because the production features three life-size puppets ("baby, mid-size and a massive one") that portray the bear at different stages of his life. And once again there's a local connection: the design is by Abby Clarke, who grew up in Allesley - the same Coventry suburb as the writer.

A number of local community groups are also involved in the production.

"Most of the real soldiers in the story were

from eastern Poland, including places like Lvov [Lviv], which is now part of Ukraine. One of the schools we're collaborating with is a primary school in Camp Hill in Nuneaton, which has the fastest-growing Ukrainian population in the country because of migration due to the war with Russia."

The show also features contributions by migrant musicians from the Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre and refugee textile makers from local minority support group the Inini Initiative. It will premiere in one of the new studio spaces at the Albany Theatre, which is rapidly establishing itself as the city's community theatre.

"The whole project is about community and migration - what you leave behind when you leave somewhere, what you carry with you, and what you end up with. I know everybody says this about everything, but I don't think this play could be more timely, with people on the move again all over the world."

"Most of the people in this story left home one morning and never went back, because Poland didn't exist anymore. They never went home, so it's about what home and what family you make for yourself somewhere else."

Migration, the trauma of being forced to leave home, and how the world treats migrants are all key themes of the play, not least when the soldiers and the bear are repatriated to the UK after being left stateless at the end of the war.

"The country didn't particularly welcome refugees after the war, but the bear helped to sugar the pill. Most people are hostile to the bear initially, and then it'll just roll over and make a funny sound and everybody's won over. The bear makes friends with everybody."

"So it's a lovely story with a bit of an emotional edge. I won't tell you the ending but it'll be really entertaining as well as rather moving."

.....

The Bear Who Went To War shows at Coventry's Albany Theatre from Wednesday 30 October to Saturday 2 November. Associated events will also take place at various libraries in Warwickshire from Sunday 6 to Wednesday 9 October. See page 6 for details



CHILDREN OF THE REVELATION

New family drama at the Coventry Belgrade...

When director Jay Zorenti-Nakhid started working on Daniel J Carver's Caribbean family drama, *Revealed*, little did he know it would change his life. Now an associate director at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre, Jay is hoping the show will have a similarly profound impact on its audience - as he recently explained to What's On...

A variety of tough issues and secrets are laid bare when three generations of a Caribbean family are forced to spend an evening together in Daniel J Carver's acclaimed drama, *Revealed*. An exploration of differing attitudes to racism, sexuality, parenting and love, the production comes to the B2 stage of Coventry's Belgrade Theatre this month.

The 'kitchen sink'-style drama is set in the family's restaurant, where 16-year-old Luther, his father Malcolm and grandfather Sidney are taking refuge from rioters who have taken to the streets following an incendiary incident in police custody.

Designed to be hilarious and heart-warming as much as angry and edgy, the play features three men who, although initially struggling to see eye to eye, ultimately overcome their prejudices to demonstrate their love for, and connection to, one another.

The play has become something of a passion project for the Belgrade's recently appointed associate director, Jay Zorenti-Nakhid. Jay has not only been involved from the outset but has first-hand experience of the profound impact the work can have.

Originally developed by Birmingham's Red Earth Collective, the play was a response to a provocation about what black men think and feel but don't say. It was workshopped at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) five years ago, premiering at Bristol's Tobacco Factory in 2022. Jay was in the director's chair for the show, and right from the start he was so affected by the drama's themes of identity and connection that he decided to track down his own biological father. And that was when things got really interesting...

"I'd never met my biological dad," he recalls. "All I knew was that he left a letter with my mum when I was a one-year-old because they weren't really together. My mum told me about the letter when I was nine, and then it got demon-ed away, locked in a cupboard, and we never spoke about it again.

"Doing the show and unpicking what it means to be a father, especially among Caribbean families - my dad's from Trinidad - made me want to do something about my situation. So I read the letter, which turned out to be a love letter and the opposite to the narrative that I had in my head."

Jay managed to track his father down in Trinidad, only to discover that the parent he'd never met had been searching for him too, but with far less information to go on. Not only had Jay moved and his mum

changed her surname, but he had shortened his first name from the original Jacob.

The timing of their reconnection was particularly poignant - Jay's dad had just buried his own father.

"The day I tracked him down he was actually at the funeral, so he was going through this mad thing where he'd lost his dad but then his lost son had appeared."

The coincidences snowballed from there.

"We got talking about what I do for a living. He told me he liked going to theatre - which was interesting - and then asked me about the last show I'd worked on. I told him about the R&D [Research & Development] shows, and he said 'at the MAC, in April, about the Caribbean family?' and I was like 'yeah, yeah, yeah', and he said 'I saw it'.

"So this R&D version of the show, which had just two performances, my dad was sat in the auditorium for one of them... and a few days later I was trying to track him down."

Did he like the show?

"He did!"

The links go even deeper, because Jay's father knew playwright Daniel J Carver through the church, as well as a few people from his son's social circle. "It was six degrees of separation," laughs Jay incredulously. "We've got a great relationship now, and he'll be coming on opening night." Jay believes his own story shows the power of the play to motivate someone to connect - or reconnect - with people in their lives. He is suitably enthusiastic about getting the message across.

"As well as the play itself, hearing this story about me being activated to track down my dad has inspired other people to do the same. So when I talk about activating audiences, I genuinely, legit, 100 per cent, first-hand feel what that's done for me."

He also keenly believes part of the narrative of *Revealed* is creating the space for those types of conversations to happen.

"Without going into too much detail about the plot, this play can leave you with the feeling that you need to do something, tell your loved ones you love them and reconcile with family.

"It [also] has the potential to create more stories, and that's what excites me. It can be enjoyed and consumed, but that triggers us to tell a story about ourselves or someone we know - it starts that connection. We talk about how theatre can connect people, and

it's through a shared experience of watching the show, as well as talking afterwards."

Revealed is the first production that Jay will direct at the Belgrade, but if he feels any pressure, he's not showing it.

"I'm quite emotionally attached to the play, so it feels like an exciting piece of work to be the first thing that I do here.

"There's always a pressure, but sometimes pressure is alleviated by having belief, and I've seen the impact this piece can have."

It doesn't do any harm that he not only knows the play, but two of the three cast members (Daniel J Carver and Everal A Walsh - middle initials are a theme) from the Bristol production are returning. They are joined by Jayden Hanley, best known as Darcy from TV's *Phoenix Rise*, who is making his stage debut as the youngster Luther.

Jay says having the play's writer in the cast is far more of a blessing than a curse.

"For me, it's always about collaboration, but we have clear boundaries; Dan is either in actor mode or writer mode, and the lines are never blurred."

Jay is also acutely aware of what the play means to its creator.

"It's very much in Dan's blood - I'm sure he won't mind me saying that this piece of work lives and breathes his life experience. He worked for Geese Theatre Company for a number of years and was in and out of different prison settings, working with men in the criminal justice system and often talking about some of these things.

"We are both excited about the impact this work can have with audiences, and the things people may be inspired to do as a result of engaging with it."

But as much as he hopes the show will be a conversation starter for those who see it, Jay is comfortable with the idea that it's also just a great evening's entertainment.

"It's a beautiful story about a family, what happens when their secrets become exposed, and how they deal with that. I'm biased, but if you like family dramas that are heart-warming, funny, sad, angry - all the emotional range - then that's what this is."

.....

Revealed shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Friday 18 October to Saturday 2 November

Upcoming Exhibition



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10/10/24	Stories and Dreams with Anton Lesser	Warwick Hall
12/11/24	The Long Road	Stratford PlayHouse
16/11/24	George Eliot in Words and Music	St Mary's Guildhall, Coventry
17/01/25	Friends' Fundraiser	Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon
25/02/25	Safety Last!	Stratford PlayHouse
06/03/25	Entranced II	St Mary's Church, Warwick
20/03/25	Elements	Warwick Hall
03/06/25	Wildwood	Stratford PlayHouse
19/06/25	Interstellar	Warwick Hall

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Orchestra Of The Swan: Stories And Dreams

Warwick Hall, Thurs 10 October

Birmingham actor Anton Lesser here joins Orchestra Of The Swan (OOTS) for a concert of music and readings.

An OOTS associate artist, Anton will be reading excerpts from Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, a work for which the playwright asked composer Edvard Grieg to write music. The resulting *Suite No1* opens the evening's programme.

Also featured is Herrmann's *Psycho: A Narrative For String Orchestra*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's dazzling symphonic suite, *Scheherazade*. The latter is interspersed with text from Yasmine Seale's translation of *Tales From 1001 Nights*.

The concert is conducted by Rebecca Miller (pictured).

Ex Cathedra: Bruckner, Palestrina & Allegri

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 13 October

Ex Cathedra here make a welcome Town Hall return, collaborating with the wind & brass sections of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to present a concert in celebration of the 200th anniversary of Anton Bruckner's birth.

Alongside the Austrian composer's majestic motets - *Locus iste*, *Ave Maria*, *Ecce sacerdos*, *Inveni David* - the concert also features his monumental *Mass in E Minor*, widely considered to be the most spiritual of his seven masses.

Completing the programme is Palestrina's *Missa sine nomine* (*Kyrie*, *Gloria*) and Allegri's *Miserere*.



BBC Philharmonic with Jennifer Pike

Malvern Theatres, Fri 25 October

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic visits Malvern in the company of Jennifer Pike (pictured) - a BBC Young Musician Of The Year winner at the tender age of 12 - who will be performing Bruch's *Violin Concerto*.

The programme also features Schubert's unfinished *Eighth Symphony* and Mozart's 41st, longest and last symphony, nicknamed *Jupiter*. Ben Gernon conducts.

Doric String Quartet

Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa, Fri 18 October

The Doric have toured extensively since forming more than a quarter of a century ago, along the way collaborating with some of classical music's finest performers. Their Leamington Music concert this month - their sixth in 18 years - sees them presenting a programme that features Beethoven's critically acclaimed final two quartets and Swedish composer Andrea Tarrodi's third quartet - a work written 10 years ago for the Brodsky Quartet.



Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra

Warwick Hall, Sat 12 October

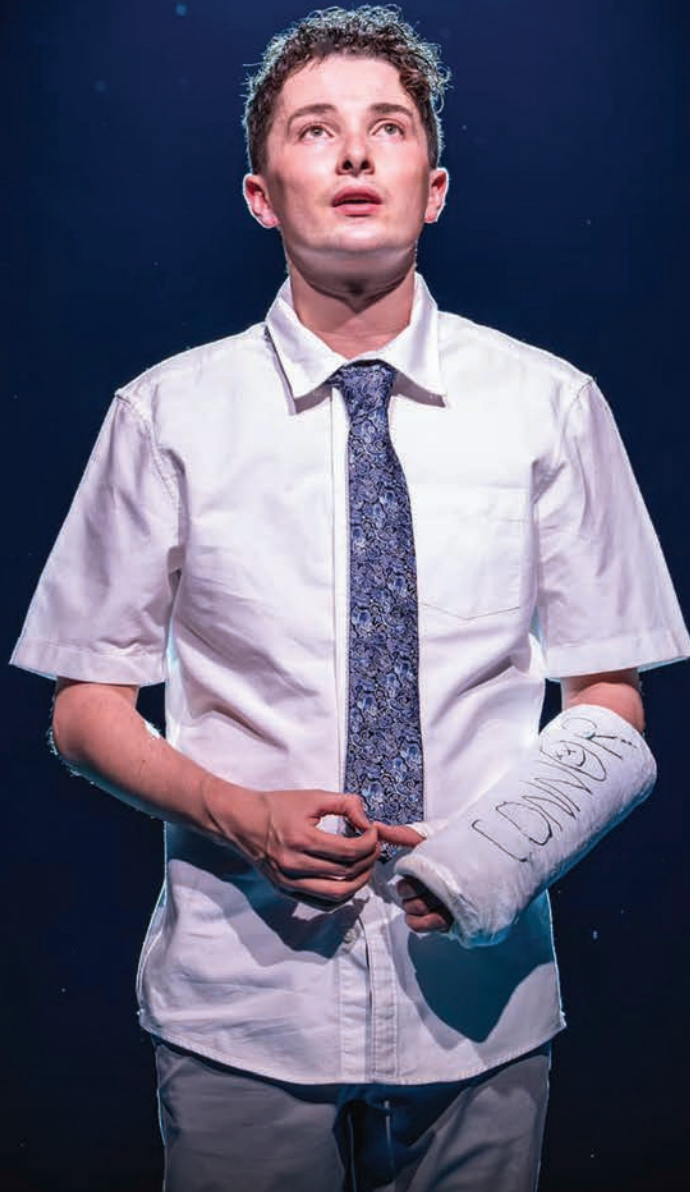
Now in its 84th year, Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra here presents a concert featuring work by three greatly admired composers: Kodaly (*Dances Of Galánta*), Rachmaninov (*Piano Concerto No2*) and Sibelius (*Symphony No2*). The orchestra's principal conductor, Roger Coull, is the man with the baton. Pianist for the evening is Ryan Bradshaw.

Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 8 October

A work which received its UK premiere at Birmingham Town Hall 112 years ago - Sibelius' *Fourth Symphony* - features among the compositions being performed by Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra, making their first visit to the second city with American conductor Theodore Kuchar, whose own roots lie in Ukraine. The programme is completed by the *Overture to Rossini's The Thieving Magpie*, Brahms' *Concerto For Violin & Cello* and Beethoven's *Second Symphony*. The soloists are Oksana Hretchyn (violin) and Jiří Bárta (cello).





A LITTLE REINVENTION

**A new version of hit musical Dear Evan Hansen tours to
Birmingham theatre The Alexandra this month**

A new Nottingham Playhouse production of multi-award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen is visiting Birmingham this month. The show follows title character and anxious teenager Evan, who bends the truth to fit in at school, and then faces the consequences. The iconic role is being played by Ryan Kopel, with Sonny Monaghan taking over for matinee performances. Here, the two actors offer a glimpse behind the scenes...

‘Today is going to be a good day...’

With not one, but two Evan Hansens in the room, that would appear to be a given.

Ryan Kopel and Sonny Monaghan may sport very different looks and have an age gap of six years, but they have one important thing in common - both are preparing to play the iconic title role in Dear Evan Hansen, the fresh new Nottingham Playhouse production of the Olivier, Tony and Grammy award-winning musical.

Dear Evan Hansen is the story of an anxious high school kid who wants nothing more than to fit in - but who, on his way to fitting in, doesn't tell the whole truth. As events spiral and the truth comes out, Evan reckons with himself and everyone around him.

The musical premiered in Washington, DC, in 2015 before transferring to off-Broadway and then Broadway a year later. The London West End production followed in 2019, but it was on Broadway that Monaghan, a self-confessed fan of the show, first saw the musical during a family holiday to New York.

He then landed the part after submitting a video on TikTok, as part of the casting team's collaboration with the social-media platform. From more than 2,000 submissions, the 21-year-old was one of 36 TikTok users invited to in-person auditions, eventually being cast as a member of the show's ensemble and as alternate Evan, a role he will perform twice a week, at every matinee.

Kopel took a more traditional route when auditioning, but unlike Monaghan, had never seen the show before. His introduction came during the audition process, and with themes including bullying and mental health, he quickly discovered that Dear Evan Hansen deals with some important issues.

The actor from Kirriemuir, in Scotland, recalls, “Reading the script during the audition process was very helpful because as much as Ben Platt, the original Evan, was iconic in the role, it was nice to be able to form my own take on Evan. The writing is so good that I really can just trust my instinct to bring what I feel to the character... We have complete freedom to take the script and create something new.”

“Staging-wise, everything is different...” chips in Monaghan, before Kopel continues: “It’s eight years since the Broadway production debuted, which doesn’t sound that long but when you think about it, a lot has changed in that time. The technology we use every day is so different that much of the script has taken on a whole new meaning. Just looking at the piece from the lens of 2024 has been an interesting experience.”

If the rehearsal period has been invigorating for Kopel, for Monaghan it has been nothing less than hectic. Explaining how having two Evans ‘in the room’ works, he reveals, “Mainly, it’s Ryan and the principal cast who are in the rehearsal room with Director Adam Penford. They create the show. As the alternate Evan, I get brought in once it looks the way they want it to look. Then I work with our associate director to replicate that.”

Kopel elaborates: “To be fair, that is the case, but it’s also done that way because Sonny has about ‘90 million’ different things to learn. While I’m lucky to be focusing on one character, he has to be in a different room learning the parts of Evan, Connor, Jared, and all the ensemble’s moves, too. One hundred per cent do I have the easy shift... apart from having to do it every night!”

And it’s not just lines, songs and moves with which the pair have to familiarise themselves. Due to the sensitive themes of the piece, the producers have partnered with The Mix, the UK’s leading digital charity for under-25s, to ensure anyone affected by the issues explored in the show knows where to find support. The Mix has provided training to the cast and creative team on how to respond appropriately to queries from the public, both online and offline, and has equipped them with the knowledge to direct individuals to the right support channels.

Kopel explains: “There’s just something about this show that allows people to connect deeply with the characters. Often, they then associate characters with the actor playing them and open up, sharing what they’re going through. We take that responsibility incredibly seriously, and having that guidance from The Mix is vitally important.”

Despite its themes, Dear Evan Hansen is a beautifully crafted and uplifting piece of musical theatre, one that Monaghan believes will “be a blessing for many, by helping them realise they need to talk to someone.”

Kopel agrees: “Ultimately, Dear Evan Hansen is about hope. No matter what happens, what you are going through, its message is that there is always someone to talk to and reasons why you should go on. That’s what I’d like people to take away from the show.”

Packed with some of the biggest musical theatre songs of the last decade, Dear Evan Hansen has Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, the Oscar-winning composers for The Greatest Showman, to thank for its haunting score - and both Evans have a favourite song.

The anthemic For Forever is Monaghan’s, while for Kopel it’s Words Fail. He adds with a cheeky smile, “I like it because it’s a bit of an emotional catharsis; it doesn’t matter if your voice cracks, because you are crying and already an emotional mess.”

Before they head back to rehearsal, there’s one last question: Dear Evan Hansen starts with Evan writing a letter to himself. It begins, naturally enough, with the title of the show followed by ‘Today is going to be a good day because...’ So, what would they write in such a letter to themselves?

“Keeping in line with the show,” says Kopel, “my letter would say, ‘today is going to be a good day because you can take each day at a time, every hour as it comes.’”

And what about Monaghan’s? “Mine would read, ‘today is going to be a good day because this is what and where you want to be, and you should know that you have worked hard and deserve to be here.’”

.....

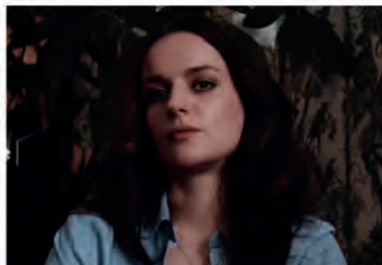
Dear Evan Hansen shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 October. The production returns to the Midlands in 2025 to play Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 April



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Wed 9 Oct

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Fri 18 Oct

Fairport Convention



Sun 20 Oct

Beethoven's 5th



Fri 25 Oct

Interstellar: Tribute to Hans
Zimmer



Fri 1 Nov

Supersonic: Bohren &
Der Club of Gore



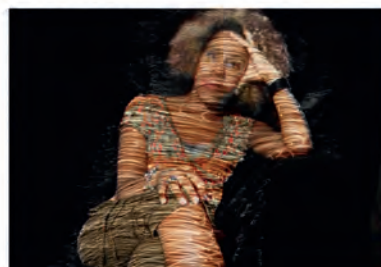
Sat 9 Nov

Manchester Collective &
Abel Selaocoe



Tue 12 Nov

Errollyn Wallen and Thallein
Ensemble



Fri 22 Nov

Julius Caesar
(The Crescent Theatre)



5-7 Dec

Macbeth
(The Crescent Theatre)



12-14 Dec

Dustin O'Halloran



Sat 22 Feb



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Live music from across the region...

Iron & Wine

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 29 October

Inspiring a wide range of descriptions, including sophisticated, fancy-free and whimsical, Sam Beam's latest album, *Light Verse*, is his seventh, and his first solo offering since 2017's *Beast Epic*. Talking about the new release, Sam - aka Iron & Wine - said: "*Light Verse* is a form of poetry about playful themes that often uses nonsense and wordplay, and it's my first official Iron & Wine comedy album!... '[Nah], just kidding!'"



Anna Erhard

Central Library, Coventry, Sat 5 October

Anna Erhard likes to mix adventurous indie pop grooves with delightfully dry humour in her live shows. And if her rapidly expanding fanbase is anything to go by, the Berlin-based Swiss singer-songwriter is most definitely peddling a winning combination. Going solo a handful of years ago following the break-up of Basel folk collective Serafyn, she's visiting Coventry in support of her third album, *Botanical Garden*.



The Vaccines

hmv Empire, Coventry, Sun 27 October;
Wulfrun Hall at The Halls Wolverhampton,
Thurs 31 October

Freddie Cowan may have left, but the euphoric hooks and melodies just keep on coming for The Vaccines. The boys stop off in Coventry with a show in support of their sixth album, *Pick-Up Full Of Pink Carnations*, a record which has been

described as so good that every track should be a single.

Hailed for their signature 60s-inspired guitar pop infused with new wave vibes, the four-piece have played with and opened for bands including The Rolling Stones, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Arctic Monkeys, Imagine Dragons and Muse, sold in excess of two million records, and been likened to The Ramones, The Strokes and The Jesus And Mary Chain.

The Wave Pictures

The Marrs Bar, Worcester, Sun 20 October;
The Tin Music & Arts, Thurs 24 October

Hailing from a small village in rural Leicestershire, long-established indie icons The Wave Pictures blend classic rock roots with DIY spirit to excellent effect, along the way making sure they thoroughly enjoy themselves.

"Having fun is kind of the most important part," band member David Tattersall told *Uncut*. "I think that's got to come first, otherwise what are you doing? Making something so great that you'll sacrifice your own happiness? Music is the happiest thing to do; that should be important. It should be fun, first and foremost."

Public Service Broadcasting

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Thurs 24 October

Fusing electronic sound with spectacular visuals and making use of samples from public information films, archive footage and propaganda material, Public Service Broadcasting visit Coventry as part of a UK tour. The quartet mainly play instrumental music because, as instrumentalist-auteur J

Willgoose Esq notes: "Singing is never going to work. I'm not going to be comfortable playing it to other people."

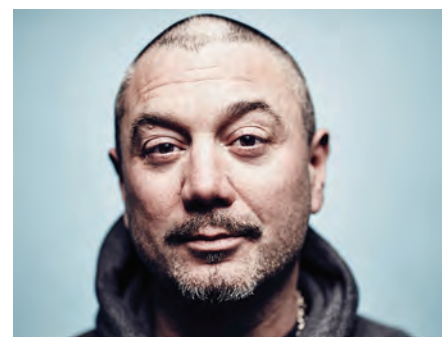
Huey Morgan

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sun 6 October;
Stratford Playhouse, Fri 1 November

Huey Morgan came to prominence as the frontman of eclectic American rap/rock outfit Fun Lovin' Criminals, with whom he performed for almost 30 years.

Running alongside his commitments with the band, he's also hosted The Huey Show on BBC Radio 6 since 2008.

This Worcestershire appearance comes as part of his first-ever solo 'in conversation' tour and sees him presenting a show mixing music and chat.





“What we're trying to create is a space where you can come and make work, you can see work, and you can grow as a result of the experiences that you have here.” Doreen Foster



REBELS WITH A CAUSE

Warwick Arts Centre (WAC) celebrates its 50th anniversary this November with a programme honouring community creativity and its power to make change - from a showcase of protest songs curated by the legendary Pauline Black, to the hidden wonders of an ordinary shed. The venue's director, Doreen Foster, spoke to What's On about WAC's past, present and future...

Warwick Arts Centre (WAC), located within the University of Warwick on the outskirts of Coventry, celebrates its 50th anniversary in November with a programme of events exploring protest and activism.

The programme has been named *Rebels With A Cause!*, a title inspired by the venue's heritage - as WAC's director, Doreen Foster, explains. "It comes out of the fact that the university was a site for quite a bit of radical action back in the 1970s. Students were always on strike or protesting about something, but also there were actually academics here who were doing quite leading work, thinking differently about what teaching could and should look like."

Part of Doreen's role includes working with the programming team to ensure that the themes and ideas being explored each season are woven into every part of the schedule. "What we're trying to create is a space where you can come and make work, you can see work, and you can grow as a result of the experiences that you have here."

The venue strives to provide arts-led space which offers anyone and everyone a place to meet - and these spaces aren't only to be found within the building's walls: "We're increasingly working in neighbourhoods, the intention being to develop our relationships and friendships with people who wouldn't normally come to us, so that eventually, over time, they'll become part of our family."

There are plenty of reasons to visit Warwick Arts Centre. Part of the venue's appeal is the broad range of events that are hosted across its galleries, foyers, and performance spaces. Some of the biggest names in comedy make regular appearances at the venue's Butterworth Hall.

"A lot of students come here because they know that we have a music centre, so they can maintain their practice; they can join one of the music societies."

During Doreen's tenure, the venue's cinema has been transformed, meaning that a broader range of films can be screened.

"When we reopened in 2020, we reopened with three new screens, which is amazing.

We still do our independent, our foreign language films, but we've added to that the ability to show blockbusters."

The venue's 50th anniversary is also being celebrated with a wide-ranging programme that centres around community creativity. It all kicks off with the installation of an enormous quilt, designed by local artist Julia O'Connell with contributions from people in the community.

Doreen explains that quilting has a rich history of rebellion: "Women who weren't able to say what they wanted to say - because of the way in which society treated them - used the quilt to do that. Enslaved people in America used quilts to actually write messages or to identify routes."

"There's something about that active rebellion, that bit of activism: 'I might not have a voice, might not be able to speak the truth that I want to speak, but actually I can use my hands to do that just as effectively.'"

The 50th anniversary celebrations are book-ended by another community event: The People's Programme Day, on Saturday 30 November - a total takeover of the public spaces by the venue's associate community groups and organisations. "What I'm hoping is that people will work together to curate creative activities that they want to see... We're not going to be imposing our artistic taste on any of that. We'll provide the support and the technicians - but it will be a day totally designed by residents and local organisations."

For the duration of the programme, the foyer will contain an unexpected statement piece: The Shed. "November is men's mental health awareness month. It occurred to us that, actually, the shed - I'm not a man, so I don't know what men talk about in sheds - but the shed is a space where a lot of quite radical ideas might be formed."

The Shed will be built by Warwick Arts Centre's carpenter, Philip Roe, in collaboration with It Takes Balls To Talk. This is a local campaign, founded to encourage people - particularly men and people who care about them - to talk about how they feel.

The Shed will be host to talks and activities throughout the month, as Doreen explains: "It's quite a radical act to support someone to speak, to say something that they may not be comfortable saying elsewhere."

Music also plays an important role in the *Rebels With A Cause!* programme. On Sunday 27 October the venue has commissioned *Songs Of Protest*, a female-led night of music and words on that theme. The event will be curated and led by local legend Pauline Black - frontwoman of The Selecter - alongside The Staves, Bess Attwell and Grace Petrie.

At the other end of the season is *Songs For A New World*, a concert of three works performed by the University of Warwick Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, on Sunday 1 December. "We've got a new classical music commission by a composer called Bobbie Jane-Gardner. She's from Birmingham, and she's making a piece called *The Burning House*. It's a new piece for the climate emergency."

Warwick Arts Centre's 50th birthday celebrations give a nod to its rich and innovative history - but what does Doreen hope for in terms of the venue's future?

"What I'd like to see is even more different people coming into the Arts Centre. That would be a massive achievement - a testament to the work that we're doing at the moment across all our programming."

"We're interested in finding a way, through the programme, of creating space for everyone who feels that they want to make a change... *Rebels With A Cause!* is about saying 'Actually, if you want to change something, you have the power to change that thing.'"

Rebels With A Cause! takes place at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, throughout the autumn season. For information an all upcoming events visit warwickartscentre.co.uk

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ON THE ROAD...

Comedian & writer Maisie Adam is currently zig-zagging the country with new show *Appraisal*, stopping off at three Midlands venues along the way. We recently caught up with the So You Think You're Funny award winner to chat about her new show, her new hair-do, football and plenty more...

Let's get the hair out of the way quickly. It's now blonde and longer at the back, where you previously shaved it.

It's strange. I was getting quite a lot of tweets saying 'love the new hair' when I was on the Last Leg in March. But I dyed it blonde last summer for the Women's World Cup. I guess a lot of telly stuff I've filmed since then hasn't gone out yet, so this was probably the first time that people would see this hair. And not to sound like a little old man, but I've been growing it out the back; it's too cold to have my head exposed when I'm walking back from gigs. I fancied a change. A lot of people thought I'd gone blonde for the Barbie film, which was annoying, as it was actually doing it like Paul Gascoigne!

Are you keeping it like this for the tour?

I better had - I've had my photos done now!

Why is your show called *Appraisal*?

I'm now in my fifth year of being able to say that this is my job, and the title came from a conversation with a friend who said that normally, when anybody in his company has been there for five years, they come in for an appraisal. That doesn't really exist in comedy, but maybe this tour is that. Each night you're going in for a meeting with people who are going to sit the other side from you and let you know how you're doing. Hopefully the audience will be impressed and I'll keep my job.

Tell us about the pre-tour warm-ups...

You've got ideas in your notepad, and you don't really know how they're all going to form together. But I really like work-in-progress shows for that reason, because you can share a little secret with the audience like 'I think I've got an idea, and I want to know if I'm barking up the wrong tree.' I like that vulnerability. It gives you a different thrill to the one you get when you're out on tour, where you're like, 'I think I've got a brilliant show and I want you to hear it.'

Is there a theme?

It's about everything that's been going on for me in the last couple of years. I got married in June 2023, then played Soccer Aid at Old Trafford the next day. That's a weekend that I don't think many people will be able to say they've had. Then, three days later, you're trying out jokes in a room above a pub, and a day after that you're hosting the UK Mattress Awards. Sometimes you have to stop and go 'What on earth is happening here?'

Do you feel under more pressure with your second tour?

With the first big tour there are no expectations, whereas perhaps there are with this one. People might come expecting me to talk about certain things, so it's a puzzle that you've got to work out - which, again, is why the work-in-progress is really fun; I enjoy trying to work out that puzzle.

Who would you say your typical fans are?

Before my first tour, I'd been tour support for bigger comedians like Jason Manford, Josh Widdicombe and John Bishop, and one of the things I clocked was how different every comic's audience is. So I was nervous but really excited to see what my crowd was going to be like. Was it going to be people who heard me talk about women's football on Radio Four, or people who like the woman with the weird hair on *Mock The Week*? I guess now it's those same things plus a new specific audience from the Big Kick Energy podcast.

Big Kick Energy, with Suzi Ruffell, has been a big hit. How did that come about?

When the Women's World Cup was on, there was no comedy entertainment show about football. It's the fastest-growing sport in the world, and it felt like all of the talk around it was clinical and technical, which doesn't do much for new fans. I thought I'd do a podcast about 'what if I knew somebody who was enthusiastic but doesn't know the ins and outs'. And that's Suzi. We came up with this idea that I could get Suzi into football during the World Cup, and afterwards we got loads of messages going 'please continue it'. So we carried on and within eight months won Sports Podcast Of The Year at the Broadcast Sports Awards.

Do you still play for the football team you talked about in your first touring show?

Yes, the Brighton Seagals. I love it. Last week I was filming *QI* and they got me a car home, but I asked for the car to take me straight to training. I got changed as soon as we'd finished filming. The driver dropped me off, and I was in a full face of make-up, which was running everywhere by the end of the training session.

What are the best and worst things about touring?

The best thing is getting the opportunity to gig to a roomful of different people every single night. You can't walk into a theatre in Guildford expecting to do what you did in a comedy club in Cardiff. It's going to be two completely different gigs with two completely different audiences... The worst thing is travelling on your own. You do start to feel a bit 'Alan Partridge' staying in hotel rooms. I went through my phone camera recently and it was just pictures of hotel-room doors with the numbers on; you'd be away for seven nights in a row, you'd get to the hotel, and suddenly you're thinking 'What number room am I in?' That's how I remember the room numbers. But if that's the shittiest part of touring, it's pretty good.

Maisie Adam brings her *Appraisal* tour to Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Friday 4 October; Birmingham Town Hall (part of the Birmingham Comedy Festival) on Tuesday 8 October; and Royal Spa Centre, Leamington, on Saturday 2 November



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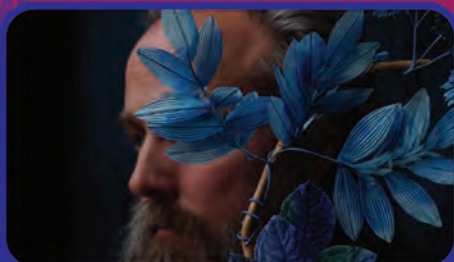
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Comedy previews from across the region...

Laura Lexx

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Thurs 10 October

Laura Lexx's arrival on the stand-up scene was impressively explosive; within just one year she'd reached the finals of both the Chortle and Paramount student competitions and confidently set out her stall for a successful career on the UK comedy circuit.

"My on-stage persona is fairly close to the off-stage me," explains Laura. "It's quite chatty, excitable and energetic, and I don't really like putting people down."

She visits the Midlands this month with Slinky, a show which is being publicised as 'effortlessly heartwarming, hilarious about motherhood, and fearless with the front row'.



Kiri Pritchard-McLean

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 26 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 14 November; Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 15 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 16 November; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 24 November

Hailed for her dynamic stand-up and admirable commitment to chiselling out high-quality humour from even the thorniest of subjects, Kiri Pritchard-McLean makes a welcome return to the circuit with Peacock, a show about her recent experience of becoming a foster parent.

"Lots of people don't know how [fostering] works," Kiri recently told Entsouthwales, "and I think demystifying things can often open doors. People have preconceptions about who and what it takes to be a foster carer. I think a stand-up comedian who's about to do a 100-date tour blows a lot of those [preconceptions] out of the water!"



Lucy Beaumont

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 20 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 14 November; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 21 November

No less a comedian than the highly praised Arthur Smith once described Lucy Beaumont as 'the next Victoria Wood in the making'. Others have called her 'a riot' and praised her 'devastating comic timing'.

For Lucy's part, though, she's just grateful that performing no longer feels like an out-of-body experience.

"I started out acting but quickly realised I needed to try something else," says the Hull-born comic, who was last year diagnosed with ADHD and recently amicably separated from husband and fellow comedian Jon Richardson. "I've had all sorts of humorous things happen to me in my life, so I thought it made sense to see how I'd do at being funny."



Felicity Ward

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 28 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 10 November

A much-loved regular at the Edinburgh Festival, New South Wales-born comedian Felicity Ward is this month set to attract a whole new army of followers when the Australian version of The Office, in which she top-bills, arrives on Prime Video (Friday 18 October).

She stops off in the Midlands this month and next with I'm Exhausting, a show described by its publicity in the following way: 'Birth, Quorn, fingering, and transition lenses - there's no matter too big or too small that Felicity can't get worked up about.'

Rachel Parris

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 10 October

Rachel has passed this way before, not only as a solo performer but also as a founder member of smash-hit improv show Austentatious, a comedy play presented in the style of Jane Austen.

An award-winning comic whose name has appeared on the BBC's Hot Talent List, Rachel is touring to the Midlands with Poise, a show that sees her doing more of what she does best: bringing together a stand-up routine with a smattering of highly amusing songs.





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Comedy previews from across the region...

Sooz Kempner

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 13 October; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 22 November

Combining material from her last two Edinburgh Fringe offerings, award-winning comedian Sooz Kempner says her new show is for anyone who remembers the year 2000 or had big dreams as a kid. "Now, almost a quarter of a century later, things feel eerily similar," says Sooz. "I'm looking at class through the lens of doing my GCSEs in 2000 at a state comp, while knowing all about dressage, politics, horses, EastEnders and the Millennium Bug."



Daniel O'Reilly

Lichfield Garrick, Wed 16 October; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 12 October; Walsall Arena, Fri 1 November; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 30 November

Daniel O'Reilly reckons his life has resembled a rollercoaster ride - and he's stopping off in the Midlands this month to tell his fans all about it. O'Reilly originally made his name a decade ago as the character Dapper Laughs, but an ill-advised joke about rape put the brakes on what had seemed to be a promising career. Now he's out on the road performing under his own name and urging comedy lovers to bag themselves a seat for his upcoming gigs: "For those of you who missed out on Oasis tickets but still wanna see a loudmouth ex-coke-head working-class millionaire with a habit of rubbing people up the wrong way - my tickets are now on sale!"



Jason Byrne

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 11 October

Watching Jason Byrne on stage has been likened by one reviewer to watching footballer Lionel Messi: it's not a matter of 'if' the magic will come, but 'when' and 'how often'.

Jason this month visits the Midlands with brand-new offering No Show, a 'full-on, double-up, gasping-for-oxygen-hilarious' experience which has so far met with plenty of positive reviews.

"Everyone's welcome at the show," says the 52-year-old Dublin-born comedian. "Unless you're under 14 years of age - in which case, come back when you're older."



Adam Kay

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 3 October; Malvern Theatres, Fri 18 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 28 October

After watching an Adam Kay performance, Stephen Fry declared, "This made me very, very happy."

Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is this month visiting the Midlands with latest offering Undoctored, a follow-on from previous smash-hit stage show This Is Going To Hurt.



Jonny Cole

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Thurs 10 October; Halesowen Town Hall, Sat 19 October

"It's difficult for me to put my brand of comedy into an industry-standard soundbite," says local comedian Jonny Cole. "There are a lot of people who love Black Country humour and who'd love to go into a rough & ready Black Country pub just to listen to the banter, and that's exactly what I do. I've absorbed Black Country humour the whole of my life. I take it out of that pub, where people wouldn't dare go in case they got their teeth knocked out, and I put it into a safe, controlled environment where they can enjoy it."

Rhod Gilbert

The Halls Wolverhampton, Thurs 10 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 17 & Fri 18 October; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 15 - Sat 16 November

Welsh funnyman Rhod Gilbert has acquired a huge and still-growing following thanks to a high-energy brand of grumpiness that marks him out as one of the top comedians of his generation.

He's returning to the Midlands this month with Rhod Gilbert And The Giant Grapefruit, a show in which he discusses his recent battle against stage four head and neck cancer.

Rhod's best-loved gags include: "In the Bible, God made it rain for 40 days and 40 nights. That's a pretty good summer for Wales... That's a hosepipe ban waiting to happen."

Laura Smyth

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 16 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 18 October

British Podcast Awards 2023 Best Comedy nominee (for Bang On It) Laura Smyth is asking how 'living your best life' is actually achieved. And here's a heads-up from her: "It don't involve Instagram!"

Laura is stopping off in Coventry with an evening of new material that sees her mugging off the madness of all manner of subjects - from childhood, school and parenting, to marriage, social media and chasing her dreams.





DISNEY DELIGHT



Adam Strong and Desmonda Cathabel talk about starring in the touring stage version of Disney's Aladdin, which flies into Birmingham Hippodrome this month...



A stage adaptation of Disney's 1992 animated film version of Aladdin has been delighting audiences for more than a decade. A high-flying spectacle boasting comedy, colour and a memorable musical score, the show is currently doing the rounds as part of its first-ever UK tour and stops off in Birmingham this month. What's On recently caught up with two of the production's cast - Adam Strong, who plays the evil Jafar, and Desmonda Cathabel, who stars as Princess Jasmine...

Actor Adam Strong shares his dressing room with a cuddly toy. It's an official Disney character from the film Aladdin which dates back to when Adam was a child growing up in Sunderland. But Adam didn't want a cuddly Aladdin or Princess Jasmine; he wanted his very own baddie - the evil royal vizier, Jafar.

Adam has been intrigued by the character ever since he first saw the animation. And now he is living his dream, playing Jafar on the UK tour of the stage musical, which comes to Birmingham Hippodrome this month.

Based on the hit Disney movie, Aladdin The Musical premiered in the US in 2011 and features well-known songs from the film, including A Whole New World, Friend Like Me and Arabian Nights, as well as new tracks created for the stage production. The show has played worldwide to audiences of more than 14 million people and enjoyed a run in the West End from 2016 to 2019.

"I first saw the film as a child," Adam recalls. "It came out when I was about four years old. I'm half Middle Eastern, and Aladdin was the first time I'd seen someone on the screen who kind of looked like me.

"And as much as I saw myself in Aladdin, I wasn't interested in him. I just gravitated towards Jonathan Freeman's interpretation of Jafar. And now to be playing Jafar is just amazing.

"Ironically I have a teddy-bear Jafar in my dressing room that I've had since the movie came out. He's in quite good condition. Bearing in mind it was 1992, he's quite old now, and he comes with me on every tour I'm doing. And I also have many figurines which I get sent, which I love."

Adam trained at London School of Musical Theatre and has appeared in a host of top shows - including We Will Rock You, Rock Of Ages, Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and Jesus Christ Superstar - as well as pantomimes and concerts in theatres across the UK.

"I've always gravitated towards the villain. I've played quite a few now. I like those roles because it's so far removed from who I am. And you get to have so much fun playing the villain."

Adam has wanted to play Jafar ever since he first caught the acting bug as a child, but it's a role which for a long time proved elusive.

"I always thought I was too young. When it was in the West End, I was never considered for the role because it's normally played by a much older actor - but thankfully our director, Casey Nicholaw, and the team took the chance on somebody younger.

"I mean, we're all actors, so I can portray older. For Jafar, I wear a lot of make-up to make me look not just older but gaunt and creepy."

For Desmonda Cathabel, taking the role of Princess Jasmine is also an acting dream come true.

"You grow up watching Disney movies and Disney animation," she says, "so you're really familiar with the characters. It feels like you're almost a part of that world. So to be actually playing the part feels very natural. With knowing Aladdin, knowing Princess Jasmine, knowing the Genie, knowing Jafar, knowing the magic carpet as you grow up, you just accept that that's a magical world you strive to be in. I know these characters. I grew up with them. I knew them a lot.

"And for me it's special because the original singing voice of Princess Jasmine was Lea Salonga, and she is a South Asian icon. She was the first one to do it, and for me to be in this position as another South East Asian woman - although I'm Indonesian rather than Filipino - is quite unbelievable. I've always looked up to her, and now I get to play the same role that she played."

Born in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, Desmonda trained at the Royal Academy of Music in London and has gone on to take roles in shows including Miss Saigon, From Here To Eternity and Stephen Sondheim's Old

Friends. She is keen to ensure her Jasmine is a feisty and independent princess.

"I think Jasmine has always been a strong character, even among the princesses that come within that Disney renaissance in the 1990s. And with our show in particular, she has more to show. She has more dialogue, more solo songs, and we get to see her more than we see her in the animation.

"I've found it really easy to play Jasmine because she feels like a modern girl. She has modern wants and needs - although actually these things aren't necessarily really modern. Girls have always had these aspirations, and that's how we've got to where we are today; because of all the women before us wanting and having these aspirations."

Having grown up with Disney princesses, Desmonda is also very conscious of the responsibilities that come with such an iconic role.

"Jasmine has always been that character for me. It's just a real privilege to play because I know there are a lot of young children watching, of any age and gender, and they get to see this really famous princess, but they can see her as a real girl with real sides to her. She's joyful but she's also determined. She has vulnerability but also strength within her. It's a really good role to play.

"With our production, we're lucky to work with directors who really allow me to bring my own interpretation to Jasmine. They never said 'You have to do it like this' or 'This is a Disney princess and you have to be a certain way.' They really wanted me to bring my interpretation to the character, and that's what I really love about it."

Disney's Aladdin shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 9 October to Sunday 3 November



& Juliet Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 7 - Sat 12 October; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 22 April - Sat 3 May;
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 12 - Sat 17 May

Premiered in 2019 and featuring a string of hits by Max Martin, & Juliet tells an alternative story of Shakespeare's famous heroine. In sharp contrast to the original tale, this one sees Juliet realising that she *can* survive without Romeo - a revelation that prompts her to set off on her own journey, both in love and life.

The award-winning production, which has proved a massive hit across four continents, visits the Midlands this month with former X Factor winner Matt Cardle taking on the role of the Stratford bard himself.

"People will have assumptions because the show is about Juliet," says Matt. "If you like Shakespeare and his plays, then great, you'll come

along. But if you have any fear that it might be Shakespearean and you're not into that, that's fine, because it's not anything to do with Shakespeare. It's spawned from one of his plays, but that's as far as it goes. There's a mention of it at the beginning, but the rest is absolutely brand new.

"This is one of the most joyous two hours you'll spend in a long time. It will have you laughing, it will have you crying, it will have you up dancing. The message that runs through the show is that love is love - you can love whoever you want, you can be whoever you want - set to the most iconic pop tunes of the last 20 years. I defy anyone not to have the best time ever."

Dear Evan Hansen

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 22 - Sat 26 October;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 1 - Sat 5 April

Olivier, Tony and Grammy award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen makes a welcome return to the Midlands. The show focuses on title character and high-school student Evan, a young man struggling with Social Anxiety Disorder, who has a therapeutic and self-intended letter stolen by classmate Connor Murphy.

When Connor later dies by suicide, Evan inserts himself into the boy's past, a decision that leads to a series of lies and confrontational events...



Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 22 - Sun 27 October;
Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 4 - Sun 9 March

Everybody's favourite flying car makes a welcome return to the region, complete with the Sherman Brothers' memorable score and a high-energy cast headed by Adam Garcia, Liam Fox and RuPaul's Drag Race UK winner The Vivienne (Hippodrome casting tbc). When eccentric inventor Caractacus Potts creates an amazing flying automobile, he uses it to take his family to the fictional country of Vulgaria. But all is not well in the European barony, where the sinister Baron Bomburst has decided to make children illegal... Truly Scrumptious, Toot Sweets, Hushabye Mountain and the Oscar-nominated title song feature among the show's best-known musical numbers.





Becoming Nancy

The Rep, Birmingham,
Wed 2 October - Sat 2 November

Acclaimed director & choreographer Jerry Mitchell looks set to add another triumph to his portfolio of hit shows when his latest offering receives its UK premiere at The Rep this month. Adapted from Terry Ronald's bestselling novel of the same name, *Becoming Nancy* finds gay teenager David Starr faced with a dilemma. He's been offered the role of Nancy in school musical *Oliver!*, but doesn't know whether to take it. While his friends and family all weigh in with their views, David is less than certain he's ready to put his head above the parapet... "I have a funny feeling that this show is going to be a huge success in the UK," says Jerry. "I've seen other shows like it, such as my own show *Kinky Boots*, or *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. These are shows that have a similar sort of leading character, with issues that I think are very much what's happening today."

Callings

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,
Thurs 10 & Fri 11 October

Well-established theatre company Kabosh here take their audience back in time to the 1970s, to tell the story of how a befriending service was set up to support the north of Ireland's 'community' of hidden LGBTQ+ individuals. With a strong anti-gay feeling prevailing at the time, establishing the service proved to be no easy task...



Pride And Prejudice* (*sort of)

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 14 - Sat 19 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 29 October - Sat 2 November; Malvern Festival Theatre, Tues 21 - Sat 25 January; The Rep, Birmingham, Mon 3 - Sat 8 February; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 13 - Sat 17 May

A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, *Pride And Prejudice* (*sort of) has proved a winner with critics and audiences alike. Indeed, celebrity fan Stephen Fry has described it as an evening of "hilarity, romance, madness and utter theatrical joy". Alongside the raucously



irreverent but admirably affectionate retelling of Austen's rollercoaster romance, the 2022 Olivier Award winner also boasts a host of pop classics, including *Young Hearts Run Free*, *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* and *You're So Vain*.

Only Fools And Horses The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 21 - Sat 26 October; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 2 - Sat 7 December; Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 31 March - Sat 12 April

Become reacquainted with loveable rogue Del Boy in this touring version of the hit *West End* musical. Based on John Sullivan's classic BBC TV sitcom, the stage show is co-written by comedy legend Paul Whitehouse and John's son, Jim. Much-loved characters Rodney, Cassandra, Grandad, Boycie and Marlene are all present and correct, as are more than 20 'hilarious' songs and a re-worked version of Chas & Dave's iconic theme tune.

The New Real

The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Thurs 3 October - Sat 2 November

"It's [about] two political consultants who have run a company together in America, split up rather acrimoniously, and end up on opposite sides of the same election in a faraway country. So it's a kind of grudge match thousands of miles away from home." So says David Edgar in talking about *The*

New Real, his epic new play for the Royal Shakespeare Company. "There's comedy in it," he continues, "but also it's a way of looking at how the new politics has been constructed, and how it's spread throughout the world."



Frankenstein

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 8 - Sat 12 October

Mary Shelley's classic gothic horror novel has inspired no shortage of films, but theatrical versions of the story, such as this one, are relatively rare. Tilted Wig have taken the 1818 original and played around with it. Setting their tale in the war-torn Europe of 1943, they take as their starting-point two women hiding from their past at what feels like the very end of the world... The production is not suitable for under-12s.



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Theatre previews from around the region



Dracula

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Tues 15 & Wed 16 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 14 - Sat 18 January; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 April; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 18 & Sat 19 April

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is best known from its many and varied cinematic incarnations - but as theatrical productions like *The Woman In Black* have ably illustrated, a spine-tingling story of horror can work just as well on the stage as on the screen... Cue, the critically acclaimed Blackeyed Theatre's brand-new adaptation, a production which imaginatively blends Victorian Gothic with the contemporary... The company has deemed the show suitable for audience members aged 11 upwards.

Partition Of The Heart

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 October

Midlands Arts Centre commemorates the 77th anniversary of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent with this ground-breaking new show. A multi-disciplinary work of musical theatre, the production delves into 'a moment in history that continues to shape the lives of millions'.



Show & Tell

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tues 15 - Sat 26 October

Mention Alan Ayckbourn and a list of brilliant observational comedies springs readily to mind, the most famous among which - think *Relatively Speaking*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Bedroom Farce* - were penned way back in the 1960s and 70s. But the 85-year-old has written plenty more plays besides, including this latest (and 90th) offering, a 'delightfully dark farce' which celebrates theatre and lifts the lid on 'the performances we act out on a daily basis'. As is often the case with his plays, Ayckbourn also takes the directorial reins.



A Steady Rain

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 16 - Sat 19 October

The notorious and gruesome Dahmer murders are the inspiration behind this tale of Chicago police officers Joey and Denny. When a domestic-disturbance call takes a turn for the worse, the lifelong buddies suddenly find themselves operating in a moral grey area inhabited by pimps, prostitutes and criminal lowlives... The show is an Old Joint Stock Theatre in-house production starring Steven Rostance and Graham MacDonnell (pictured).



Othello

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 11 October - Sat 23 November

Shakespeare's tragic tale of lost handkerchiefs, ruined reputations and mistreated wives has always been one of theatre's most powerful stories.

When Iago is overlooked for promotion by Othello, his Machiavellian mind turns to thoughts of vengeance. Othello's willingness to be led by the nose is all grist to Iago's mill, and fatal consequences ensue... John Douglas Thompson (pictured) stars as Othello.



The History Boys

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 8 - Sat 12 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 15 - Sat 19 October

"I think I'd always wanted to write something about a charismatic schoolmaster, and that went back quite a long way," explains Alan Bennett in talking about his award-winning play, *The History Boys*.

The story unfolds in a boys' school in northern England in the 1980s. A young teacher named Irwin has been brought in to coach the pupils for the Oxbridge exam - but fellow teacher Hector believes instead in learning for its own sake.

"Realistically the person that parents would want teaching their child would be Irwin, as Irwin would get you into university," says Alan. "However, sentimentally their hearts would be with Hector, because he's the type of teacher everyone wants. Everybody always wishes they'd learned more poetry at school and had someone who would inspire them like that. And it's the fact that, in a way, I couldn't resolve this conflict in my head which made me write [*The History Boys*]." This new production is touring in celebration of the play's 20th anniversary.



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
The Baddies

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Mr Sleepybum

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 27 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 30 October; The Core, Solihull, Sun 10 November; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 17 November

With a nomination for best kids' show at this year's Leicester Comedy Festival to recommend it, not to mention a clutch of five-star reviews trailing in its wake, Mr Sleepybum is a show well worth checking out. The title character is a fella who has 'stupid, silly dreams' at night - and he's going to re-enact the whole lot of them for his sure-to-be-enthralled audience... The show runs for 45 minutes and is suitable for children aged between three and eight.

Awful Auntie

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 October; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 October

Frights, fights and friendships are the order of the day in this lively adaptation of David Walliams' much-loved story. At the centre of the tale is a young girl named Stella. The sole heir to Saxby Hall, she finds herself in danger of losing both her inheritance and her life when she comes up against her thoroughly unpleasant Aunt Alberta...

Produced by the team behind the hugely successful stage adaptation of Walliams' Gangsta Granny, the show comes complete with a very old car, a very large owl, a very small ghost and plenty of opportunity to enjoy a jolly good chuckle.



The Baddies

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 26 & Sun 27 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Tues 8 - Sun 13 April

Given the success of so many other stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's hugely popular stories (see, for example, The Smartest Giant In Town elsewhere on this page), it's a real no-brainer to mount a live version of The Baddies. The company behind the show is Freckle Productions, who've got plenty of form when it comes to brilliant stage adaptations of Donaldson's terrific tales. This one focuses on a witch, a troll and an ancient ghost who

love nothing more than being very, very bad... Expect your kids to laugh out loud.

Milkshake! Live On Holiday

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 28 October

The Milkshake! pals are heading off on holiday - and Midlands-based families are invited to join them for a fun-packed new adventure...

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

Dinosaur World Live

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 31 October - Sat 2 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 22 - Thurs 24 April

Dinosaurs are once again roaming the Midlands this autumn, thanks to this interactive show for all the family to enjoy. Youngsters get to meet a host of impressive prehistoric creatures - including, of course, every child's favourite flesh-eating giant, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. A special meet & greet after the show provides the perfect opportunity to make a new dinosaur friend.



Curious Investigators

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sun 13 October; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Mon 21 October

Fancy inspiring your kids with a fun-filled and brain-stretching adventure? One Tenth Human's Curious Investigators is exactly that, presenting an inventive and engaging work of theatre for youngsters aged three to seven.

The story revolves around the characters of Scribble & Clipboard. Having discovered a mysterious egg hidden in the recycling rubbish, the pair then call on their young audience to help them rescue an unborn chick...

The Smartest Giant In Town

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 October; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 12 & Sun 13 April; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 April

Fierylight & Little Angel Theatre are the creatives behind this stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved story.

The title character is George, a giant who decides his scruffy days are a thing of the past and buys himself some oversized clothes. But when he encounters various animals needing his assistance - and, more particularly, his newly purchased items of clothing - George soon realises that it isn't clothes that maketh the giant but rather a gargantuan sense of generosity and a colossal warm heart...

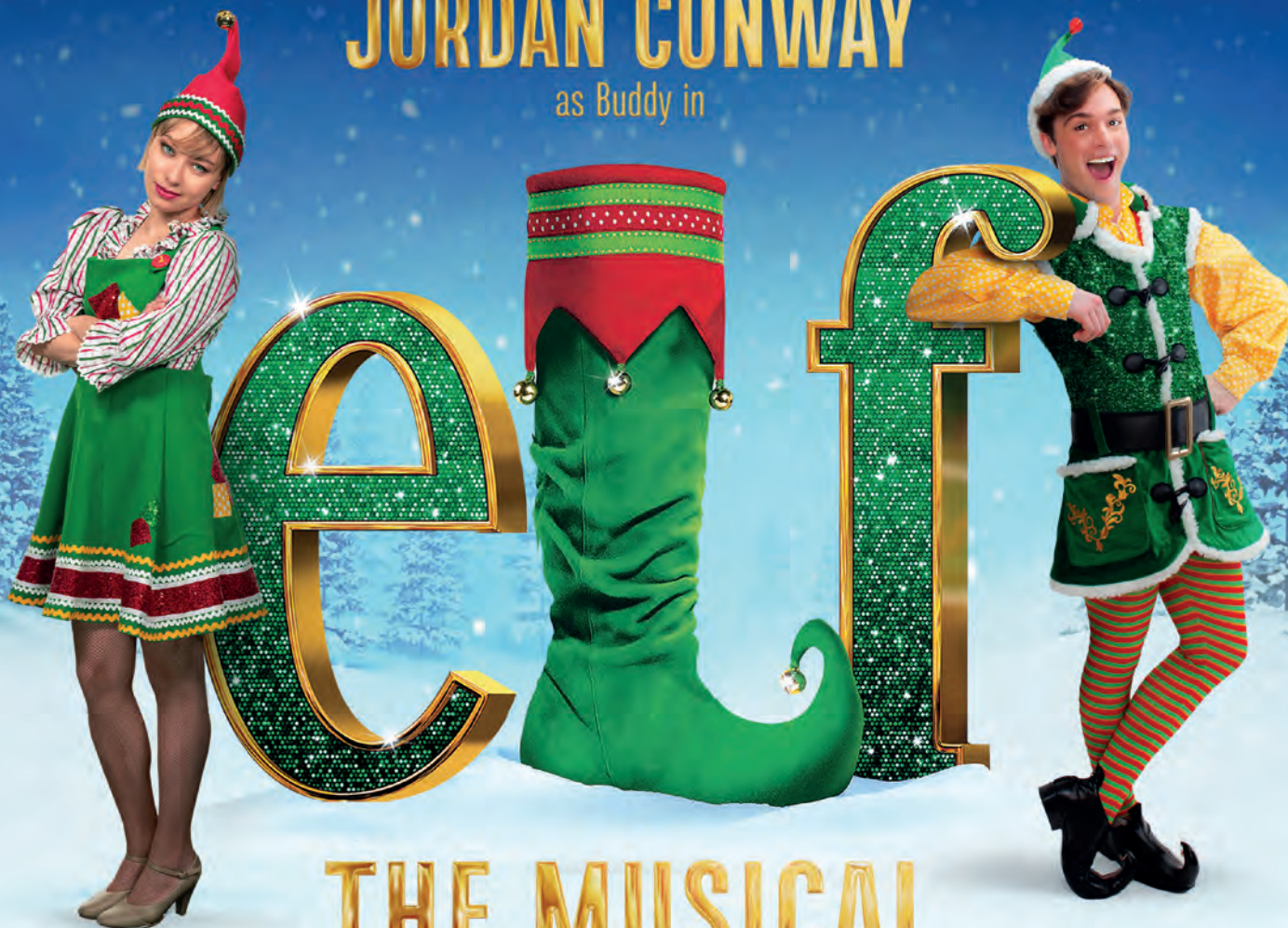


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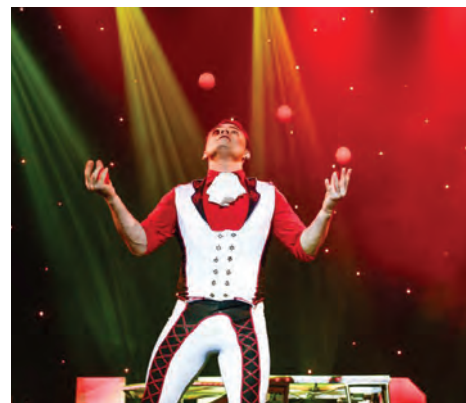
Light entertainment from around the region



Cirque du Magique

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Thurs 31 October - Sat 2 November

'Mind-blowing magic, world-class circus acts and death-defying stunts' are seamlessly brought together in this high-energy magic show, visiting Wolverhampton this month as part of a UK tour. Richard Cadell, Alex McAleer, Rebecca Foyle & Taylor Morgan are the stars of a production that promises to be 'no ordinary circus' and 'a journey into the extraordinary'... The recommended age to experience the performance is eight-plus. Kids younger than three will not be admitted.



Showstopper: The Improvised Musical

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Thurs 24 October

If ever there was a show worth seeing more than once, this is it - and not only because it's an Olivier Award winner.

Showstopper! is exactly what it says on the tin: a musical that's improvised (meaning that no two nights are ever the same). The rotating cast of quick-witted performers take audience suggestions and then 'magic up' a brand-new comedy musical out of thin air, complete with tunes, lyrics, dances and harmonies.

It's clever stuff performed by clever people - and if audience reaction across the years is anything to go by, you can expect to be well and truly gobsmacked.



I Screamed A Scream

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Wed 30 October - Fri 1 November

Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre is promising 'a frightful night' this Halloween, courtesy of this special concert event paying homage to 'the best baddies of stage and screen'.

According to the show's publicity, audiences should brace themselves for 'barbarous ballads and horrible hidden gems, performed by some of the most frighteningly talented performers in the musical theatre industry'.

Jack Rhodes Magic

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 31 October

As might be expected, reaching the final of this year's Britain's Got Talent has done wonders for Jack Rhodes' burgeoning career. The talented magician is most definitely 'on the up', his winning blend of comedy, magic, and sheer, unadulterated nonsense having seen his online material amass more than 125 million views. He's visiting Birmingham as part of his first-ever live tour.



Queenz: Drag Me To The Disco

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 9 October;
Lichfield Garrick, Tues 22 & Wed 23 October;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 31 January

Loved and adored by celebrities including Gary Barlow and Dawn French, Queenz is described as 'a trailblazing, life-affirming drag extravaganza that's currently taking the UK by storm'.

This latest show sees a selection of dazzling divas performing the biggest disco hits of all time - and if their previous production is anything to go by, there won't be a lip-sync in sight!

Carrie Hope Fletcher: Love Letters Live

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 14 October

West End star Carrie Hope Fletcher hits the road again having toured her debut solo show, An Open Book, last year. This time out, she's taking a



look at the subject of love in its many and varied guises - from romantic to maternal, and unrequited to obsessive - all explored through a concert of musical theatre favourites. West End leading man Bradley Jaden joins in the fun.

Musicals: The Ultimate Live Band Sing-Along

Royal Spa Theatre, Leamington Spa, Wed 9 October; Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock, Fri 11 October; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Sat 12 October; Lichfield Garrick Theatre, Sun 20 October; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 27 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 29 October

If you love musical theatre, appreciate the live-band experience and enjoy a good old-fashioned singalong, then this is the show for you...

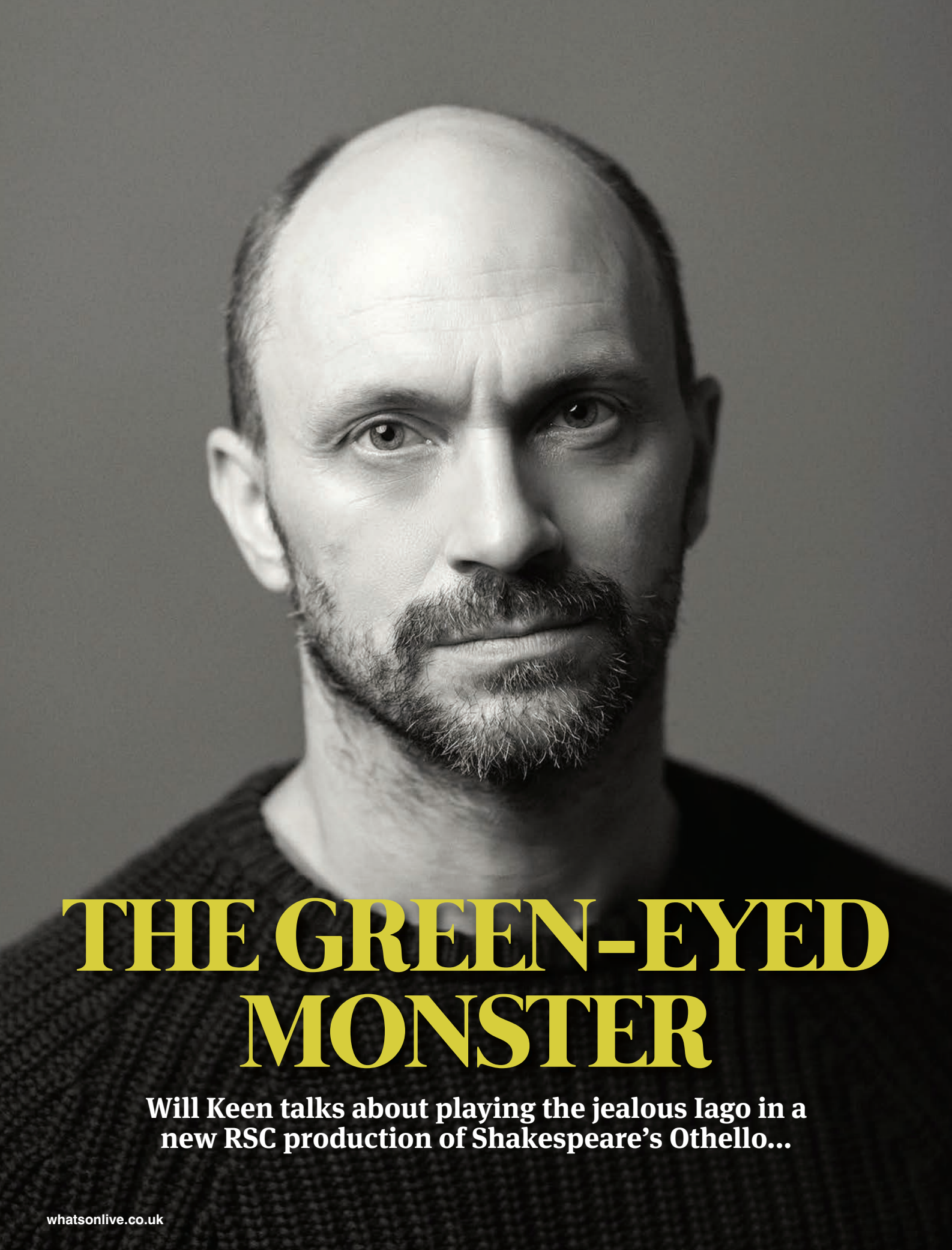
Featuring memorable numbers from Mamma Mia!, Grease, Frozen, The Greatest Showman, Dirty Dancing, SIX and Hairspray (plus plenty more), the production provides the perfect opportunity to - as the show's publicity puts it - 'unleash those iconic lines, flaunt your funkier dance moves, and become part of the musical magic'.

The Return Of The Wicked Wizard Of Fizzog

Halesowen Town Hall, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 October

Having previously registered a big hit with a chuckleworthy parody of Wicked and The Wizard Of Oz, Black Country-based Fizzog are now returning with this reimagined version of that show.

An award-winning company suitably proud of their Midlands roots, Fizzog urge anybody who enjoys a good laugh to get along to this latest production. "Our shows are riotous, poignant and nostalgic," they say, "but most of all, they're hysterically funny."



THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

**Will Keen talks about playing the jealous Iago in a
new RSC production of Shakespeare's Othello...**

A new production of Othello opens this month at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The play swings from political intrigue to tight domestic drama, telling a tale of jealousy and exploring the way in which an individual can be manipulated towards destruction. Will Keen, who is playing Iago - Othello's officer, and a man intent on orchestrating the title character's downfall - recently spoke to What's On about the power of a great Shakespearean tragedy...

Can you give us a brief outline of the story of Othello, Will...

I'll try to spoil as little as possible... Othello is a Moorish general in Venice, a very distinguished fighter and statesman, and he falls in love with a young woman called Desdemona. Meanwhile, one of his 'ancients' [his standard-bearer, Iago] wishes he had been promoted to a better position. For various reasons of jealousy, Iago decides to create a plot which will frame the person who's been put in the position of authority that he wishes he could have, and destroy Othello's marriage.

It's really a story about how you manage to infect a mind with jealousy, and what the effects of jealousy are. How, once that seed has been planted in your head, it can become so overpowering that it matters more to be proved right in your suspicion - for your ego to be proved right - than for the thing actually to be true, even to the cost of your own destruction.

Tell us about Iago, the character you're playing...

Well, it's difficult to say a take really, because I'm still getting to know him, and I don't want to become too prejudicial. I would say that, as far as I can make out, he is somebody who feels that the universe has betrayed him in some way. The form of that betrayal is partly to do with his belief that his wife has cheated on him, and is partly to do with a very deep spiritual sense of betrayal, which I think is a sort of theological despair. I think that Othello is almost a god-like figure, and Iago feels a bit like Lucifer - like God has turned away from him.

In terms of developing your own interpretation of the character, what is your starting-point and what are your influences?

Well the director is Tim Carroll, who I've worked with several times in the distant past. I've always loved his playfulness as a director. What we're doing is a lot of games around the verse - it's actually incredibly rich language. You're given a huge amount of options as an actor, and in a way, one's job is to try and keep as many options open for as long as possible - not to be shutting things

off. It's a judicious job deciding when and where you take decisions and where it's possible not to take decisions. The starting point, I suppose, is being as irreverent and as respectful as possible, in terms of the preconceptions that we have for the play and the characters.

How well do you know the play - have you ever performed in Othello before?

This is my first time. I do know it quite well, just because it's a play that I've always loved and have read several times throughout my life. The amazing thing about these huge plays is how they seem to transform themselves according to your life experience. They become different animals. When you meet them at different moments in your life, they mean completely different things to you.

Is there anything about the production that you feel will make it refreshingly different from a 'standard' version of Othello?

Well, I think the way Tim approaches text is fantastically rigorous and fantastically releasing. It really does listen to the heart of the play, without having any kind of prejudices about what it represents - what it *has* represented culturally, what it represents culturally [now]. It's a very pure way of listening to the play, which just allows it to reverberate in the audience's mind. The audience draws their conclusions. Of course, what's so brilliant about Shakespeare, like all great writers, is that he's not providing any answers - he's only putting questions out there. I think Tim is very good at revealing the questions.

Where does the play stand in comparison with Shakespeare's other tragedies?

I'd put them all equal first, really - it's one of the great plays of world literature, without any shadow of a doubt. It's an astonishingly tight domestic drama. It feels like a very modern psychological drama. It's amazingly imaginative, it's incredibly rich, but it's different. If Macbeth is a play of the imagination, this is a play of the mind.

If you could choose one Shakespearean character to play who you haven't already

played, who would it be and why?

I think probably, if I could only play one other Shakespeare character in my life, it would be King Lear, which I think is as complete and terrifying an account of the experience of humanity and approaching death as I can imagine.

What would you like an audience member who's new to Shakespeare to take away from watching this latest version of Othello?

I would always want them to feel that they had been spoken to intimately about their own lives, and their own responsibilities, and their own treatment of other people - their treatment of *themselves* and other people. I think that this play talks about that as well as any other piece of literature I've ever come across.

You're making a return to the RSC to play Iago - what do you think makes the RSC special and different, other than its obvious world-renowned status in terms of the works of Shakespeare?

I'm semi-returning. It was a co-production I did before, between the Lyric Hammersmith and the RSC. I've never done a full, pure RSC production - so in that sense, I'm a debutant! I'm thrilled, of course. I'm absolutely delighted, very honoured and privileged. I think there's a wonderful thing about leaving London and playing in a space which is dedicated to a particular imaginative universe - the imaginative universe of Shakespeare. And being surrounded by the countryside which inspired that imagination. I think that, obviously, the RSC has an amazing history of people who started it up and have worked for it over the years. It's lovely to feel a part of a continuing tradition. There aren't many playwrights who deserve to have a company made in their honour, but Shakespeare certainly does.

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Othello shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon from Friday 11 October until Saturday 23 November

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Director Carlos Acosta

Sir Peter Wright's

The Nutcracker

22 November – 14 December

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Dance previews from across the region

**Jasmin Vardimon: Now**

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 8 October

"Most of what I produce originates from observing our contemporary society," explains choreographer Jasmin Vardimon in talking about her body of work. And that's certainly the case with *Now*, a piece in which she uses her distinctive dance-theatre style and creative approach 'to tell a story of our time'. Designed to reflect 'the current moment, the present, the now, and the continuous movement of time', the work marks the company's 25th anniversary. Jasmin is as clear as ever about her ambitions for the future: "I want to make people think and ask questions; I don't want to give answers. At the end of the day, I see myself as a storyteller and communicator about things that are important to me."

BRB: LunaBirmingham Hippodrome,
Thurs 3 - Sat 5 October

Birmingham Royal Ballet's new production turns the spotlight on the role of women as creators, innovators and activists, both with regard to the history of Birmingham and in a wider, global context.

The work has been inspired by Louise Palfreyman's critically acclaimed book, *Once Upon A Time In Birmingham: Women Who Dare To Dream*, and has been created by an all-female team.

Luna forms part of a trilogy of Birmingham-inspired ballets conceived as a homage to the city. The other two productions in the trilogy are *City Of A Thousand Trades* and the box-office smash, *Black Sabbath - The Ballet*.

**Imperial Classical Ballet: Swan Lake**

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 14 October;
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 28 October;
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 4 & Tues 5
November; Malvern Theatres, Sun 24
November;

Imperial Classical Ballet presents a spectacular production of a timeless classic. Set to Tchaikovsky's mesmerising score, *Swan Lake* tells the story of Odette, a

beautiful princess who, caught under the wicked spell of the evil Von Rothbart, must spend the daytime hours as a swan, returning to human form only when night falls... A sumptuous visual feast, *Swan Lake* is ideal not only for the seasoned dance-goer but also the first-time trier.

**James Wilton Dance: Lore**Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,
Sat 19 October

The award-winning James Wilton's choreography is always distinctive, his productions powered by an energy the audience can almost reach out and touch. James' in-demand company previously scored a massive hit with *Leviathan* - a retelling of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* - which is widely considered to be the ensemble's best and most finely tuned work to date. They here make a welcome return with *Lore*, a one-hour folklore-inspired journey into a pagan world of gods, demons and humans - all embodied through the 'otherworldly' athleticism of the company's dancers.

**The Nutcracker**

Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 31 October

Whisper it as quietly as you can...

Christmas is a-coming.

...And, as usual, that means a return to the limelight for Tchaikovsky's beloved *Nutcracker*.

Kickstarting the season of goodwill a few weeks early, Moldova's Crown Ballet here present the much-loved story of Clara's exciting fantasy-adventure, experienced in a world of soldiers, giant rats, snow fairies, mystery and magic.

BalanceThinktank Birmingham Science Museum,
Mon 28 October - Fri 1 November

The outcome of an unusual collaboration between Keneish Dance and Dr Darius Koester from the Centre for Mechanochemical Cell Biology at Warwick University, *Balance* presents an exploration of resilience, renewal, and the interconnectedness of all living things. The show has been described as a mesmerising and high-spirited dance-theatre performance, and sees Keneish's dancers 'morphing into the microscopic marvels of immune cells'... The performance lasts 45 minutes and is suitable for all ages.



AUTUMN at COMPTON VERNEY

CELEBRATING **20**



Photo by Graham Fudger



A Walk in the Park: Autumn Colours

Fri 4, 18, 23 Oct & 22 Nov

Smartphone Photography Discovery Walk

Fri 11 Oct

CV Sounds: Indian Man

Sat 26 Oct

The Reflected Self: Portrait Miniatures 1540-1850. (c) Simon Bevan



Curator's Tour and Tea

5 & 19 Nov



The Textile Fair

Fri 8 – Sun 10 Nov



Neon Naked Life Drawing

16 Nov

OCTOBER HALF TERM

KIDS GO FREE*

Sculpture in the Park- Louise Bourgeois' Spider. © Compton Verney, photo by Jamie Woodley. Louise Bourgeois's art is © The Easton Foundation/DACS, London



Halloween Trail

Sat 26 Oct – Sun 3 Nov

Photo by Graham Fudger



Curious Adventures of Colour & Light

Sat 26 Oct



Make your own Pinhole Camera

Tues 29 Oct



Blue Play Blocks

Tues 29 Oct – Sun 3 Nov

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Kinton RAF Stem

Wed 30 Oct



Get Mucky, Get Making

Thu 31 Oct

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Film highlights in October...

Joker: Folie à Deux

CERT tbc (138 mins)

Starring **Joaquin Phoenix, Lady Gaga, Zazie Beetz, Harry Lawley, Brendan Gleeson, Jacob Lofland**
Directed by **Todd Phillips**

This much-anticipated follow-up to 2019's Academy Award-winning *Joker* sees Joaquin Phoenix once again donning the grotesque clown's makeup to play Batman's arch nemesis... Institutionalised and awaiting trial for his crimes as the Joker, Arthur Fleck stumbles upon true love in the form of music therapist Lee (Lady Gaga). Meanwhile, Arthur's followers launch a movement aimed at liberating him from the long arm of the law...

Released Fri 4 October



Transformers One

CERT PG (104 mins)

With the voices of **Chris Hemsworth, Brian Tyree Henry, Scarlett Johansson, Keegan-Michael Key, Jon Hamm, Laurence Fishburne**
Directed by **Josh Cooley**

Having eagerly anticipated a new film for more than four years, Transformers' hugely committed fans were beyond ecstatic to see their favourites finally return to the cinema screen last year in *Rise Of The Beasts*, the seventh installment in a series which kickstarted in 2007 and has been gathering pace ever since. So the arrival this month of *Transformers One* - recounting the untold origin story of Optimus Prime and Megatron, and coming so soon after the last movie - is sure to be met with a further show of undiluted joy. Particularly as it's the first-ever fully CG-animated film in the series.

Released Fri 11 October

The Apprentice

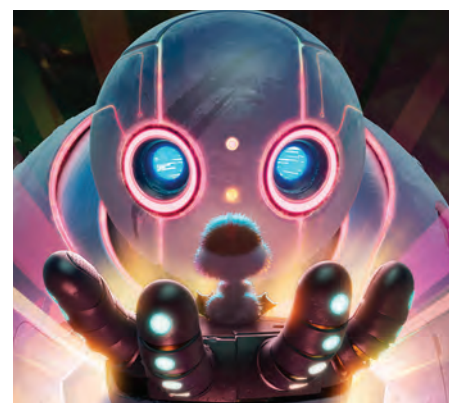
CERT tbc (120 mins)

Starring **Sebastian Stan, Jeremy Strong, Maria Bakalova, Martin Donovan, Catherine McNally, Charlie Carrick**
Directed by **Ali Abbasi**

With the US presidential election taking place next month, what better time to release a film about presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump?

Hollywood's first-ever biopic of the 45th President of the United States charts Trump's ascent to power through the Faustian deal he cuts with influential right-wing lawyer and political fixer Roy Cohn... Sadly, considering the outsized personality of the man at the centre of the story, the film is somewhat pedestrian in its pacing and disappointingly tame.

Released Fri 18 October



The Wild Robot

CERT U (101 mins)

With the voices of **Lupita Nyong'o, Pedro Pascal, Kit Connor, Bill Nighy, Stephanie Hsu, Matt Berry** Directed by **Chris Sanders**

Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot*, an illustrated middle-grade novel first published in 2016, became a startling phenomenon, rocketing to the top spot on the New York Times bestseller list. So it's hardly surprising that Hollywood came a-calling. Or, to be more precise, DreamWorks Animation. The epic adventure follows the journey of Rozzum robot unit 7134. Known as 'Roz' for short, the robot is shipwrecked on an uninhabited island, where it learns to adapt to the harsh surroundings, gradually builds relationships with the animals it encounters, and becomes the adoptive parent of an orphaned gosling.

Released Fri 18 October

STEPPING OUT

Steps' brand-new musical, *Here & Now*, will debut at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra next month



Iconic songs from pop group Steps' repertoire provide the backdrop for a brand-new musical premiering at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra next month. A celebration of love and friendship, Here & Now is helmed by former Birmingham Rep artistic director Rachel Kavanaugh. What's On recently caught up with Rachel to find out more about the new musical...

Midlands theatre The Alexandra will next month host the world premiere of new musical Here & Now.

Based on songs by pop band Steps, the show tells the tale of four friends - Caz, Vel, Neeta and Robbie - as they steer their way through a summer filled with happiness, heartache, hurt and humour.

Written by Shaun Kitchener and helmed by former Birmingham Rep artistic director Rachel Kavanaugh, the musical features a host of hit Steps tracks, including Last Thing On My Mind, Heartbeat, Tragedy, Chain Reaction, One For Sorrow and 5,6,7,8.

Rachel, who has directed West End blockbusters including Half A Sixpence and The Great British Bake Off Musical since her time at The Rep (from 2006 to 2011), says that the songs are the perfect backdrop to the show's storyline.

"Here & Now is a completely original story with new characters. It's not about Steps, but we use their songs to tell the story. It's brilliant for people who love Steps, but I think that even if you don't know the songs, you'll still enjoy it.

"Shaun has very cleverly interwoven the songs and the story. It's set in a British seaside town and is about four friends who set themselves a task over one summer. The thing that is incredibly appealing about it is that the characters are incredibly recognisable. They're just ordinary people with ordinary everyday dilemmas to do with having children, marriage breakups, commitment issues in relationships, not being able to tell someone that you've had a crush on them for ages, issues to do with sexuality - all kinds of stuff, but it's presented very lightly and is great fun."

The show also explores how friendship can bring together people with very diverse life experiences.

"Because it's set in a supermarket, and all kinds of people of all ages work in a supermarket, the friendship group is two early-middle-aged people and two younger people, all from different heritages, so it's incredibly inclusive in so many ways.

"We use the songs to express all these emotions, but it's mostly about those four people trying to achieve something for a party by the end of the summer. It's really

saying, seize the day, have fun, hold your loved ones tight, and have a good dance!"

Here & Now follows in the tradition of productions like Mamma Mia!, set to Abba hits, Greatest Days, based around Take That songs, and We Will Rock You, featuring Queen tracks. Rather than telling the story of the bands, these shows use their songs as a backdrop to a totally different story. And, says Rachel, the beauty of such shows is that they not only follow a narrative but also bring something new to the songs themselves.

"I think there's always a challenge, when the songs are very well known, to make people hear them in a new setting. In a musical, if we get it right, you hear the lyrics more. The audience will hear the songs they know and love - they might be sung in a slightly different way, but they will be recognisable as those pop songs - but what the musical should do is make you hear the words in a slightly new way because they are connected to a particular moment in a story.

"With good pop songs, you love them not just because they're musically catchy but because you connect to the sentiment in them. And lots of pop songs are about love: disappointed love, or hopeful love, or a celebration of love.

"Part of the task which these four friends are set over the summer is to do with love. So when one of them falls for someone, it makes great sense to sing Love's Got A Hold On My Heart, or Say You'll Be Mine, or It's The Way You Make Me Feel. They all work brilliantly at certain moments in the show. It's all about placement and about who sings them."

Featuring Claire Richards, Faye Tozer, Ian 'H' Watkins, Lee Latchford-Evans and Lisa Scott-Lee, Steps formed in 1997. They went on to have 14 top-five singles, release four chart-topping albums, sell 22 million records, and pack out arenas on 11 sold-out tours.

As co-producers of the musical, along with ROYO and Coventry-born pop legend Pete Waterman, the band have been heavily involved in the creation of Here & Now.

"I've been meeting with them at every stage of the development," says Rachel. "I met them first of all just to meet them. Then we did a workshop earlier in the year, which they all came to, and they give notes on the show. They've all got opinions and they are

incredibly supportive.

"I think people have been talking to them for a long time about doing a musical using their music, but it's never felt quite right until this proposal [was put] to them. And it's great to have Pete on board because his wisdom and knowledge of the music is extraordinary."

Beginning her career as an assistant director in the 1990s, Rachel has worked on countless shows - many of which were premiered at Birmingham Rep. These included A Doll's House with Tara Fitzgerald, Hapgood with Josie Lawrence, and Arthur And George, based on a true story set in the West Midlands. Her career has featured musicals and both classic and new drama.

"I really like doing new musicals. It's both the hardest and the most rewarding kind of theatre to do because there's so much at stake - but if you get it right, you can create something that's really joyous or really moving, or hopefully both.

"I also love Steps, and I think for people of my age the band have come round a second time. I think that's one of the very clever things about doing this musical now - that hopefully people of different ages will enjoy the music, and that parents will take their children, or groups of friends will go."

With her strong links to Birmingham, Rachel is delighted Here & Now will be premiering in the city.

"I'm thrilled it opens at the Alex because I love Birmingham. I've never worked at the Alex, so it's great to have a show originate there. I think it's great that it's going to be done first of all in a city, and also a diverse city, and also a city that has such a good history with musicals and new writing. It's a perfect home for it.

"It would be lovely both to tour it and take it to London afterwards, but at the moment this is the premiere and we want to get it right for Birmingham first. People will have a really, really good time, a proper fun night out. They might cry a bit, but they're mostly going to laugh and want to sing along and dance."

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Here & Now shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Saturday 9 to Saturday 30 November

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Visual Arts previews from around the region

**Scent And The Art Of The Pre-Raphaelites**

Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, Fri 11 October - Sun 26 January

“The exhibition is going to have a sensory experience,” explains Andrew Davies, communications & marketing manager at the Barber, in talking about Scent And The Art Of The Pre-Raphaelites. “We’re actually going to be producing scent in the gallery. There was a belief in Victorian

times that you could smell a rainbow - it smelt like spring flowers and meadows... “One of the paintings we’re borrowing comes from Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. It’s called The Blind Girl, where they’re breathing in the scent of the rainbow in the background.”

Chila Kumari Singh Burman: Spectacular Diversions

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 26 October - Sun 26 January

Highly rated contemporary artist Chila Kumari Singh Burman works in multiple media, with drawings, prints, collage and sculpture all featuring in her output. An installation of her famous neons will light up the façade of Compton Verney, with Hindu deities and mythological creatures mingling with animals and ice creams in a glowing display.

**Waste Age: What Can Design Do?**

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 26 October - Sun 23 February

MAC’s first collaboration with the Design Museum is a group exhibition focusing on a new generation of designers who are ‘rethinking our relationship to everyday things’.

Telling the story of the environmental crisis, the show explores how design can transform waste into valuable resources. The exhibition features a new sculptural commission inspired by clothes waste markets in Nigeria. The work has been created by Birmingham-based artist Abdulrazaq Awofeso.

Atchin Tan: Travelling Through Art

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Sat 26 October - Sunday 5 January

Oral histories, traditional storytelling, poetry and music all feature in this brand-new exhibition, which takes viewers on a visual journey through the history of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Co-curated with members of those communities, the show presents works by Turner, Munnings and Gainsborough alongside newly commissioned artworks by Romani artists, some of which demonstrate skills from endangered crafts.

**Friends In Love And War: L'Éloge des meilleur-es ennemi-es**

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, Wed 2 October - Sun 23 February

An exhibition exploring the nature and role of friendship in contemporary life, Friends In Love And War features paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, textiles, film, sculpture and installation.

The exhibition is showing at Ikon as part of the venue’s 60th anniversary year.





Material Worlds: Contemporary Artists And Textiles

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 9 October - Sun 15 December

Hayward Gallery Touring's new exhibition explores how simple everyday materials are being used to surprise and provoke, 'creating worlds and telling stories ranging from the personal to the cosmic'. Speaking about the show, its curator, Caroline Achaintre, said: "I wanted the exhibition to emphasise the transition from something quite everyday, domestic and supposedly unspectacular, into the creation of fantastical and extraordinary works, worlds, and visions. "It has been an enriching experience to encounter such a diverse realm of artists and to create this exhibition, which features pieces by both upcoming and established artists from different generations."



Painted Dreams:
THE ART OF
Evelyn De Morgan

19 Oct 24 – 9 Mar 25
Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Free admission

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
DE MORGAN FOUNDATION

Night and Sleep, 1878, Evelyn De Morgan © Trustees of the De Morgan Foundation



Image: Love's Passing, 1883, Evelyn De Morgan © Trustees of the De Morgan Foundation

PAINTED DREAMS

Pre-Raphaelite artist Mary Evelyn Pickering De Morgan (1855 - 1919) painted in an elegant style inspired by Italian Renaissance paintings - particularly the work of Botticelli - and often featured female figures and mythological or allegorical subjects in her work.

This month, Wolverhampton Art Gallery exhibits 30 of De Morgan's oil paintings and drawings. And it's not the first time that her work has visited the city... The exhibition - titled *Painted Dreams* - is a recreation of a show held at the same venue in 1907.

The artworks will be reunited for the first time in 120 years, having been loaned for exhibition from private collections and by the Trustees of the De Morgan Foundation.

De Morgan studied at Slade School of Art at the University of London, where she excelled, winning a full scholarship and prizes for her work. During her time at the school she chose to paint under her ambiguously gendered middle name, Evelyn. This decision was made so that her work would be judged equally alongside that of her male peers, rather than being subject to the prejudices held against women painters at the time.

These prejudices created an environment in which female artists' work was rarely showcased in modern galleries - the pursuit of art was not seen as a suitable occupation for women.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery's curator in the early 20th century, JJ Brownsword, first encountered De Morgan's work while he was visiting her husband, ceramics designer William De Morgan.

Brownsword was enthralled by what he saw, writing in 1906 that De Morgan's paintings were "vividly impressed on my memory".

As curator, Brownsword was invested in bringing the work of unknown artists to exhibit in Wolverhampton. So he wrote to De Morgan, asking her if she "would be so kind as to lend" her artwork "to the Corporation of Wolverhampton for an exhibition at the Wolverhampton Art Gallery". At the time, it was particularly unusual for a female artist to be the subject of a solo exhibition.

The 1907 show was to be the largest of De Morgan's career and certainly made an impression. One reviewer at the *Wolverhampton Express & Star* newspaper described the pictures as "painted dreams", from which the gallery's 2024 exhibition takes its evocative title.

The new exhibition will present the works chronologically, across three galleries, to highlight some of the themes that De Morgan revisited throughout her career. She frequently drew from mythological subjects, one example of which is *Flora* - a lifesize painting featuring the Roman Goddess of Spring.

She also painted in an allegorical style, in pieces which reimagine abstract ideas as human figures. One such example is her impressive painting, *The Storm Spirits*, which shows thunder, lightning and rain represented as three beautiful women.

Three pictures which were originally exhibited in 1907 were sadly lost in a warehouse fire in 1991. However, local artist Paul Francis-Walker, who also works in the Pre-Raphaelite style, has recreated these paintings for inclusion in the exhibition. The recreation of the lost pieces ensures that the new show is as close as possible to the 1907 display.

Painted Dreams not only showcases the work of a talented artist, but also offers a unique opportunity to dive into the past of the gallery itself. In the recreation of this groundbreaking exhibition, Wolverhampton Art Gallery reconnects with its history - to a time when it was a key player in recognising and elevating De Morgan's work, and in celebrating a female artist who might otherwise have been disregarded and forgotten.

Painted Dreams: The Art Of Evelyn De Morgan shows at Wolverhampton Art Gallery from Saturday 19 October until Sunday 9 March



AIMING HIGH

New drone light show Evolution is set to wow audiences at Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium this month...



Get 15% off tickets to Evolution at Edgbaston Stadium with the code EVOLUTION15



Drone light show pioneers Celestial have reached dizzying heights since forming in 2020. Their productions use hundreds of illuminated drones to create extraordinary animations that light up the night sky and provide a brand-new form of family entertainment. Celestial have now partnered with Bristol-based experience provider Yuup to produce Evolution, an epic light show that recreates monumental moments in history - from the origins of life on Earth, through to the modern-day moon landings. What's On caught up with Celestial's founder and chief executive officer, John Hopkins, to find out more...

Can you tell us about Celestial, and how it all started?

Celestial began about four years ago. My background is as a film director, and I spotted a drone display that Intel had done at the Korean Winter Olympics in 2018 - I saw a snowboarder in 3D in the sky over the mountains. It blew my mind, and it made me realise that perhaps the sky was the next big screen, through which we could use these drones to tell stories on an epic scale.

I just had this feeling that I had the skill set to be able to harness this new medium. It turned out I did!

My partner at the time, who I set Celestial up with, was a drone engineer, so we had that side of the business covered, and I was leading the charge with the creative vision.

How many drone shows has Celestial created to date?

Despite the process of creating and animating a drone show still requiring a fair amount of time, the market is still growing and we're producing more and more each year. This year to date, we've delivered over 18 shows globally and with the addition of our new ticketed drone shows - a brand-new concept - a single show goes on tour and plays in multiple venues for multiple nights.

When making a drone show, is the creative process always the same?

It always starts with a conversation. Historically, if we were doing a show for a brand, we'd usually take a brief from the client.

Now we're doing ticketed drone shows, it's more of a collaboration with Yuup to come up with a concept for a new show.

We get the project down on paper first, then go into the design phase, where we animate the show with the soundtrack. Then it's the final phase, where we deploy the show.

Has it been hard to adjust to creating narratives for a long-form show?

It's more satisfying. We're telling longer stories. Our shows are longer than traditional drone shows, which tend to be around eight minutes and are sort of seen as a firework-replacement gimmick. We're choosing to use

this new medium to tell longer stories.

Evolution is roughly half an hour long, which is much more immersive and involved. You can tell a much fuller story that emotionally carries audiences away with the narrative. What's exciting about the ticketed drone show paradigm is that we're now really playing to our creative strengths; getting to flex our storytelling muscles.

Are you able to do trial runs beforehand?

We're good at being able to judge a show on a computer and get a really good, solid understanding of what it's going to look and sound like. We test our productions as much as we possibly can using this method before we have to deploy them, but there's nothing like standing there in person and seeing what you've created go live.

In a single production, how many drones are in the sky?

In Evolution we've got about 650 drones, split into three different flights. Drones have a duration cap - they can only fly for a certain period of time, so in order to extend our shows, we've got several flights staggered. It feels like you're watching drones in the air for 30 minutes, but actually it's been three separate flights cleverly stitched together. In the cricket stadiums that we're currently flying in, they will be flying quite low down to the ground, keeping them enclosed within the stadium - I think the uppermost part of the show can be 100 metres.

How do you troubleshoot problems?

Putting on drone shows isn't easy. It's very complicated, and it's taken four years for us to fine-tune our processes, which are now way better than they've ever been. It's night and day from when we first started doing this.

We tend to hire people who are brilliant problem-solvers. What we do is unprecedented, so we are a self-solving team. Safety is our number-one mantra. We've never had any safety issues in any of our shows. I think we've only had one or two shows within four years where we've had any technical problems at all - so we're pretty good!

Let's talk about Evolution. Is it your most ambitious project to date?

Absolutely! And I would argue that it's the best show we've created. We've had so many thousands of people buying tickets to come and see it, and such great, positive reviews. Absolutely it's the most ambitious.

What sparked the idea to use evolution as the subject matter?

The concept of Evolution was something that Celestial have been toying with for a while. The way in which our drones transform and morph from one object to the next felt very apt for the concept of evolution, which is a constant morphing of objects. We really like the scale of the story. It felt like the right tale to tell as our opening show.

Do you personally have a favourite moment in Evolution?

I really like the cave-painting sequence that we created in the third act of the show. It was one of the hardest to get right with the animation design. I think now that I look at it, it brings me more pleasure.

What are your hopes for Celestial in the future?

The ethos of Celestial - that we are an entertainment company who use drones to tell stories - is very important. We're not just a drone-show company that puts a logo in the sky. We want to take this new genre of drone art in a completely different direction. We feel like we're only scraping the surface of what's possible. Ultimately, all of the stories we want to tell carry a meaningful purpose that we build the show around. With this beautiful, epic, and very emotionally powerful new art form, we want not just to entertain crowds but inspire people to live greener, healthier, more connected lives.

.....

Celestial presents Evolution at Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium on Saturday 26 October.
Visit yuup.co/evolution for tickets

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GHOST TRAINS

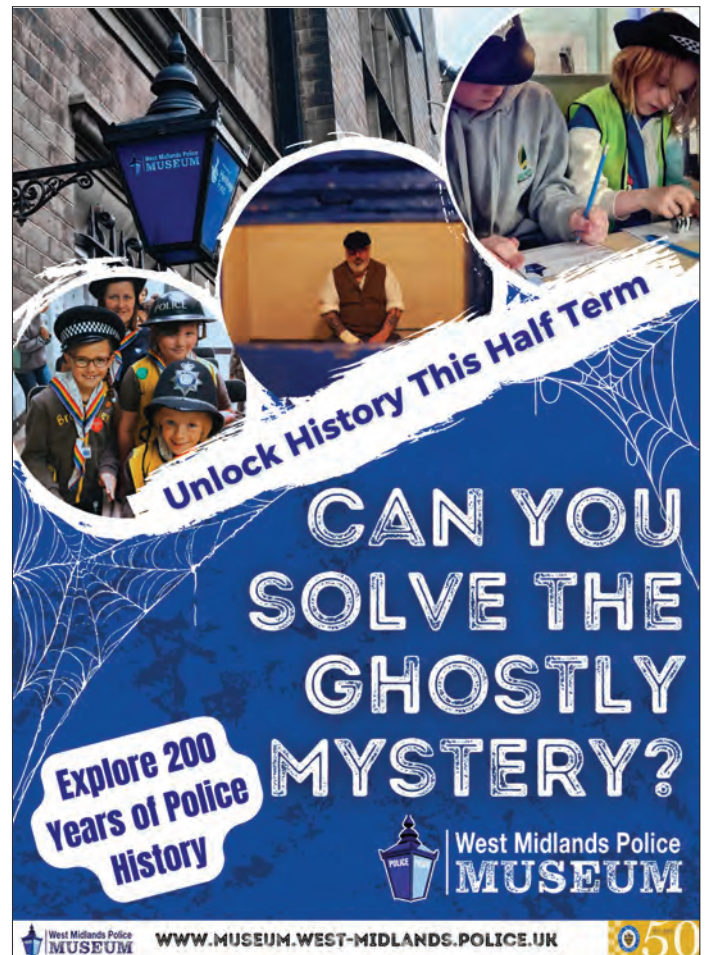
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Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, Hammersmith, London W6 7BT. Company number 02708675.

Events previews from around the region



Severn Valley Railway Ghost & Scream Trains

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster, Sat 26, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 October

Are you brave enough to ride the Ghost Train at Severn Valley Railway this Halloween? Kickstart your fright night with tricks and treats for the whole family to enjoy at Kidderminster Station; then take your reserved seats and settle back to experience a ride out into the darkness. Scary characters will join you on board, sneaking along the corridors of the train as it passes through haunted stations to Arley.

The Ghost Train experience lasts for approximately 75 minutes and comes complete with a free goodie bag for every child. Severn Valley Railway is also hosting a similar but 'more fearsome' event for older guests. The Scream Train is aimed at visitors aged 18-plus and features 'petrifying ghouls' who will be looking to scare the life out of commuters as they make their way to Arley.

Pumpkinfest

Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, Shropshire, Fri 11 - Sun 13, Fri 18 - Sun 20, Fri 25 October - Sun 3 November

Park Hall Country Experience is having a spooky takeover this month with the return of Pumpkinfest. As well as providing youngsters with free pumpkins to carve in the farm's huge pumpkin shed, the venue is also hosting numerous Halloween attractions (Pumpkin Alley, The Little Scare House and a spooky trail) and activities (Pass The Pumpkin and Mummy Wrap). Also included in the price of a ticket are all the usual farm attractions, including barrel train and tractor rides, the planet room and science area.



Car Design: Tech Takes the Wheel

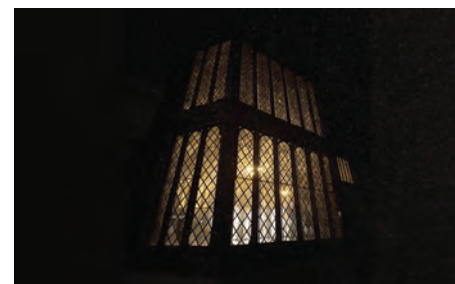
British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Sat 26 October - Sun 3 November

The British Motor Museum's family-friendly selection of half-term activities are inspired by the evolution of car design. From the classic sketchbook to 3D digital imagery, visitors can learn how technology has made possible some of history's finest designs. Activities include Dottie & Dougie's Tracing Tech Family Tours and an 'electrifying' Graphite Lights craft activity. Families visiting the venue from Tuesday 29 October to Friday 1 November can join the scientists in the lab for a series of mind-blowing experiments. A spooky Black Cat Trail also features.

After-Dark Tours

The Commandery, Worcester, Tues 15, Thurs 17, Tues 22, Thurs 24, Tues 29 and Thurs 31 October

The Commandery is one of Worcester's oldest buildings and a place that harbours lots of ghostly secrets for visitors to uncover. Suitable for people aged 14-plus, the venue's after-dark tours include tales of strange sightings and mysterious rumours, with your guide for the evening giving the history of the building a hair-raising Halloween twist.



Canal-O-Ween

Dudley Canal & Caverns, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 October

Climb aboard a Canal-O-Ween boat this Halloween and embark on a mystical journey that delves into the heart of Dudley's ancient limestone mines and caverns. Krazy Kris and his Groovy UV gang will be back to provide a glow-in-the-dark extravaganza for the whole family to enjoy. The trip lasts approximately one hour and is designed to be a delightful Halloween treat rather than a fright fest - a fact which ensures that guests of all ages can join in the fun.

Halloween Trail

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 26 October - Sun 3 November

Families visiting Compton Verney this October half term can enjoy a spooky Halloween trail. Inspired by Chila Kumari Singh Burman and Louise Bourgeois' on-site Spider sculpture (see picture below), visitors will take a journey through the grounds and uncover neon spider pumpkins concealed in hidden areas.



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Events previews from around the region



The Creative Craft Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 31 October - Sun 3 November

The Creative Craft Show is the UK's biggest mixed craft exhibition, featuring everything from stamps to threads and patterns to embroidery kits.

In addition to shopping, workshops and offering plenty of inspiration both for new and established crafters, the event also includes demonstrators and influencers sharing new ideas, and stallholders poised

and prepared to provide the very latest tools, allowing visitors to fully refresh their craft cabinet.

A ticket to the event also buys access to sister shows Sewing For Pleasure (Winter Edition, see below), Simply Christmas (see below), Cake International (Friday to Sunday only) and Bake International (Friday to Sunday only).

Sewing For Pleasure Winter Edition

NEC, Birmingham,
Thurs 31 October - Sun 3 November

If you have a passion for sewing, knitting, patchwork or stitching, then Sewing For Pleasure is the show for you.

Now boasting a brand-new Winter Edition, the event features must-have fabrics, yarns, patterns and threads, as well as plenty of inspiring ideas from a host of sewing celebrities.

Attractions include Make & Take sessions - mini workshops (hosted on-stand by stallholders) which offer visitors the chance to try out a new material or tool before making a purchase.



Simply Christmas

NEC, Birmingham,
Thurs 31 October - Sun 3 November

Simply Christmas is a 'crafty' show offering a diverse range of gifts to help visitors with all their present-buying conundrums. Over 150 stall holders will be showcasing exclusive ranges of bespoke and unusual gifts, with glassware, jewellery, art, candles, ceramics and clothing (plus plenty more) all featuring.

Visitors can get stuck into the festivities with a themed workshop, soak up the atmosphere with Christmas food, drink and live music, and even say hello to Santa Claus himself as he spreads some early yuletide cheer.

Grand Designs Live

NEC, Birmingham, Wed 2 - Sun 6 October

It's the 25th anniversary of Channel Four's Grand Designs television series - and this accompanying live version of the show is marking the occasion in style.

The UK's leading home design & innovation exhibition, the five-day event comes complete with an abundance of 'expert advice and endless inspiration'.

Highlights include live talks, eco innovations with Kevin's Green Heroes, The Grand House showhome and an 'outdoor living' showcase.



Historic Rally Festival

Apley Estate and Willey Estate, Shropshire,
Sat 5 & Sun 6 October

Returning for 2024, the Historic Rally Festival features stages at two new venues: Apley Estate and Willey Estate.

The new stages will take place on a mixture of surfaces, including tarmac, gravel and hard compact dirt roads.

Apley Estate will host the start of this year's dusk stages and a meet & greet on the Saturday afternoon, providing enthusiasts with a not-to-be-missed opportunity to get up close to the cars and chat with the drivers.





A Black Country Touring Theatre Production



Venues Across the Black Country
16 - 26 October 2024



bct.touring



bct_touring

FROM DANCE FLOORS TO EARTHQUAKES

Black Country Touring returns with a show to go wild about.

A new show touring the Black Country this autumn is asking audiences this question: what does the idea of 'wild' mean to you?

To create the work, innovative theatre company Black Country Touring posed the question to people from all walks of life across the Black Country. And, says writer Rochi Rampal, they received a myriad of responses.

"When the artistic directors, Stephen Johnstone and Frances Land, talked to me about the concept of what this show could be, I thought, what a big question: What is wild?

"It kind of instantly conjures up a million things in my head. So I was excited at the challenge of capturing what wild could mean to all of our audiences, but also the prospect of how that could be really meaningful for everyone who comes to see the show - especially if everyone's understanding of what wild means is so diverse."

And that proved to be the case. The team spoke to people in a host of different groups and settings, from community gardens to the police force, and from mountain rescue teams to city dwellers who experience their concept of wild on the streets or in the local clubs.

"It's important to us as an organisation that the diversity of experience, and lives and journeys of people within the Black Country, are absolutely reflected in the shows we make," says Rochi. "So we talk to as many people as we can possibly fit into any research phase. We treat it a bit like an oral-history-collection project, so we did interviews with people from all reaches of life within the Black Country."

Rochi, who has worked with Black Country Touring on shows for more than a decade, says the responses were wide-reaching.

"People talked about going on holidays, to the mountains, to the beach. We've talked to so many people about their experience of the sea. People have talked about how important the sea is in terms of not just when you go on holiday but the need to escape and to face yourself at the shore's edge. People have talked about standing at the sea in raging storms and jumping into the sea to swim in that.

"And wild doesn't have to mean standing on top of a mountain. Wild, for many, particularly in a landlocked area, means letting loose on a dancefloor, the adrenaline

of being chased on city streets, or earthquakes in Dudley."

The challenge for Rochi and the team was then to condense all of those stories into a 75-minute show.

"My involvement as writer in the room of actors and musicians and directors is to offer somewhere where everybody's ideas can come together and be shaped into a script," she says. "Black Country Touring is entirely collaborative, so I'm not the writer of the play; I'm just a writer in the room, and we are all the creators. That's my favourite way of working; it speaks to the interests of the company and how important it is to reflect as many voices as possible.

"Everybody has got a story to tell, so there are lots of stories that people have wanted to share with us - but within that, there are so many commonalities. That's the magic of working in this way - that within all of our different experiences as humans, there is so much that connects us and holds us together.

"We've looked at ways to allow these stories to speak to each other. So, for instance, you might find that one person's experience of getting stuck on a mountain chimes with another person's experience of being lost in city streets at night."

Those responses have been based in different people's lives and experiences.

"When we spoke to our mountain-rescue volunteer, his frame of reference was very much his experience of living and working near the mountains. But then, when we spoke to someone from one of the community gardens in Smethwick, his frame of reference was racist behaviour in the 1980s. Whilst we were sat in an allotment community garden, he didn't talk about wild meadows, he talked about the feeling of being chased through city streets at night and how that made him feel wild."

The show, which tours to libraries, arts centres and community spaces this month, combines the stories with recorded and sung soundscapes.

"We're having digitally produced soundscapes, and we also have a community choir, which is led by an amazing singer-songwriter: Katy Rose Bennett. The idea is that the choir will also provide the soundscape, so there will be live sound textures as well as songs surrounding the audience.

"The show will be in traverse, so that the

audience will be either side of the action and the choir will be around that. That is to allow the audience to be as transported as possible into the worlds of the show. We can't take the audience to the sea, but we hope to create a sense of being in a raging storm, or lying down and looking up at the stars at night."

Rochi hopes Wild will light a spark in audience members and inspire them to consider their own ideas and responses.

"The show features such a wide range of stories, and we're interested in inviting people to think about where they sit amongst those experiences. What does wild mean to us, and what is it that we need from wild behaviour or the wild world?

"The story within the show is, what are the wider things that connect us? So the stars which go back and back and back further than we can imagine. The sea that reaches beyond us. Nature finds a way, nature carries on - and experiencing that will help the audience feel connected to other people with different stories."

The company hope to encourage people from all backgrounds to come and experience Wild.

"This show is for you if the word wild says something to you and you wonder what it means to you. When we did our research, there wasn't a single person who didn't have an answer to that question, and that's what's so exciting about it. Everybody brought their own experience to that word because it does mean something to everybody. Whether we want more wild in our lives and feel we're not getting it, or if we live a wholly wild existence, it is completely personal.

"The show will be celebratory about human nature, and how much we rely on our world to keep us going; how we, as humans, confront the wild; how we battle with it; how we live alongside it; how we need it. There are no answers, but maybe when the audience leave our show, they might be thinking about that in a different way - what is wild to them?"

.....

Wild shows at venues across the Black Country from Wednesday 16 to Saturday 26 October. The recommended age for audience members is 10-plus. Entrance is 'pay what you can', with a suggested price of £6 per person. For further information visit bctouring.org.uk/wild



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Birmingham science museum

Bewitching Biology

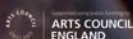
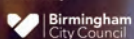
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- Gross Encounters Science Show
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**SPOOKY
SCIENCE
TRICK OR
TREAT**



Birmingham
Museums

*Your week-
by-week
listings guide*
October 2024

the list



ART at Belgrade Theatre, Coventry - Tues 15 - Sat 19 October

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

What's On

Tues 1 - Sun 6 October



Alyssa Kyria - Royal Spa Centre,
Leamington Spa

Thurs 3 October

Mon 7 - Sun 13 October



Rocky Horror Show -
Malvern Theatres

Mon 7 - Sat 12 October

Mon 14 - Sun 20 October



Nutcracker -
The Albany Theatre, Coventry

Fri 18 October

Mon 21 - Thurs 31 October



Jeffery Straker - Temperance,
Leamington Spa

Tues 29 October

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

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

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR Exhibition of powerful photographs showcasing animal behaviour, spectacular species and the fragility of our planet, Thurs 24 Oct - Sun 20 Apr

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

THE REFLECTED SELF A 'sumptuous' exhibition diving into the fascinating history of portrait miniatures, until Sun 23 Feb

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 March 2026

Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

COVENTRY ARTSPACE STUDIO HOLDERS EXHIBITION Showcase of works reflecting a wide breadth of visual art disciplines, Sat 5 - Tues 22 Oct

MICROWORLD COVENTRY Immersive and interactive artwork for all ages, filled with digital creatures, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 23 Feb

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

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 tributes to The Specials' Terry Hall and Roddy 'Radiation' Byers.

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

25 YEARS | 25 OBJECTS | 25 ARTISTS Celebrating 25 years of Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum at the

Royal Pump Rooms. Twenty-five artists, including recent winners of the Open 2024, have been invited to display and sell artworks that will form part of a pop-up shop within the exhibition space, Fri 4 Oct - Sun 12 Jan

Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

CUSP Exhibition of Cyanotype artworks by Anne Guest, showcasing the beauty and fragility of nature 'at a time when we appear to be on the cusp of losing so much', until Sat 5 Oct

Rugby Art Gallery

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

THE REVELATION COLLECTION Exhibition of Islamic antiques and stories, until Sat 5 Oct

SEELIFE VISTAS: DON'T JUST LOOK... Photography exhibition by Katherine Nowill featuring stunning seascapes and natural landscapes which urge viewers to truly see and appreciate their natural surroundings, until Sat 12 Oct

GINA GLOVER: A WORLD OF FIRE AND ICE Exhibition which uses powerful images 'to explore our relationship with energy and the natural world', Sat until Sat 9 Nov

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

CONNECTIONS Featuring artworks - selected by community groups in 2023 and '24 - from Worcester's own collection, the exhibition explores people's different responses to art and the emotions and perspectives it can evoke, until Sun 20 Oct

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

Elsewhere:

SMALL PEOPLE, BIG WORLD Local artist Steve Roach presents a macro photography exhibition centred around models of people and animals at 1/76 scale in locations across the UK. Places used for backdrops include Worcester city, the Malvern Hills, Dartmoor, Brecon and Offa's Dyke Path, until Sat 5 Oct, The Hive, Worcester

HIDDEN VOICES Exhibition exploring the stories of 'the women who made Shakespeare', using objects from the museum's collection, until Sun 3 Nov, Shakespeare's New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon



Billie Marten - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Gigs

JACK FRANCIS Tues 1 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE LAST DINNER PARTY + LUCIA & THE BEST BOYS + KAETO Tues 1 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

POND Tues 1 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

SLØTFACE Tues 1 Oct, The Victoria, B'ham

PORCHES Tues 1 Oct, Mama Roux's, B'ham

HANNAH SCOTT Tues 1 Oct, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

THE WEDDING PRESENT Tues 1 Oct, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

HANNAH ALDRIDGE BAND + KATIE BATES Tues 1 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

CRYSTAL TIDES Wed 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BABYBIRD Wed 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

DAN WHITLAM Wed 2 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE STRUTS & BARNS COURTNEY + JAMES BRUNER Wed 2 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SMALL CHANGES + JOE BAYLISS Wed 2 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

TRISH CLOWES & ROSS STANLEY - SARA COLMAN & REBECCA NASH Wed 2 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

DAN WHITEHOUSE AND GUSTAF LJUNGGRÉN Wed

2 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

WHEN RIVERS MEET Wed 2 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

THE THING + IDLE NOISE + MVNICH Wed 2 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

BILLIE MARTEN Wed 2 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

TARREN Wed 2 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

MAKING TRACKS Wed 2 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? - TINA TURNER TRIBUTE Wed 2 Oct, Malvern Theatres

TERRY REID WITH CHRIS HILLMAN Thurs 3 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE HOWLERS Thurs 3 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE LIBERTINES Thurs 3 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JESSE COOK Thurs 3 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

OYSTERBAND & JUNE TABOR Thurs 3 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SUTHERING Thurs 3 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR Thurs 3 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

THE WEST END JERSEYS Thurs 3 Oct, Albany Theatre, Coventry

CARA DILLON Thurs 3 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

WILD CARD Thurs 3 Oct, Marrs Bar, Worcester

BARB JUNGR SINGS DYLAN AND COHEN Thurs 3 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

THE ANN DUGGAN BAND Thurs 3 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

TOTALLY TINA Thurs 3 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

A BAND CALLED MALICE Fri 4 Oct, The Night Owl, Birmingham

WUNDERHORSE + HIGH SCHOOL Fri 4 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

KABAKA PYRAMID + THE BEBBLE ROCKERS Fri 4 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

PEARL JAM UK Fri 4 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

TOM VEK Fri 4 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

REVIVECHIZL + UNKO + SKBABY Fri 4 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth, B'ham

SICK JOY Fri 4 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

ASHLEY ALLEN & FRIENDS Fri 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

SAMANTHA FISH Fri 4 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SALT PEANUTS Fri 4 Oct, Tower Of Song, B'ham

REBECCA DOWNES Fri 4 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

BEDROCK BULLETS Fri 4 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

ANDRÁS DROPPA Fri 4 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

ALBERT BOUCHARD Fri 4

Oct, Marrs Bar, Worcester

THE TOTAL STONE ROSES Fri 4 Oct, Drummonds, Worcester

THE ROZZERS - A TRIBUTE TO STING & THE POLICE Fri 4 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

SHAPE OF YOU Fri 4 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS Fri 4 Oct, Malvern Theatres

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 4 Oct, 45Live, Kidderminster

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES Fri 4 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

HOLLOWKIN + THESE FOUNDATIONS + WE ARE SOVEREIGN + BURIED BY MY HEARTACHE + IMPERIAL AVENUE Sat 5 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE Sat 5 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TOM MEIGHAN Sat 5 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

SOLAR EYES + SMALL WORLD THEORY + SANCHE PANZA Sat 5 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

IN FLAMES + ARCH ENEMY + SOILWORK Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE DOORS ALIVE Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

ST OCTOBER + SECREUM + THE BLACK HOUNDS + THRASHEAD Sat 5 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

MAN THE LIFEBOATS Sat 5 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

EMILIO SANTORO AS ELVIS Sat 5 Oct, Stratford Playhouse

BIG COUNTRY + MIKE PETERS Sat 5 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

THINK-182 Sat 5 Oct,

Arches Venue, Coventry

MELROSE QUARTET Sat 5 Oct, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS Sat 5 Oct, Number 8, Pershore

DARK HORSES Sat 5 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

HELLBENT FOREVER + BORN TO BE BAD Sat 5 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

TANGO CALOR Sat 5 Oct, The Market Theatre, Ledbury

KILLER RHAPSODY - QUEEN TRIBUTE Sat 5 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

THE BIG COUNTRY MUSIC SHOW Sat 5 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

BLIND LEMONS Sat 5 Oct, 45Live, Kidderminster

OH WHAT A NIGHT - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI Sat 5 Oct, Civic, Stourport

SQUEEZE Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KESSONCODA Sun 6 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KERR MERCER Sun 6 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

GEOFF TATE + KIM JENNETT Sun 6 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

YEAT Sun 6 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SKA TRAIN Sun 6 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

HOWLIN RIC AND THE ROCKETEERS Sun 6 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

BARREL HOUSE JUKES Sun 6 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

HUEY MORGAN Sun 6 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Classical Music

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL

Programme includes works by Parry, S Wesley, Stanford & Widor, Thurs 3 Oct, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

ARMONICO CONSORT: NAKED BYRD 2 Featuring Christopher Monks (director). Programme includes works by Byrd, Allegri, Sheppard & more..., Thurs 3 Oct, Malvern Theatres

HARRY SULLIVAN ORGAN RECITAL Fri 4 Oct, St Mary's Church, Warwick

LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS Featuring St Mary's Choirs. Programme includes works by Parry, Handel, Vaughan Williams & more..., Sat 5 Oct, St Mary's Church, Warwick

DANIEL MOULT ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Stanford, Schumann, Bach & more..., Sat 5 Oct, Worcester Cathedral

ECHO RISING STARS Featuring Benjamin Kruihof (cello) & Marco Sanna (piano). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Boulanger, Beamish & Britten, Sun 6 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: AN ENGLISH JOURNEY Featuring Ella Harrison (cello) & Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme includes works by Holst, Elgar, Coates & Walton, Sun 6 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

SWAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA CONCERT Featuring Rebecca Miller (conductor). Programme includes works by Sheppard, Holst, J Williams & Coleridge-Taylor, Sun 6 Oct, Warwick Hall

Comedy

MAUREEN YOUNGER, SUSIE MCCABE, BARBARA NICE, MAPLE & KATE SHARP Tues 1 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COUNT BINFACE Wed 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RED RICHARDSON Wed 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BEN ELTON Wed 2 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CLINTON BAPTIST Wed 2 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

MARK WATSON Wed 2 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MARJOLEIN ROBERTSON & CRAIG HILL Thurs 3 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

ALYSSA KYRIA Thurs 3 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa



BEN ELTON Thurs 3 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RICHARD BLACKWOOD & TOMMY SANDHU Fri 4 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Fri 4 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

SUSAN MURRAY, STEVE DAY & JASON NEALE Fri 4 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

FERN BRADY Fri 4 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DAN TIERNAN, GRAEME MATHEWS, JULES O'BRIAN & CARL JONES Fri 4 Oct, Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton

TOM DEACON, RYAN CULLEN, MARJOLEIN ROBERTSON & CRAIG HILL Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL SMITH Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham



DALISO CHAPONDA Sat 5 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

JAY SODAGAR, FARHAN SOLO, NOREEN KHAN & PRINCE ABDI Sat 5 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

COMEDY CLUB 4 KIDS Sat 5 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

NISH KUMAR Sat 5 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

MITCH BENN Sat 5 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

AL MURRAY Sat 5 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MILTON JONES Sun 6 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ROBBIE GEE, EDDIE NESTOR, JACKIE FABULOUS, ERIN JACKSON & MARLON DAVIS Sun 6 Oct, The

Glee Club, Birmingham

SCHALK BEZUIDENHOUT Sun 6 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL FREE HALF-DAYER: PART 1 Sun 6 Oct, Cherry Reds Cafe Bar & The Victoria, Birmingham

CRASH TEST COMEDY Sun 6 Oct, The Cuban Embassy, B'ham

ANU VAIDYANATHAN Sun 6 Oct, Old Joint Stock, Birmingham

Theatre

PLAY ON! A new jazz musical based on Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, presented as part of Talawa Theatre Company's Black Joy season, until Sat 5 Oct, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry



LONDON ASSURANCE Amateur version of Dion Boucicault's comedy of mistaken identities and romantic entanglements, Mon 30 Sept - Sat 5 Oct, Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre, Kenilworth

PALI & JAY'S ULTIMATE ASIAN WEDDING DJ ROADSHOW Rifco Theatre present an immersive DJ bromance in which an uncle & nephew duo are determined to climb one more place in the Google search as Southall's 19th best DJs, Tues 1 - Wed 2 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MACBETH Shakespeare's famous tragedy, Tues 1 - Wed 2 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST QMTS present an amateur version of the Disney classic, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

1984 Keith Allen stars in a new version of George Orwell's classic tale, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, Malvern Theatres

SHON DALE-JONES: THE DUKE A playful show that gently challenges our priorities in a world full of crisis, Wed 2 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

SHOCK HORROR: A GHOST STORY A chilling journey into a haunted past, combining live performance, big-screen action and shocking revelations, Wed 2 - Thurs 3 Oct, Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury



Squeeze - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Witley Court & Gardens

Illuminated

Sat 26 - Thu 31 October, excluding Mon

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BULLRING TECHNO MAKEOUT JAMZ

Nathan Queeley-Dennis' debut play is described as a love letter to Birmingham, exploring masculinity through Beyonce lyrics, techno raves and the deeply intimate relationship between a man and his barber, Wed 2 - Sat 5 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham

DEATH DO US PART An original murder-mystery performed by the Phoenix Players, Wed 2 - Sat 5 Oct, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

BECOMING NANCY A new musical about first love and finding your voice. Based on Terry Ronald's best-selling novel, Wed 2 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

HOWERD'S END Mark Farrelly (Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope) stars alongside Simon Cartwright in a two-hander which explores the clandestine relationship between one of Britain's best-loved comedians, Frankie Howerd, and his long-term partner, Dennis Heymer, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SHREK THE MUSICAL Five Star Theatre present an amateur version of the Dreamworks classic, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, The Benn Hall, Rugby

WONDER BOY Ross Willis' heart-warming and inspiring story about the power of communication, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



THE NEW REAL David Edgar's epic, panoramic play about how the political fault-line was redrawn, Thurs 3 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

NIGHT OF THE VAMPIRES Don't Go Into The Cellar present a theatrical anthology of classic tales, Fri 4 Oct, The Civic, Stourport

SHIT FACED SHAKESPEARE: MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Acclaimed production combining an entirely serious adaptation of Shakespeare's classic with an inebriated cast member, Sat 5 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry



Dance

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: LUNA

Powerful and moving new ballet in which five female choreographers from around the region tell stories tackling universal themes, taking their inspiration from the pioneering women of Birmingham, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

THE RITUAL A horror comedy show featuring two vampires intent on terrifying audiences in the most extravagant and charming way... Wed 2 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

JOHN HEGLEY: AN AMERICAN IN LUTON

John returns with a story of family, fantasy, love, loss - and the long-unseen son's stamp album... Fri 4 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

LIFE ON OUR PLANET: LIVE IN CONCERT WITH THE CBSO

Immersive concert experience in which Morgan Freeman narrates the story of life's epic battle to conquer and survive on planet Earth. The live soundtrack is performed by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Fri 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS: RESPECT

Multi-award-winning show packed with hit songs, Fri 4 Oct, Malvern Theatres

JENNY 'THE VIXEN' RYAN: OUT OF THE BOX

Join The Chase's 'dream-crushing brainbox' for a journey through her life and times via some of her favourite tunes, sung live, Sat 5 Oct, Regal, Tenbury Wells

SU POLLARD: STILL FULLY CHARGED

One-woman show in which the Hi-De-Hi star recounts stories from her 50 years in showbiz, Sat 5 Oct, Malvern Theatres

BC:AD (BEFORE CHILDREN, AFTER DIAPERS)

A mad mommy's take on how the definitions of words change before and during motherhood, Sun 6 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

JON SOPEL: IN CONVERSATION The renowned British journalist, bestselling author, political insider and presenter of the chart-topping podcast The News Agents explores post-Brexit Britain and what it means to be British, Fri 4 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



Life On Our Planet: Live In Concert With The CBSO - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Events

GANDEYS HOLLYWOOD SPECTACULAR

Featuring circus magic and Hollywood glamour, until Sun 6 Oct, Pye Hayes Park, Erdington

BIRMINGHAM ANIME FILM FESTIVAL

The festival returns with another selection of visually striking and often mind-bending anime films, until Sun 6 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

FAMILY MUSEUM DETECTIVES TRAIL

Eight items on display have been chosen for you to find - but can you spot them all? until Fri 25 Oct, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

AUTUMN MAKERS MARKET

Featuring an array of independent, local traders selling handcrafted and sustainably made items, Wed 2 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

GRAND DESIGNS LIVE

The grand home event, full of inspiration and expert advice, Wed 2 - Sun 6 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

THE BACK TO BACKS BY CANDLELIGHT

Enjoy a tour of the Birmingham Back to Backs in the atmospheric glow of candlelight, Thurs 3 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

AUTUMN DIESEL BASH

A celebration of heritage diesels, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

PILLOWS AND PILOTS

Youth groups aged seven to 15 are invited to set up base-camp at the museum and sleep amongst the aircraft, tanks and missiles, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

PUMPKIN PATCH

Stroll through the pumpkin patch, explore the maize maze and take a pumpkin home, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW

A chance to pick the brains of hundreds of top wedding suppliers, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

THE MALVERN CARAVAN & MOTORHOME SHOW

Explore a diverse range of new & used motorhomes, campervans and caravans, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

CRAFT AND FLEA

A twist on the traditional craft market and featuring a huge selection of products, Sat 5 Oct, Coventry Cathedral



The National Wedding Show - NEC, Birmingham

exploring ideas together

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Gigs

STEVE HACKETT Mon 7 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SUSAN SANTOS Mon 7 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

JIM JONES ALL STARS Tues 8 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SEA GIRLS + DAYDREAMERS Tues 8 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CHINA BEARS Wed 9 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

BAR STOOL PREACHERS Wed 9 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE VAN MORRISON ALUMNI BAND Wed 9 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

CHRIS WHILE AND JULIE MATTHEWS Wed 9 Oct, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

GREG COULSON + JONATHAN EARP TRIO + THE SWAPS Wed 9 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

ADAM ROSS + TARRAGON Wed 9 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

A KIND OF MAGIC: MUSIC CENTRE FREE CONCERT Wed 9 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KEROSENE Wed 9 Oct, Nuneaton Blues Club

10CC Wed 9 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE IRREPRESSIBLES Thurs 10 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SHAE UNIVERSE Thurs 10 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ELEINE Thurs 10 Oct, The Asylum, B'ham

PLASTICINE Thurs 10 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Thurs 10 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

BOB FOX Thurs 10 Oct, Bromsgrove Folk Club

CRISTINA RUSSO & NEOSOL COMBO Thurs 10 Oct, Marrs Bar, Worcester

CANDACRAIG Thurs 10 Oct, 45Live, Kidderminster

THE BOHEMIANS Thurs

10 Oct, Civic, Stourport

ONE NIGHT IN NASHVILLE Fri 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PUNK ROCK FACTORY Fri 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ASTON MERRYGOLD + JAMIE GREY + MAX RAE Fri 11 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PARTYNEXTDOOR Fri 11 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MIMI BARKS Fri 11 Oct, The Asylum, B'ham

KAINE + VICIOUS NATURE + MYSTIEK Fri 11 Oct, The Flapper, B'ham

RICK ASTLEY Fri 11 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

GOOD NEIGHBOURS Fri 11 Oct, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

SAM BROOKES Fri 11 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

SHAUN RYDER Fri 11 Oct, Stratford Playhouse

RISE Fri 11 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

THESE SMITHS Fri 11 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

MOTOWN'S GREATEST HITS - HOW SWEET IT IS Fri 11 Oct, Albany Theatre, Coventry

THE CROWNED ROGUES Fri 11 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

WISHBONE ASH Fri 11 Oct, The Benn Hall, Rugby

STEVIE MAC (STEVIE NICKS FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE) Fri 11 Oct, Marrs Bar, Worcester

THE RONNIE SCOTT'S STORY Fri 11 Oct, Malvern Theatres

STONE COLD HUSTLE + NESTER DONUTS + WILF SPIVEY + DUKE KEATS Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, The Night Owl, Birmingham

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE MOUSE OUTFIT Sat 12 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PARADISE CIRCUS Sat 12 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

CHANCE PEÑA Sat 12 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE REAL PEOPLE Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS + LITTLE DUKE Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE AMY WINEHOUSE EXPERIENCE + LAUREN HOPE Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAD DOG MCREA Sat 12 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

BLANKET + DELAIRE THE LIAR Sat 12 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

LEO SAYER Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

CURTIS ELLER'S AMERICAN CIRCUS Sat 12 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

KERRY ELLIS Sat 12 Oct, Stratford Playhouse

SHED SEVEN Sat 12 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

KORN AGAIN + SPOOKY KIDS Sat 12 Oct, Arches Venue, Coventry

FOREVER FREDDIE Sat 12 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Coventry

SWEET REVENGE Sat 12 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

THE SKALECTRICS Sat 12 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

DPLAY Sat 12 Oct, Marrs Bar, Worcester

WISHBONE ASH Sat 12 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

PARAMORE GB + FALLEN Sat 12 Oct, 45Live, Kidderminster

ALEX VOYSEY BLUES TRIO Sat 12 Oct, West Malvern Social Club

PRATEEK KUHAD Sun 13 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TWEN Sun 13 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

SKINNY LIVING Sun 13 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE UPSIDERS Sun 13 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

LIL' JIMMY REED Sun 13 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

CAST Sun 13 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

THE REBELS Sun 13 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT: 190 YEARS OF TOWN HALL Also featuring Anthony Peers (presenter). Mon 7 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

LVIV NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA OF UKRAINE Featuring Theodore Kuchar (conductor), Oksana Hretchyn (violin) & Jiří Bárta (cello). Programme includes works by Rossini, Sibelius, Brahms & Beethoven, Tues 8 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE GESUALDO SIX Featuring Owain Park (director), Guy James & Alasdair Austin (countertenors), Joseph Wicks & Josh Cooter (tenors) & Michael Craddock (baritone). Programme includes works by Brumel, Compère, Festa & more..., Tues 8 Oct, St Mary's Church, Warwick

CBSO RUSH HOUR CONCERT Featuring Thomas Søndergård (conductor). Programme comprises Brahms' Symphony No.2, Wed 9 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: BRAHMS 2 Featuring Thomas Søndergård (conductor) & Leila Josefowicz (violin). Programme includes works by Strauss, Adès & Brahms, Thurs 10 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LYNN ARNOLD & CHARLES MATTHEWS PIANO CONCERT Thurs 10 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: STORIES & DREAMS Featuring Rebecca Miller (conductor) & Anton Lesser (narrator). Programme includes works by Greig & Rimsky Korsakov, Thurs 10 Oct, Warwick Hall

DAVID HARDIE ORGAN RECITAL Fri 11 Oct, Birmingham Cathedral

HIDDEN GEMS OF THE FRENCH BAROQUE Featuring Alice Earl (violin) & Satoko Doi-Luck (harpsichord), Fri 11 Oct, St Mary's Church, Dymock, Gloucestershire

WARWICKSHIRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: AUTUMN CONCERT Featuring Ryan Bradshaw (piano) & Roger Coull (conductor). Programme includes works by Kodaly, Rachmaninov & Sibelius, Sat 12 Oct, Warwick Hall

VILLIERS QUARTET Featuring Katie Stillman & Tamaki Higashi (violins), Carmen Flores (viola) & Leo Melvin (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, Fung & Beethoven, Sun 13 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

EX CATHEDRA Featuring CBSO Wind & Brass & Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme includes works by Bruckner, Palestrina & Allegri, Sun 13 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: JUPITER'S FAIRGROUND Featuring Kenneth Woods (conductor) & Alison Lambert (clarinet). Programme includes works by Alberga, & Mozart, Sun 13 Oct, Pitville Pump Room, Cheltenham

Comedy

PETER KAY Mon 7 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

JO ENRIGHT Mon 7 Oct, ARTUM, Birmingham

MAISIE ADAM Tues 8 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

LLOYD GRIFFITH & LEE PEART Tues 8 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PIERRE NOVELLIE Wed 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SAM JAY Wed 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVE LONGLEY, FREDDY QUINNE, DINESH NATHAN & RAYMOND AND MR TIMPKINS Wed 9 Oct, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

RACHEL PARRIS Thurs 10 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE Thurs 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL BREAKING TALENT AWARD Thurs 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DARIUS DAVIES, FREDDY QUINNE, DINESH NATHAN, KAY NICHOLSON & SLIM Thurs 10 Oct, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

RHOD GILBERT Thurs 10 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

KANE BROWN Thurs 10 Oct, The Wulfrun at The Halls W'hampton

RICKY BALSHAW, SAMANTHA DAY, ADAM BLOOM & DOUG CARTER Thurs 10 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

ANDY PARSONS Thurs 10 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PIERRE NOVELLIE Thurs 10 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JASON BYRNE Fri 11 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SUKH OJLA, OLA LABIB, SHAZIA MIRZA & KYRAH GRAY Fri 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, ROSCO MCCLELLAND, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE & LOU TAYLOR Fri 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NOREEN KHAN, SHAZIA MIRZA, KYRAH GRAY & SUKH OJLA Fri 11 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

DOM JOLY Fri 11 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PETE FIRMAN Fri 11 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ED BYRNE Fri 11 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Birmingham COMEDY Festival^{4-13 Oct} 2024



SARAH MILLICAN

MILTON JONES

RACHEL PARRIS

JASON BYRNE

MAISIE ADAM

GEORGE LEWIS

LADIES OF LAUGHTER

LLOYD GRIFFITH

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MICHAEL AKADIRI Sat 12 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, ROSCO MCCLELLAND, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE & COMIC TC Sat 12 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RACHEL BAKER Sat 12 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

JASON STAMPE AND GUESTS Sat 12 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

MYRA DUBOIS Sat 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

AMY GLEDHILL Sat 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SANDY TOKSVIG Sat 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SARAH MILLICAN Sun 13 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CARL HUTCHINSON Sun 13 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

ANDY HAMILTON Sun 13 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Theatre

AUSTEN'S WOMEN: LADY SUSAN

Rebecca Vaughan's one-woman comedy show, based on Jane Austen's first full-length work, Mon 7 Oct, The Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

& JULIET Matt Cardle and Ranj Singh star in a touring production of the award-winning West End musical, which flips the script on the greatest love story ever told, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ROCKY HORROR SHOW Richard O'Brien's legendary rock'n'roll musical, featuring Stephen Webb as Frank-N-Furter, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Oct, Malvern Theatres

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE

Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play follows a singer & civil rights activist as she seeks redemption for the death of her father. Nicholle Cherrie stars, Tues 8 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

THE HISTORY BOYS The 20th-anniversary production of Alan Bennett's award-winning play, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Oct, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

FOUR MINUTES TWELVE SECONDS

James Fritz's topical drama sheds light on the sorts of insidious opportunities new technology offers - 'where nothing dies online, except reputation', Tues 8 - Sat 12 Oct, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

SISTER ACT Worcester Operatic Dramatic Society present an amateur version of the much-loved musical, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Alcester Musical Theatre Company present an amateur version of the kooky musical, Wed 9 - Sat 12 Oct, Palace

Theatre, Redditch

DISNEY'S ALADDIN Escape to a whole new world with this touring production of the hit Broadway and West End musical, Wed 9 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

WOYZECK A unique reimagining of Büchner's harrowing and fragmented tale, set against the backdrop of World War One, Thurs 10 Oct, The Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

CALLINGS Kabosh Theatre present the story of five queer people who find sanctuary and community via a phone befriending service set up in the 1970s to support LGBTQ+ individuals across the north of Ireland, Thurs 10 - Fri 11 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Amateur version of the kooky musical, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 Oct, The Dream Factory, Warwick

THE WIZARD OF OZ Amateur version presented by Phoenix Theatre Group, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 Oct, The Henrician, Evesham

OTHELLO John Douglas Thompson takes the lead in a new production of Shakespeare's tragedy. Juliet Rylance (McMafia, Perry Mason) stars as Desdemona, with Will Keen (Operation Mincemeat, Wolf Hall) as Iago, Fri 11 Oct - Sat 23 Nov, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

SCIENCE MUSEUM: THE LIVE STAGE

SHOW Brand-new stage show for younger audiences which aims to ignite curiosity and fuel imagination, Sat 12 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

RUBBISH SHAKESPEARE: ROMEO AND JULIET

Three award-winning fools tackle Shakespeare's epic love story with nothing but a box of bargain-bin wigs, a tatty floral dress, and a burst air mattress they found by the bins... Suitable for all ages, Sun 13 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Light Entertainment

MIND MILK A kaleidoscope of characters collide in a hallucinatory sketch comedy feast from The Awkward Silence, Wed 9 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE REST IS POLITICS; ELECTION TOUR 2024 Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart lift the lid on Westminster, Wed 9 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

MUSICALS - THE ULTIMATE LIVE BAND

SING-ALONG A 'wild, interactive, and seriously rockin' musical theatre experience', Wed 9 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

BIRMINGHAM IMPROV FESTIVAL 2024 Five days of workshops, shows and more, Wed 9 - Sun 13 Oct, Midlands

Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

JOHN NICHOL'S: THE UNKNOWN

WARRIOR A moving and revealing production exploring the concepts of sacrifice, camaraderie and remembrance, Thurs 10 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

OH! WHAT A NIGHT A musical journey through the career of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, Fri 11 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

JUMPROV The UK's first Black and Brown Improv group present a unique performance made up entirely on the spot from audience suggestions, Sat 12 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

KERRY ELLIS: QUEEN OF THE WEST END

See and hear the West End's biggest hits in an intimate setting, Sat 12 Oct, Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

A GOOD NEET AHT A humorous, reflective and celebratory show about 'the places we grow up in, and the traces they may or may not leave', Sat 12 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

DAD'S ARMY RADIO SHOW

Three episodes of Perry & Croft's classic BBC comedy are brought to life in a production that sees two actors play 25 characters, Sat 12 Oct, Malvern Theatres

Talks & Spoken Word

FRED DINENAGE: RONNIE, REGGIE AND ME

A definitive insight into the life of Britain's most notorious gangsters, Mon 7 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

SHAUN RYDER - HAPPY MONDAYS, AND FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS, AND

SUNDAYS Spoken-word show presented in support of Shaun's new book. Expect 'an entertaining evening of wild tales and improbable truths', Wed 9 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

BEHIND THE BOOKS - WORDS

Non-fiction writer, novelist & editor Meg Sanders and Bromsgrove crime-fiction author Linda Mather contemplate the journey from blank page to publication, Thurs 10 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

KENTON COOL - K2 THE SAVAGE

MOUNTAIN Join Britain's most successful Himalayan climber for a talk about the history of one of the world's most notorious mountains, Thurs 10 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

SIMON ARMITAGE Evening of readings from the Poet Laureate, Thurs 10 Oct, Malvern Theatres

SHAUN RYDER - HAPPY MONDAYS, AND FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS, AND

SUNDAYS Spoken-word show presented in support of Shaun's new book. Expect 'an entertaining evening of wild tales and improbable truths', Fri 11 Oct, Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

LEMN SISSAY: LET THE LIGHT POUR IN LIVE Spend an evening with a master of the spoken word, Sun 13 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Events

GAYDON GATHERING

A show welcoming all motoring enthusiasts and all sorts of vehicles, Tues 8 Oct, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

STRATFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL Guest speakers include Dame Harriet Walter, Graeme Hall, Sarah Rainsford and the Rev Richard Coles, Tues 8 - Sun 27 Oct, various locations, Stratford-upon-Avon

HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW 2024 The 75th edition of the popular equestrian event, Wed 9 - Sun 13 Oct, NEC & bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

DEER AT DUSK Join a member of the team for a guided walk after hours, Fri 11 Oct, Charlecote Park, Warwick

OKTOBERFEST Get your lederhosen ready as Oktoberfest visits Cheltenham for the first time, Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Cheltenham Racecourse

PUMPKIN PATCH Stroll through the pumpkin patch, explore the maize maze and take a pumpkin home, Fri 11 - Sun 13 Oct, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

CURIOUS ADVENTURES IN NATURE: SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

DISCOVERY WALK Find out how to use your smartphone camera to capture and manipulate images of nature, Fri 11 - Sat 19 Oct, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

80S ANTHEMS BY CANDLELIGHT Show serving up 'the biggest and best rock anthems, power ballads and pop classics of the decade', Sat 12 Oct, Worcester Cathedral

CRAFT FEST UK Stock up on all your craft essentials and be inspired by brand-new products, Sat 12 Oct, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

BIRMINGHAM VEGAN FESTIVAL Enjoy a series of stalls, talks, demos and much more, Sat 12 Oct, Edgbaston, Birmingham

ON THE HOME FRONT 1940S WEEKEND

Displays illustrating life in the Midlands during the Second World War, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

TRANQUIL ANGELS: MIND BODY SPIRIT SHOW Featuring stalls selling a wide and varied selection of crystals, jewellery, witchie wares, mystical figures and more... Sun 13 Oct, The Civic, Stourport

Gigs

BESS ATWELL Mon 14 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE GHOST INSIDE + GIDEON + BOUNDARIES Mon 14 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WALLOWS + MATILDA MANN Mon 14 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOE JACKSON Mon 14 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

WOODEN DOG + FOX PALMER + SI CONNELLY Tues 15 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HEALTH + GOST + ZETRA Tues 15 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PALE WAVES Tues 15 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE SKINTS Tues 15 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

THE MAGPIES Tues 15 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

MAN & THE ECHO Wed 16 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ISHMAEL ENSEMBLE Wed 16 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MALLORY KNOX Wed 16 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ALICE COOPER + PRIMAL SCREAM + THE MEFFS Wed 16 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

BESTIAL MOUTHS + ATTRITION + VALENTICH Wed 16 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

ABC - AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH MARTIN FRY Wed 16 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

COLLAPSED LUNG Thurs 17 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE COVASETTES Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NEW MODEL ARMY + THE AUTUMN SAINTS Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ASLAN Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CROWDED HOUSE Thurs 17 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

KATEY BROOKS Thurs 17 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

ROBIN AND BINA

WILLIAMSON Thurs 17 Oct, Stratford Playhouse

ABC - AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH MARTIN FRY Thurs 17 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

JIVE TALKIN' Thurs 17 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

SOFT PLAY Fri 18 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

BÔA Fri 18 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE ENEMY + THE SUBWAYS + THE HOLLOWAYS Fri 18 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

RAZORLIGHT Fri 18 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

CARDINAL BLACK Fri 18 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

CELLAR TWINS + SKYE Fri 18 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

KENNY THOMAS Fri 18 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE GREY + IRAN IRAN Fri 18 Oct, The Rainbow, Birmingham

MIKEY KENNEY Fri 18 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

TOBY WALKER + JAMIE SCOTT Fri 18 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

SCOUTING FOR GIRLS Fri 18 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

JOHN BRAMWELL Fri 18 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

INNER EMPIRE Fri 18 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW Fri 18 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

KICK THE CLOWN Fri 18 Oct, Marris Bar, Worcester

WRONG JOVI Fri 18 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

THE DIANA ROSS STORY Fri 18 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

GARY CLARK JR. Sat 19 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

INIKO Sat 19 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CASH... A TRIBUTE TO THE MAN IN BLACK Sat 19 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BECKY HILL Sat 19 Oct, Utilita Arena B'ham

TRANSMISSION: THE SOUND OF JOY DIVISION Sat 19 Oct, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

SOUTHERN BEAUTY FT. ALISON WHEELER Sat 19 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

SHOVEL DANCE COLLECTIVE Sat 19 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

TROPICANA 80S BAND Sat 19 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

ABC - AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH MARTIN FRY Sat 19 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MINISTRY OF SOUND IBIZA ANTHEMS WITH ELLIE SAX & FRIENDS Sat 19 Oct, Coventry Building Society Arena

JAYLER Sat 19 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

MORETALLICA Sat 19 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

BRITPOP UNITED Sat 19 Oct, Marris Bar, Worcester

THE CARPENTERS EXPERIENCE Sat 19 Oct, Coventry Building Society Arena

BILLY MITCHELL & BOB FOX Sat 19 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

WILD BOYS - BACK TO THE 80S Sat 19 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

HIGH LLAMAS Sun 20 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE JAZZ APPLES Sun 20 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

EMILIA QUINN + JOHN W DOYLE Sun 20 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SAINTÉ Sun 20 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Sun 20 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

IZZIE YARDLEY Sun 20 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

THE WAVE PICTURES Sun 20 Oct, Marris Bar, Worcester

Classical Music

CBSO: BRAHMS & SHOSTAKOVICH Featuring Sir Mark Elder (conductor) & Sir Stephen Hough (piano). Programme also includes works by Janáček, Wed 16 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MUSIC FOR STRINGS Featuring Orchestra da Camera. Programme includes works by Mozart, Elgar, Grieg & more..., Wed 16 Oct, Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Thurs 17 Oct, Worcester Cathedral

DORIC STRING QUARTET Featuring Alex Redington & Ying Xue (violins), Hélène Clément (viola) & John Myerscough (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven & Andrea Tarodi, Fri 18 Oct, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

STEPHEN HOUGH PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Chopin, R Schumann, Hough & Liszt, Sat 19 Oct, Malvern Theatres

CHELTEMHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: THE PLANETS Featuring David Curtis (conductor). Programme includes works by Copland, Dukas & Holst, Sat 19 Oct, Cheltenham Town Hall

EUROPEAN UNION CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Featuring Hans-Peter Hofmann (director & soloist). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Mozart, Holst & more..., Sun 20 Oct, Malvern Theatres

BAKER Thurs 17 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CARL HUTCHINSON Thurs 17 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RHOD GILBERT Thurs 17 - Fri 18 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PAUL F TAYLOR, KATE BARRON, JIMMY MCGHIE, CHARLIE BAKER & MARK ROW Fri 18 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

JONNY COLE Fri 18 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

AURIE STYLA Fri 18 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

LAURA SMYTH Fri 18 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NOREEN KHAN Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL F TAYLOR, KATE BARRON, JIMMY MCGHIE & CHARLIE BAKER Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MUHSIN YESILADA, MICHELLE DE SWARTE, NABIL ABDULRAHID & JOSH PUGH Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAT B, MICHELLE DE SWARTE, NABIL ABDULRAHID & LIMAH GERMAIN Sat 19 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

MILTON JONES Sat 19 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

HAYLEY ELLIS Sun 20 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SERENA TERRY Sun 20 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LUCY BEAUMONT Sun 20 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SCHALK BEZUIDENHOUT Sun 20 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Comedy

JACKIE FABULOUS Mon 14 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FINLAY CHRISTIE Tues 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DOM JOLY Tues 15 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

LAURA SMYTH & JOEY PAGE Wed 16 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARRETT MILLERICK Wed 16 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JIMEOIN Wed 16 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

TEZ ILYAS Wed 16 & Sat 19 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JIMMY MCGHIE & CHARLIE

Theatre

BURNING DOWN THE HORSE Award-winning comedy which takes audiences on a journey into the heart of the most iconic wooden animal in history - the Trojan horse, Mon 14 - Tues 15 Oct, Macready Theatre, Rugby

PRIDE & PREJUDICE* (*SORT OF) A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL Carpet Trade Musical Theatre Company present an amateur version of the Dolly Parton musical, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

DRACULA Blackeyed Theatre present a new version of Bram Stoker's chilling tale, Tues 15 - Wed 16 Oct, The Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

ART Seann Walsh, Chris Harper and Aden Gillett star in Yasmina Reza's smash-hit comedy, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Oct, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THE HISTORY BOYS The 20th-anniversary production of Alan Bennett's award-winning play, Tues

15 - Sat 19 Oct, Malvern Theatres

A STEADY RAIN 'Gripping' crime drama inspired by the vicious Dahmer murders, Wed 16 - Sat 19 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY Amateur version of Harold Pinter's modern classic, Wed 16 - Sat 19 Oct, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

ANIMAL FARM The Worcester Repertory Company present an amateur version of George Orwell's critical satire, Wed 16 - Sat 19 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

THE THINGS GOOD MEN DO Royal Birmingham Conservatoire actors present an amateur version of Dan Muires's dark comedy, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

REVEALED Daniel J Carver's heartwarming family drama, celebrating the courage it takes to connect 'with those we find hardest to love', Fri 18 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

TELL ME ON A SUNDAY Amateur version of Andrew Lloyd Webber & Don Black's classic musical, Sat 19 - Sat 26 Oct, Rugby Theatre

1984 Amateur version of George Orwell's classic novel, Sat 19 - Sat 26 Oct, Criterion Theatre, Coventry

CONCERNED OTHERS Award-winning Tortoise In A Nutshell present an intimate tabletop performance that shares the stories of critically unheard voices, Sun 20 Oct, Macready Theatre, Rugby

Kid's Theatre

PEPPA PIG'S FUN DAY OUT Join Peppa, her family and friends as they go to the zoo and beach, Wed 16 - Thurs 17 Oct, Malvern Theatres

AWFUL AUNTIE LIVE ON STAGE! Birmingham Stage Company present David Walliams' much-loved adventure story, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

CHARLIE COOK'S FAVOURITE BOOK Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's children's book is brought to life with puppetry and enchanting songs, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Oct, Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

Dance

NUTCRACKER Presented by Ballet Theatre UK, Fri 18 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry



Light Entertainment

MOST HAUNTED: THE STAGE SHOW

Spine-chilling theatre show presented by Yvette Fielding and based on the paranormal investigation TV series, Mon 14 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

CARRIE HOPE FLETCHER: LOVE LETTERS LIVE West End leading man Bradley Jaden accompanies Carrie in a concert performance of musical theatre favourites, Mon 14 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MOST HAUNTED: THE STAGE SHOW

Spine-chilling theatre show presented by Yvette Fielding and based on the paranormal investigation TV series, Thurs 17 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

STEVEN COHEN - PUT YOUR HEART UNDER FEET... AND WALK! Join the visual performance artist as he celebrates love and engages in a dialogue with death. Part of Fierce Festival, Fri 18 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

ODE TO JOYCE A celebration of the songs and monologues of Joyce Grenfell, Sat 19 Oct, The Core, Solihull

ZER-BRECH-LICH A 'mesmerising' performance in which three disabled performers bring to life songs composed by Swiss musician Gina ÉTÉ. Part of Fierce Festival, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

RICHARD HERRING'S LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE PODCAST Join Richard as he interviews top comedians, often asking questions too controversial for broadcast, Sun 20 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

Talks & Spoken Word

SHAUN RYDER - HAPPY MONDAYS, AND FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS, AND SUNDAYS Spoken-word show presented in support of Shaun's new book. Expect 'an entertaining evening of wild tales and improbable truths', Wed 16 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JON RONSON'S PSYCHOPATH NIGHT Join the renowned journalist, filmmaker & author as he explores madness and the psychopathic mind, Thurs 17 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE - BRENTON WEST & RAJ BISRAM An evening of stories from the worlds of antiques, repairs and television, Fri 18 Oct, Number 8, Pershore



Pumpkin Patch - Cotswold Park Farm

Events

MINI MOTORISTS MONDAYS Find those pesky Black Cats on a special Halloween trail, Mon 14 Oct, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

AFTER-DARK TOUR Explore one of the oldest buildings in Worcester, by torchlight, Tues 15 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

FIERCE FESTIVAL Six-day programme of daring international contemporary live art and performance, Tues 15 - Sun 20 Oct, various venues in B'ham

THE MOTORHOME AND CARAVAN SHOW Spanning 11 halls, this huge event is the UK's national leisure-vehicle showcase, Tues 15 - Sun 20 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

GUNDOG OF WALES CHAMPIONSHIP DOG SHOW Featuring all breeds of Gundogs in a beauty competition, Wed 16 Oct, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

LET'S CHILL: BABY HANGOUT A chance to hang out with fellow parents and enjoy some 'Cathedral zen', Wed 16 Oct, Coventry Cathedral

AFTER-DARK TOUR Explore one of the oldest buildings in Worcester, by torchlight, Thurs 17 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

DEER AT DUSK Join a member of the team for a guided walk after hours, Fri 18 Oct, Charlecote Park, Warwick

MUSEUM AFTER HOURS - GHOSTLY GRAVEYARD BASH Have a bop to hauntingly good tunes, sip a blood-curdling cocktail, and dress up in your most frightening finery, Fri 18 Oct, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

PUMPKIN PATCH Stroll through the pumpkin patch, explore the maize maze and take a pumpkin home, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Oct, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

AUTUMN QUILTS FESTIVAL Featuring quilt displays from well-known quilters and textile artists, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Oct, Three Counties Showground,

Malvern

INK BLOCK INDIE COMIC FESTIVAL

Featuring self-published comic artists and authors, unique items, zines and originals, Sat 19 Oct, FarGo Village, Coventry

GCCF SUPREME CAT SHOW Featuring cats of all shapes, sizes and coat textures, Sat 19 Oct, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

DARK ARCHIVES: GOTHIC ADVENTURES IN THE MUSEUM Hour-long talk about poisons, potions and chemicals in literature, Sat 19 Oct, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

THE FRENCH PROPERTY SHOW A one-stop shop for anybody thinking of moving to France, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Cheltenham Racecourse

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR Hatton is transformed into a spooky wonderland filled with Halloween-themed activities to enjoy, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

O GAUGE GET TOGETHER Celebration of railway modelling in 1:43.5 scale, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

FREDDO'S SPOOKTACULAR STAGE SHOW Expect plenty of spooks, surprises, tricks, treats and games, Sat 19 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN AT THE ZOO Prepare for a spooktacular adventure, solve creepy-crawly mysteries, and encounter the more mysterious animals that lurk within the zoo, Sat 19 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Twycross Zoo, Atherstone

SPOOKY SPECTACULAR Fang-tastic activities for all ages, including a silly science show and monster mystery trail, Sat 19 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley

MALVERN MILITARIA Featuring stalls selling the widest range of militaria available in the UK, Sun 20 Oct, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

Gigs

LICE Mon 21 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VICTORIA CANAL Mon 21 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN Mon 21 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BEARTOOTH + POLARIS + LANDMVRKS Mon 21 - Tues 22 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM Tues 22 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ADAM ANT Tues 22 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

CHRIS STAPLETON Tues 22 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

NXTGEN#3 Tues 22 Oct, The Rainbow, B'ham

MARTHA TILSTON Tues 22 Oct, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

THE EVERLY BROTHERS STORY Tues 22 Oct, Malvern Theatres

DAN CROLL Wed 23 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

CASISDEAD Wed 23 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

MAXIMO PARK Wed 23 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ANGELINE MORRISON AND CLARKE CAMILLERI Wed 23 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

STEPHEN WILSON JR. Thurs 24 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KÄÄRIJÄ Thurs 24 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

GYPSY PISTOLEROS Thurs 24 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

WALTER TROUT Thurs 24 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

GIGSPANNER BIG BAND Thurs 24 Oct, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

THE CHURCHFITTERS Thurs 24 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING Thurs 24 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

AN EVENING OF JAMES TAYLOR Thurs 24 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY MUSIC Thurs 24 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT Fri 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

UK FOO FIGHTERS + ROYAL MONSTER Fri 25 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ART BRUT Fri 25 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

XHOSA COLE Fri 25 Oct, 1000 Trades, B'ham

TINDERSTICKS Fri 25 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

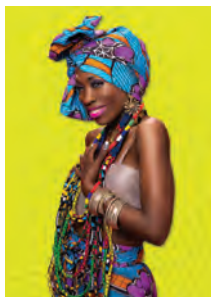
HOLLIE ROGERS, DAISY CHUTE AND ED BLUNT Fri 25 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

TOBY LEE Fri 25 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC - ABBA TRIBUTE Fri 25 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

SONIC BOOM Fri 25 Oct, FarGo Village, Coventry

HEATHER SMALL Fri 25 Oct, Coventry Cathedral



ACOUBA Fri 25 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE Fri 25 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE FEZZ - STEELY DAN TRIBUTE Fri 25 Oct, Marrs Bar, Worcester

MARTIN MCALOON Fri 25 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

CHAKA - THE MUSIC OF CHAKA KHAN Fri 25 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

MALTLOAF AND THE MONSTARS OF ROCK Fri 25 Oct, Civic, Stourport

IAN PROWSE Sat 26 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

LIANA FLORES Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

RAF-SAPERRA Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

FELL OUT BOY + BLACK CHARADE Sat 26 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HENRY MOODIE Sat 26 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DAVID AUSTIN GREY Sat 26 Oct, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

PHIL BATES Sat 26 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

RAY COOPER Sat 26 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

CHOCOLATE STARFISH Sat 26 Oct, Arches Venue, Coventry

DIANA & LIONEL - ENDLESS LOVE THE SHOW Sat 26 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

IBIZA PROMS Sat 26 Oct, Coventry Cathedral

WOLF WITCH GIANT FAIRY Sat 26 Oct, Number 8, Pershore

THUNDER DAZE Sat 26 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

RAGGED BEAR FESTIVAL Sat 26 Oct, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

LADY GAGA & AMY WINEHOUSE PARTY NIGHT Sat 26 Oct, The Benn Hall, Rugby

SHADOWING HANK Sat 26 Oct, The Market Theatre, Ledbury

LEIGH-ANNE Sun 27 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE PRETENDERS Sun 27 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MIKE OLDFIELD'S TUBULAR BELLS LIVE IN CONCERT Sun 27 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

SORREL NATION Sun 27 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

THE VACCINES Sun 27 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

THE STAVES + GRACE PETRIE + BESS ATWELL + PAULINE BLACK Sun 27 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THIRSTY WORK Sun 27 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

THE ELVIS YEARS Sun 27 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT: CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH Featuring Thomas Trotter (organ). Programme includes works by Bolcom, Sowande, Price, Wallen, Dring & Flagler, Mon 21 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

YOMIURI NIPPON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF TOKYO Featuring Sebastian Weigle (conductor) & Christian Tetzlaff (violin). Programme includes works by Akira Ifukube, Beethoven & Rachmaninov, Wed 23 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

CBSO: PROKOFIEV & SIBELIUS Featuring Jonathon Heyward (conductor) & Yeol Eum Son (piano). Programme includes works by Prokofiev, Still & Sibelius, Thurs 24 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BBC PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Ben Gernon (conductor) & Jennifer Pike (Violin). Programme includes works by Schubert, Bruch & Mozart, Fri 25 Oct, Malvern Theatres

THREE TENORS BY CANDLELIGHT Operatic classics and timeless favourites performed by Samuel Kibble, William Searle and Rhys Meilyr, Sat 26 Oct, St Mary's Church, Warwick

KEITH HEARNshaw ORGAN RECITAL Sat 26 Oct, Great Malvern Priory

ALDWYN VOICES & IAIN SIMCOCK Also featuring Adrian Lucas (conductor). Programme includes works by Bach, Sun 27 Oct, Malvern Theatres

NASH ENSEMBLE Featuring Alasdair Beatson (piano), Gareth Hulse (oboe), Richard Hosford (clarinet), Ursula Leveaux (bassoon) & Richard Watkins (horn). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Poulenc, Ibert & more..., Sun 27 Oct, Malvern Theatres

Comedy

JIMEOIN Tues 22 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

GARY DELANEY & COMICS TBC Wed 23 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

ALISON LARKIN Thurs 24 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

FELICITY WARD Sat 26 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

NISH KUMAR Sat 26 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MICHAEL AKADIRI, KAT B, KYRAH GRAY & RICHARD BLACKWOOD Sat 26 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE NOISE NEXT DOOR Sat 26 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN Sat 26 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

HAL CRUTTENDEN & COMICS TBC Sun 27 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Theatre

ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES THE MUSICAL Critically acclaimed musical inspired by the hit BBC TV sitcom, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

REBUS: A GAME CALLED MALICE A new play by Ian Rankin and Simon Reade. Gray O'Brien stars as John Rebus, with Abigail Thaw as Billy Hartman, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Oct, Malvern Theatres

A BITTER AND TWISTED COCKTAIL A new comedy murder mystery, set to music from the operettas of Gilbert & Sullivan, Tues 22 - Thurs 24 Oct, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

DEAR EVAN HANSEN Multi-award-winning musical concerning an anxious schoolkid wanting nothing more than to fit in, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

TOP GIRLS Carol Churchill's complex study of women's roles in society, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

UNCLE VANYA David Fletcher's new version of Anton Chekhov's exploration of human frailty, Wed 23 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Amateur version of the much-loved kooky musical, Wed 23 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

BRIGHT PLACES Autobiographical story about growing up in the shadow of chronic illness, Thurs 24 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Rep, B'ham

A DOUBLE BILL OF HORROR Two one-act plays by AA Birch: When Hell Breaks Loose and The Vampire Of Huntley Cross, Fri 25 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

Kid's Theatre

THE WHALE Circo Rum Ba Ba fuse theatre, circus skills, puppetry, comedy and music in a show about sea creatures and their battle to survive in an ocean full of rubbish, Sat 26 Oct, Malvern Theatres

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE Tallulah Swirls Puppet Theatre fuse music, interactive shadow puppetry and projections in a theatrical adventure for younger audiences, Sat 26 Oct, Malvern Theatres

CHARLIE COOK'S FAVOURITE BOOK Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's children's book is brought to life with puppetry and enchanting songs, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE BADDIES A laugh-out-loud

staging of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's story. With songs by Joe Stilgoe, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ROOM ON THE BROOM Theatre for younger audiences based on Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's best-selling book, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Malvern Theatres

MR SLEEPYBUM High-energy and seriously silly comedy show for the whole family, Sun 27 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU Scarlet Oak Theatre fuse live music, puppetry and playful characters in a show for younger audiences in which animals discuss their life experiences and the challenges they face in a rapidly changing world dominated by humans, Sun 27 Oct, Malvern Theatres

TRICK & TREAT CIRCUS Hour-long spooktacular featuring family-friendly characters, laughter, magic and fantastic tricks & treats, Sun 27 Oct, The Bann Hall, Rugby

Light Entertainment

ALED JONES: FULL CIRCLE One-man show in which the classical crossover artist looks back on his remarkable career, Wed 23 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

JOHN NICHOL'S: THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR A moving and revealing production exploring the concepts of sacrifice, camaraderie and remembrance, Wed 23 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

QUEEN BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring a cast of West End singers accompanied by a live rock band, Wed 23 Oct, Worcester Cathedral

MEATLOAF BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring a cast of West End singers, including stars from hit show Bat Out Of Hell, Thurs 24 Oct, Worcester Cathedral

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Popular theatre show fusing rock'n'roll, pop and comedy, Thurs 24 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

IN POUR TASTE: A COMEDY WINE TASTING EXPERIENCE Join comedians Sweeney Preston and Ethan Cavanagh as they guide audiences 'through tasting five wines and at least five jokes', Fri 25 Oct, Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

IN POUR TASTE: A COMEDY WINE TASTING EXPERIENCE Join comedians Sweeney Preston and Ethan Cavanagh as they guide audiences 'through tasting five wines and at least five jokes', Sat 26 Oct, The Civic, Stourport

IL DIVO An evening with the globally

renowned classical crossover group, Sat 26 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

A MURDEROUS SPELL An interactive murder-mystery evening, Sat 26 Oct, Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre, Kenilworth

MUSICALS - THE ULTIMATE LIVE BAND SING-ALONG A 'wild, interactive, and seriously rockin' musical theatre experience', Sat 26 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH RICHARD DAWKINS AND FRIENDS Join the world-renowned evolutionary biologist for an unscripted conversation touching on topics from science to religion, life on Earth and beyond... Wed 23 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JON RONSON'S PSYCHOPATH NIGHT 2024 Join the renowned journalist, filmmaker & author as he explores madness and the psychopathic mind, Fri 25 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DR LOUISE NEWSON: HORMONES & MENOPAUSE Medical expert Louise and Dublin-based comedian Anne Gildea challenge misconceptions about menopause and advocate better health for women, Fri 25 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcester

SIMON REEVE: TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH The author, TV presenter & adventurer tells stories to inspire audiences to move outside their comfort zone, Sun 27 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

Events

AFTER-DARK TOUR Explore one of the oldest buildings in Worcester, by torchlight, Tues 22 & Thurs 24 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

GREAT MALVERN FESTIVAL OF STORIES FOR CHILDREN Featuring performances, storytelling, workshops and more... Tues 22 - Sun 27 Oct, various locations across Malvern

SPACE AT TEWKESBURY ABBEY Journey through outer space and gaze up at emerging galaxies in a light and sound art installation from Luxmuralis, Tues 22 - Sun 27 Oct, Tewkesbury Abbey

THE LISTED PROPERTY SHOW Featuring a host of regional and national specialist conservation suppliers and experts, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Oct, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

PUMPKIN PATCH Stroll through the pumpkin patch, explore the maize maze and take a pumpkin home, Wed 23 - Thurs 31 Oct, Cotswold

Farm Park, Cheltenham

BIRMINGHAM COCKTAIL WEEKEND Returning for its winter edition, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Oct, various venues in Birmingham

DEER AT DUSK Join a member of the team for a guided walk after hours, Fri 25 Oct, Charlecote Park, Warwick

ORIENTAL EXPRESS Chinese-inspired dining experience, Fri 25 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

HALLOWEEN HALF TERM FUN Explore the castle grounds via a mythical medieval trail and encounter friendly medieval monsters, Fri 25 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

GHOST TRAINS Join the storytellers for some spooky tales, Sat 26 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

SCREAM TRAIN Hold on tight as the train roars away, passing through haunted stations on the way to Arley, Sat 26 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMEONE BLUE - MURDER MYSTERY DINNER Miss Mapletree is back with a wedding-themed murder-mystery dinner, Sat 26 Oct, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

COLOURS OF MY WAGON A storytelling and woodcraft performance which brings to life the ever-changing and adapting culture of Romani people, Sat 26 Oct, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

THE RESONATE FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE Exploration of what's important to society, from language to law, with activities for all ages, Sat 26 Oct, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

EVOLUTION An epic drone light show that promises to take audiences on a mesmerising journey through time and space. The narrated story starts with the Big Bang, the explosive birth of the universe, before journeying into the remarkable origins of conscious life on Earth, Sat 26 Oct, Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS GIFT FAYRE Featuring a wide range of gifts and products, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

HALLOWEEN MAKERS MARKET Featuring a wide range of goods, from candles to needle-felted pumpkins, jewellery, sweets and more... Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, FarGo Village, Coventry

CASTLE AFTER DARK See if you have what it takes to hang out in the UK's scariest castle, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Warwick Castle

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR See Hatton transformed into a spooky wonderland filled with Halloween-themed activities, Sat 26 - Thurs 31

Oct, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN CARVING Choose a pumpkin and carve a spooky design, ready to be lit up at home, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Webbs, Wychbold, Worcestershire

CANAL-O-WEEEN Family-friendly Halloween boat trip featuring a UV underground show, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Dudley Canal & Caverns

ILLUMINATED WITLEY COURT Featuring storytellers, magical folklore and eerie delights, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Witley Court & Gardens, Worcestershire

SKULLS, SPOOKY SKELETONS & ANIMALS Craft vibrant chalk drawings, collaborative art pieces, cotton skeletons and more... Sat 26 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

HALLOWEEN AT TUDOR WORLD Enjoy family fun during the day, with ghost tours, mediumship and seances by night, Sat 26 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Tudor World, Stratford-upon-Avon

HAUNTED HOUSE FAMILY TRAIL What monsters and spooks can you find in Worcester's historic Commandery? Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, The Commandery, Worcester

'VILE VEGETABLE' OCTOBER HALF-TERM TRAIL Discover fun vegetable games and earn a non-pumpkin-based prize, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Charlecote Park, Warwick

OCTOBER HALF TERM Celebrating the Monarch butterfly and its incredible migration story, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm

SPOOKY SKELETON HALLOWEEN TRAIL See if you can find all the Halloween visitors hiding along this brand-new trail, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

OCTOBER HALF TERM FUN Featuring spooky performances, hands-on activities, a new family-friendly trail and Supernatural Shakespeare, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, across Shakespeare Birthplace Trust venues, Stratford-upon-Avon

HALLOWEEN TRAIL Take a journey through the grounds and check out the neon spider pumpkins concealed in hidden areas, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Charlecote Park, Warwick

OCTOBER HALF TERM HALLOWEEN TRAIL Hunt around the grounds for spooky shapes lurking in the garden, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Coughton Court, Warwickshire

MALVERN 4x4, LAND ROVER & VINTAGE SPARES DAY Chance to meet with like-minded enthusiasts, Sun 27 Oct, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

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Bob Mortimer • Miranda Hart
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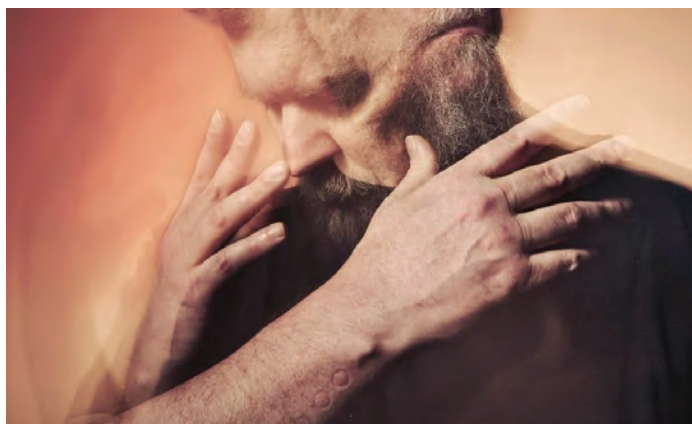


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Gigs

BARBICAN ESTATE Mon 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EVAN DANDO Mon 28 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

LIZZY MCALPINE Mon 28 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOHN GRANT Mon 28 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

MEL OUTSIDER REFORMATION Mon 28 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

EDDIE CHACON Tues 29 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

OLD SEA BRIGADE Tues 29 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CRADLE OF FILTH + BUTCHER BABIES + HIGH PARASITE + BLACK SATELLITE Tues 29 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

RUSSIAN CIRCLES + REZN Tues 29 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALTERED IMAGES + VANITY FAIRY Tues 29 Oct, O2 Academy,

Birmingham

IRON & WINE Tues 29 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JEFFERY STRAKER Tues 29 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

TOM ROBINSON BAND Wed 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MASS HOUSE + OTHERLESS + GILL Wed 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DINGUS KHAN Wed 30 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

GAVIN DEGRAW Wed 30 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

JOSHUA BURNELL AND BAND Wed 30 Oct, Temperance, Leamington Spa

DISCOVERY ZONE Wed 30 Oct, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

ALBERT LEE Wed 30 Oct, hmv Empire, Coventry

JAM NIGHT Wed 30 Oct, The Crew, Nuneaton

ABBAMANIA Wed 30 Oct, Swan Theatre, Worcs

SMOOVE & TURRELL

Thurs 31 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PINS & KNUCKLE + VARIALS + TO THE GRAVE Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KOE WETZEL + GIOVANNIE AND THE HIRED GUNS Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Thurs 31 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JESCA HOOP Thurs 31 Oct, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

DAN MCKINNON Thurs 31 Oct, Bromsgrove Folk Club

KIM CARNIE Thurs 31 Oct, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

JAKUB KLIMIUK QUINTET Thurs 31 Oct, Marris Bar, Worcester

BEN HOWARD Thurs 31 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE VACCINES Thurs 31 Oct, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton



Jeffery Straker - Temperance, Leamington Spa

Classical Music

CBSO: KAZUKI & MILOŠ Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Miloš Karadaglić (guitar). Programme includes works by Rodrigo, Rimsky-Korsakov, Falla & more..., Wed 30 Oct, Birmingham Symphony Hall

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS Featuring Matthew Sharp (narrator) & Leo Jaffrey (conductor). Programme comprises Saint-Saëns Carnival of the Animals, with poems by Michael Morpurgo, Wed 30 Oct, The Courtyard, Hereford

Comedy

GARTH MARENGHI Mon 28 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM KAY Mon 28 Oct, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

URZILA CARLSON Tues 29 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAI HUMPHRIES Tues 29 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH KEYWORTH & PRIYA HALL Wed 30 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BBC NEW COMEDY AWARD Wed 30 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JACK RHODES Thurs 31 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JARRED CHRISTMAS & COMIC TBC Thurs 31 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM STADE Thurs 31 Oct, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

JOHN BISHOP Thurs 31 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Theatre

SHOCK HORROR: A GHOST STORY A chilling journey into a haunted past, combining live performance, big-screen action and shocking revelations, Mon 28 Oct, Macready Theatre, Rugby

THE CARNIVAL OF ANIMALS

Imaginative visual production with no text, instead focusing on 'the simple magic of puppetry', Tues 29 Oct, Number 8, Pershore

INTO THE BREACH Dad's Army meets The Vicar Of Dibley in a one-man comedy written and performed by Marc Carey, Tues 29 - Wed 30 Oct, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

DON'T BELIEVE ALL YOU READ

Charlotte Didora's lighthearted thriller centres around a group of actors on a UK tour of a comedy mystery play, Tues 29 - Wed 30 Oct, Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

upon-Avon

A WARNING TO THE CURIOUS Toby Burchell's one-man performance of MR James' chilling ghost story, Tues 29 - Wed 30 Oct, Malvern Theatres

GWYNETH GOES SKIING Critically acclaimed musical telling a story of love, betrayal... and skiing! Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

NEVER LET ME GO World premiere of Suzanne Heathcote's play, which 'challenges us to think about what it is to be human'. Based on Kazuo Ishiguro's bestselling novel, Tues 29 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Malvern Theatres

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR An afternoon of 'rib-tickling' entertainment and audience participation in 'the Halloween adventure of a lifetime', Wed 30 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE HENFIELD HAUNTING Creepy Halloween farmyard fun for all the family, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE BEAR WHO WENT TO WAR A true story of bravery, love and friendship, with a cast of six actor-musicians and life-sized puppets, Wed 30 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

THREE MEN IN A BOAT Giles Shenton presents Jerome K Jerome's story of his boating holiday along the River Thames, Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

MUKHTAR DAR: PARTITION OF THE HEART Live music, soundscapes, multi-lingual spoken word, dance, visual projection and theatre combine in a performance that captures both the horrors of Partition and the resilience and solidarity that emerged from it, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

PIED PIPER A raucous and musical re-imagining of a medieval fairytale, featuring a talented cast of beatboxers, musicians and special guest performers from the local community, Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS COMIC present an amateur version of the cult musical, Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Kids Theatre

MILKSHAKE! LIVE ON HOLIDAY All-singing, all-dancing family show featuring children's favourites Paw Patrol, DORA, Pip & Posy, Milo and more... Mon 28 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TRICK & TREAT CIRCUS LIVE ON STAGE Featuring family-friendly characters,

rib-tickling laughter, mind-blowing magic, and fang-tastic tricks and treats galore, Tues 29 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

PRINCESS LIVE! All-singing, all-dancing princess pop party featuring fairytale royalty 'as you've never seen them before', Tues 29 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

MR SLEEPYBUM High-energy and seriously silly comedy show for the whole family, Wed 30 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

THE BUBBLE SHOW A unique blend of magic, storytelling, science and bubble art from Mr. Bubbles, Tues 29 Oct, Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

DISNEY ON ICE: ROADTRIP ADVENTURES Mickey Mouse and friends take audiences on a wild ride to some favourite Disney destinations, Wed 30 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

Dance

BALANCE Keneish Dance present a high-spirited dance-theatre performance in celebration of the human body. Suitable for the whole family, Mon 28 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Thinktank, Birmingham

NUTCRACKER Crown Ballet presents its version of the magical festive fairytale, Thurs 31 Oct, Palace Theatre, Redditch

Light Entertainment

TONY RAE THE TIME TRAVELLER A show 'for those who are curious about having lived before, and how our experiences from past lives contribute to and affect our choices and decisions in this life', Tues 29 Oct, The Benn Hall, Rugby

THE MYSTERY OF DRACULA Occult Illusionist David Alnwick investigates the supernatural folklore behind Bram Stoker's acclaimed novel, Tues 29 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MUSICALS - THE ULTIMATE LIVE BAND SING-ALONG A 'wild, interactive, and seriously rockin' musical theatre experience', Tues 29 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ANYTHING FOR LOVE Brand-new production featuring over 25 of Meat Loaf and Jim Steinman's greatest hits, Tues 29 Oct, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

IN POUR TASTE: A COMEDY WINE TASTING EXPERIENCE Join comedians Sweeney Preston and Ethan Cavanagh as they guide audiences 'through tasting five wines and at least five jokes', Tues 29 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE Expect laughter, cabaret, mystery and glamour, Wed 30 Oct, Malvern Theatre

I SCREAMED A SCREAM: A VILLAINS CABARET Concert performance featuring songs from the best baddies of stage and screen, Wed 30 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

JACK RHODES Comedy, magic and nonsense combine in this performance from the Britain's Got Talent 2024 finalist, Thurs 31 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BEYOND THE BARRICADE The UK's longest-running musical theatre concert tour, featuring songs from The Phantom Of The Opera, West Side Story, Les Miserables, Miss Saigon, Hamilton and more... Thurs 31 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

TRIAL OF MARY ANN HIGGINS A word-for-word recreation of an 1831 murder trial in which Mary Ann Higgins is accused of taking her uncle's life. Guilty or not guilty? It's up to the audience to decide... Thurs 31 Oct, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

CIRQUE DU MAGIQUE Featuring 'mind-blowing magic, world-class circus acts and death-defying stunts that will leave you on the edge of your seat', Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Talks & Spoken Word

SIR RANULPH FIENNES: MAD, BAD AND DANGEROUS Spend the evening with 'the world's greatest living explorer', Wed 30 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE An evening with 'the Godfather of punk poetry', Wed 30 Oct, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

RESPONSIBLE AI A talk which delves into what responsible AI could look like, and why the issue needs to be addressed to safeguard against potential harmful content. Part of Festival of Social Science, Thurs 31 Oct, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

DRINKS WITH A DETECTIVE: THE DARK SIDE OF SERIAL KILLERS Join crime expert Steve Gaskin as he guides audiences through the different aspects of serial killing, Thurs 31 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

Events

WITCH AND WIZARD SCHOOL Create your very own magic wand and practise your spells with Professor Bumbledum, Mon 28 - Thurs 31 Oct, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

PUMPKIN CARVING Pick out a pumpkin



The Creative Craft Show - NEC, Birmingham

from the patch, have fun scooping out all the seeds, and draw your own design, Mon 28 - Thurs 31 Oct, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

OCTOBER HALF TERM PUMPKIN TRAIL Solve the mystery of the missing pumpkins, Mon 28 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Packwood House, Warwickshire

AFTER-DARK TOUR A torchlight exploration of one of the oldest buildings in Worcester, Tues 29 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

BOOKTOBER: FAMILY DAY Drop-in for a fun-filled day dedicated to all things reading and books, Tues 29 Oct, The Exchange: 3 Centenary Square, Birmingham

MAKE YOUR OWN PINHOLE CAMERA Have fun experimenting with home-made photography, Tues 29 Oct, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

LET'S PLAY & PICNIC Featuring indoor games and crafts suitable for families of all ages, Tues 29 Oct, Coventry Cathedral

TALK AND ECHO - POETRY WORKSHOP Exploring how everyday conversations can hold personal meaning, shaping our social lives and the very essence of who we are. A Festival of Social Science event, Tues 29 Oct, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

SCIENCE SPECTACULAR! ANIMAL MAN Meet Simon from Corner Exotics, who will be bringing some very special guests with him, Tues 29 Oct, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

HAUNTED HOUSE FAMILY MORNINGS Featuring crafting activities and a haunted house trail, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

GLADIATOR MINIMUS! Craft your own pupa, a clay gladiator doll which was sold as a souvenir in the grand amphitheatres of Rome, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Lunt Roman Fort, Baginton, Warwickshire

FASCINATING FUNGI Find out about the fascinating world of fungi and the species that live around Thinktank,

Wed 30 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

KINETON RAF STEM Fun-filled day of design and engineering, Wed 30 Oct, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

FEEDING THE FUTURE: USING INSECTS AS FOOD AND FEED A topical panel debate hosted and organised by the Royal Entomological Society, Wed 30 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

GHOST TRAINS Dare to take a thrilling trip into the night... Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

SCREAM TRAIN Hold on tight as the train passes through haunted stations on the way to Arley, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

GHOST TALES Join the storytellers for tales of ghosts, supernatural sightings and horrors from history, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Kenilworth Castle

AFTER-DARK TOUR Explore one of the oldest buildings in Worcester, by torchlight, Thurs 31 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

ART MASTERCLASS: CYANOTYPE SKULLS & NATURE PRINTS Join talented artist duo Creative In Nature for an exclusive art masterclass exploring the intricate printing techniques of Cyanotype, Thurs 31 Oct, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

SEWING FOR PLEASURE WINTER EDITION Featuring must-have supplies and workshops, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS Featuring stall holders showcasing bespoke and unusual gifts, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW The UK's biggest mixed-craft event offers visitors access to five shows via just one ticket, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

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Autumn

at Worcester Cathedral

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Saturday 5 October

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80s Anthems By Candlelight

Saturday 12 October

Queen by Candlelight

Wednesday 23 October

Meatloaf by Candlelight

Thursday 24 October

'A Monk's Life' October Half Term

Tuesday 29 & Wednesday 30 October

Discover and explore the life and times of the monks that lived and worked at Worcester Cathedral in 11th – 16th Century

Art Market

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