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ISSUE 460 MAY 2025

What's On

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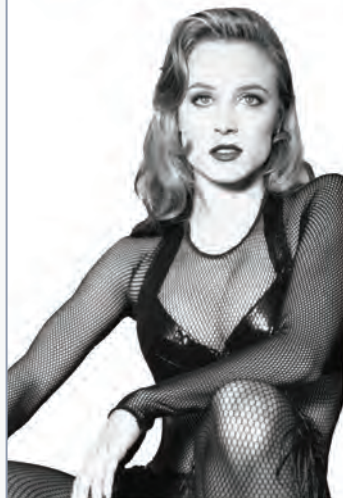


CHICAGO

JANETTE MANRARA
as Roxie Hart

DARREN DAY
as Billy Flynn

DJALENGA SCOTT
as Velma Kelly



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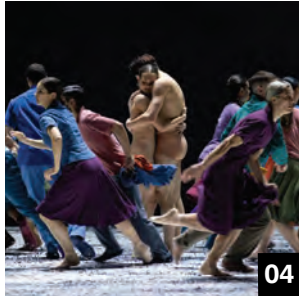


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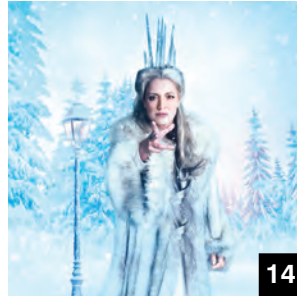




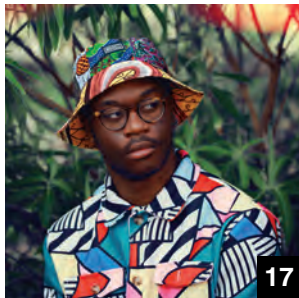
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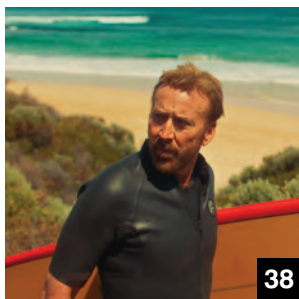
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What's On

MEDIA GROUP

Jessica Clixby jessica@whatsonlive.co.uk Subscriptions: subscriptions@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281714
Contributors: Graham Bostock, Diane Parkes, Patsy Moss, Steve Adams, Sue Hull, Reggie White, Sue Jones, Chris Eldon Lee
Publisher and CEO: **Martin Monahan** Accounts Administrator: **Louise Hunter** louise@21stdc.com 01743 281717

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Wolverhampton return for Canadian dance company

Canada's leading contemporary dance company is heading to Wolverhampton. Stopping off at the city's Grand Theatre next month (Friday 6 & Saturday 7 June), the Vancouver-based Ballet BC (standing for British Columbia) will be performing a programme featuring two danceworks... The first piece, *Frontier*, 'examines the unknown - the characterisation of dark matter, the personification of shadows'... The second - and longer - show, *Passing*, is 'inspired by climate catastrophe'. For more information and to book tickets, visit the venue's website: grandtheatre.co.uk

Emily shares her cycling adventures at The Hive

Endurance cyclist Emily Chappell will be sharing stories of her epic travels when she visits Shrewsbury venue



The Hive on Wednesday 14 May. To book your seat for her show, visit the venue's website at hiveonline.org.uk

Gladiators stars on tour...

A live version of hit television series *Gladiators* is heading to the Midlands pre-Christmas.

The two-hour show will stop off at Birmingham's bp pulse LIVE arena on Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 December. Tickets are available at livenation.co.uk



National Trust gets busy in its first forest garden

The National Trust is to plant 80,000 plants in its first forest garden, which is located on the Shugborough estate in Staffordshire. The Trust has 'significant environmental ambitions' for the garden, including increasing carbon capture, providing habitat,

and encouraging forest gardening methods in domestic gardens.

Bollywood panto fun at the Wolverhampton Grand

A British South Asian pantomime, co-produced by Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre, will this autumn head out on a short UK tour - after premiering at the Grand itself. Fusing the British tradition of pantomime with 'a spectacular Desi vibe', *Surinderella* shows at the venue from Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 September. Tickets for the show are available by visiting grandtheatre.co.uk

Freya Ridings to play Cannock Chase Forest

Forest Live, the summer concert series presented by Forestry England, has announced that singer-songwriter Freya Ridings will support Northern Irish indie-rockers Snow Patrol when they



perform in Cannock Chase Forest on Thursday 26 June. Tickets for the gig are available by visiting forestlive.com

Ambitious plans for Wolverhampton venue

Ambitious plans have been unveiled for the redevelopment of popular Wolverhampton venue Newhampton Arts Centre. The project will see every space on the former Wolverhampton Municipal Grammar School site refurbished. The venue will also have a new name from

this month

onwards:

Wolverhampton Arts Centre.

Commenting on the news, Wendy Stephens, chair of the venue's board

of trustees, said: "We're hugely excited by these plans and will be asking all those who want us to be here in the city for the next 25 years to support us over the coming months and years."



Strictly star's dance show a festival highlight

A brand-new dance show created by Strictly Come Dancing star Neil Jones (pictured) is among the highlights of this year's Lichfield Festival.

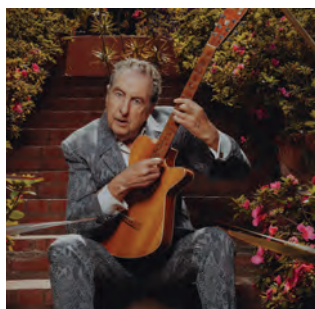
Taking place at various venues around the city from Tuesday 8 to Sunday 20 July, the popular annual event also features, among other attractions, performances by The Unthanks and former Spandau Ballet frontman Tony Hadley. To check out this year's complete programme, and to purchase tickets, visit lichfieldfestival.org



Eric looks on the bright side of life

Eric Idle will visit the Midlands in the autumn as part of a UK tour.

The much-loved Monty Python star appears at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Wednesday 10 September, presenting a show which he says "contains everything, including comedy, music, philosophy, and one fart joke". Tickets can be purchased at bmusic.co.uk



Utilita Arena date for Deadly Steve

A new live entertainment adventure featuring 'daring stunts, mind-blowing experiments, and cutting-edge science' is visiting Birmingham's Utilita Arena in the autumn (Thursday 30 October).

Taking the title Deadly Live!, the show is based on popular BBC franchise Deadly. BAFTA-winning wildlife presenter & adventurer Steve Backshall, who hosts the television series, will also front the live version.

Tickets are available via the website at deadlylivetour.com

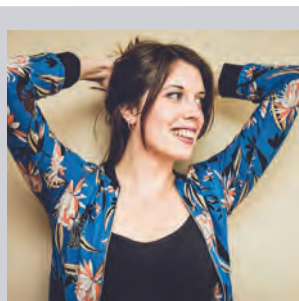


Stage version of Fawlty Towers heading to the Midlands

Veteran stage & screen actor Paul Nicholas and Strictly Come Dancing favourite Joanne Clifton will star in the touring production of John Cleese's Fawlty Towers - The Play when it takes to the road later in the year.

Based on the classic 1970s BBC TV sitcom - which was co-written by and starred Cleese - the show visits the Midlands next year, stopping off

at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre (Tuesday 10 - Saturday 21 February), the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent (Tuesday 24 - Saturday 28 February) and Birmingham venue The Alexandra (Tuesday 17 - Saturday 21 March). For further information and to book tickets for the show, visit fawltytowerstour.co.uk



Two West Mids gigs for Bella

Derbyshire singer-songwriter Bella Hardy will visit two West Midlands venues next month as part of a UK tour. Often referred to as 'the voice of modern folk', Bella stops off at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Friday 6 June and then plays Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre on Thursday the 12th. Tickets can be purchased from the venues' websites.

Acclaimed Kinks musical to bring sunshine to three Midlands venues

Award-winning musical Sunny Afternoon will visit Birmingham theatre The Alexandra in the autumn.

A celebration of iconic British band The Kinks, the show stops off in the second city from Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 October. It then returns to the Midlands next spring, showing at Malvern Theatres from Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 March and the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 April. Further information is available by visiting the show's website at thekinksmusical.com



VE Day celebrations at the National Arboretum

To mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day, the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is inviting visitors to step back in time for a weekend of free, family-friendly activities (Saturday 3 - Monday 5 May).

Inspired by the joyous street parties that took place across Britain in May 1945, the celebration forms part of the venue's year-long programme, 'The Year Was 1945...', an initiative marking 80 years since the end of the Second World War. To find out more, visit thenma.org.uk/whats-on

Shrewsbury festival to support cancer charity

The organisers of the 2025 Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival have chosen Lingen Davies as their designated charity for this year's event, set to take place at various venues from Wednesday 9 to Sunday 13 July. Money donated will be used to improve the lives of everyone in the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Mid Wales community impacted by cancer. To find out more about the festival, visit its website at sicfest.co.uk

A sandy end to summer in Wolverhampton!

Wolverhampton's annual Seaside In The City event returns in August.

Visitors to Victoria Street and Bell Square will be able to get sand between their toes on Friday 29 & Saturday 30 August. Follow Enjoy Wolverhampton's Facebook page for updates in the weeks and months ahead.

Summer holiday fun at the New Vic Theatre

The education team at Newcastle-under-Lyme's New Victoria Theatre are inviting young people to join



them during the school summer holidays for a series of activities designed to transport them to 'worlds of wonder'.

Highlights include Time Travellers' Adventure - a two-day workshop exploring dinosaurs and medieval castles - and The Time Travellers' Playground, which provides participants with the chance to create a play in just one week.

To check out the full programme of activities and book a space, visit newvictheatre.org.uk



Midlands dates for stage version of hit TV comedy

The stage version of award-winning television comedy series Inside No 9 will play two Midlands venues in the autumn.

The creation of League Of Gentlemen stars Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, the production shows at The Alexandra,

Birmingham, from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 October and The Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 25 November.

Visit atgtickets.com/shows/inside-no-9-stage-fright to purchase tickets.

The Undertones to play Brum's Pairc Festival

The Undertones will join previously announced headliners Saw Doctors and Nathan Carter when independent Birmingham-Irish festival Pairc Summer Series makes a return in late August.

Taking place at the King's Heath Irish Centre on Saturday the 23rd & Sunday the 24th, the event will also feature, among other artists, Sharon Shannon Big Band, featuring Liam Ó Maonlai from Hothouse Flowers, Mundy, Camille O'Sullivan and Cait O'Riordan from The Pogues.

For more information and to book tickets, visit paircsummerseries.com

An artist's journey in Ironbridge Gorge

A new exhibition, titled Line, The Artist's Journey, will show at the Footprint Gallery - a purpose-built space in Ironbridge Gorge's Jackfield - from Thursday 1 to Monday 26 May.

Creatives whose work features in the display include resident artist Jan Park, 3D artist Jane Wilson, furniture maker Debs Hart, glass fusion specialist Jo Newman, ceramicist Ruth Gibson and silversmith Sue Chadwick. The exhibition is open daily from 10am to 4pm. Visit footprintgallery.co.uk for further information.

Autumn return to the region for Kinky Boots

Hit musical Kinky Boots will stop off in the Potteries this autumn as part of its UK tour. Featuring a score by Cyndi Lauper, the award-winning show visits Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre from Wednesday 26 to Sunday 30 November. For further information and to book your seat, visit the venue's website at atgtickets.com/stoke

Ghostly goings-on for Stacey and Kevin

Real-life partners Stacey Dooley and Kevin Clifton will star in supernatural thriller 2:22 - A Ghost Story when it tours to the



Midlands later this year and early 2026. The smash-hit show stops off at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre (Monday 29 September - Saturday 4 October), and Birmingham's The Alexandra (Monday 13 - Saturday 18 October).

2:22 - A Ghost Story then returns to the region next year to play Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 18 - Saturday 23 May.

For more information and to book tickets, visit 222aghoststory.com

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bmusic.co.uk/bclassical

Dianne & Vito: Red Hot And Ready in the region!

Strictly Come Dancing's Dianne Buswell and Vito Coppola are heading to the Midlands with a brand-new show.

Taking the title Red Hot And Ready, the production is being described as 'the ultimate high-voltage dance extravaganza, exploding with jaw-dropping choreography, heart-pounding music and breathtaking moves'.

The show visits Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Friday 4 July. To find out more and book tickets, visit dianneandvito.co.uk



Shrewsbury Food Festival to host charity concert

Shrewsbury Food Festival makes a welcome return across the final weekend of next month (Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 June) - and this year comes complete with a special charity concert.

The concert is being organised by Shropshire Festivals on behalf of Crystal Owen, the Shrewsbury mother of Harvey Owen, who lost his life alongside three friends in a crash in North Wales in November 2023.

Profits will go towards the Shine On With Harvey Owen charity, which aims to support pathways for young people to enjoy the arts, music and food... For further information about the concert and festival, which takes place in the town's Quarry Park, visit shrewsburyfoodfestival.co.uk

Weston Park Air Show to return next month

Weston Park's Air Show International will return this summer for its 28th year.

Taking place in the grounds of the popular visitor attraction, the show runs from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 June. Highlights include a 'spectacular display' - set to music - by the world champion Fire Monkey Pyro Fireworks Team. More information is available by visiting seetickets.com



Line-up announced for Penkridge Open Air Festival

Vengaboys, Nik Kershaw and Boney M are among the artists performing at this year's Penkridge Open Air festival.

The event is bringing together 90s & noughties dance party anthems with 80s hits and soul and disco music.

Taking place at Penkridge Sports &

Recreation Centre in Staffordshire over the August Bank Holiday weekend (Friday the 22nd to Sunday the 24th), the festival also features a circus show, a BMX stunt show, numerous rides and inflatables, and a selection of stalls. Tickets for the event can be purchased at penkridgeopenair.co.uk

The Sherlocks added to Heal Festival line-up

The Sherlocks will appear at Heal Festival when it makes a welcome return at the West Mid Showground in Shrewsbury this autumn.

The South Yorkshire indie rockers will support headliners The Fratellis on the Saturday night of the three-day event. The festival also features multiple stages and arenas, activities for all age groups to enjoy, fairground attractions, street-food outlets and a wellness village.

Heal runs from Friday 19 to Sunday 21 September. To find out more, visit the website at healfestival.co.uk

Wolf & Owl podcast to go live in the Midlands

Comedians Tom Davis and Romesh Ranganathan are bringing a live version of their Wolf & Owl podcast to the Midlands this autumn.

The much-loved duo will be stopping off at Birmingham Hippodrome on Monday 29 September. Tickets are available now by visiting the theatre's website.



An evening with Gazza at Dudley Town Hall

Much-loved football icon Paul Gascoigne is bringing his one-man show to the Black Country next month.

The ex-Newcastle, Tottenham, Lazio and Glasgow Rangers star will be sharing anecdotes from his always-controversial career when he stops off at Dudley Town Hall on Thursday 12 June.

Visit boroughhalls.co.uk to find out more and book your seat.



Darren Day to reprise role of Billy Flynn in Chicago

Veteran West End and TV favourite Darren Day will return to the role of hotshot lawyer Billy Flynn when hit musical Chicago visits the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next month. The one-time Joseph and Rocky Horror star last played Billy in late 2024. He will be joined in the Black Country by Strictly Come Dancing's Janette Manrara. The production visits the Grand from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 June.

For tickets and further information, visit the venue's website at grandtheatre.co.uk

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Sun 1 Jun



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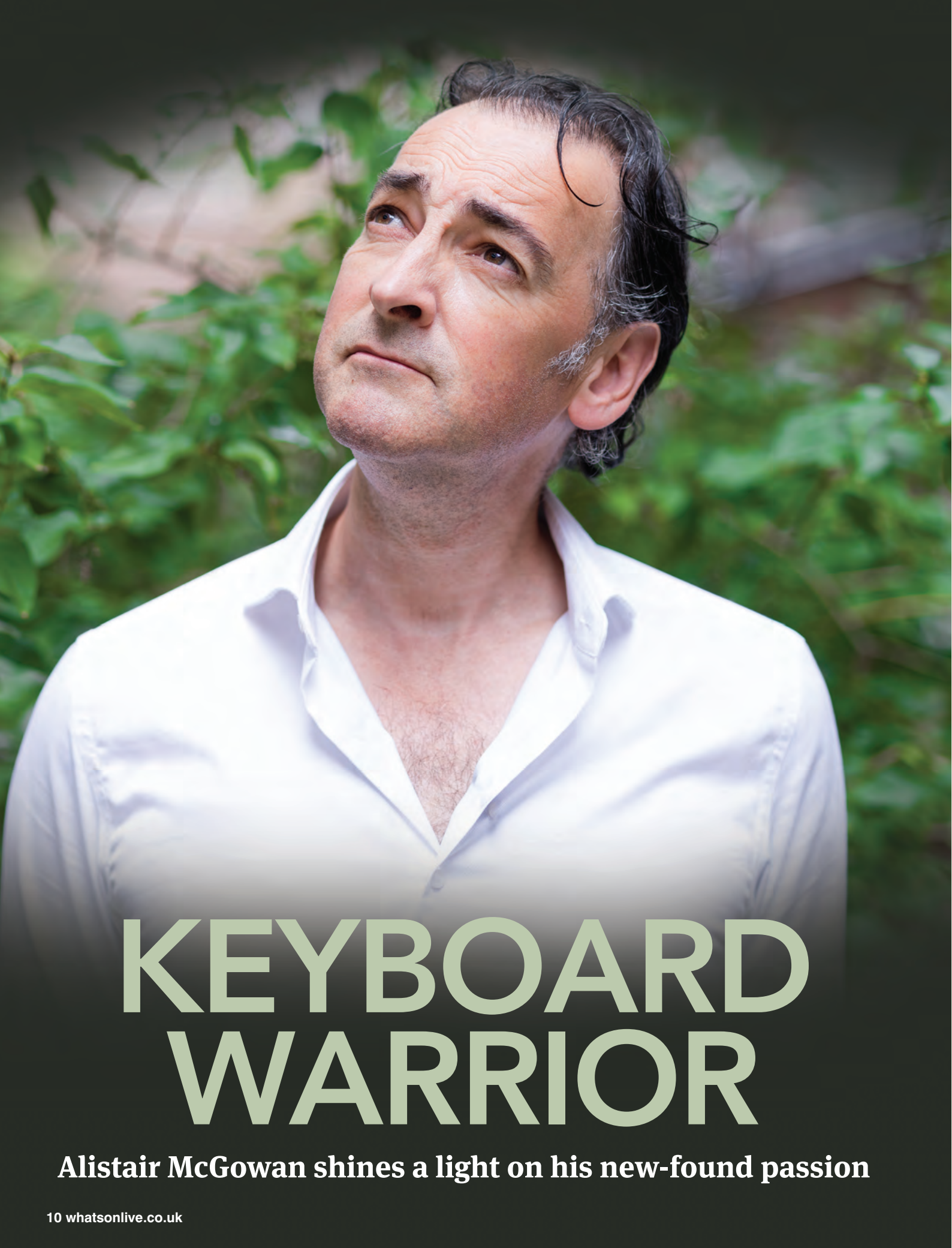
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KEYBOARD WARRIOR

Alistair McGowan shines a light on his new-found passion

Impressionist, stand-up comedian & actor Alistair McGowan added another string to his bow - or key to his piano - when he returned to his love of tinkling the ivories at the age of 49. He's since released two albums, performed shows that combine piano playing with his trademark impressions, and started a successful piano festival in Ludlow, the Shropshire town where he now lives. It's all inspired by his heartfelt desire to share a genuine love of the music, he tells What's On...

Comedian and impressionist Alistair McGowan is probably best known for appearing on TV's *The Big Impression* and providing voices on the original series of *Spitting Image*, but his 40-year career extends to roles as writer, actor, poet, and now, pianist.

The latter is arguably the most surprising, not least because the 60-year-old only returned to the instrument a decade ago, having given it up at the age of eight.

"I got to grade 2 of the eight grades but then stopped because it clashed with football practice and that was it," he says. "I'd always wanted to go back to playing, because I loved the music, but never had the time. I bought a piano in my mid-30s and always meant to play it but never did."

In the end, his return to the instrument was inspired by something far more unlikely: revenge.

"I was living in London, and some very noisy Dutch neighbours moved in. We banged on the walls to show they were really thin and we could hear everything, but they wouldn't go quiet. So I started playing the piano, as I thought 'That'll show them!'"

The more he played, the more he enjoyed it, and the better he got, eventually deciding he was competent enough to realise a long-held ambition to put on a show about his favourite composer, Erik Satie. The Frenchman is best known for short piano pieces such as *Gymnopédies No.1* ("one of those pieces that's used in adverts and films all the time - absolutely beautiful, very simple, very short"). He also had a sideline in comic writing and lived a fascinatingly bizarre life that included a penchant for dressing in unusual outfits.

"I looked into his life and always wanted to do a show about him. I took it to Edinburgh in 2016, when I could barely play, really. It's the show I'll be doing at [this year's] Piano Festival - only now I can play better!"

Alistair must've played pretty well at the time, as the show prompted a record deal with Sony Classical that culminated in *The Piano Album*, a collection of short pieces that reached number one in the classical charts. So, had there been any resentment from professional musicians, wondering why a comedian was getting a record deal when they couldn't?

"I'm sure there was. And of course I'm aware now, particularly doing the festival, that you

want to do things that will sell. There are so many talented pianists and so much wonderful music, but what do you do that will make people interested? What do you put on that will get people to come? I think that's what Sony were doing when they offered me the deal. They were thinking, here's somebody we don't associate with piano music - maybe we can get a new audience through him."

Alistair hired a tutor and practised for four hours a day for six months in preparation for the recording ("I knew it had to be as good as it could be"). He admits the choice of shorter pieces was designed to make it more palatable to a wider audience.

"That's been my ethos, and certainly in my live shows. To me, the more interesting pieces are the shorter pieces. But it's also good for my brain and good for my fingers."

On the back of the album's success, he began performing shows that mixed stand-up comedy and impressions with piano music, partly to prove a point to MP-turned-raconteur Gyles Brandreth.

"Gyles was a neighbour when I lived in London, and he's an inspirational man. I told him about the piano thing and he said [adopts note-perfect Brandreth impersonation] 'You should combine it with your comedy; it would be wonderful - people will get two shows for the price of one.' In the end, I did it to prove it wouldn't work... but it did!"

The shows don't sit very well in listings and can be difficult to market ("is it music or is it comedy?"), but their popularity means it's a style of performance ("not necessarily comedy, just variety") that Alistair is keen to incorporate into the Ludlow Piano Festival, an event he launched in 2023 a couple of years after moving to the town.

"I did my piano show as part of the Ludlow Fringe in 2021 at St Laurence's Church; loved the piano and the place to play. Then I did it again at the Assembly Rooms, and that had a wonderful piano, too."

"It's very rare to have two such fantastic pianos in the same town, 100 yards apart. I just thought that if we could get a third venue - because there's something attractive about a triangle shape - maybe we could do a festival."

With the "beautiful, medieval, wood-panelled room" of Palmers Hall at Ludlow College providing the final piece of the

puzzle, even though it contained no piano ("we hire one there"), the festival was up and running. This year's edition will be the biggest yet, with 16 events taking place across five days. Alistair is keen to highlight the variety of entertainment on offer.

"It's not just recitals; there's always something different. It's not all sitting down watching a pianist or pianists playing one thing after another. There's words and music with me, there's an interview with Sheila Hancock that also goes into pieces of music she's chosen - like *Desert Island Discs* but with live piano - and we've also got music from Wolf Hall, played by the composer, with one of the actors reading bits of it."

"I try to give a good cross-section of music with as wide a variety of composers and eras as possible, just to show people it's not all one particular sound."

Alistair is also keen to attract audiences of all ages and interests. He has been surprised and delighted by how his return to playing a musical instrument has given others the impetus to do the same.

"People often come up to me to say I've inspired them to start playing again, and that's one of the things I hope will happen with the festival. You're encouraging people to hear music that's new, or to go back and listen to it again."

The same goes for younger audiences. Alistair loves the fact that a schools' concert taking place the week before the festival gives talented kids the opportunity to show off their chops.

"Younger pianists from the schools, some only seven or eight years old, get a chance to play the wonderful Steinway at the Assembly Rooms in front of their peers, and they love it. It's great to hear that enthusiasm, and to hear them playing this amazing piano, which isn't something they'd normally do. It's great to see, and also to show children that there's more to music than Stormzy."

.....

The Ludlow Piano Festival takes place at various locations across the south Shropshire town from Wednesday 21 to Sunday 25 May

For information on individual concerts and events visit ludlowpianofestival.com

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BBC National Orchestra of Wales

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 29 May

The BBC National Orchestra of Wales bring their on-the-road concert season to a close with a programme that features two works which were written by composers for the women they loved.

Bartók's deeply personal two-movement concerto - composed for his muse, Stefi

Geyer, and here performed by world-renowned violinist James Ehnes - has been described as a rhapsodic outpouring... Mahler's Fifth Symphony, meanwhile - a token of his love for his new wife - comes complete with trumpet fanfares.

Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 15 May

Having notched up their half century a couple of years back, the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO) visit Symphony Hall this month with a much-deserved reputation for being one of the Asia-Pacific region's top musical ensembles. They perform to the masterfully wielded baton of their acclaimed music director & principal conductor, Grzegorz Nowak, who has been the inspiration behind their output since 2023. The orchestra's Birmingham appearance sees them presenting a programme of music that begins with a short work by the PPO's composer-in-residence, Jeffrey Ching (which he's written especially for the UK tour) and ends with Beethoven's always-thrilling Fifth Symphony. Performed in-between the two compositions is Bizet's Carmen Suite no1, Ralph Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending, and two works by Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake Suite and Rococo Variations.

Elisey Mysin

Walcot Hall, Lydbury North, South Shropshire, Sat 3 May

Currently studying at the Moscow State Conservatory - and with competition wins in Russia, China, Germany and the US already under his belt - 14-year-old Russian concert pianist Elisey Mysin is here making his full British debut. Elisey will perform a programme featuring ballet music by Tchaikovsky and works by Mozart, Schumann, Liszt and Prokofiev.



Martin James Bartlett & Mariam Batsashvili

Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre, Thurs 8 May

Bringing this season's Stoke-on-Trent Piano Masters series to a satisfying close is this 'two for the price of one' team-up between Martin James Bartlett & Mariam Batsashvili.

Martin is a two-time keyboard finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year contest, winning the competition in 2014, while Mariam bagged first prize in the Franz Liszt Piano Competition in the very same year.

The evening's programme includes Mozart's Sonata in D major For Four Hands, Franz Schubert's Fantasia in F minor, and Richard Wagner's Tristan und Isolde.

Works by, among other composers, Mendelssohn and Debussy also feature.

Wolf Hall In Concert

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 30 May

Birmingham-born and Midlands-based actor Anton Lesser (pictured) will be reading extracts from Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall as part of this late-month concert.



Anton played the part of Thomas More in the BBC television adaptation of Mantel's acclaimed trilogy - and it's the original music featured in the series, composed by the award-winning Debbie Wiseman, that the Locrian Ensemble of London will here be performing.

Expect a memorable evening of drama, intrigue and storytelling.

Julian Bliss Septet

Blackburn Theatre, Prestfelde School, Shrewsbury, Fri 9 May

Widely considered to be one of the UK's most talented soloists, celebrated clarinettist Julian Bliss is joined by six other impressive musicians for a Shropshire Music Trust concert featuring a host of Hollywood hits.

Julian's septet have been performing together for 15 years, and are rightly admired for their dazzling virtuosity and extraordinary musicianship.



BREAKING THE ICE

**Katy Stephens talks about playing the villainous White Witch
in *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe***

CS Lewis' The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe tells the terrific tale of four siblings who travel through a wardrobe, find themselves in a magical land, and meet Aslan the Lion and the White Witch, the latter of whom is plotting their downfall. A smash-hit stage version of the much-loved children's story is returning to the Midlands to mark the 75th anniversary of the book's publication, this month playing Birmingham before heading to the Potteries in June and Wolverhampton in October. What's On spoke to Katy Stephens - who will be plotting evil as the icy, ruthless and shockingly wicked White Witch - to find out more...

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the publication of CS Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*, in which Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie travel through a wardrobe to the magical land of Narnia.

The acclaimed 2017 stage version, directed by Mike Fentiman in its newest incarnation, has embarked on a national tour. It's a show packed with puppetry, music and spectacle.

"I think what's really special about this production," says Katy Stephens, who plays the White Witch, "is that it captures the heart and soul of what CS Lewis was writing about. I really feel it captures the core of *The Chronicles Of Narnia*. It's a very beautiful, spectacular show, and there's a huge amount of talent on stage. We have actor-musicians, who pick up all kinds of instruments, put them down and pick up another instrument to play... We've got the most incredible ensemble of dancers; really talented dancers who can also act. The music is absolutely beautiful, and Mike Fentiman has done a fantastic job of lifting this beautiful book off the page and making it palpable for a live audience."

The White Witch famously freezes Narnia, making it always winter (but never Christmas), and tempts Edmund Pevensie to the dark side with enchanted Turkish Delight. While *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe* is the most well known of CS Lewis' books, Katy has discovered more about her character in a different story.

"You don't find out a huge amount about her in *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe* - we're at the end of her journey then. CS Lewis wrote a prequel, which he wrote after *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*, called *The Magician's Nephew*, and that's really interesting in terms of - what do they call it now? - a villain origin story! In *The Magician's Nephew*, the White Witch is much more feisty, much more 'punk rock' - she does incredible things. She accidentally gets taken to London, she robs a jeweller's store, she hijacks a handsome cab, she rips a lamp post out of the ground.

"When she goes back to Narnia, she eats an apple that gives her immortality, but by eating that apple, it resigns her to a life of misery. Not only does she freeze the world, she freezes herself... When Aslan returns, he thaws Narnia, and as he does that, he thaws her as well, I think, back to the person that

she was in *The Magician's Nephew*. It's an incredibly interesting journey. I do play a lot of baddies, and I think it's my job as an actor to find the sympathy, or find the root of that person, so that it doesn't become a 2-D evil performance."

While Katy has clearly explored the books to dive into the White Witch's background, the Narnia series was never a favourite of hers as a child.

"It wasn't really part of my childhood. I kind of always thought it was about posh kids - but I've grown up since then. It was really lovely for me as an adult to visit those books for the first time. I knew the gist. I knew there were kids that went through a wardrobe and into another world, but there are so many layers to the story. There's so much depth to it, and I think I've really appreciated that as an adult."

When producing *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*, you have to address the elephant - or over-sized feline - in the room, and work out how to bring Aslan the Lion onto the stage. In this version, the lion is partly represented by an enormous puppet, with three puppeteers operating its head, heart and tail.

"We also have an actor on stage: Stanton Wright, who's absolutely fantastic. He is Aslan the Man; he's the soul of Aslan. My interactions are with the man, whereas the Pevensie children interact with the puppet - so actually, I don't get to look at the puppet much on stage. It's such a beautiful puppet. When I'm standing off-stage and it's looking into the wings, sometimes I really feel like it's looking into my soul.

"We've also got a beautiful cat puppet. When it's backstage, it just looks like a pile of rags, but once the puppeteer has got hold of it, it becomes alive. It's unbelievable!"

The Midlands is a familiar theatrical stomping ground for Katy, who is an associate artist at the Royal Shakespeare Company, where she appeared on stage during Sir Michael Boyd's time as artistic director. She performed in the award-winning *History Cycle*, which included all eight of Shakespeare's *Histories*, produced over two and a half years. In returning to the region, she will also be returning to her home.

"I actually really started out at the Belgrade. It's a theatre that's very close to my heart. The Belgrade used to have flats above it, and

I used to live in one with my dog, for about a year. I was living in London at the time. It was my experience at the Belgrade, and everybody who worked there, the people of Coventry, that actually made me fall in love with Coventry - I moved there 25 years ago."

She also works with the locally based EGO Performance Company, which this season is touring a landmark production.

"We are completely inclusive. We have a huge range of abilities, but we also have an academy for actors with special needs. We've just embarked on our first UK tour, with a play called *You Know My Mum*. It's a really humorous, poignant look at how people with learning disabilities deal with grief."

Having worked in the acting industry for over 30 years, it's perhaps unsurprising to learn that Katy has a preference for performing on stage over appearing on screen. As a parting thought, she explains the reason why - and reveals her favourite theatrical experience.

"I love a live audience, but I also love being part of a company. You become like a family, and I love the social aspect. Also, artistically, I like to get on a wave and surf it all the way to the beach. What I find with TV or film is that you surf a little bit, and then you pick up your board and you get back on again. For me, I just love the flow of starting a character at A and ending up at Z - it just suits me as a performer.

"The greatest moment for me was doing the *Histories*. I played Joan of Arc in *Henry VI Part One*, and then I was burned at the stake. Then I reincarnated as Margaret of Anjou. I played Margaret as a young woman in *Henry VI Part One* and *Part Two*, as the leader of an army in *Henry VI Part Three*, and then as a crazy old crone in *Richard III*. I followed her journey all the way. Going back to what I was saying about surfing the wave - that was the biggest wave of all."

.....

The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 27 to Saturday 31 May; Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre from Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 June and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 28 October - Saturday 1 November



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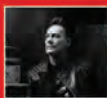
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SIMPLY SCAN THE QR TO SIGN UP TODAY

Live music from across the region...

Georgia Ruth

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sat 17 May

Boasting a unique sound that's positively dripping with folk influences, Georgia Ruth announced her arrival 12 years ago with debut album *Week Of Pines*. Since then, the Aberystwyth-born musician has released a further three records, and visits Shrewsbury this month in support of her latest offering, *Cool Head*. Co-produced with long-time collaborator Iwan Morgan, Georgia describes the album - 'a candid collection of songs spanning wide-open Americana to 60s-influenced folk ballads' - as "a long drive through night into morning".



Jorja Smith

The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton, Sat 31 May

When West Midlander and soul singer Jorja Smith uploaded debut track *Blue Lights* to SoundCloud nine years ago, Canadian rapper Drake was among the legion of listeners to sit up and take notice. Indeed, he liked what he heard so much that he featured Jorja not once but twice on his 2017 mixtape, *More Life*, which went on to score a massive hit on both Spotify and Apple Music.

The resultant exposure played its part in launching the Walsall-born singer into the music-industry stratosphere - and her star has been burning brightly pretty much ever since. Bringing her *Falling Or Flying* tour to Wolverhampton this month, Jorja is supported on the night by soulful singer-songwriter Mychelle.



Sultan Stevenson Trio

Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Thurs 8 May

Sultan Stevenson has wasted no time establishing himself as a force to be reckoned with on the jazz scene. Just a handful of years into his 20s, the London-born pianist communicates his innovative talent and artistic maturity with a quiet intensity, writing and performing compositions that seamlessly blend traditional jazz with more contemporary sounds.

Sultan has this year followed up his debut album, 2023 release *Faithful One*, with sophomore offering *El Roi*. The title is Hebrew for the biblical 'God of Sight'. "El Roi is about trying to further the themes in my music that have caught my attention artistically, and to explore them more clearly and concisely," explains Sultan, who uses his musicmaking to navigate the intricate landscapes of faith and identity. "It's a dedication to my heroes and an exploration of the religious and philosophical."

We Are Scientists

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 29 May

We Are Scientists' breakthrough success came with debut studio album *With Love And Squalor*, which featured hit single *Nobody Move*, *Nobody Get Hurt*, the song for which the rock duo are best known. "I can't wait for these shows to begin," said frontman Keith Murray, prior to the late-April start of the pair's new European & UK tour, of which this Sugarmill date forms a part. "I'd happily skip straight to the first show if I could - although I suppose we *do* need to rehearse, and I should probably get some new stage outfits!"

songwriting has become more sophisticated. We know what we like and we're more unabashed now. We know who we are."

Expect plenty of that heart-on-the-sleeve storytelling, along with beautiful lyrics, warm harmonies and relentless repartee, when the trio stop off in Shrewsbury this month as part of their 20th anniversary tour.



Eduardo Martín & Ahmed Dickinson

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 25 May

Cuban guitarist Ahmed Dickinson Cárdenas didn't just admire fellow countryman Eduardo Martín from afar; he actually took lessons with the great man, who is one of the most-performed guitar-music composers in the world. The pair clicked, and are playing Stafford to celebrate the release of their new album, *The Bridge*, a carefully curated compilation of Eduardo's most alluring works for two guitars.

The Young'uns

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 30 May

After many a year spent plying their trade at festivals and around the folk clubs of the North East, the Young'uns are now well established as one of the country's most popular folk/acoustic acts.

"We approach folk music as stories and songs and anecdotes," explains the trio's singer & accordion player, David Eagle. "Every gig is about storytelling, so our

SIMPLY THE BEST

**Holly Bannis talks about playing Tina Turner
in hit show What's Love Got To Do With It?**



After a spectacular 2024, during which more than 60,000 Tina Turner fans danced in the aisles at performances of What's Love Got To Do With It?, the hit show - a critically acclaimed tribute to Tina - is back with a bang in 2025. What's On caught up with Holly Bannis, who plays the rock & roll legend in the production, to find out more...

Whether you've been a fan of Tina Turner for decades or are discovering her magic for the very first time, What's Love Got To Do With It? promises to be an inspiring and uplifting experience that's sure to make you want to sing along. Holly Bannis stars as Tina, and is at the forefront of an evening of unstoppable energy and unforgettable music...

How did you land the part of Tina in the show, Holly?

I'd been singing semi-professionally for 10 years while working a day job - music was always part of my life. My dad, Greg Bannis (ex-Hot Chocolate lead singer), was a big influence.

In 2021, I auditioned for Starstruck on ITV, where I had to perform as three icons. Tina was one of my choices. The show happened during lockdown, so I had time to study her performances and style. The What's Love Got To Do With It? team saw me on TV and got in touch. I started as a backing singer and understudy but stepped into the lead role within a few months.

What makes Tina such a special artist?

When I prepared for Starstruck, I watched a lot of her live performances, studying her energy, movements and mannerisms. But what really struck me was her back story - her resilience, her strength, and how she overcame so much.

She once said that she didn't like her own voice because it was different, which really resonated with me. Learning about her helped me embrace my own voice and understand where I belong musically.

What can audiences expect from the show?

It's a full-on concert experience with a 10-piece band, backing singers, dancers, and all of Tina's biggest hits. We recreate the energy of her live shows - right down to the walk, the moves, and the way she connected with audiences. By the end of the night, it's a party! People always tell us how much it feels like a real Tina show. That's the best compliment we can get.

How did Tina's passing in May 2023 impact the show?

We were mid-show when she passed, but we didn't know until the end. The audience's energy shifted - more phones were out, people were crying. Backstage, we found out why. Since then, we've felt a deeper responsibility to honour her legacy. We haven't changed the show, but we know it carries more weight now. Fans want to keep her spirit alive, and we're proud to help do that.

What are your favourite songs to perform?

Private Dancer is a special moment. It starts with dialogue, and you can feel the audience's anticipation. The lights, the band solos, our sax player stepping forward... it's magic! Then there's Nutbush City Limits, one of the only songs Tina wrote herself. By then, the audience are on their feet dancing, and the energy is through the roof.

How do you keep up with the demands of touring?

Life on the road is intense - sometimes we drive six hours before even setting up. But we have a great team, and we take care of each other. Staying fit and healthy is key. I warm up and cool down my voice religiously, work with a vocal coach, and keep up with physical training. Singing as Tina isn't natural - it's a very specific sound that takes work to maintain safely. Even now, I still watch her performances and pick up new details to incorporate.

What's your pre-show ritual?

After setup and dinner, I start my makeup - Tina's dark eyeshadow and signature red lips. I put on my first of three wigs and my custom-made costume. The last step? Red lipstick. That's when I know I'm ready. Once that's on, I am Tina until the show is over.

Why should people go to see the show?

If you love Tina Turner or rock & roll, this show is for you. Even people who don't think they know her music are blown away - so many of her songs are classics. It's a show for all generations - parents, grandparents.

Everyone knows and loves Tina. And if you're not a fan before, you'll leave as one!

How important is Tina's legacy?

Tina will always be the Queen of Rock & Roll. Her music is timeless, but her story is just as important. She spoke openly about her struggles at a time when few did, and that changed lives. For me, this show has been life-changing. Through her music, I've found where I truly belong as a performer. Every night on stage is a privilege, and I can't wait to share that energy with new audiences.



What's Love Got To Do With It? The Ultimate Tina Turner Tribute shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Sun 11 May; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sun 6 July; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 29 October; Malvern Theatres, Fri 23 January 2026; The Civic Hall, Wolverhampton, Sun 28 March 2026; Dudley Town Hall, Sun 9 May 2026

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Comedy previews from across the region...

Dara Ó'Briain

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 15 & Fri 16 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sat 17 May; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 17 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 5 & Thurs 6 November

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



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

Jamali Maddix

Civic Hall, Wolverhampton, Fri 16 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 21 May; Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 5 June

One-time Chortle Student Comedian of the Year Jamali Maddix has been hailed for his frank yet ironic take on everyday racism and his willingness to tackle the hot-potato subject of terrorism.

He visits the Midlands three times across the next couple of months with his brand-new touring show, *Aston*.

Jonny Cole

Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton, Fri 2 May; Dudley Town Hall, Thurs 8 May; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 16 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 18 May; Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, Fri 23 May; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 24 May; Rugeley Rose Theatre, Fri 6 & Sat 7 June; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 11 June; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Thurs 12 June; Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, Fri 13 June; Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton, Sat 14 June; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 19 June

"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."



Zakir Khan Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 18 May

"I've been writing jokes ever since I was a kid," says Indian comedian Zakir Khan. "My early years were spent in a boys' school, a fact that gave me a near-unlimited stock of tales that I could use to make people roll around on the floor. The challenge for me was working out the best way to present

them."

The winner of Comedy Central's India's Best Standup award, Zakir has performed more than 1,000 sold-out shows in venues across the world. His Symphony Hall show this month will be performed in Hindi.

Kerry Godliman

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 17 May

Comedian & actress Kerry Godliman's new touring show, *Bandwidth*, contemplates how life looks for a middle-aged woman 'who is busy parenting teenagers, feels bogged down with knicker admin, and is giving some serious consideration to the possibility of dealing HRT on the black market'... You may remember Kerry from such TV shows as *Miranda*, *Our Girl* and *Ricky Gervais' Extras*, *Derek* and *After Life*. She's also had her own show on Radio Four. But it's live standup that's closest to her heart. "It's such a creative opportunity to say all the stuff I want to say about things like politics and parenting," she explains. "And that's amazing. There aren't many jobs where you can just say exactly what you like."



Sophie McCartney

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 4 May; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 10 May; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Fri 16 May

Having previously toured a show based around her experience of the perilous world of parenting, award-winning comedian Sophie McCartney now sets about tackling her perimenopausal panic by asking the question: what does life look like when you're too old to be young, but too young to be old? Sophie is urging her fans to grab their glow sticks and ready themselves for an evening of sequins, snorty laughs, and a pair of killer orthopaedic heels...



A SPARKLING SEASON AWAITS



Tue 27 – Sat 31 May



Tue 10 – Sat 14 Jun

Thu 12 Jun 7.30pm

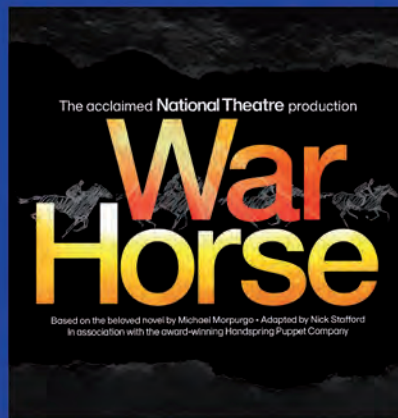


Tue 17 – Sat 21 Jun

AD Sat 21 Jun 2.30pm

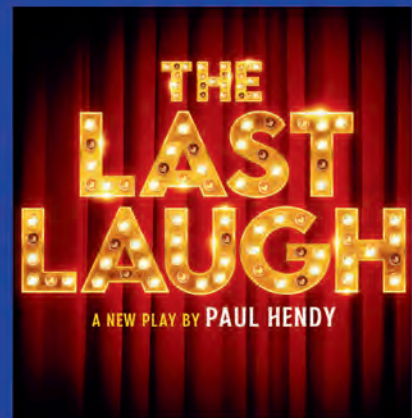


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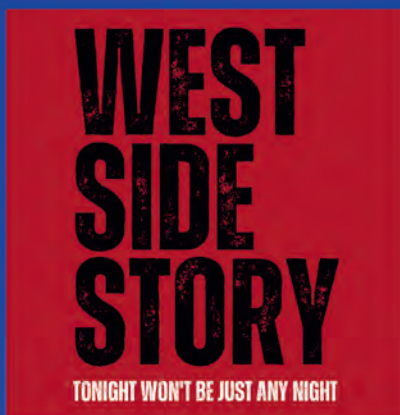
Thu 10 – Sat 19 Jul

CAP Thu 17 Jul 7.30pm AD Sat 19 Jul 2.30pm



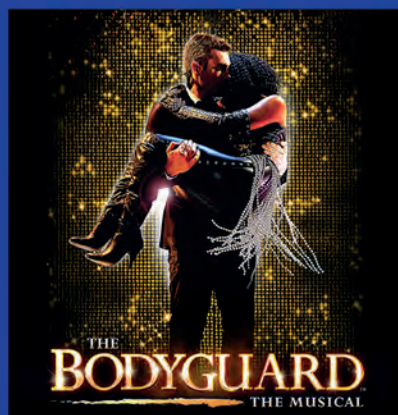
Tue 22 – Sat 26 Jul

Thu 24 Jul 7.30pm



Thu 14 – Sat 16 Aug

CAP Fri 15 Aug 7.30pm AD Sat 16 Aug 2.30pm



Sat 20 – Sat 27 Sep



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Comedy previews from across the region...

Andy Hamilton

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sun 18 May;
The Roses, Tewkesbury, Sun 15 June

"A lot of comedy shows are confessional, aren't they?" says Outnumbered writer and long-established standup comedian Andy Hamilton, in talking to Cambridge Independent. "People get up and talk about their struggles with their demons. But I don't really have any demons. I mean, maybe I should get some, and then I could do jokes about them!"

Andy is visiting the region with a show that's been described as an intimate evening of comic reflection, reminiscence and revelation.

The second half of the evening will feature a Q&A session with the audience.



Julian Clary

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 23 May;
Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 24 May

Following in the footsteps of comics such as Kenny Everett and Larry Grayson, Julian Clary peddles a fine line in 'saucy postcard humour' that disguises an intelligent sarcasm which digs fun at both himself and his audience.

The world of standup is undoubtedly where he's enjoyed most success, seeming to thrive on the close contact with a live audience. By contrast, his forays into television haven't always gone so well; indeed, a long-ago but infamous 'fisting' gag about a Conservative politician saw him blacklisted by television producers for some considerable time.

He's making a welcome return to the region this month with critically acclaimed standup offering A Fistful Of Clary.

"Yes, it *still* has a Western theme," says Julian of the much-toured show. "It was only a matter of time before I eased myself into some chaps once again..."



Ellie Taylor

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 9 May; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 24 May

Ellie Taylor kickstarted her comedy career in her late 20s, performing in standup reality TV series Show Me The Funny. "I got some other television work out of that and a few bookings," recalls Ellie, "but people's expectations outweighed what I was able to provide. I wasn't really good enough at that stage."

Now in her early 40s, Ellie's comedy has come a long way. Part of the secret of her success, she believes, is 'the way she tells 'em'. "I enjoy doing comedy with a narrative. A lot of standup shows have absolutely no narrative whatsoever, but a beginning, middle and end is very important to me."

David O'Doherty

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 22 May

David O'Doherty spent a lot of time wondering whether he actually wanted to be a stand-up comedian. His subsequent award-winning career as a comic shows he's absolutely made the right choice. Jokes include: "I like the Ten Commandments but have a problem with the ninth. It should be: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox - except in Scrabble.'"

Bring The Laughter

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome,
Sat 17 May

There's the promise of 'pure comedy and good vibes' when Bring The Laughter makes a welcome return this month, with Muhsin Yesilada and Raj Poojara (pictured) being joined by Birmingham's Shazia Mirza.

One of the UK's most creative female comedians, Muslim Shazia has never been averse to treading a delicate line when it comes to her material. Her post-9/11 joke, "My name's Shazia Mirza - at least, that's

what it says on my pilot's licence", marked her out as a comedian happy to balance on the very precipice of acceptable humour. Other examples of her style and content include: "My parents really want me to get married. But Muslim men don't want to marry me because... I speak" and "My dad said if I went out with a black man, he'd burn me. Which would be good, because then I'd be black, too"



POWER TRIP

The RSC explores Shakespeare's bloodiest play, Titus Andronicus, through the lens of 21st-century aggression...



One of Shakespeare's earliest - and goriest - tragedies, Titus Andronicus is also one of his least-performed works. Actress Emma Fielding, who stars in the Royal Shakespeare Company's current production, explains to What's On why the play's themes of power, conflict and revenge make it as compelling and relevant as ever...

Written around 1590 and considered to be Shakespeare's earliest tragedy, Titus Andronicus has had something of a chequered history. Initially one of his most popular plays, it has since become widely regarded as his worst, with 17th-century dramatist Edward Ravenscroft notably referring to it as "a heap of rubbish" and numerous scholars debating whether the Bard wrote it at all.

Theories about how much of the play Shakespeare wrote continue to this day, and although it remains one of the least performed from his repertoire - even the RSC hasn't staged it since 2017 - much of the criticism has abated in recent times.

The latest production is directed by Max Webster - fresh from recent successes working with Doctor Who actors David Tennant (in Macbeth) and Ncuti Gatwa (The Importance Of Being Earnest). Now showing at the company's Swan Theatre, it stars celebrated actor Simon Russell Beale in the title role, with Emma Fielding as his sister, Marcia. The award-winning actress has been an RSC regular since spending a season there straight out of drama school, and is now one of the company's associate artists. She firmly believes the historical debate over who wrote Titus Andronicus is less important than how exciting and relevant the play remains.

"Shakespeare might not have written all of it, but that's the same with a lot of plays written at the time," she says. "There was lots of collaboration - people came in to do a bit of a tidy up, or *he* came in to do a bit of a tidy up. "The watchword is that it's his bloodiest tragedy, but it's always about much more than that, and it absolutely has resonance today."

The play revolves around a bloodbath of violent retribution that's set into motion when the titular Roman general, returning victorious from a war against the Goths, executes his enemy's son in a ruthless act of vengeance. The violence that follows highlights the bloody horror of war, which the current production views through the lens of 21st-century aggression.

"We're definitely not doing it in Elizabethan dress," says Emma, while remaining coy

about precisely how the play will look. "I'm trying not to give any spoilers! There is violence written in the script - and we're playing the script largely as written - but it'll be done slightly differently. It's not like Reservoir Dogs!

"Sometimes, if you do things with concealed pouches of blood, everyone spends five or 10 seconds thinking 'How did they do that?' But if you do it a different way, it lets you get on with the story a bit quicker."

Telling the story is crucial, and is one of the reasons Emma enjoys the "on the job training" of rehearsals, where she says the actors not only find out what the words they're saying mean, but why they're saying them.

"It's like we're decoding it. Sometimes it can be really clear, but sometimes it's like a crossword puzzle. And that's fine; that's the joy of it. Ultimately, you've got to communicate it to an audience - that's the most important thing. Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed and not have people scratching their heads and being terribly po-faced about it."

Emma believes the rhythms in the language are there to help, not hinder, the cast or audience. She is confident the story will be clear, as will its underlying theme - the horror and futility of war - even as hostilities rage around the globe.

"There are so many conflicts going on in the world at the moment, where people fly in and think there can be a quick and easy fix, not realising it's generation upon generation and cycles of violence, revenge and inherited trauma.

"Look at Israel and Palestine, Ukraine, Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo. All over the world, at any time, there's constant military action, which is never a solution in itself because no one ever thinks about 'the day after', sitting down and having a chat. A military solution will never bring peace."

Rather than simply condemn it, she says Titus Andronicus explores why conflict occurs - and, as usual, it involves Shakespeare observing the human condition. "Without ramming it home and dressing

people up in a particular way, audiences will get that it's about whatever conflict you want it to be about, because it's about human nature and our need to get one over on each other in that animalistic, feral way. We're human, we're flawed, we're... difficult. People make rash decisions very quickly.

"It's also about a crumbling empire, and what you do to try to hold on to power. These are massive themes that will always be current somewhere. It's beautiful and horrific at the same time. I love it."

She also loves working with Olivier and BAFTA Award winner Simon Russell Beale, who, although he is Shakespearean acting royalty, is the absolute opposite of a daunting presence to his fellow actors.

"Simon's the least intimidating person you could meet," laughs Emma. "I've known him a very long time. He's incredibly skilful at what he does, but he's also really great to have in a room. He's so encouraging, he's really kind, and I just hope a tiny bit of his talent will rub off on me."

The actress also claims a relaxed vibe in the rehearsal room - where everyone can contribute - is critical to her own enjoyment ("it's why I love doing theatre"), as well as the success of the production.

"Max actively encourages people to make suggestions, and we've got a really great creative team. Any play you do, I think - because I'm an old bag - should always be greater than the sum of its parts, and if you don't allow people to contribute, then it never will be that. With this production, that's what we've got - a really great collaborative environment to try and do our best.

"You've got fabulous language, great performances, and a story that goes like an express train - people won't even stop to think. If you want to be shaken and stirred, you should come and see it - it'll be an exhilarating watch."

.....
Titus Andronicus shows at the RSC's Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Saturday 7 June



Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 20 May - Sun 1 June

Joseph was Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's first foray into the world of musical theatre, paving the way for later offerings Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita. Fabulously fun and frothy, the show offers great entertainment for anybody who fancies the kind of night out that lets you leave your brain at home.

Joseph sees the future in dreams, and tells his 11 brothers that he's had a vision in which he's seen them all bowing down to him. Not surprisingly, the lads are a tad annoyed with him about this - and then feel even more aggrieved when their dad gives him a coat of many colours...

Much-loved Hippodrome panto favourite Matt Slack stars as Pharaoh.

...Earnest?

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Mon 12 - Tues 13 May; The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Sat 17 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 24 & Sun 25 May

"When I pitch it to my non-theatre friends," explains Simon Paris, the director & co-writer of ...Earnest?, "I say we're putting on a very traditional, classical play [Oscar Wilde's The Importance Of Being Earnest], and it's all going well until the lead actor doesn't show up. The director comes out, apologises, and says 'It's okay, because one of you is going to do it.' We then find the best person in the audience to play this role, and *they* do it."



What could possibly go wrong? Well, in common with shows such as Noises Off, the answer is, pretty much everything, with the desperate director (of the play within the play) doing his best to keep the production on track as more and more audience members are drafted in to replace an ever-thinning cast...

A fun evening is definitely in prospect - particularly if you have aspirations to tread the boards yourself!

Ghost Stories

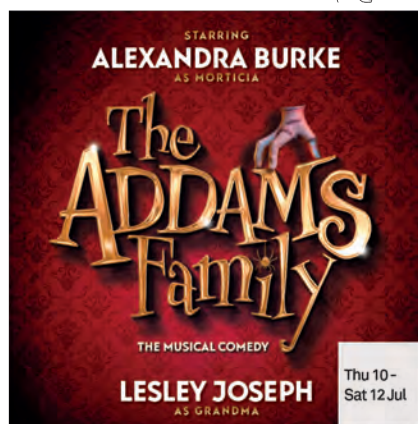
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 20 - Sat 24 May; Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Tues 1 - Sat 5 July; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 15 - Sat 19 July; Malvern Theatres, Tues 22 - Sat 26 July

After a couple of years spent giving London West End theatre-goers the heebie jeebies, Ghost Stories is this month spooking audiences in the Midlands!

The brainchild of Andy Nyman - co-creator of Derren Brown's television and stage productions - and The League Of Gentlemen's Jeremy Dyson,

the show focuses on the character of Professor Goodman, a 'man of reason' who's determined to debunk the paranormal. But when he embarks on an investigation into three apparent hauntings, as recounted by a night-watchman, a teenage boy, and a businessman awaiting his first child, the professor finds himself at the outer limits of rationality - and fast running out of plausible explanations for what he's experiencing... Clive Mantle, Eddie Loddmer-Elliot, David Cardy and Dan Tetsall, star.







A Shoddy Detective And The Art Of Deception

Regal Theatre, Tenbury Wells, Thurs 1 - Fri 2 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 23 - Sat 24 May; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 27 May; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Wed 28 May

If slapstick is the name of your game comedy-wise, then bag yourself a seat for this high-energy show from the well-regarded Shoddy Theatre.

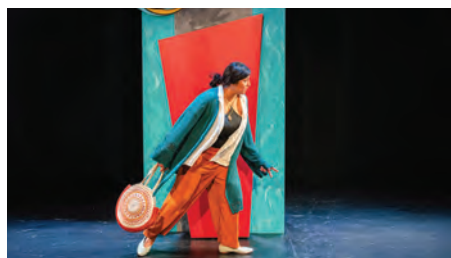
A small group of one-time East 15 Acting School students, the ensemble have previously made a significant splash at the Edinburgh Fringe, where they were nominated for three Offie Awards for their coming-of-age comedy *The Olive Boy*. They're visiting various Midlands venues this month with the first show they ever produced, a lively whodunnit that sees four actors taking on the challenge of playing a dozen characters.

A Beginners Guide To Widowhood

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 9 May

With her husband having passed away, Suria takes her children on holiday and finds herself facing plenty of challenges - from the turbulent dynamics of a newly fractured family, to dealing with sympathetic head tilts and the use of the dreaded 'W' word...

A one-woman show, *A Beginner's Guide To Widowhood* explores the experiences of young, widowed women as they deal with the loss of their loved one. In the process, the play asks the question: why does society find it so hard to talk about death?



Welsh National Opera

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 8 - Sat 10 May

Welsh National Opera are stopping off in Birmingham this month with two shows. Mozart's *The Marriage Of Figaro* sees love and laughter converge in a whirlwind of clever schemes...

Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* (pictured), meanwhile, is an iconic tale of isolation and prejudice which comes complete with

dramatic choruses, enthralling solos and the famous *Sea Interludes*.

There's only one Hippodrome performance of each, so be sure to book your seat as soon as possible.



The Pocket Dream

Lichfield Garrick, until Sat 3 May

Lichfield Garrick's latest in-house production is this reworking of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Written by Elly Brewer & Sandi Toksvig - and first performed by Nottingham Playhouse more than 30 years ago - *The Pocket Dream* tells the story of a company of strolling players whose production of the bard's most popular comedy hangs in the balance. Can a motley crew of makeshift mechanicals possibly save the day?...

The Garrick's longtime pantomime favourites, Sam Rabone and Ben Thornton - here reuniting far earlier in the year than usual - are joined in the show by Joe Feeney. Joe starred alongside Sam and Ben in last Christmas' production of *Jack And The Beanstalk*, playing the character of the ne'er-do-well Luke Backinanger (geddit?).

Bosie

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 23 & Sat 24 May

Making a welcome return some eight years after its critically acclaimed debut, Rik Barnett's one-man play - here produced by Northern Rep Theatre and starring Barnett himself - focuses the spotlight on Oscar Wilde's beau, Lord Alfred Bruce Douglas - otherwise known as Bosie.

As Wilde's scandalous story unfolds prior to his sensational trial, the privileged and petulant Bosie ruminates on his own sexuality and prowess, his hunger for position and status - and the part he has played in the very public downfall of his celebrated lover...

Jarman

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 27 & Wed 28 May

"Audiences can expect dynamism, inspiration and spontaneity," explains Mark Farrelly, who has written and performs this one-man

tribute to filmmaker Derek Jarman. "Derek was a wondrous polymath; a writer, painter, gardener, filmmaker and activist. He lived a life without boundaries or convention and is a beacon for anyone who wants to express themselves without restriction. He also showed tremendous, heart-breaking courage in dealing with and dying from Aids. So, in this show, you get a thrilling, funny and authentic encounter with this man, who still has so much to teach us."



What will you see next?



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Wed 14 May 7.30pm

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Earnest?

Sat 24 May & Sun 25 May 7.30pm

This one-of-a-kind comedy sensation is completely different, completely chaotic, and completely Wilde every single night.

Kim's Convenience

Tue 27 – Sat 31 May

Now a global smash hit, this is the hilarious and heartwarming drama about a family-run Korean store that inspired the Netflix phenomenon.

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Dr Julie Smith In Conversation

Sun 25 May 5pm

Dr Julie has amassed an audience of over 8 million, and is the go-to online resource for mental health tips and tricks for millennials and Gen Z.

Kirsty Gallagher: Your Cosmic Purpose Live

Tue 3 Jun 7.30pm

The Sunday Times bestselling author will share her newest work, *Your Cosmic Purpose*, a simple yet profound guide to uncovering your life's true path.

Michael Rosen: Getting Through It

Wed 11 Jun 7.30pm

Poetry legend Michael Rosen presents his new one-person show, formed of a double-bill of monologues: *The Death of Eddie* and *Many Kinds of Love*.

WARWICK

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Theatre previews from around the region



Marie & Rosetta

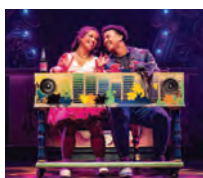
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 27 - Sat 31 May

Wolverhampton's very own Beverley Knight returns to her home city to star as African American singer-songwriter Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Sister Rosetta's distinctive gospel recordings - blending spiritual lyrics with the sound of the electric guitar - saw her scoring a major hit with mid-20th-century rhythm & blues and rock & roll audiences. Set in Mississippi in 1946, the story catches up with her at a time when her nightclub performances have seen her shunned by straitlaced church folk. Having persuaded a saintly singer named Marie Knight to join her on a tour of the segregated southern states, Rosetta must first of all convert the younger woman's pure Sunday sound into something that has just a little more swing...

& Juliet

Birmingham Hippodrome, until 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 Wanted band member and 2015 Strictly Come Dancing winner Jay McGuinness taking top billing. Steps favourite Lee Latchford-Evans co-stars. Featured pop anthems include Britney Spears' Baby One More Time and Katy Perry's Roar, as well as chart toppers Since U Been Gone, It's My Life and Can't Stop The Feeling.

The Croft

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 20 - Sat 24 May; Malvern Theatres, Tues 27 - Sat 31 May; The Rep, Birmingham, Tues 10 - Sat 14 June

Two women arrive at a former crofter's hut in the deserted village of Coillie Ghille. The remote Scottish Highlands seems the perfect place to get away from it all - until, that is, the two friends find themselves enveloped by The Croft's dark and dangerous history...

Written by Ali Milles and based on a true

highland story, the show stars Gray O'Brien (Coronation Street), Caroline Harker (A Touch Of Frost - pictured) and, topping the bill, veteran television actor Liza Goddard (Doctor Who and Bergerac).



"I think audiences will enjoy The Croft," says Liza. "I think they'll have a good time, find it intriguing, and maybe a little bit scary!"

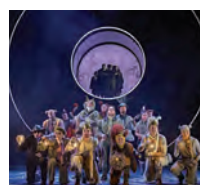
The show is being presented by long-established Bury St Edmunds company Original Theatre, which recently toured to the region with its critically acclaimed adaptation of Sebastian Faulks' epic World War One novel, Birdsong.

The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 27 - Sat 31 May; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 3 - Sat 7 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 28 October - Sat 1 November

This much-loved story from the pen of CS Lewis is rightly regarded as an all-time classic of children's literature. It sees the lion-god Aslan coming to the aid of four youngsters who've accidentally stumbled into his mystical world of Narnia...

Visiting Birmingham this month having last stopped off in the city at The Rep for the Christmas 2023/24 season, the show features 'magical storytelling, bewitching stagecraft



and incredible puppets'.

"We have this epic stage and fantastic imagery," says the production's director, Michael Fentiman, "but there's not a lot of literal depiction of location of the show. Instead, we're asking the audience to take a leap with us. We work with an illusionist to try and do things that seem impossible. So the way we use magic and lighting and shift-of-focus achieves the possible from the seemingly impossible."

The show's Midlands stop-offs, this month, next month, and in the autumn, come as part of a UK-wide tour to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the novel's publication.

Whatever Happened To Phoebe Salt

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Sat 31 May - Sat 21 June

Forming part of the Arthur Berry 100 and Stoke-on-Trent centenary celebrations, Whatever Happened To Phoebe Salt is here receiving its world premiere, 37 years after unsung local playwright Berry wrote the play. Born and raised in the industrial heartland of Stoke-on-Trent, Phoebe spends her days working in the meat market but desperate to break into showbusiness. Soon enough, opportunity comes knocking. But will a TV appearance help her finally escape the trials and tribulations of her working life?...

"Arthur was writing specifically for our theatre-in-the-round with Phoebe Salt," explains New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins. "It's such a privilege to be producing his final play, written for the New Vic but never performed."

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Rizwan-Muazzam Qawwals
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24 May | Town Hall



BBC National Orchestra of Wales
29 May | Symphony Hall



The Twang
31 May | Town Hall

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Theatre previews from around the region



Much Ado About Nothing

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until 24 May

The course of true love never runs smooth in one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies. Beatrice and Benedick conduct their courtship through sarcasm and verbal sparring. The younger Claudio and Hero, meanwhile, find their heady romance cruelly compromised by the villainous Don John, who's determined to stop them tying the knot...

Fresh from his tenure as artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse, Michael Longhurst takes the helm of this imaginative new version of the bard's oft-performed romcom. Its action is relocated to the world of top-flight football and celebrity culture, 'where scandal-filled rivalries are the hottest new thing, and lads and WAGs collide'. Freema Agyeman (Doctor Who) and Nick Blood (Day Of The Jackal, Slow Horses) top-bill as Beatrice and Benedick.

One Man Poe

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 10 May

Paying homage to the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Stephen Smith directs himself in a one-man presentation which not only completely sold out during its run in Edinburgh last summer but also picked up the Fringe's Spookies Award for Best Horror Solo Show. Featuring Poe's original text, the production includes four of the legendary author's most famous stories: The Tell-Tale Heart; The Pit And The Pendulum; The Raven; and The Black Cat...

Suitable for audience members aged 12-plus.



Pride & Prejudice* (*Sort Of)

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 Sir 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.



Spitfire Girls

Malvern Theatres, Tues 20 - Sat 24 May;
The Rep, Birmingham, Mon 16 - Sat 21 June

The real life but rarely acknowledged war-effort contribution of the women of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) is joyously celebrated in this heartwarming new play from Tilted Wig. Paying tribute to the pioneering pilots who took to the skies during the Second World War to ferry warplanes between factories, maintenance units and front-line squadrons, the show has been developed and produced with support from the National Theatre's Generate Programme.



The Rocky Horror Show

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 5 - Sat 10 May; The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 22 - Sat 27 September

Hook up your fishnets, tighten your corsets and prepare to 'do The Time Warp again' - The Rocky Horror Show is returning to the region!

Richard O'Brien's cult production tells the tale of the straight-laced Brad and the deliciously corruptible Janet, who arrive at the castle of the alien transvestite Frank N Furter and witness the birth of the monster, Rocky.

Along the way, they take the audience through a selection of love-'em-or-loathe-'em musical numbers, including Sweet Transvestite, Damn It Janet and The Time Warp. Great fun's a guarantee - particularly if you get into the spirit of things and attend the show dressed in your very best stockings & suspenders (as many patrons do)! Motherland star Jackie Clune - she played school receptionist Irene Lamb in the hit BBC TV comedy series - takes on the role of the Narrator at the Regent.



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The Dinosaur That Pooped: A Rock Show

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 17 May;
Albany Theatre, Coventry, Fri 30 May;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 20 July;
Malvern Theatres, Sat 25 October; Lichfield
Garrick, Wed 29 October

Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter are promising their brand-new production will come complete with new songs, a lot of laughs and (not surprisingly given the show's title) a whole load of poo!

Based on Tom and Dougie's bestselling children's books, *The Dinosaur That Pooped* follows Danny and Dino as they try to get hold of the last two tickets to their favourite rock band's last-ever concert. But with a villainous band manager lurking, nothing goes to plan... Will the band perform? Will Danny rock out? Or will Dino's rumbling tummy save the day?...

Little Bulb: Four Seasons

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,
Sun 25 May

Olivier Award-winning Little Bulb bring together puppetry, physical theatre and clowning fun for yet another of their enchanting and innovative theatre shows. This one catches up with an intrepid team of magical gardeners as they tend to a marvellous menagerie of flora and fauna across the seasons of the year. The action unfolds against a score of seasonally inspired tracks - including, as might be expected given the production's title, Vivaldi's iconic violin concerti, *The Four Seasons*.



You Choose

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent,
Tues 27 & Wed 28 May; Halesowen Town Hall,
Fri 6 June

The highly rated Nonsense Room have plenty of form when it comes to providing top-quality theatre experiences for youngsters to enjoy - their touring productions of *Shark In The Park* and *Hairy Maclary* have been met with pretty much universal acclaim wherever

they've visited.

The company's latest venture, *You Choose*, is an interactive musical based on the same-named picture book by Pippa Goodhart and *Shark In The Park* author Nick Sharratt. Using the book as inspiration, and via a series of games and challenges, Nonsense Room promise that each show will be a unique experience, 'featuring different locations, costumes and much more, every time!'

An Ant Called Amy

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Fri 30 & Sat 31 May

"Amy the ant is missing her brother, Andy," explains Julie Sharkey, the playwright behind this well-reviewed 40-minute touring show. "This is a gentle tale. It's entertaining and fun. It's not going to uncover an awful truth or discuss serious illness. Simply, we meet this little ant Amy, who is working to forget - until her supposed arch enemy, the Brown Spider, gently nudges her to find Andy in the everyday..."



Bringing their signature mix of entertainment and education to Birmingham, the fun-loving Australian



music group will be joined by all their Wiggly friends, including Dorothy the Dinosaur, Wags the Dog, Henry the Octopus, Captain Feathersword and TikTok sensation The Tree of Wisdom.

There's A Monster In Your Show

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 10 & Sun 11
May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 13
& Wed 14 May

Children's author Tom Fletcher's critically acclaimed *Who's In Your Book?* series here makes the leap from page to stage. The hit musical sees *Little Monster* being joined by friends Dragon, Alien and Unicorn for 50 minutes of comedy, chaos and high-energy fun.



The Wiggles

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 14 May

"We love touring the UK," says founding Wiggle Anthony Field. "We're all looking forward to seeing our old friends, as well as meeting some new ones."

A close-up portrait of a middle-aged man with a shaved head and a short, well-groomed beard. He has a friendly expression, smiling slightly, and is looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a dark brown, long-sleeved V-neck shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

FROM PANTO TO PHARAOH

**Hippodrome pantomime star Matt Slack is back...
in Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat!**

Matt Slack may be the king of comedy in Birmingham Hippodrome's pantomime every Christmas, but his next appearance at the venue is taking place in springtime and sees him donning an altogether different crown - as the rock & roll character of Pharaoh in the currently touring production of Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

Matt spoke to What's On about appearing in Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical, and about the wide-ranging and sometimes entirely unpredictable nature of life as an actor...

Matt, we usually see you causing chaos in the annual panto - how do you feel about your side-step into the Hippodrome's musical theatre programme?

It's fantastic. I'm extremely honoured and privileged to be asked. Michael Harrison - the producer of Joseph, and of course the pantomimes - when he asked me, I said it would be an honour. Such a prodigious role in such a prestigious show - I'm very, very lucky; I can't wait to do it. It's very nice to do something different from panto at the Hippodrome.

What's your history with musical theatre - have you dabbled before?

I've had a very varied career - a lot of people don't know that. I do screen, stage, and serious drama. My first taste of musical theatre was Boogie Nights, the 70s musical. I played a part which was the understudy to the lead role of Roddy, and eventually I played the lead - I loved it. It was something very different to what I was used to, but I took to it straight away. My second real taste was when I went to see Blood Brothers in Torquay, where I'm originally from. The show just blew my mind. It blew me away, and still does to this day. I'm very proud that, after I watched it, about six months later, I was in it!

You've got a long history of working with Michael Harrison, Joseph's producer. Did that influence you when you were asked to play the role of Pharaoh?

He's an incredible man, Michael Harrison, and I owe everything to him - my success at Birmingham, he opened the door for me. He's one of the biggest producers of musical theatre in the country, and he took pantomime to a different level. When I'm asked to go and appear for two weeks only in Birmingham, what is there to say 'no' to? I couldn't say no. I know there'll be a lot of people who will go to see Joseph because they're Joseph fans - musical theatre fans. I'll bring a new audience, and vice versa - people may go away going 'Oh, we must go and see him in the panto!'

What's your Pharaoh going to be like?

It's a tricky one, because originally it was 'The King' - it's based on Elvis Presley. I was a massive Elvis fan as a kid... I think they still want to stick true to that, but I shall make it my own. It's kind of an amalgamation or a hybrid with Matt Slack - whoever that is, I

don't know! The man is very different from the performer.

There will be elements of Elvis in there. It doesn't have to be just an impression of Elvis. I don't need an Elvis wig and sideburns! The show's moved on from how it was originally played when it first came out. The associate director just said "Have fun with it!"

Does your working year usually follow the same pattern?

It's a funny old life, really, because it's either 100 miles an hour, or it's the complete opposite. It can be testing to get back into gear, if you switch off too much... I've just moved home and I've got a 10-month-old baby, so I'm being a dad, doing runs to the tip and things like that, painting and decorating. So I've got one finger on that pulse. The other thing is, after pantomime, I need that down time - just to rest my voice for a start!

I was in episode six of Bergerac, the remake. That was nice. You just don't know; sometimes you've got something on the horizon - next week, I could be cast in a movie! That happened a couple of years ago when we were on honeymoon in Mauritius. I had a casting for a Netflix film. I did a short thing with a phone, just handheld, and I got the job! It turned out to be an award-winning movie alongside Millie Bobby Brown and Ray Winstone. It's very exciting; you just don't know what's around the corner.

What would you say about Joseph to an audience member who comes to see you in panto every year?

If you're a fan of me, fantastic - you'll see me in a different light. I'll still have that little wink and that 'comedy walk', because that lends itself to the role. There are parts that I've played where people wouldn't recognise me. That's what I do; I'm a comic *and* an actor, and it's not all going to be the same. With this role, they can see a bit of Matt Slack, and the Joseph fans will see an actor they don't necessarily recognise or know, playing the part of Pharaoh - making it as good as I possibly can. It's a great gift of a role. It's a showstopper moment.

There's often a lot of bare chests on show in Joseph. Have you felt any pressure to hit the gym before you hit the stage?

I'll be honest... with having a 10-month-old baby, keeping fit has not been my priority.

You don't have time! It's full-on being a dad again at 54 - nearly 55 - so I'm gonna try and get in shape as much as I possibly can. I don't mind if I've got a bit of a beer belly, though - I'll use that to my comedy advantage! I've got no qualms about the costume - if Joe McElderry can wear it, I can wear it! I've not put it on yet, and I'm having some boots made. I did see footage of Donny Osmond [playing Pharaoh], and he is really fit! I don't know how old he is, but he's an incredible man. I promise, just for the mums, I'll get in the gym - at least once!

Do you have a favourite musical number in the show?

Obviously the number that I'm doing, which is Song Of The Pharaoh - a rock & roll number. That's great fun, with the ensemble performing as well. I think the music, from the off, is just enchanting. It's captivating, it's mesmerising, and it's addictive. Everything seems familiar, because it is familiar! Even if you've never seen the show, you will recognise at least one tune, one melody. You just feel very safe - it's like a warm mug of musical theatre.

Close Every Door is just incredible, and there's one moment in Act Two, with all the brothers. They are absolutely fantastic - it's such a talented cast. They do a big, epic number, and the harmonies, and that's a highlight moment.

If you had your pick of another musical in the future, which would you choose, and who would you play?

I've always been a fan of Les Mis and the role of Thénardier. I'd love to play that, and it was on the cards a while ago. If that came around again, that would be fantastic. I'd also love to play someone like Fagin... Those 'character roles', I would love. Who knows?! The whole point about being an actor - a comic actor or a straight actor - is the diversity of those roles. That's what I find exciting... I find getting laughs from an audience just as rewarding as making an audience emotional or making them cry. I need both ends of the spectrum.

.....
Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 20 May to Sunday 1 June

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Light entertainment from around the region



Murder She Didn't Write

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 14 May;
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 1 June

Improvised shows are seemingly all the rage nowadays - and this one has certainly got plenty to recommend it...

First and foremost, it was a multiple-sell-out hit at the Edinburgh Fringe...

Secondly, it's presented by a critically acclaimed company - Degrees Of Error - who are past masters of the improv genre...

Thirdly, the show is a real hoot. An Agatha Christie-inspired whodunnit, it features a classic murder-mystery which is created 'on the spot'. Audience members are then encouraged to don their deerstalkers (if they've brought them along), grab a magnifying glass and make sure their 'finger of suspicion' is 'at the ready'... The show runs for two hours, including an interval.

Showdown

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Thurs 8 - Sat 10 May

Exploring the concept of 'healthy competition' via six fearless contestants pushed to their limits in a no-holds-barred race to the top, Showdown brings together comedy and audience interaction with a bold mix of circus, spoken word, UK hip-hop, grime and Afrobeat.

The show is presented by local contemporary circus company Upswing.



MC Hammersmith

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 17 May; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 30 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 31 May

Widely considered to be the greatest rapper ever to emerge from the 'ghetto' that is middle-class west London - the competition for such a coveted accolade must be fierce indeed! - MC Hammersmith specialises in improvised freestyle rap comedy based on audience suggestions.

"As a straight, cisgender, privately educated white male," he told voicemag.uk, "I think it's important to acknowledge my struggle: sometimes, I can't get a slot on a professional comedy night in London because too many of my school friends are already on the bill. Cut me a break, society..."

Susan Murray: How Not To Die In A Plane Crash

Wolverhampton Arts Centre,
Sat 10 May

Comparisons with Kerry Godliman and Sarah Millican have done wonders for Susan Murray's profile, playing their part in establishing her reputation as one of the UK's funniest female comedians. Her currently touring show sees Susan promising to make her audience 'laugh and cry at the same time' with a host of 'useful death-defying survival tips, all wrapped up in fantastic jokes'.



Danny Lee Grew: 24K Magic

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Fri 9 May

Danny Lee Grew's publicity advises would-be audience members to expect their jaws to do some serious dropping during 24K Magic, a 'spellbinding' production awash with 'illusion, laughs, gasps, and stunning sleight-of-hand sorcery'. With celebrities including David Beckham, James Corden, Stormzy, Pink and Chris Hemsworth rumoured to be among his biggest fans, Danny will be hoping to impress a whole new generation with this latest show - a family-friendly offering that's suitable for youngsters aged eight and older.



Nick Mohammed Mr Swallow: Show Pony

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 15 May

He may have been one of the worst contestants in Taskmaster history, but Nick Mohammed has proved himself a winner in pretty much every other aspect of his showbiz career. His success has been due, in no small measure, to his much-loved alter-ego Mr Swallow, the attention-seeking man-child who he's been playing for more than a decade. Nick and Mr S are here making a welcome return in a brand-new show, one which has been described by the latter as "payback for everyone who didn't come to the last tour". Expect magic, music, 'and a whole load of brand-new mistakes'.



Jamaica Love

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 4 May

The 77th anniversary of Windrush is marked via this critically acclaimed show, which was nominated in the Best Musical Production category at the Black British Theatre Awards. Reflecting on the deep and intertwined history of Britain and Jamaica, the production brings together singers John McLean and Celia Wickham-Anderson (of Black Voices fame) for a journey through Jamaica's rich musical heritage, from ska and rocksteady, to reggae, dub and dancehall.





CELEBRATIONS EN POINTE

BRB2's Gala performance will take audiences back to the roots of modern ballet - as Carlos Acosta explains...

A new show by ballet company BRB2 promises to bring the very best past, present and future dance to the stage, according to Carlos Acosta, the director of Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB).

BRB's junior company, BRB2 aims to identify, develop and showcase talented young dancers from around the world in theatres across the UK.

The new production, Carlos Acosta's Ballet Celebration - which shows at Birmingham Hippodrome early this month - takes audiences back to the roots of modern ballet and pays tribute to legendary stage impresario Sergei Diaghilev.

With the programme featuring The Firebird, Spectre de la Rose, Les Sylphides, Les Biches and Scheherazade, the performance is a showcase of some of the most revolutionary works of ballet, danced by the stars of the future.

"These are very talented young dancers, who, hopefully, in a couple of years' time or in a year's time, will join our company and rise all the way through the ranks," says Carlos. "Some may choose to stay with BRB, but it all depends on people's ambitions and what they want from life. Others will stay with BRB for a time and then go to other companies.

"But this is a chance to see them as they are, starting out. They are excellent dancers. We have brought talented young dancers from Australia, from America, from Cuba, from Ukraine, as I am very aware not just to operate on our own doorsteps but to reach out to different countries to see what talent is there as well.

"It's always nice when you are part of the beginning of somebody's career and you can look back and say 'I saw them when they first started.'"

Launched three years ago, BRB2 features an annual cohort of roughly half a dozen dancers, aged from 18 to 22, who undergo two years of intensive training and development. Along the way, they perform in shows such as The Nutcracker and Swan Lake with the main company, but also tour their own repertory.

The five dancers of the first cohort have all joined the main BRB company as artists. The current BRB2 company comprises dancers now in their second year of the programme and a new cohort on their first tour.

From the very beginning, Carlos and BRB2 artistic co-ordinator Kit Holder have been determined to push the dancers to their limits in terms of the shows they perform. And the new tour puts these young dancers

through their paces with a host of classic works.

"This programme is a tribute to Diaghilev and the beginning of modern ballet," says Carlos. "Diaghilev created a movement that launched the career of artists like Picasso, Cocteau, Stravinsky and Massine, as well as the dancer Nijinsky and the choreographer Fokine. So this programme is a homage to that era.

"If people like their ballet and their dance, it's great to see where it all began. This show is a chance to explore how much ballet has evolved from that time. These dances may be from the past, but they help us understand so much more about where we are going in dance."

Many of the works have a special resonance for Carlos, who performed them during his glittering career as a top principal with companies including the Royal Ballet.

"These are ballets that are very dear to me because I grew up with them. I remember Scheherazade when I was in English National Ballet, performing it when I was 19 - and that is exactly the age that these BRB2 dancers are. And that was the age that Nijinsky was when he danced Scheherazade.

"I have performed Spectre de la Rose in many places, including at The Met with American Ballet Theatre, and I remember when I rehearsed Les Sylphides with Dame Alicia Markova and I was 18.

"I wanted to pay tribute to that era and also my beginnings by bringing these ballets back to the stage. When I came to the UK in the 90s, they were pretty much part of the fabric of the repertory of many companies, but they don't get seen on stage so much these days. And yet they are fantastic ballets."

The pieces are also works which ask a lot of their performers.

"The whole point of BRB2 is to develop these dancers, and the only way to do that is by having them do hard things, technically and artistically. They are still at the beginning of the road, and the only way to develop a dancer is to expose their body to hard training.

"Dancing is a battle between mind and body. The mind has to be able to cope. It has to be trained to absorb all the information, and the more you have access to complexity of work, the better you will be prepared in the future.

"What is special about BRB2 is that it has a tailor-made repertory just for that company, while they are also touring with the main company and featuring in their works. So for two years they are pretty much part of the

company, but at the same time they have a lot to work on with their own rep. That develops the dancers quicker and faster. They are being challenged and pushed, and you can see it in their performances."

For Carlos, who grew up in Cuba's capital city of Havana and became a ballet phenomenon, BRB2 is giving young people a chance to reach for the sky. And the project has been hugely supported by donors including the Jerwood Foundation, the Oak Foundation, Charles Holloway OBE, Linbury Trust, Mary Laing and the late David Laing, the George Cadbury Fund, The Kirby Laing Foundation and The Noël Coward Foundation.

"BRB2 is the only company in the UK of its kind which will be launching the careers of the stars of tomorrow. And we are seeing that there is a demand for this kind of company. We see this in the ticket sales and also from the perspective of donors. Everyone wants to help the next talent out there."

The tour's choreography, sets and costumes retain Mikhail Fokine's original vision and have been adapted for smaller stages. In most venues, the music will be a Royal Ballet Sinfonia recording made exclusively for the tour and presented with live piano.

Carlos is looking forward to bringing the show to Birmingham Hippodrome. It will be the first time the junior company have danced on the main stage.

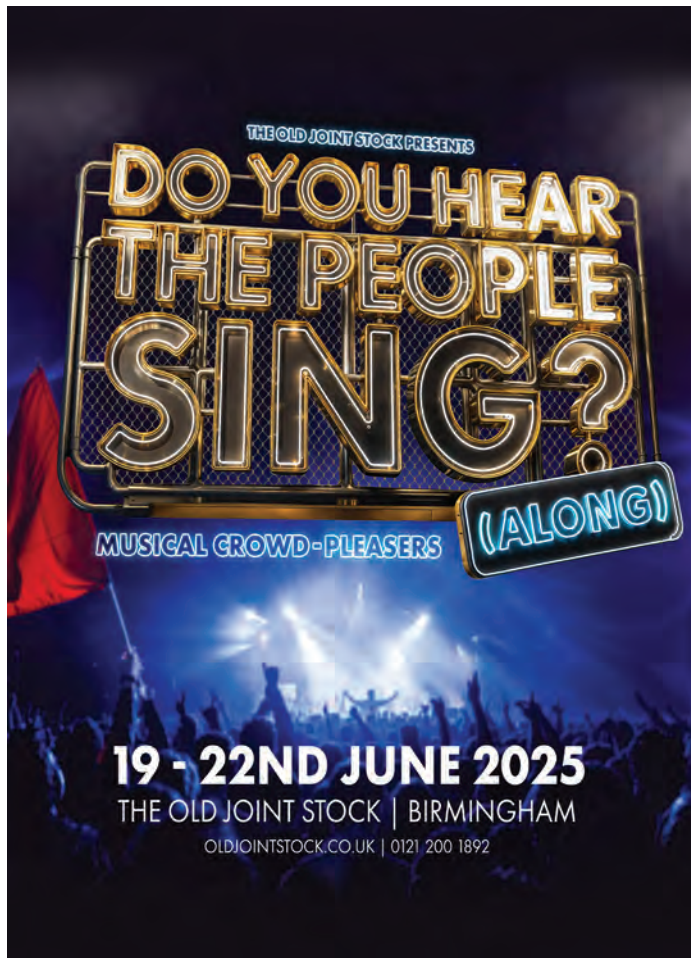
"I'm really pleased to be bringing BRB2 to the Hippodrome, our home stage, where BRB perform so regularly. We have a full-scale orchestra for Birmingham, and for the dancers to have exposure to that sound is fantastic. It's good to develop them for that scale at home, where they have the limelight themselves, not sharing with everyone else. It's fantastic."

And taking the junior company to mid-scale venues and stages which may not often receive live ballet helps BRB reach new audiences, says Carlos.

"The aim of the tour is to bring ballet with great dancers and full production values to people who don't normally have the access or means to come and see these shows in maybe London or other large-scale venues.

"It is important that BRB brings ballet to everywhere in the UK. That's our mission as a touring company."

Birmingham Royal Ballet's BRB2 perform at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 6 May



Dance previews from across the region

**Acosta Danza: Cuban Eclectico**

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 13 & Wed 14 May

Danceworks inspired by Cuban culture - but which come complete with a 'twist' - are brought together in this latest creation from Birmingham Royal Ballet Director Carlos Acosta.

The show is presented by Carlos' critically acclaimed ensemble, Acosta Danza, which performed a Latin American-inspired version of The Nutcracker at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton earlier in the year.

This latest production will see the company showcasing dance that ranges from modern to Afro-Cuban. The featured works, created in tandem with Carlos by highly regarded choreographers from across the globe, incorporate flamenco, capoeira and hip-hop. A Q&A session will take place post-show on the opening night.

Rhiannon Faith Company: Lay Down Your Burdens

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 14 May

"The constant in all my work is love," explains socially conscious choreographer Rhiannon Faith, who this month brings critically acclaimed show Lay Down Your Burdens to Coventry. "I know how that might sound, but actually, I think it's brave to say. I make work about the human experience, and at the heart of that, the most essential thing that we truly know and we truly need, is love; to give it and to receive it."

Set in an on-stage pub and exploring themes of grief, serious illness and personal suffering, Rhiannon's Olivier Award-nominated show combines physical performance, personal testimonials, music from a live Ceilidh band and a selection of pub games. Its stated aim? To 'draw together those who have been estranged or never even dreamed they were connected'.

A free-but-ticketed workshop takes place the night before the show (Tuesday the 13th) from 6pm to 7.30pm.

**Nikita: Midnight Dancer**

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 2 May;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 11 May;
Birmingham Hippodrome, Sat 17 May

International champion and Strictly Come Dancing star Nikita Kuzmin's first-ever solo tour sees him joined by 'a sharp and chic cast of talented dancers and vocalists... for an evening bursting with happiness, euphoria, and (of course) world-class dance'.

**Aljaž & Janette: A Night To Remember**

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 23 May

Strictly Come Dancing favourites Aljaž Škorjanec and Janette Manrara here make a welcome return to the region with a brand-new show in which they're promising 'unforgettable dancing, great music and plenty of laughter'. Supported by their own big band and an



ensemble cast of dancers and singers, the husband & wife team will be performing routines to a wide selection of music, including classics from the Great American Songbook and various modern-day favourites.

Bibi Rukiya's Reckless Daughter

Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome,
Thurs 22 & Fri 23 May

Bibi Rukiya's Reckless Daughter is a new dance-theatre production exploring 'the conditioned patriarchy enforced by women within family structures'.

Created by choreographer Amina Khayyam and loosely based on Federico García Lorca's The House Of Bernarda Alba, the story is set in contemporary inner-city marginalised new migrant communities.

The piece was developed over 18 months through an extensive programme of outreach workshops with women's community groups nationwide.



IT'S KICKING OFF...



Showing at Stratford-upon-Avon's Royal Shakespeare Theatre this month is a version of *Much Ado About Nothing* that side-steps the play's original setting in favour of the world of professional football. And what's more, the production comes complete with a celebrity wedding, fake news, and a swimming pool! Director Michael Longhurst spoke to What's On about his bold new take on Shakespeare's much-loved comedy...

Michael, why have you chosen this play, and why this setting?

I had a conversation with Daniel Evans and Tamara Harvey, the co-artistic directors of the RSC, and we were discussing various titles - *Much Ado* was a title that crossed over on both of our lists. I was circling around it, trying to think about how I would bring it to life. I was mentally going through various historical wars, trying to find a setting for the play, and was not particularly inspired or excited by the ideas that I was having... What was interesting to me was, it's a group of men coming back from a victory - which started me thinking about the world of professional sport. As soon as that idea had risen in my mind, it became very exciting. I think the play is about masculinity, about the dynamics of masculine relationships - brought into contact with feminine relationships. I was looking for figures within the world, and Silvio Berlusconi was someone I started researching - as soon as I understood that he was prime minister of Italy, a major owner of a media company and he was the president of AC Milan... that's literally what Leonato could be.

Can you describe what your rehearsal process has been like?

Joyous! There's something that happens when there are footballs to be kicked, and a bunch of guys that enjoy kicking footballs. There's an energy that automatically happens, which is amazing. What this has allowed us to do is to make a really unique world. The actors can be younger, because they're from the world of football, and it's a working-class sport, so I was determined that the voice and identity of the actors playing these roles would be authentic. I think that adds a really brilliant spin on how we might be used to hearing Shakespeare and what's 'the proper way' to speak it. It's been really fun to hear how vivid the world is that we've collectively created. It's a play full of movement - with the masques and dances and all that jazz - and once you're trying to do comic sequences involving a swimming pool... it's been a lot of fun!

Did anything surprise you while you were directing?

I'm always surprised by how little contact Beatrice and Benedick actually have together in the play. They are technically the subplot that we all fall in love with as the leads, but it's extraordinary the speed of development in their relationship, with very little contact time. It's a masterclass in playwriting to watch how we're so quickly hooked into their relationship. We were just working on Act Four Scene One... What an extraordinary scene, starting with the wedding, where Claudio slanders Hero, through to Beatrice and Benedick declaring love to each other. It's just sort of epic to go from polite titters at a wedding, to the absolute trashing of someone's dreams and reputation - essentially the cancelling of someone - through to the rollercoaster of emotion into declaring love. It's the kind of thing that I can imagine in modern telly you'd be told by a script editor "That's not believable, take the edges off it." Shakespeare just writes through it and doesn't let you simplify it, and that is extraordinary to stage and play. So watching the company get their teeth into such a big scene is really thrilling.

Are you a football fan, or have you come to this production from outside of that world?

In honesty, I am absolutely not a football fan. I have three brothers; they're all very sporty. *Match Of The Day* was on the telly on a Saturday, and I had to sit very quietly through it, and it was not my cup of tea. I have been football-adjacent. The job of directing is to become a mini expert before you go into rehearsal. Whether it's the conflict in the Middle East, or the climate emergency, or urban isolation, or quantum physics, - or, in this case, football! It's always something that, as a director, I'm trying to learn in a crash course... All our footballers went to meet players, training staff and members of the PR team at Watford Football Club. They came back with some extraordinary stories, which absolutely fuelled the characters. Once you do that work, you realise these kids have often been obsessively training on that one thing, from a

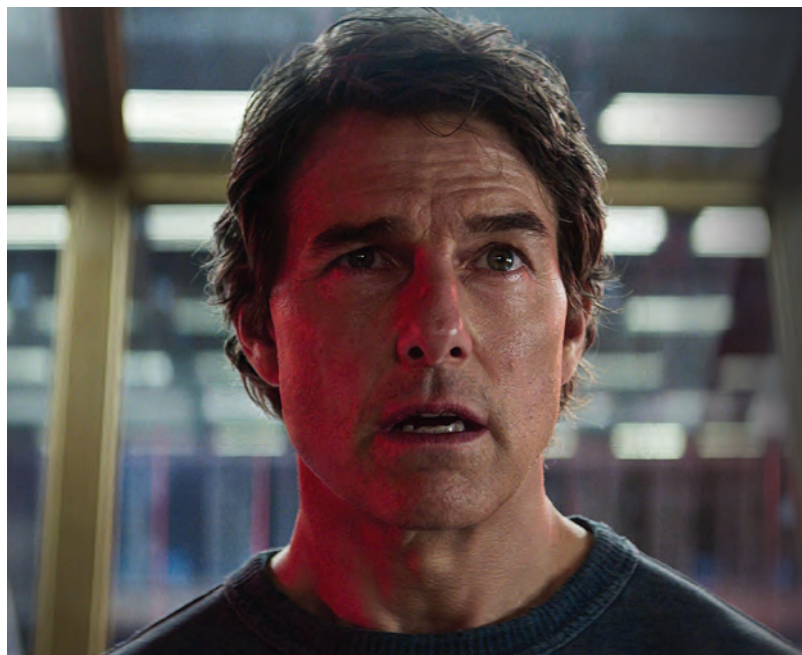
very young age. They have been moved away from their families, and the team is their life. Their lives are controlled by the managers, and every bit of their life, every beat of their diet, is scheduled and controlled for them. People love to come and share their stories in the rehearsal room, because theatre is an amazing medium for exploring facets of the world that we don't get to walk in ourselves. Or, if you have something important to say, we can be the means by which we share a discussion about it. The boys came back with amazing insights from their time with the footballers.

Of the play's two love stories, which have you found most interesting to direct?

I think I identify more strongly with Beatrice and Benedick because of my age. Hero and Claudio are a very young couple; their love is speedy and instant, and historically would have been in the form of romantic chivalry. Today, it's got sucked into the world of influencers and images - the surface veneer of it. Beatrice and Benedick are a much more experienced couple. The parallel between war and love in the original play really holds between sport and love - with the same sort of nationalistic language. We're here to conquer enemies, we're here to vanquish, we're doing national service... those sorts of things.

You have to 'surrender' to be in love. What does it mean to risk that at a certain age, when you may have been hurt in love before? I find it very moving to watch the two actors play all that wit, all the sharp, defensive, protective mechanisms, and then to watch that melt away - as it suddenly does. It's beautiful when that catches. When Freema Agyeman, who's playing Beatrice, declared her love for Benedick, I watched every eye in the rehearsal room wet immediately, and just thought - that's good! It feels like we're on to something.

.....
***Much Ado About Nothing* shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon until Saturday 24 May**



Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning CERT tbc

Starring **Tom Cruise, Vanessa Kirby, Hannah Waddingham, Simon Pegg, Tramell Tillman, Hayley Atwell, Angela Bassett** Directed by **Christopher McQuarrie**

Tom Cruise continues to take on impossible missions like there's no tomorrow...

The Final Reckoning was filmed back-to-back with its predecessor, *Dead Reckoning*, and takes the number of M:I movies to an impressive eight.

And Cruise may not be ready to hand in his Impossible Missions Force (IMF) badge just yet either, with the 62-year-old actor having pointed out that Harrison Ford was still playing Indiana Jones as he approached his 80s. This latest addition to the hit franchise (costing a cool \$400million - making it one of the most expensive movies ever made) sees Cruise's Ethan Hunt carrying on where he left off in *Dead Reckoning* - namely, trying his damndest to destroy an AI system called The Entity, which is housed in a sunken Russian stealth submarine.

Released Wed 21 May

Shadow Force CERT 15 (104 mins)

Starring **Kerry Washington, Omar Sy, Mark Strong, Da'Vine Joy Randolph, Ed Quinn, Sala Baker** Directed by **Joe Carnahan**

Kyrha and Isaac were once the leaders of a multinational special forces group called Shadow Force. Problem was, they broke the rules and fell in love. In order to protect their son, they go underground. But with a large bounty on their heads, and the vengeful Shadow Force hot on their trail, one family's fight quickly becomes an all-out war... Kerry Washington (*Django Unchained*, *Little Fires Everywhere*, and hit thriller series *Scandal*) becomes a fully fledged action hero in this highly anticipated movie.

The film has been produced by Lionsgate, a company that knows a thing or two about making classics out of initially-under-the-radar actioners. Their previous such offerings include *Fall*, *Den Of Thieves 2*: *Pantera*, and the John Wick franchise (including its upcoming spinoff movie, *Ballerina*, which is currently slated for release next month).

Released Fri 2 May



The Wedding Banquet

CERT 15 (102 mins)

Starring **Bowen Yang, Lily Gladstone, Kelly Marie Tran, Han Gi-Chan, Joan Chen, Youn Yuh-jung** Directed by **Andrew Ahn**



Korean rich kid Min's student visa is set to expire, and he desperately needs a green card. Frustrated with his commitment-phobic boyfriend Chris and running out of time, he makes a proposal to their friend Angela: a green-card marriage, and in exchange he will pay for her partner Lee's expensive IVF treatment. Min and Angela prepare to quietly elope, but then their plans are upended by the arrival from Korea of Min's sceptical grandmother, who insists on staging an all-out Korean wedding extravaganza...

Director Andrew Ahn's comedy of errors - a reimagining of Ang Lee's same-named 1993 Oscar-nominated romcom - played pretty well with the critics when it was screened at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year.

Released Fri 9 May

The Surfer CERT 15 (103 mins)

Starring **Nicolas Cage, Finn Little, Rahel Romahn, Michael Abercromby, Alexander Bertrand, Julian McMahon** Directed by **Lorcan Finnegan**

The Surfer is intense, unnerving, and made a real splash at last year's Cannes Film Festival.

When Nicolas Cage's unnamed title character and his teenage son arrive at a beach with the intention of riding the waves, they find themselves confronted by a gang of unpleasant, bullying surfers, who make it clear that only local people are permitted in the area. But *The Surfer* isn't about to go home quietly. As he attempts to stand his ground, he finds himself being gaslit by his aggressors, a strategy that leaves him struggling hard to hold onto his sanity... Very much a slow-burn film, *The Surfer* makes for an absorbing watch, comes complete with a twist in its tale, and looks highly likely to acquire cult-movie status at breakneck speed.

Released Fri 9 May



Lilo & Stitch CERT tbc

Starring **Maia Kealoha, Sydney Agudong, Billy Magnussen, Tia Carrere, Hannah Waddingham** and the voice of **Chris Sanders**
Directed by **Dean Fleischer Camp**

Lilo & Stitch have been around since the early years of the new millennium. Debuting in an animated, cinema-released movie, they then starred in a further three straight-to-video films as well as appearing on television.

For those not in the know, Lilo is an orphaned Hawaiian girl who loves hula, surfing and wildlife. Stitch is a genetically engineered runaway extraterrestrial creature who Lilo adopts as her 'dog'.

This 2025 remake of the original 2002 film is a live-action & computer-generated-animation hybrid. The storyline finds Lilo & Stitch getting involved in an adventure that sees them pursued by aliens (who are attempting to recapture Stitch) and bothered by the delightfully named and oh-so-strict social worker Cobra Bubbles (who's not convinced Lilo's older sister can do a good enough job of looking after her sibling).

The original film's co-writer/co-director, Chris Sanders, once again provides the voice of Stitch, just as he did back in the 2002 version. **Released Fri 23 May**



Hurry Up Tomorrow

CERT 15 (105 mins)

Starring **The Weeknd, Jenna Ortega, Barry Keoghan, Paul L Davis, Roy Williams Jr, David Moskowitz** Directed by **Trey Edward Shults**



"It's about an artist, you could say, on the verge of a mental breakdown," explains *Hurry Up Tomorrow's* director & co-writer, Trey Edwards Shults. "He meets this woman, and they go on this odyssey together. It's a mix of psychological thriller and drama." The movie stars Abel Tesfaye, aka The Weeknd, who recently released his sixth studio album, also titled *Hurry Up Tomorrow*. "The film actually inspired the album," Tesfaye told *Variety*. "It offered me a chance to express a lot that I needed to release, with cinema serving as the ideal medium for exploration. The openness of film allowed me to delve into these themes freely."

Released Fri 16 May

The Phoenician Scheme

CERT tbc

Starring **Scarlett Johansson, Tom Hanks, Benedict Cumberbatch, Bryan Cranston, Rupert Friend, Bill Murray**
Directed by **Wes Anderson**

Wes Anderson has teamed up with longtime collaborator Roman Coppola for *The Phoenician Scheme*, the pair having previously co-written *Asteroid City* and *Moonrise Kingdom*.

A tale of espionage, boasting an all-star cast and described by Anderson as a "three-hander", the film focuses on the character of Zsa-zsa Korda, one of the richest men in Europe, who names his daughter - a nun, and one of his six children - as his heir. He does so, however, without disclosing why he's made the decision, other than to reveal that he's embarking on "the most important project of my lifetime."

Further details about the film are few and far between at the time of writing, but Anderson's legion of fans will care not a jot about that, enthusiastically signing up to anything and everything that passes through the critically acclaimed director's hands.

Released Fri 23 May



Karate Kid: Legends

CERT tbc (118 mins)

Starring **Joshua Jackson, Jackie Chan, Ralph Macchio, Ming-Na Wen, Shaunette Renée Wilson, Sadie Stanley**
Directed by **Jonathan Entwistle**



The sixth film in the *Karate Kid* franchise is set three years after the events of the *Cobra Kai* series. It follows the story of kung fu prodigy Li Fong, who, after a family tragedy, is uprooted from his home in Beijing and forced to move to New York City with his mother.

Once in the US, Li struggles to let go of his past as he tries to fit in with his new classmates, and although he doesn't want to fight, trouble seems to find him everywhere. When a new friend needs his help, Li enters a karate competition - but his skills alone aren't enough.

Li's kung fu teacher, Mr Han (Jackie Chan), enlists original *Karate Kid* Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) for help, and Li soon learns a new way to fight, merging their two styles into one for 'the ultimate martial arts showdown'...

Released Fri 30 May

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Sofia Liñares, © Perou.

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TO BE FRANK...

With previous roles in touring productions of Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Rock Of Ages, We Will Rock You and Aladdin under his belt, musical theatre star Adam Strong is currently wearing the iconic heels of Frank N Furter in The Rocky Horror Show.

What's On recently caught up with Adam to find out more about his performance pathway so far...

Where are you from, Adam?

I grew up in Sunderland and am based just outside of Durham - although I'm never there, due to work.

When did you first realise you had some talent, and who encouraged you?

My sister was a dancer for many years, and I used to love watching her, especially in the panto at the Sunderland Empire, which she did for many years. She was the one who encouraged me to get started in musical theatre and helped me land my first role, which was Jerome in The Sound Of Music at the Sunderland Empire. I've loved musicals since being a child - the first time I saw The Phantom Of The Opera on stage, I was hooked.

Was there a moment when you realised you wanted to be a professional performer, and is there a role that changed everything for you?

When I auditioned for We Will Rock You. I'm a massive Queen fan, and I knew it was time to move from understudy to playing a role of my own. And it worked out.

What was your first major role, and is there a role that has a special significance.

My first musical as an adult was Jesus Christ Superstar - the arena tour starring Tim Minchin and Mel C. I played a priest and understudied the role of Annas. I had the most amazing time touring the world with that show - and performing in arenas was just unbelievable.

Also, playing Jafar in Disney's Aladdin was very personal to me. Watching the animated film was the first time I had seen anyone who looked like me on screen [Adam describes himself as half Middle Eastern]. Disney is so conscientious about casting a diverse company.

You've performed all over the world. Do you have any highlights?

I have many career highlights, but I think performing opposite Brian May for our gala performance of We Will Rock You will always stick out as one of my proudest moments.

What do you love about playing Frank N Furter?

It's such an empowering role, and I get to sing all of my favourite songs and be part of the musical's history. I've been a massive

Rocky Horror Show fan for many, many years, and I've studied many different Franks - so for me, it just felt like the right fit.

The Rocky Horror Show fanbase is legendary. What's your experience of them?

The fans are so supportive of the show! I get a lot of gifts, which is very kind, as I love show memorabilia.

Rocky Horror has been pushing boundaries for 50 years. Do you think it still has that same rebellious edge in 2025?

Oh, I think the show is timeless and always will be! I had a chat with our wonderful director, Chris Luscombe, in rehearsals, and we had a look at the script from the 1970s - it's almost identical!

.....

Adam Strong stars in The Rocky Horror Show when it visits the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 5 to Saturday 10 May, and the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Monday 22 to Saturday 27 September



Elizabeth And Stanhope Forbes: A Marriage Of Art

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, until Sun 29 June

Elizabeth and Stanhope Forbes were very much the power couple of British Impressionism, with both artists already well established and enjoying success at the time of their marriage in 1889.

This brand-new exhibition features what's being described as a 'sumptuous' selection of their artworks. The show includes many pieces that are on loan from Penlee House Gallery & Museum, and which are visiting Worcester for the very first time.

Also on display in the exhibition is Stanhope's Chadding On Mounts Bay, one of the most widely admired and beloved paintings in Worcester City's Fine Art collection.

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THE
CANVAS**

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John Devis (c. 1850), Head of a Man.
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Mao Ishikawa

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 1 May - Sun 22 June

Warwick Arts Centre is this month and next presenting the first institutional exhibition in the UK of revered Okinawan photographer Mao Ishikawa.

Featuring more than 60 photos from the 1970s onwards, the show includes images

from some of Mao's best-known projects. Among these is an iconic series focusing on Okinawan women who formed relationships with African American servicemen stationed at US military bases on the island.

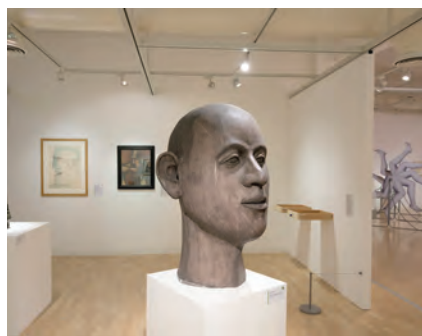
Beyond The Canvas

Rugby Art Gallery, until Sat 7 June

Taking the subtitle A Celebration Of British Sculpture From The Ingram Collection, Beyond The Canvas explores the diverse styles and techniques that defined British sculpture throughout the 20th century.

The Ingram Art Foundation boasts one of the most significant collections of modern British art in the UK. The collection is here sharing space with pieces from the widely admired Rugby Collection.

The display is being presented as part of the gallery's 25th anniversary celebration.



Suzanne Holtom: And Hills Bore Scars

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 29 June

"During the pandemic, I lost my dad," explains Suzanne Holtom, "and as a result, my trips back home to the West Midlands became far more frequent. It was this continuing return to my original home, contemplating and experiencing this embodied landscape, that initiated a new direction in my work."



A deep mapping of place - encompassing geological time, personal experiences, social histories and memory - has become the primary motivation in Suzanne's art. The paintings featured in And Hills Bore Scars - which draw from 'geosites' in the Black Country Global Geopark - contemplate bodily forms, land masses, histories, patterns of energy and industry, layered materiality and shifting terrains. Visitors to the gallery on Saturday 10 May can join Suzanne for a printmaking session and a tour of her exhibition.

John Piper In The Countryside

Netherwood Manor, Herefordshire, Sat 31 May - Sun 8 June

This major exhibition draws together a wide selection of originals, prints and fabrics by John Piper, a Surrey-born 20th-century artist whose work often focused on the British landscape. An official war artist during World War Two, Piper's depictions of bomb-damaged churches and landmarks - including, and most notably, Coventry Cathedral - hugely enhanced his reputation and led to his work being acquired by a number of public collections.

The Netherwood Manor display includes a selection of artworks featuring the local region.



Through Their Eyes: 80 Years On

National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, Sat 3 May - Sun 16 November

Marking this month's 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, Through Their Eyes is part of the National Memorial Arboretum's The Year Was 1945... project. The initiative comprises displays, events, services, talks and tours, its aim being to share the stories of those who served during wartime.

Through Their Eyes has been produced by the Royal British Legion, the UK's largest charity solely dedicated to supporting the needs of the Armed Forces community.

PARTY TIME

August Strindberg's Miss Julie has been radically reimaged for a new audience



A radically reimagined version of August Strindberg's Miss Julie shows at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre this month. Directed by Holly Race Roughan and written by Laura Lomas, The House Party is set in modern times and explores themes of class, power and privilege. Holly and Laura spoke to What's On about their critically acclaimed play...

August Strindberg's play Miss Julie has been reimagined numerous times since it was first staged in 1888, but when director Holly Race Roughan and writer Laura Lomas approached the story, they decided to create a radical new version for audiences today.

Where the original tells of the fall-out of a brief moment of passion across the class divide, The House Party explores the relationships between three teenagers - Julie, her friend Christine, and Christine's boyfriend, Jon - and how one night changes their lives forever.

As artistic director of Headlong Theatre, which has produced The House Party along with Frantic Assembly and Chichester Festival Theatre, Holly says it was essential that the story spoke to modern audiences and made us hear this classic afresh.

"I think Miss Julie is one of the best plays ever written about the intersection between the personal and the political," she says. "But I re-read it and realised we needed a new version, with more about the psychology and humanity of the characters. Laura was the right person to contemporise it but also complicate it.

"As a production company, we are interested in making a version where you *feel* first for the characters before you then *think* about them. What is genius about Lomas' and the Strindberg version is that it's so balanced; you can't really come down on one side. Who's the victim and who's the perpetrator? Each page slides you back round the drama triangle."

The team also decided to give the play its new name, The House Party, to signify its differences from Miss Julie.

"I'm really interested at Headlong in estranging audiences from works they think they know really well, in order to allow them a contemporary experience of hearing those stories for the first time. Having a different name is partly to acknowledge that this is quite a radical new interpretation. It's so

exciting when you don't know what's going to happen next when you're sitting in the theatre. If it's called The House Party and is based on Miss Julie, you know the playground it's in but you don't really know what's going to happen next. That allows us to create experience that feels more like a modern-day thriller."

When the show premiered at Chichester in May last year, one of the great joys for the creative team was seeing how it appealed to people of all ages but especially younger audience members.

"We were quite knocked out by the reaction from different generations. It's in the mouths of 18-year-olds, but it's an inter-generational theatrical experience.

"Headlong's place in the theatre ecology is - in part, I believe - to be a 'gateway drug'. So what really excites me - as well as playing to brilliant and loyal core audiences - is playing to first timers. What Laura has written is such a tense, exciting show that if it's your first time going to the theatre, you're going to want to come back."

In writing The House Party, Laura was keen to retain the original play at the heart of her version, but also to give it a greater relevance and modern-day resonance.

"Strindberg is so immediate," she says.

"Dramatically, it grabs you by the throat and never stops. The challenge in trying to make it contemporary is being able to update it while also holding onto that propulsive drama.

"It's very emotional, and there's something quite teenage and hormonal about that. And so the idea of setting it in a teenage house party arose. Along with that came the idea of making this party really vibrant and anarchic.

"I think it's a play about friendship and class, and it's about three teenagers who don't fully understand the external pressures that are bearing down on them and the destructive

force of that. So in some ways it's an awakening or a coming of age for them. But I've also written humour into it, so it's funny and entertaining."

The friends face the power of external pressures such as social media.

"It's about Julie's experience of being sexually shamed online, so it's also about misogyny. There's a sense that Julie is a bit of a femme fatale in the original, and I really wanted to address that in this updating. I wanted us to find a way of understanding Julie as someone who is also marginalised and objectified and acting out of the social violence she has experienced by being told that her only worth is her sexual currency.

"There are so many big intersections in all of the characters - so race, gender, class - but there are also smaller intersections, which hopefully mean that different people will hook into different things with each of these characters.

"There's so much going on in the knot between them that your sympathies will shift, but hopefully within that journey you will understand them all."

The success of The House Party would not have been possible without the collaboration of the three producing partners - something of which show director Holly is very aware:

"The production really is a love child of the dynamic movement of Frantic Assembly, Headlong's commitment to vivid, robust, thrilling new writing, and Chichester's 'Yes we can' attitude to producing. All three of us felt deeply proud of the show last year. We felt we had surpassed what we could do without each other."

.....

The House Party shows at The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Thursday 8 to Saturday 10 May

See website for full line-up

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Events previews from around the region



Laithwaites Wine Festival

The Custard Factory, Birmingham, Sat 10 May

Glasses at the ready - the Laithwaites Wine Festival is on its way to Birmingham. Dozens of producers from around the world will be gathering at the city's Custard Factory venue this month to serve their

wines and share the stories behind them. The event also includes a selection of fun and informative masterclasses - including cocktail winemaking and a cheese & wine pairing session.

Whitchurch Food & Drink Festival

Jubilee Park, Whitchurch, Shropshire, Sat 24 May

Whitchurch Food & Drink Festival makes a welcome return after a five-year break. A celebration of local produce, the free one-day event features chef demonstrations, exhibitors from across the region, and hands-on food sustainability activities presented by local organisations. Live entertainment takes place on the bandstand throughout the day, and a kids' area will feature a host of free activities, including inflatables, vintage games, alpacas, and have-a-go circus skills and sports.



90's Baby Bottomless Brunch

Gosta Green, Birmingham, Sat 17 May; The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury, Sat 17 May

Get ready to party like it's 1999 as The Brunch Club bring their 90s-themed event to two Midlands venues this month. Guests can enjoy all their favourite 90s hits - courtesy of live performers and the resident DJ - whilst also tucking into their brunch dish and making the most of a not-to-be-missed 60-minute 'bottomless booze' option.

Weston's Spring Fling

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sun 25 & Mon 26 May

Weston Park's popular Spring Fling features unique crafts, a selection of street food, and a line-up of local artisan food producers. Live music is provided by the Dirty Rockin Scoundrels, with fairground rides available to keep visitors of all ages entertained. The whole estate - including the house and its collection, the miniature railway and the woodland adventure playground - is open to explore across the two days.



Digbeth Dining Club Summer Tour

Warwick Castle, Fri 2 May; Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sat 3 May; Brueton Park Lake, Solihull, Sun 4 May; Bromsgrove Recreation Ground, Mon 5 May; Waterfront, Brierley Hill, Fri 9 May; Sutton Coldfield Rugby Club, Sat 10 May; Lightwoods Park, Smethwick, Sun 11 May; Tamworth Castle Grounds, Sat 17 May; Codsall Village Hall, Sun 18 May; Compton Verney, Sat 31 May; Barton Marina, Burton-on-Trent, Sat 31 May

Digbeth Dining Club is back on the road, with the award-winning street-food operator touring local parks, fields and beauty spots across the region over the next few months. Hawker Dan, Original Patty Men, Beef On The Block, Cofton Pizza, Urban Spice Box and Bournville Waffle Co are just a few of the

100-plus street-food traders taking part in the summer tour. Chilled DJ sets, family-friendly activities and drinks stations - such as cocktail caravans and fizz bars - all add to the experience for diners, whose dogs (if they have any) are very welcome, too.

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Events previews from around the region



RHS Malvern Spring Festival

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 May

Taking the theme Plants & People, the RHS Malvern Spring Festival is this year encouraging visitors to explore the numerous ways in which plants bring a positive impact to their lives. As well as showcasing new attractions - including the first RHS-judged Indoor Plant Gardens and the Give It A Grow Theatre - the

festival also boasts contributions from Alan Titchmarsh and BBC Gardeners' World regulars Adam Frost, Frances Tophill and Rachel de Thame. Numerous well-established elements of the popular event also make a return, including show and feature gardens, the floral marquee and the Tips & Tricks Theatre.

Spring Diesel Festival

Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 May

Severn Valley Railway's four-day festival of traction is back this month and features both guest and home locomotives operating a busy timetable between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade. Guest locomotives include the Freightliner Class 66, Freightliner Class 70, Rail Adventure Powercars 43468 and 43480 and Colas Class 56 x 2 (expected to be 56090 and 56094). The Kidderminster Diesel Depot & Carriage Shed will be open for tours, which can be booked on the day.



Giffords Circus

Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham, Fri 9 - Mon 19 May

This year celebrating their 25th anniversary, Giffords Circus return to Sudeley Castle with brand-new offering Laguna Bay. Set in the 'buoyant and sunny era' of 1950s America, the show features a cast of top-rated acrobats, magicians, musicians and clowns.



Makers Central

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 17 & Sun 18 May

Makers Central is back at the NEC, bringing together creators, hobbyists and artists from all over the world. Visitors young and old can get involved with a selection of interactive sessions, including woodworking, metalworking, electronics and leathercraft. Everyone from experienced makers to families and first-time triers can have a go at

making things with new technologies, along the way gaining a better understanding of the science behind how things are made. Numerous makers-community YouTube stars and social-media influencers will be putting in an appearance across the weekend, including Britain's very own inventor & maker Colin Furze and the star of Netflix's Making Fun, Jimmy Diresta.

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Three Counties Showground, Malvern



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Events previews from around the region



Circus Extreme

Combining live rock music and 'world-class' circus stunts, Circus Extreme returns with brand-new show Rock It Out. The two-hour extravaganza features, among

other acts, the Extreme Freestyle Motocross Team, South American stunt legend Paulinho, and The Danguir Troupe's Double Wheel Of Death (pictured).



Birmingham Pride

Birmingham Gay Village & Smithfield, Birmingham, Sat 24 & Sun 25 May

Celebrating the Midlands' LGBTQIA+ community, Birmingham Pride will once again be getting the city partying this month. It's expected that more than 40,000 revellers will attend the event across the weekend, with an impressive 75,000-plus people either participating in or watching the annual

Pride parade through the city's streets. The festival's Smithfield site is the centre of the action, featuring a main stage, the Cabaret Stage and Dance Arena. Headline acts this year include Clean Bandit, Cascada and Bananarama.

Staffordshire County Show

Staffordshire County Showground, Wed 28 & Thurs 29 May

The 2025 Staffordshire County Show offers something for visitors of all ages to enjoy. The Country Pursuits Area will host the West Lancs Dog Display Team, birds-of-prey presentations, a ferret roadshow, a sheep show and giant tortoises. The Main Ring programme, meanwhile, includes the Bolddog Lings Motorcycle Display Team, the Mounted Games, show jumping, a parade of hounds, and young farmers' floats. There will also be a grand parade of livestock - the show features over a thousand cattle, sheep, pigs and goats - and more than 1,500 horses and ponies, some of which will be participating in various competitions across the two days. Four hundred-plus trade stands and a food hall further add to the event's appeal.



AJ Bell Great Birmingham Run

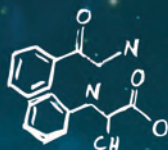
Birmingham City Centre, Sat 3 & Sun 4 May

The Midlands' biggest running event returns across the first weekend of the month. Saturday the 3rd sees the junior and mini Great Birmingham Runs taking place at the Alexander Stadium in Perry Barr. On Sunday the 4th, the city hosts the 10k and half marathon races. Participants will be running past some of Birmingham's best-known landmarks and areas, including the Jewellery Quarter, St Paul's Square, the Mailbox and Grand Central. The event begins in Centenary Square, with both runs ending at Smithfield in Southside, where there will be food stalls and a party to enjoy.





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Events previews from around the region



World War Two Week

RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June

The RAF Museum Midlands is travelling back to the 1940s this half-term week, to highlight the importance of World War Two in terms of the development of technology, engineering

and community.

Attractions include talks, make & take sessions, a selfie station, Lego racers, and the return of the popular Spy Hunter Trail.



Half term fun at Thinktank Science Museum

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Mon 26 - Fri 30 May

Thinktank will be keeping youngsters entertained during the half-term holiday with daily events and activities. Highlights include the return of the Roving Robots Family Show, during which kids (and adults) can learn how space rovers are powered, what they might be up to on other

planets, and how they get there.

The venue's line-up of entertainment also includes Lunar Lego Lab workshops, providing youngsters with the opportunity to build, program and customise their very own Science Rover.

Brick Dinos

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, Sat 31 May - Sun 7 September

This new exhibition provides families with the opportunity to step back in time to the prehistoric world.

The show's attractions include a range of Lego dinosaur sculptures - created in collaboration with palaeontologists - behind-the-scenes videos, photo opportunities, and the chance to uncover fossils at an interactive 'dino dig'.

Visitors can also get creative with hands-on Lego and Duplo play, design their own dinosaurs on a graffiti wall, and take home dinosaur-themed colouring sheets.



VE80 Anniversary Celebrations

Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire, Sat 10 & Sun 11 May

Tamworth Castle is marking the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe with a weekend of activities and entertainment. Visitors can try their hand at sending Morse Code and decoding secret messages, see if they can pass the army medical, and take the air raid shelter survival test. Tamworth Games Club will also be contributing to the weekend by reenacting some of World War Two's most significant battles.



STEPPING INTO SHAKESPEARE

Lee Latchford-Evans joins the cast of & Juliet...



Lee Latchford-Evans' career with 90s popsters Steps has, for the most part, overshadowed his long-held love of musical theatre, which he studied at drama school. Things are definitely changing on that score, though... Having previously played roles including Teen Angel in Grease, Lee is now starring as Lance Dubois in critically acclaimed musical & Juliet, which visits the Potteries this month. Here, What's On chats to him to find out more...

For people who think they know Romeo & Juliet, how does the show shake things up, Lee?

It's not the Romeo & Juliet that everyone knows. It's more about life for Juliet after the familiar story, with Shakespeare and his wife Anne Hathaway arguing over how the tale is meant to play out. It's about how Juliet's life goes on without Romeo, who and what she encounters, and all the characters within that. So it's not your typical Romeo & Juliet story. It's a comedy and it's a musical, so if you're going along expecting something like A Midsummer Night's Dream or Hamlet, then you might be a bit shocked!

Who is your character Lance, and how does he feature in the narrative?

Lance Dubois is a father. He has lost his wife, but he has three sons, although two of them are away at war, so he's really concentrating on Francois, the one son who hasn't gone off to be a soldier. I think it's a battle for Lance, as he's a very set-in-his-ways, old-fashioned type of father who is trying to get to grips with raising a son on his own. He's that burly kind of character who goes: "I was a soldier, I was in the police, and you will do as I say." As the story unfolds, he becomes less complicated and more loving - plus, he has a love interest in Angelique, who is Juliet's Nurse. It's a bit of a rollercoaster for Lance and a nice thread throughout the show.

Are you a Shakespeare buff or a novice?

I'm a total novice; I'm not even going to pretend otherwise! When I was at school, I did an Antigone project where we went down to Stratford-upon-Avon and performed there, but that's as far as it goes. It's very strange with the language of Shakespeare because you kind of get what's going on without really understanding everything. But & Juliet isn't typical Shakespeare by any means. It's modern language, and it's a jukebox musical full of fantastic Max Martin songs. So you get Domino by Jessie J, ...Baby One More Time by Britney Spears, It's My Life by Bon Jovi, songs by Katy Perry, Backstreet Boys and Justin Timberlake. Max has worked on so many amazing songs. The musical is also what I'd call very Steps-friendly. We always say with Steps shows that you leave your troubles at the door; you just let yourself go and have a great time. It's the same with & Juliet.

You're no stranger to musical theatre, but what hooked you in about this particular show?

My character Lance is French, and he's the only one in the show that actually has a French accent. Okay, it's more in the style of

the TV show 'Allo 'Allo, or Lumiere from Beauty And The Beast, but I wanted to challenge myself. What I also love is that it's the kind of role where you can really let yourself go and be free, and it's a little bit over-the-top. He's this exuberant, larger-than-life character, and if anyone truly knows me, they'll know that it's a challenge for me to let myself go. Away from the job, I'm this just-get-on-with-it, straight-down-the-middle kind of guy. When I played Niko in Eurobeat: Moldova, I really had to step out of my comfort zone, and it feels a bit like that with Lance as well, But I've been welcomed into the show with open arms by the team and the cast, which makes life so much easier.

What makes Max Martin's music so special? And do you have a favourite number in the show?

Every song of his you just have to sing along to, and there are so many hits in the show. It's so clever how they're worked into the story. For example, one of the big numbers for me is the mash-up of Teenage Dream and Break Free, where Lance and Angelique have this moment together that's romantic but also very funny, and those songs tell their story in this moment so well. All the songs in the show are very catchy. Steps toured with Britney, so I know her music well - as does everyone - and who doesn't love a bit of Everybody (Backstreet's Back)?

How does the & Juliet story speak to contemporary audiences?

It's a show where everybody's welcome, and it touches on inclusivity, diversity and themes that are relevant in the world right now. The LGBTQ community is obviously huge with Steps, and it feels like this show speaks to the same audience. Like I said before, if you just let yourself go and leave your worries at the door, everybody's welcome at a Steps show and everybody's welcome at & Juliet.

Was theatre always part of your career plan?

Well, I trained at Laine Theatre Arts, where I studied musical theatre and dance. Steps came along during my third year there. Because I've had that background, that training, I've got the work ethic for, and an understanding of, musical theatre. The success of Steps has opened doors, and it's given me opportunities to at least audition for certain parts. It's only when you get the part that you understand how hard the work is and what goes into a musical. And if you're part of a wonderful, hard-working cast that all gel, you can really make the show come to life.

What have been your favourite stage roles so far?

I enjoyed playing Teen Angel in Grease in the West End. Christian in Wolfboy was interesting, delving into a darker side of musical theatre. I would say that so far, though, Niko in Eurobeat: Moldova is probably my favourite character because he was so over-the-top. He was basically a red coat who thought he was Robbie Williams. Now Lance in & Juliet ticks a few boxes. There is a serious side to him when he's being very militant and straight with his son, but there's also the caring, fun, cheeky side to him when his guard comes down with Angelique.

When it comes to your career in Steps, can you pick a few highlights?

That's a difficult one because there are so many. We had many number ones, so many hits, travelling, touring and meeting fans all over the world. I think winning a Brit Award is something to be proud of, as is getting the Attitude Icon Award. In the early days, it was Smash Hits tours and things like that, where you were in the line-up with lots of other bands. Then, when you get to do your own arena tours, that really steps things up - if you'll pardon the pun! People are there just for you, and that can be as nervous as it is exciting. Then, of course, there's the Steps musical, Here And Now, which enjoyed huge success on its opening run at The Alexandra in Birmingham last year and will be touring up and down the country from September this year. It broke all box-office records in Birmingham, and hopefully it will continue to gather momentum and create even more success and earn more followers.

What couldn't you be without on the road?

I used to travel with a framed photo of my wife, but I need to upgrade that now to one with myself, my wife and my son, which I'll be putting next to my bed to make things a bit more homely when staying in digs. On days off or when I have time out, I don't really like to talk a lot because I want to save my voice. I always say that I'm there to do a job, not to go out partying and ruin the voice. So I like to take my PlayStation with me and watch movies or play games.


.....

& Juliet shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 12 to Saturday 17 May. Tickets can be booked online at atgtickets.com/stoke

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*Your week-
by-week
listings guide*
May 2025

the list



& Juliet - The Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 12 - Sat 17 May

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

What's On

Thurs 1 - Sun 11 May



The Very Hungry Caterpillar -
Stourbridge Town Hall
Fri 2 & Sat 3 May

Mon 12 - Sun 18 May



1960s Weekend - Black Country
Living Museum, Dudley
Sat 17 - Sun 18 May

Mon 19 - Sun 25 May



David O'Doherty -
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
Thurs 22 May

Mon 26 - Sat 31 May



You Choose - The Brewhouse
Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent
Tues 27 & Wed 28 May

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

REMBRANDT: MASTERPIECES IN BLACK AND WHITE A collection of exquisite etchings, on tour from Rembrandt House Museum in the Netherlands, highlighting the full range of Rembrandt's output along with those he influenced across the centuries, until Sun 1 Jun

MODERN MUSE BY ARPITA SHAH A series of photographic portraits celebrating the identities and experiences of young South Asian women from Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Coventry Music Museum

WE'LL LIVE AND DIE IN THESE TOWNS A new temporary exhibition, partially based on the anthemic song recorded by Coventry trio The Enemy, but also exploring how football, music and Coventry all combine.

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

PRISM PHOTOGRAPHY OPEN 2025 Group exhibition bringing together a selection of thought-provoking new photographs by image-makers based across the West Midlands, until Sun 18 May

SU RICHARDSON: IN STITCHES The largest retrospective of Richardson's work to date, and the first solo exhibition in her home town. Works include recent soft sculptures that explore themes of motherhood, the maternal body, breastfeeding, loss and illness, until Sun 1 June

MARCIA MICHAEL: THE FAMILY ALBUM Powerful and moving solo exhibition. A multidisciplinary artist of Caribbean descent, Marcia reimagines the family album to explore the beauty and depth of Black family connections in British history, until Sun 1 June

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

SHROPSHIRE QUILTERS: THREADS OF FRIENDSHIP Exhibition celebrating 40 years of Shropshire Quilters, looking at some of the group's work and some of their favourite objects from Shropshire Museums' textile collection, until Sun 22 June

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

POP, PRINT, PROTEST Exploring how Pop artists used mixed media collage and combined text and image in order to convey powerful, persuasive challenges to capitalism, racism and conflict, until Sun 11 May

SUBJECTS OF STATE, LABOURS OF LOVE Immersive video installation and

exhibition, capturing the shared joys, celebrations, struggles, oppressions and complexities experienced by Caribbean heritage communities, until Sun 8 June

HRAIR SARKISSIAN: OTHER PAINS Solo exhibition by the Syrian-Armenian photographer in which captivating landscapes and urban scenes reflect sites of previous pain, trauma or melancholy, until Sun 22 June

SMALL WONDERS A selection of works, by members of the Wolverhampton Society of Artists, on the theme of Senses, and limited to a size restriction of 10 to 15cms, until Fri 4 July

Elsewhere:

BEAR STEPS ART GALLERY EXHIBITIONS Featuring works by Lesley Palmer and Julie Mortimer, until Sat 10 May, Bear Steps Art Gallery, Shrewsbury

IRONBRIDGE FINE ARTS SPRING 2025 EXHIBITION Featuring works of mixed media by Wayne Longhurst, Linda Nevill, Rob Pountney, Rob Leckey, Louise Davies & Claire Walton, until Sat 24 May, Ironbridge Fine Arts, Telford

SHUGBOROUGH IN BLOSSOM A selection of watercolour studies by local artist RN Clarke, until Sun 29 June, Shugborough Estate, Staffs

GREENER GLASS Explore the beauty and innovation of environmentally sustainable glass art in this unique exhibition, emphasising eco-friendly practices and the artistic exploration of environmental themes, until Sun 27 July, Stourbridge Glass Museum

THE BRITISH PUPPET AND MODEL THEATRE GUILD Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the guild, featuring important puppets that tell its story, until Sun 31 Aug, Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton

LINE: THE ARTISTS JOURNEY Featuring the work of resident artist Jan Park, 3D artist Jane Wilson, furniture maker Debs Hart, glass fusion specialist Jo Newman, ceramist Ruth Gibson and silversmith Sue Chadwick, Thurs 1 - Mon 26 May, Footprint Gallery, Shropshire

ART EXPO WOLVERHAMPTON Showcasing works by 40 artists using a variety of mediums including painting, ceramics, printmaking, photography & more... Fri 16 - Sun 18 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

ARTHUR BERRY: THEATREMAKER A collection of the artist's original drawings - vibrant characters and settings created for his plays - presented alongside production photographs from the performances themselves, Tues 27 May - Sat 28 June, New Vic Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Gigs

CERY'S HAFANA Thurs 1 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TOBY LEE + ISABELLA COULSTOCK Thurs 1 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MARIO Thurs 1 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

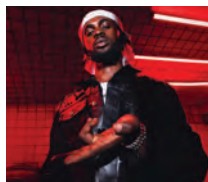
MADONNA BY KNIGHT Thurs 1 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

ARENA Thurs 1 May, The Robin, Bilston

HOTEL LUX + SHORTWAVE Fri 2 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

TARA CHINN Fri 2 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BLACK SHERIF Fri 2 May, O2 Institute, B'ham



THE POGUES Fri 2 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

EMF + SCANT REGARD Fri 2 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GNOME + WALL Fri 2 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

ULTRA FOXX Fri 2 May, The Flapper, B'ham

SKIPINNISH Fri 2 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ANDY BELL Fri 2 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

CHASE & STATUS Fri 2 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

U2 VS SIMPLE MINDS Fri 2 May, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

PARAMORE GB + AIN'T REAL LAVIGNE Fri 2 May, 45Live, Kidderminster

ANGELS OF DARKNESS Fri 2 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

AGNOSTIC FRONT Fri 2 May, The Robin, Bilston

EUREKA MACHINES + TROPICAL CONTACT Fri 2 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

VOODOO ROOM Fri 2 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

THE LUKE COMBS EXPERIENCE Fri 2 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

JO SAFINA Fri 2 May, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

TOBY LEE Fri 2 May, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FUREYS Fri 2 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

ULTIMATE QUEEN Fri 2 May, The Station, Cannock

POPPY JAM Fri 2 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

COACH PARTY + GIRLBAND! + BOOM BOOM WOMB Fri 2 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

GOLDIE LOOKIN' CHAIN Fri 2 May, Shrewsbury Castle

EVERYTHING EVERYTHING Fri 2 May, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

GARY BARLOW Fri 2 - Sat 3 May, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

VICKY JACKSON AS PINK Fri 2 - Sat 3 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SLAUGHTERHOUSE FESTIVAL Fri 2 - Sun 4 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

LOWKEY Sat 3 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TREY SONGZ & JEREMIH Sat 3 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ANNA MOSS Sat 3 May, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

THE 9075 Sat 3 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

GENESIS CONNECTED Sat 3 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

BEATLEMANIA Sat 3 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

ELECTROMANTICS Sat 3 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SIMPLY DAN Sat 3 May, The Robin, Bilston

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS FEAT. LEBBA HIBBERT Sat 3 May, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

ANDY GOWER Sat 3 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE HAIRY BARTENDERS Sat 3 May, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

JIMI HENDRIX - THE LEGEND LIVES ON Sat 3 May, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

ALMOST IN CHAINS + LOUDER THAN SOUND Sat 3 May, The Station, Cannock

THE UPTOWN MONOTONES Sat 3 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

AJA IRELAND + ECOLAGBHORSAC2021 + INFERNAL MACHINES Sat 3 May, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

DIASPORA Sat 3 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

THE CHEAP THRILLS Sat 3 May, Shrewsbury Castle

LOOPFEST 2025 Sat 3 - Sun 4 May, various venues, Shrewsbury

MILES HUNT Sun 4 May, Shrewsbury Castle

BEN OTTWEILL Sun 4 May, Shrewsbury Castle



INHUMAN NATURE Sun 4 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

GO WEST Sun 4 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

ANDY MCKEE Sun 4 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Sun 4 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SOUND OF THE LIONESS - AMY WINEHOUSE TRIBUTE Sun 4 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE ROD STEWART STORY Sun 4 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

CHRIS STAPLETON UK Sun 4 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WEEKEND DAD Sun 4 May, Shrewsbury Castle

THE MONOTONES Sun 4 May, Shrewsbury Unitarian Church

Classical Music

CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS JOY Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Kian Soltani (cello). Programme includes works by Berlioz, Fauré, Saint-Saëns & more..., Thurs 1 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MAKE A SONG AND DANCE GALA CONCERT Programme includes works by Prokofiev & Zimmer, Fri 2 May, Shrewsbury School

BBC PHILHARMONIC: ANNA LAPWOOD - SAINT-SAËNS ORGAN CONCERTO Featuring John Wilson (conductor). Programme includes works by Stravinsky & Saint-Saëns, Fri 2 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ROBERT PATTERSON ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Tournemire, Mendelssohn, Brahms & more..., Sat 3 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

ECHO RISING STARS: LUKAS STERNATH (PIANO) Programme includes works by R Schumann, Liszt, and a new commission by Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Sun 4 May, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ORGAN RECITAL: SOUND THE TRUMPET Featuring Paul Carr (organ). Programme includes works by Suppé, Clarke, Spicer & more..., Sun 4 May, Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley

Comedy

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, IAN COPPINGER & COMIC TBC Thurs 1 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LINDSEY SANTORO & COMICS TBC Thurs 1 May, Cherry Reds Cafe Bar, B'ham

MIKE RICE & COMICS TBC Thurs 1 May, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

MATT BRAGG, STEVE DAY, EDI JOHNSTON & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 1 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

KEVIN DANIEL, KWAME ASANTE, DOM BANT & DAN SMITH Thurs 1 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

NATHAN CATON Fri 2 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RICHARD HERRING Fri 2 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

TONY COWARDS, KATE LUCAS & CHRIS PURCHASE Fri 2 May, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

JONNY COLE Fri 2 May, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

ASHISH SURI, IAN COPPINGER & COMIC TBC Fri 2 - Sat 3 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAZEEM JAMAL, KEEFY JEWELL, ALEXANDER BENNETT & JAMES COOK Sat 3 May, Rosies Nightclub, B'ham

MAISIE ADAM Sat 3 - Sun 4 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DORU OCTAVIAN DUMITRU Sun 4 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TEZ ILYAS, OLA LABIB, PRINCE ABDI & AATIF NAWAZ Sun 4 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SOPHIE MCCARTNEY Sun 4 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS Roxanna Silbert's 2019 stage adaptation of novelist Khaled Hosseini's spiritual sequel to *The Kite Runner*, until Sat 3 May, The Rep, Birmingham

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Michael Longhurst relocates Shakespeare's original romcom to the world of football, where scandal-filled rivalries could undermine the final result, until Sat 24 May, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

TITUS ANDRONICUS Simon Russell Beale takes the lead in Max Webster's reimagining of Shakespeare's bloodiest play, until Sat 7 June, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN Louisa Lytton stars as Rachel Watson in the stage version of Paula Hawkins' bestselling novel of the same name, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, The Alexandra, B'ham

JUST BETWEEN OURSELVES Alan Ayckbourn's suburban comedy brings together five birthdays, two unhappy marriages and one possessive mother. Performed by London Classic Theatre, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



PICTURE YOU DEAD George Rainsford (Call The Midwife), Peter Ash (Coronation Street, War Horse) and Fiona Wade (2:22 A Ghost Story) star in a brand-new Peter James stage adaptation, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BUFF Solo-performed play reflecting on body-image pressures, social-media jealousy and one gay man's journey to self-acceptance..., Wed 30 Apr - Fri 2 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HABEAS CORPUS The Lichfield Players present an amateur version of Alan Bennett's 'farcical merry-go-round of mistaken identities and amorous encounters', Wed 30 Apr - Sat 3 May, Lichfield Garrick

UBU ROI Birmingham Newman University Drama Students present

an amateur version of Alfred Jarry's farcical play, which challenges cultural rules, norms and conventions. The production contains strong language, Thurs 1 - Fri 2 May, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL Tadlop present an amateur version of the popular musical, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ANANSI AND THE LOST SUN Swallow Wings Puppetry present a 'funny, inspiring and entertaining' West African tale, mixing puppetry and traditional West African music, Fri 2 May, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

HANNAY STANDS FAST A 'thrilling' sequel to *The 39 Steps* which sees dashing hero Richard Hannay back in the fray on a mission to thwart a new and deadly threat, Fri 2 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

CLOSURE? Lydia De La Murrây takes a journey of self-discovery by analysing her past relationships in a one-act comedy performance lecture, Fri 2 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 'Funny and heartfelt look' at the 'joys' of menopause. Carli Norris, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley and Daniele Coombe star, Fri 2 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

VOICES OF THE POTTERIES: A CENTENARY MUSICAL Amateur show taking audiences on a journey through the rich history and culture of 100-year-old Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 2 - Sat 3 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

IRISH ANNIE'S Ricky Tomlinson, Samantha Alton & Asa Murphy star in a musical play celebrating the best of Irish culture, Sat 3 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

JAMAICA LOVE A musical celebration of Windrush and legacy, bringing to life the intertwined history of Britain and Jamaica through the power of music, storytelling and culture, Sun 4 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Kids Theatre

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW Celebration of four Eric Carle stories: Brown Bear, Brown Bear; 10 Little Rubber Ducks; The Very Busy Spider; and (of course) The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Fri 2 - Sat 3 May, Stourbridge Town Hall



THE ULTIMATE BUBBLE SHOW Join international bubbleologist and Guinness World Record holder Ray Bubbles as he uses various gases to craft stunning bubble sculptures and effects, Sun 4 May, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

Light Entertainment

THE VERY BEST OF TOMMY COOPER - JUST LIKE THAT! One-man show recapturing the mayhem and misfiring magic of one of Britain's best-loved entertainers, Fri 2 May, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

VICTOR AND ALBERT: PURVEYORS OF FINE MUSICAL COMEDY Join identical twins Professor Victor and Dr Albert for an evening of 'riotous comedy, audience interaction, original songs, games, mayhem and a sprinkling of magic', Fri 2 May, Farlow and Oretton Village Hall, Kidderminster

THE MUSIC OF TAYLOR SWIFT BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring live band & vocalist, Fri 2 & Sat 3 May, Lichfield Cathedral

THE BIG NIGHT OUT 'High-octane, jam-packed, nostalgia-inducing extravaganza featuring lip-synch battles, mass singalongs, competitions, dance-offs, giant video screens and much more'..., Sat 3 May, Bilston Town Hall

VICTOR AND ALBERT: PURVEYORS OF FINE MUSICAL COMEDY Join identical twins Professor Victor and Dr Albert for an evening of 'riotous comedy, audience interaction, original songs, games, mayhem and a sprinkling of magic', Sat 3 May, Wern Town Hall, North Shropshire

MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU Comedian Mike Capozzola presents a multimedia show in which he mocks and celebrates all things Star Wars, Sun 4 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

WONDERS OF OUR UNIVERSE 'Cosmic exploration that weaves together distinctive storytelling, live demonstrations, breathtaking visuals and live music', Sun 4 May, Dudley Town Hall

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH PHIL 'THE POWER' TAYLOR Join the 16x world darts champion for an insight into his incredible achievements and personal experiences, Sat 3 May, Birmingham Town Hall

LESLEY SMITH AS PEGGY KNIGHT Local historian Lesley Smith tells the little-



Shaun The Sheep Find The Flock Trail - Trentham Gardens

known story of a shorthand typist who was parachuted into Nazi-occupied France with just two weeks training and one practice parachute jump, Sun 4 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

Events

ANIMAL CROSSING: NEW HORIZONS

Collect character stamps, discover interesting facts about the inhabitants of SEA LIFE and meet with Tom Nook & Isabelle, until Mon 5 May, National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham

SPRING BULB FESTIVAL Enjoy the immersive and colourful experience of taking a walk through the gardens, until Sun 18 May, Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire

SHAUN THE SHEEP FIND THE FLOCK TRAIL Follow the trail to discover 12 supersized and colourful Shaun the Sheep sculptures, painted by local and regional artists, until Sun 18 May, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

BUILD THE THRILL Grab your Pit Pass and choose an F1 team to join, until Sun 29 June, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

BETMGM PREMIER LEAGUE DARTS 2025

Featuring the sport's top stars, including reigning champion Luke Littler and world number one Luke Humphries, Thurs 1 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

STAFFORDSHIRE DAY Free taster tours of the Wedgwood Factory, Thurs 1 May, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

BONGO'S BINGO The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 3 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SAKE TASTING EVENING An evening of sake and sushi, Sat 3 May, Stourbridge Glass Museum

80S RACEDAY Enjoy jump racing, including the Staffordshire Plate, and live 80s music after the races, Sat 3 May, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND Featuring 25 of the UK's most popular layouts, all on display at the Highley Visitor Centre, Sat 3 - Sun 4 May, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

WESTON PARK TRIATHLON Watch the world's best off-road triathletes compete in the Elite World Cup race and enjoy a weekend of camping and family activities, Sat 3 - Sun 4 May,

Weston Park, Shropshire

A VICTORIAN SPRING FAIR Featuring sack racing, music, dancing and knobbly knee competitions, Sat 3 - Mon 5 May, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

THE YEAR WAS 1945... VE DAY

CELEBRATIONS Free weekend of activities inspired by the street-party spirit of 1945, Sat 3 - Mon 5 May, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL

Featuring celebrity chef demos, an artisan market, street-food stalls, bars, kids' activities and more, Sat 3 - Mon 5 May, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

ARTISAN CRAFT & FOOD MARKET

Featuring food, a bar and live music, Sun 4 May, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

DAWN CHORUS To celebrate International Dawn Chorus day, doors will be open at 4:45am for you to enjoy the tranquility, Sun 4 May, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

GREAT BIRMINGHAM RUN The Midlands' biggest running event, Sun 4 May, Birmingham City Centre



AIM SPORTS GROUP MHM GROUP

AN EVENING WITH THE ICON PAUL GASCOIGNE

GAZZA GAZZA GAZZ

GAZZA GAZZA

DUDLEY TOWN HALL
THU 12 JUNE - 7:30PM
boroughhalls.co.uk

Gigs

BROWN HORSE Mon 5 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DECAPITATED Mon 5 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

DEATH VALLEY GIRLS + BELLA AND THE BIZARRE Tues 6 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VUNDABAR Tues 6 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ROBERT JON & THE WRECK Tues 6 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

ELIJAH LYONS Tues 6 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

TWENTY ONE PILOTS Tues 6 May, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

TONY CHRISTIE Tues 6 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

PAUL ARMFIELD Tues 6 May, Bill's Kitchen, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

LAURIE WRIGHT Wed 7 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

AMBER RUN + BILLIANNE Wed 7 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WORMWITCH + UNDERDARK Wed 7 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

SARAH MCQUAID + ROB PETERS Wed 7 May, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

PUP Wed 7 May, XOYO, Digbeth, Birmingham

LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY Wed 7 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

OYSTERBAND Wed 7 - Thurs 8 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire



MILLTOWN BROTHERS Thurs 8 May, Hare &

Hounds, Birmingham

TOM MEIGHAN Thurs 8 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PANIC SHACK + THE PILL Thurs 8 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

WHO SAVES THE HERO + SECOND CITIES + MISTAKES WORTH MAKING Thurs 8 May, The Flapper, B'ham

BAD ACTRESS Thurs 8 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

TANGERINE DREAM Thurs 8 May, Birmingham Town Hall



DANIEL O'DONNELL Thurs 8 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

STEELEYE SPAN Thurs 8 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY SHOW Thurs 8 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

MICHAEL SCHENKER + WYTCH HAZEL Thurs 8 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

SULTAN STEVENSON TRIO Thurs 8 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

THE FIXX + WRECKLESS ERIC Thurs 8 May, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

DAVID GRAY Thurs 8 May, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

BOYZLIFE Thurs 8 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MICHAEL CERA PALIN Fri 9 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

VANITY FAIRY + ALISHA Fri 9 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SORRY Fri 9 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

450 LIVE + SUPAHEAT

+ LOYAL SQUAD Fri 9 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SMYTHS + BILLY BLAGG Fri 9 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE K'S Fri 9 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

GOLD PANDA + BABA ALI Fri 9 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

CALIBAN Fri 9 May, The Asylum, B'ham

RUM BUFFALO Fri 9 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

STEVEN WILSON Fri 9 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE CAROLINE BOMB + ALL HER SONS + GENERAL CONSENSUS + SAY LESS Fri 9 May, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

BOOTLEG ABBA Fri 9 May, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

GUNS 2 ROSES Fri 9 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

KING OF POP Fri 9 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE FOO FIGHTERS UK + MIDLIFE CRISIS Fri 9 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

IST IST Fri 9 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DAVID LIVE - THE DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE Fri 9 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

WASHERHALL LANE Fri 9 May, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

TALON Fri 9 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE JO BALDWIN PROJECT Fri 9 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

A TRIBUTE TO STING & THE POLICE Fri 9 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ELVIS & THE RISING SUN BAND FEATURING TOMMY HOLLAND Fri 9 May, The Robin, Bilston

INME Fri 9 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE SHERLOCKS Fri 9 May, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

PETE COE Fri 9 May, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ARTHUR COATES AND KERRAN COTTERELL Fri 9 May, The Albion, Burton Upon Trent

THE 'DARKEST' + BEMUSED Fri 9 May, The Station, Cannock

VICKY JACKSON AS PINK Fri 9 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury



AUDIOTHIEVES Fri 9 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

CONJOVI Fri 9 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

RICK & JO Fri 9 May, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE + ZD GRAFTERS Sat 10 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DESTINATION DISEASE + ACCELERATED MUTATION + CRACK THE FLAGS + MORE Sat 10 May, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

THE SHERLOCKS Sat 10 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ABDUL HANNAN Sat 10 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DAFT FUNK LIVE Sat 10 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

COLDPLACE Sat 10 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FROM THE JAM Sat 10 May, Birmingham Town Hall

THIS IS FLOYD Sat 10 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

NOUGHTY NINETIES Sat 10 May, The River Rooms,

Stourbridge

ROVING CROWS Sat 10 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SAM CARTER Sat 10 May, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

CAMENS Sat 10 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

YOURTHMICS Sat 10 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LAURA JURD QUARTET Sat 10 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

THE MARLEY EXPERIENCE Sat 10 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

DIVAS WITH GEM AND FRIENDS Sat 10 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE NICKELBACK EXPERIENCE Sat 10 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

DIRE STREETS Sat 10 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

NAP EYES Sun 11 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PREOCCUPATIONS Sun 11 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE STEVE GIBBONS BAND Sun 11 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

ABIGAIL LAPELL + STEPH CAMERON Sun 11 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

BLAZE BAYLEY + WHITE RAVEN DOWN Sun 11 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sun 11 May, Lichfield Garrick

MIA KELLY Sun 11 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury



Classical Music

KAI YANG PIANO RECITAL Tues 6 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

PIANO CONCERT FEATURING MARTIN JAMES BARTLETT & MARIAM BATSASHVILI Programme includes works by Bach, Brahms, Mozart & Liszt, Thurs 8 May, Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre

ARIEL LANYI PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Beethoven, R Schumann, Bartók & Chopin, Thurs 8 May, Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre

SONG OF THE HILL Featuring Sid Peacock (composer & presenter). Fri 9 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

NORTH WALES OPERA: CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA & PAGLIACCI Programme includes works by Mascagni & Leoncavallo, Fri 9 May, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

ANDRÉ RIEU Featuring the Johann Strauss Orchestra & international soloists. Celebrating 200 years of Johann Strauss, Sat 10 May, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CHORUS: ELGAR'S DREAM OF GERONTIUS Featuring Ben Lamb (conductor), Ailsa Cochrane, Robert Jenkins & Philip Lancaster (soloists), Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra & Lichfield Cathedral Chorus, Sat 10 May, Lichfield Cathedral

THE FILM ORCHESTRA: STRING ORCHESTRA IN CONCERT Featuring David Curtis (conductor), Sat 10 May, St Mary's, Leintwardine, Shropshire

DUDLEY SCHOOLS' SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT Featuring Keith Horsfall (conductor). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Elgar, Strauss & more..., Sun 11 May, Dudley Town Hall

Comedy

STUART MITCHELL Wed 7 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY ROBINSON, KEITH FARNAN & ROBERT WHITE Thurs 8 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KEVIN HART Thurs 8 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

CHRISTIAN BRIGHTY Thurs 8 May, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Thurs 8 May, Dudley Town Hall

JEFF ARCURI Fri 9 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ROSIE JONES Fri 9 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

RICHARD HERRING Fri 9 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

DOMINIC FRISBY, KEITH FARNAN, ROBERT WHITE & COMIC TBC Fri 9 - Sat 10 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Fri 9 - Sat 10 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROGER MONKHOUSE, JORDAN DUCHARME, FAIZAN SHAH & JON PEARSON Sat 10 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

KATHERINE RYAN Sat 10 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SOPHIE MCCARTNEY Sat 10 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

GEORGE LEWIS Sat 10 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (3pm)

FUN! WITH BARBARA NICE Sat 10 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (5pm)

SARA PASCOE, JOSH PUGH, DARREN HARRIOTT & WAYNE BEESE Sat 10 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CHRIS MCCAUSLAND Sat 10 May, Dudley Town Hall

SUSAN MURRAY Sat 10 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

MARK STEEL Sat 10 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

TEZ ILYAS Sat 10 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent



FAMILY COMEDY SHOW WITH BARBARA NICE, AARON SIMMONDS & ADA CAMPE Sun 11 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

SARA PASCOE Sun 11 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

Theatre

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW The return of Richard O'Brien's legendary rock & roll musical, featuring timeless classics Sweet Transvestite, Dammit Janet, The Time Warp and many more..., Mon 5 - Sat 10 May, The Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

LA TRAVIATA Verdi's tragic tale, performed by the Ukrainian Opera & Ballet Theatre Kyiv with international soloists, a highly praised chorus and full orchestra, Tues 6 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 'Funny and heartfelt look' at the 'joys' of menopause. Carli Norris, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley and Daniele Coombe star, Tues 6 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SHREK THE MUSICAL Burton & South Derbyshire College present an

amateur version of the smash-hit musical, Tues 6 - Wed 7 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

AN INSPECTOR CALLS Stephen Daldry's National Theatre production of JB Priestley's compelling thriller, Tues 6 - Sat 10 May, The Alexandra, B'ham



THE SHARK IS BROKEN Acclaimed drama that dives behind the scenes of 1970s blockbuster movie Jaws, Tues 6 - Sat 10 May, The Rep, B'ham

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR Brownhills Musical Theatre Company present an amateur version of the Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, Tues 6 - Sat 10 May, Lichfield Garrick

LA BOHÈME Presented by the Ukrainian Opera & Ballet Theatre Kyiv, with international soloists, a highly praised chorus and full orchestra, Wed 7 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BOT BROTHERS: A STORY OF OUR TIMES Clown double-act Harris Morris and Joe Smith star as two robo-clones who are separated at birth and raised by different families. Critically acclaimed show loosely based on Willy Russell's Blood Brothers, Wed 7 - Thurs 8 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

EVITA Musical Theatre Stafford present an amateur version of the Tim Rice/Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, Wed 7 - Sat 10 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL Amateur version presented by Tamworth Musical Theatre Company, Wed 7 - Sat 10 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

KIPPS, THE NEW HALF A SIXPENCE MUSICAL Amateur version presented by Manor Musical Theatre Company, Wed 7 - Sat 10 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

WNO: THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO Welsh National Opera present Mozart's tale of love, loyalty and mistaken identities, Thurs 8 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Puccini's heartbreaking story of a young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant. Performed by the Ukrainian Opera & Ballet Theatre Kyiv with international soloists, a highly praised chorus and full orchestra, Thurs 8 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LEARNING TO FLY James Rowland fuses storytelling, music and comedy to tell the story of his remarkable

friendship with 'the scary old lady' who lived in the 'spooky' house on his street, Thurs 8 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek

THE LITTLE MERMAID Amateur version presented by Curtain Call Theatre, Thurs 8 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WIDOWHOOD Uplifting one-woman show exploring the experiences of young widowed women, Fri 9 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA & PAGLIACCI North Wales Opera Company & Studio present two Italian tragedies, Fri 9 May, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

TOXIC Dibby Theatre Productions present a 'hilarious and heartbreaking' new show from award-winning theatre maker Nathaniel J Hall, Fri 9 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

TALKING ABOUT THE FIRE Chris Thorpe's one-man show about a new nuclear weapons treaty, Fri 9 - Sat 10 May, The Rep, Birmingham

WNO: PETER GRIMES Welsh National Opera present Britten's iconic tale of isolation and prejudice, Sat 10 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

HUMBLE BOY Amateur version of Charlotte Jones' comedy about broken vows, failed hopes and the joys of bee-keeping, Sat 10 - Sat 17 May, Oldbury Rep

Kids Theatre

HOW TO CATCH A BOOK WITCH Coppice Theatre present an open-ended show, aimed at children aged three-plus, that explores the importance of libraries, sharing stories and not judging people, Sat 10 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THERE'S A MONSTER IN YOUR SHOW High-energy family adventure in which favourite characters from Tom Fletcher's books come to life on stage, Sat 10 - Sun 11 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SCIENCE MUSEUM - THE LIVE STAGE

SHOW Family entertainment which promises to ignite curiosity and fuel imagination, Sun 11 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Dance

BRB2: CARLOS ACOSTA'S BALLET CELEBRATION Brand-new gala production celebrating Serge Diaghilev and the birth of the modern ballet, Tues 6 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

VERVE: TRIPLE BILL Sixteen dancers from the Northern School of Contemporary Dance present an engaging programme of works by

Luca Signoretto, Sattva Ninja and Bosmat Nossan, Thurs 8 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

NIKITA KUZMIN - MIDNIGHT DANCER The Strictly star's first-ever solo show sees him joined by a cast of talented dancers and vocalists in what promises to be 'an unforgettable night of entertainment', Sun 11 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Light Entertainment

THE PRAT PACK Banter, jokes and songs from Bradley Walsh, Brian Conley, Shane Richie and Joe Pasquale, Tues 6 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



SOUNDS OF THE 60S LIVE: HOSTED BY TONY BLACKBURN OBE Featuring live music and stories from the most iconic decade in fashion, music and pop culture, Wed 7 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE PRAT PACK Banter, jokes and songs from Bradley Walsh, Brian Conley, Shane Richie and Joe Pasquale, Wed 7 May, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

OPERA BOYS: A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS Thurs 8 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SHOWDOWN High-energy spectacle combining 'jaw-dropping circus stunts with razor-sharp humour'. Audience members get to vote for their favourite act, Thurs 8 - Sat 10 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

CRAIG REVEL HORWOOD: REVELATIONS An evening of 'big songs, tall tales and glamour', Fri 9 May, Dudley Town Hall



DANNY LEE GREW 24K MAGIC Expect a 'spellbinding evening of jaw-dropping magic, illusion, laughs, gasps, and stunning sleight-of-hand sorcery', Fri 9 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE CABARET Variety show blending cabaret, comedy, music and burlesque, Fri 9

May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE ABSOLUTELY DRAGULOUS SHOW

Starring husband & husband stage duo Marilyn & Amanda Fockhard. Expect 'side-splitting comedy, dazzling costume changes, West End vocals and more make-up than the Kardashians put together', Sat 10 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR Evening of nostalgic hits from the 1950s and 60s, Sat 10 May, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

TRÉS TRÉS CABARET 'A silly and saucy night to remember', Sat 10 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! Epic anthems singalong during which audience members get to sing their way through 'the greatest songs of all-time', Sun 11 May, Birmingham Town Hall

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic show celebrating the most iconic moments in comedy, rock & roll and pop culture, from the 1950s right through to the 1980s, Sun 11 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH JACK THE RIPPER Broadcaster Steve Morgan delves into the sordid realms of Victorian London in an attempt to unmask the notorious killer, Wed 7 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PEP TALK WITH DEO KATO FEAT. BLACK VOICES A 60-minute conversation charting Deo Kato's epic 16-month challenge, running from Cape Town to London to tell the historic story of human migration from Africa to the rest of the world, Fri 9 May, Grosvenor Road Studios, Handsworth

Events

MATCHROOM UK OPEN POOL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025 Featuring a stellar 256-player field, including the top 128 professionals from the World Nineball Tour, Tues 6 - Sun 11 May, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

BREAKFAST DINING EXPERIENCE Sit back, relax and enjoy being served a full English breakfast, Wed 7 - Thurs 8 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

EUROPHILEX BIRMINGHAM 2025 British international stamp exhibition featuring 2,000 frames of exhibits from 40 countries and over 60 dealers and trade stands, Wed 7 - Sun 11 May, NEC, Birmingham

REMEMBERING VE DAY - 80 YEARS ON

The Royal British Legion hosts a special VE Day Tea Party and Commemorative Service, Thurs 8 May, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

RHS MALVERN SPRING FESTIVAL One of the first major flower shows of the year, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 May, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

STONE FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL Meet Bake Off stars, enjoy live music and sample plenty of food & drink, Fri 9 - Sun 11 May, Westbridge Park, Stone, Staffordshire

LUDLOW SPRING FESTIVAL Bringing together food & drink, talks, live music, classic cars and more, Fri 9 - Sun 11 May, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

THE BABY SHOW Featuring over 350 leading baby brands and thousands of products, Fri 9 - Sun 11 May, NEC, Birmingham

THE CRYSTAL MILE FACTORY WALKING TOUR Embark on a journey through time, highlighting the key sites and events that shaped the area's glassmaking industry, Sat 10 May, Stourbridge Glass Museum

EMBOSSED GLASS TEA LIGHT WORKSHOP Join renowned glass artist Terri Malcolm for a creative workshop, Sat 10 May, Stourbridge Glass Museum

VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA Travel in style in a luxurious vintage carriage and indulge in a spread of sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee, Sat 10 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

LAITHWAITES BIRMINGHAM WINE FESTIVAL Taste from a range of 100 wines from 20 different producers, Sat 10 May, Custard Factory, Birmingham

UK SLOT CAR FESTIVAL Showcasing a wide range of the major slot car manufacturers, Sat 10 - Sun 11 May, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

VE DAY CELEBRATION Weekend of interactive workshops and live performances, Sat 10 - Sun 11 May, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

VE80 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS Try your hand at morse code, decode secret messages, see if you can pass the army medical and take the air-raid shelter survival test, Sat 10 - Sun 11 May, Tamworth Castle

WAKE UP THE ZOO Early morning guided tour, going behind the scenes and getting close to a variety of exotic animals, Sun 11 May, Dudley Zoo

WALSALL ARBORETUM WALK AND SKETCH Join artist Suzanne Holtom for a day of looking, walking, sketching and learning at the Arboretum, Sun 11 May, Walsall Arboretum



La Boheme - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BIRMINGHAM HISTORY TOUR: DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF WARSTONE LANE CEMETERY Uncover the rich and intriguing past of Warstone Lane cemetery, Sun 11 May, Vyse Street, Birmingham

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP - HERITAGE RAILWAYS Learn more about the theory behind photography, Sun 11 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

BREATHE WRESTLING Featuring two hours of 'high-flying, hard-hitting, heart-stopping action', Sun 11 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WORLD OF WEDGWOOD ARTISAN MARKET Featuring 30 stalls of independent local makers and small businesses from Staffordshire, Sun 11 May, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

RHS Malvern Spring Festival

Thu 8 - Sun 11 May 2025

BOOK NOW AT rhsmalvern.co.uk

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Gigs

ROSE CITY BAND + BANANAGUN Mon 12 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

LIANG LAWRENCE Mon 12 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX Mon 12 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

YOUNG GUN SILVER FOX + SMITH & LIDDLE Tues 13 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SIMEON HAMMOND DALLAS Tues 13 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

MEKONS Wed 14 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

ELLIE GOWERS + MIA KELLY Wed 14 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

YOLANDA CHARLES' PROJECT PH Wed 14 May, The Jam House, B'ham

BOTTLE ROCKETS Wed 14 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ZIMMER90 Wed 14 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SUPERGRASS Wed 14 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MANILLA TIMES Wed 14 May, The Victoria, B'ham

THE LOST NOTES TRIO + MARIANNE & ANGEL Wed 14 May, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

SAM AMIDON Wed 14 May, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

ADRIAN VANDENBERG Wed 14 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

GIVE ME THE NIGHT - GEORGE BENSON TRIBUTE Wed 14 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE HAAR Wed 14 May, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

OSIBISA Thurs 15 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

ADA MORGHE Thurs 15 May, The Jam House, Birmingham



The Haar - Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

MARKETPLACE + EDLARS Thurs 15 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

A LEXICON OF LIFE: AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH MARTIN FRY Thurs 15 May, Birmingham Town Hall

NICK HARPER Thurs 15 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

BLONDISH - A TRIBUTE TO BLONDIE Thurs 15 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

PAUL YOUNG Thurs 15 May, The Robin, Bilston

MISS AMERICANA - A TRIBUTE TO TAYLOR SWIFT Thurs 15 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DIANA & LIONEL - ENDLESS LOVE THE SHOW Thurs 15 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

WEATHER SYSTEMS + HAUNT THE WOODS Fri 16 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE CUREHEADS + SIOUXSIE AND THE BUDGIES Fri 16 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GYPSY PISTOLEROS + THE OUTLAW ORCHESTRA Fri 16 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

CLOCKWORK ORANGE Fri 16 May, Dead Wax, B'ham

MAKE THEM SUFFER + RESOLVE + CONJURER + IF NOT FOR ME Fri 16 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

THE WATERBOYS Fri 16 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

OLLY MURS + BLUE Fri 16 May, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

THE 80S SHOW Fri 16 May, Dudley Town Hall

MORGAN WALLEN TRIBUTE UK Fri 16 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

HOLDING BACK THE YEARS Fri 16 May, The Robin, Bilston

PETE KENT Fri 16 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

KATE BUSH TRIBUTE - MOMENTS OF PLEASURE Fri 16 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SHAUN WALKER Fri 16 May, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

MADE IN TENNESSEE Fri 16 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PUNK ROCK 101 Fri 16 May, The Station, Cannock

A BAND CALLED MALICE Fri 16 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

RIP IT UP Fri 16 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

KATE RUSBY Fri 16 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE SMITHS LTD + TRANSMISSION Fri 16 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DON'T STOP QUEEN NOW Fri 16 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

DAMIEN DEMPSEY Fri 16 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE ORIGINAL WANTED Fri 16 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

STRICTLY ABBA Fri 16 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shrops

WESTWORLD WEEKEND XXI WITH KIRK BRANDON + SPEAR OF DESTINY + THEATRE OF HATE + THE PACK Fri 16 - Sat 17 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

KATIESFEST 2025 Fri 16 - Sun 18 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

BRADLEY SIMPSON Sat 17 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

MOVING PICTURES Sat 17 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

TONY VISCONTI AND WOODY WOODMANSEY Sat 17 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NOASIS Sat 17 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

CLEARWATER CREEDENCE REVIVAL Sat 17 May, Birmingham Town Hall

TYLER, THE CREATOR Sat 17 May, Utilita Arena B'ham

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER Sat 17 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

OASISH Sat 17 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

SMOOTH ROCK SHOW Sat 17 May, Dudley Town Hall

BLUR 2 + PULP'D Sat 17 May, The Robin, Bilston

ASHLEY HUTCHINGS & BECKY MILLS Sat 17 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

STILLMARILLION Sat 17 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SPACE Sat 17 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

SHOWADDYWADDY Sat 17 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ED SHEERAN TRIBUTE Sat 17 May, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

DANA GILLESPIE & DINO BAPTISTE Sat 17 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE JOURNEYMEN Sat 17 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

LIVEWIRE: THE AC/DC SHOW Sat 17 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GEORGIA RUTH Sat 17 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

ERASURED Sat 17 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

DOMINO SUGAR Sat 17 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE CARPENTERS - VOICE OF THE HEART Sat 17 May, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

HYPHEN Sun 18 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BUS STATION LOONIES + THE DODO APPRECIATION SOCIETY + EVISCERATEDBAND + PLUTONIUM + BOSS MADRA Sun 18 May, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

BRYAN ADAMS Sun 18 May, bp pulse LIVE, B'ham

THE ELVIS TRIBUTE ARTIST WORLD TOUR Sun 18 May, The Alexandra, B'ham

GRANNY'S ATTIC Sun 18 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

THE DARKNISS + BILLION DOLLAR ALICE Sun 18 May, The Robin, Bilston

RIPPLE MUSIC FESTIVAL Sun 18 May, Lichfield Garrick

COUNTRY SUPERSTARS Sun 18 May, Lichfield Garrick

PAUL YOUNG Sun 18 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by J S Bach, Holst, Anderson & more..., Mon 12 May, Birmingham Town Hall

GILL STYLES & RICHARD WALKER PIANO CONCERT Tues 13 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

MARTYN RAWLES ORGAN RECITAL Tues 13 May, Lichfield Cathedral

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: CAREER ACCELERATOR CONCERT Featuring Yuliya Ostapchuk (violin), Irene Katsenelson (viola), Josh Mountford (cello) & Yijia Cui (double bass), Thurs 15 May, CBSO Centre, B'ham

PHILIPPINE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Grzegorz Nowak (conductor), Wen-Sinn Yang & Diomedes Saraza Jr (soloists). Programme includes works by Bizet, Vaughan Williams, Tchaikovsky & more..., Thurs 15 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FOUR SEASONS & LARK ASCENDING BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring London Concertante. Programme includes works by Mozart, Vivaldi & Vaughan Williams, Thurs 15 May, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

THE PEOPLE'S SHOW CHOIR SHREWSBURY Featuring Lorna Parkhouse (leader), Sat 17 May, British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

LUDLOW ORCHESTRA Featuring Claire Tocknell (leader), Jonathan Lyness (conductor) & Gina McCormac (violin). Programme includes works by Dvorak, Prokofiev, Walton & Tchaikovsky, Sat 17 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

PUCCINI MESSA DI GLORIA Featuring Anthony Rose (conductor), Ian Riddle (piano/organ), Michael Jones (tenor) & Aiden Edwards (bass) Sat 17 May, Stoke Minster

LICHFIELD SINFONIA SPRING CONCERT Featuring Ignas Maknickas (piano-pictured) & Sara Birchall (conductor). Programme includes works by Weber, Rachmaninov & Tchaikovsky, Sat 17 May, Lichfield Cathedral



Comedy

MARK NORMAND Mon 12 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham
STEWART LEE Mon 12 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
CHRIS MCCAUSLAND Mon 12 - Wed 14 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
MICHELLE SHAUGHNESSY Tues 13 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
JARLATH REGAN Wed 14 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
ABIGOLIAH SCHAMAUN Wed 14 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
ROB BECKETT Wed 14 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



JOEL DOMMETT Wed 14 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre
SHARON WANJOHI, BRENNAN REECE & COMIC TBC Thurs 15 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
NICK MOHAMMED Thurs 15 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham
HENNING WEHN Thurs 15 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre
DARA Ó BRIAIN Thurs 15 - Fri 16 May, Birmingham Hippodrome
OMID DJALILI Fri 16 May, Birmingham Town Hall
HORATIO GOULD Fri 16 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
SOPHIE MCCARTNEY Fri 16 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham
HARRY HILL Fri 16 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
PATRICK MONAHAN, CHRIS BROOKER, CHRISTIAN RILEY & BURT WILLIAMSON Fri 16 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre
JACOB NUSSEY, MARTIN MÓR, SHARON WANJOHI & BRENNAN REECE Fri 16 - Sat 17 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
DARIUS DAVIES, AARON WOOD, KATE LUCAS & PAUL REVILL Sat 17 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham
MUHSIN YESILADA, SHAZIA MIRZA & RAJ POOJARA Sat 17 May, Birmingham Hippodrome
ROB BECKETT Sat 17 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent
MC HAMMERSMITH Sat 17 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (3pm)
ANGELOUS EPITHIMOU Sat 17 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (5pm)
JOSH PUGH Sat 17 May, The Potteries

Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent
DARA Ó BRIAIN Sat 17 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
ZAKIR KHAN Sun 18 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
RORY O'HANLON Sun 18 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham
THE ELVIS TRIBUTE ARTIST WORLD TOUR Sun 18 May, The Alexandra, B'ham
JONNY COLE Sun 18 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

TALKING ABOUT THE FIRE Chris Thorpe's one-man show about a new nuclear weapons treaty, Mon 12 May, Tipton Library
& JULIET Hit musical which 'flips the script' on the greatest love story ever told, Mon 12 - Sat 17 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
MURDER, MARGARET AND ME The Nonentities Society present an amateur version of Philip Meeks' story concerning the friendship between Miss Marple actress Margaret Rutherford and Queen of Crime Agatha Christie, Mon 12 - Sat 17 May, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster
PRIDE & PREJUDICE* (*SORT OF) A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, Tues 13 - Sat 17 May, Lichfield Garrick
SEASONS OF LOVE The Mellow Dramatics present a compilation show featuring songs from the musicals, Wed 14 - Sat 17 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent
DO I LOVE YOU? John Godber's 'dramatic gem' tells the story of three twentysomethings who develop a love for Northern Soul, Wed 14 - Sat 24 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



JAMES ROWLAND DIES AT THE END OF THE SHOW A story about living that promises 'laughter and music and joy', Thurs 15 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton
THE VICAR OF DIBLEY Amateur production based on the much-loved TV sitcom of the same name, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 May, Dudley Little Theatre
WHAT HO WODEHOUSE Jonathan Goodwin stars in a lighthearted romp adapted from some of the early

writings of PG Wodehouse, Fri 16 May, Haden Hill House, Cradley Heath

STEPTOE & SON - LIVE! Show comprising four episodes of the iconic BBC television series, performed live on stage, Fri 16 May, Halesowen Town Hall



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JNR A Gatehouse Youth Theatre Junior Rep performance, Fri 16 - Sat 17 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre
...EARNEST? Spoof performance based on Oscar Wilde's The Importance Of Being Earnest, Sat 17 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham
IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID! New show in which Joe Sellman-Leava and Dylan Howells investigate the subject of how the economy wins elections, Sat 17 May, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

Kids Theatre

THERE'S A MONSTER IN YOUR SHOW High-energy family adventure in which favourite characters from Tom Fletcher's books come to life on stage, Tues 13 - Wed 14 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
THE WIGGLES Interactive live show for younger audiences which promises to spark creativity and a love of learning, Wed 14 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
THE DINOSAUR THAT POOPED: A ROCK SHOW! New musical for younger audiences, adapted from the bestselling books by Tom Fletcher & Dougie Poynter, Sat 17 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
JONNY AWSUM & HIS AWARD-WINNING KIDS SHOW Comedy show especially created for younger audiences, Sat 17 May, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

ACOSTA DANZA - CUBAN ECLECTIC Carlos Acosta's Cuban dance company showcase works ranging from modern to Afro-Cuban fused with flamenco, capoeira and hip-hop. A post-show Q&A features on the opening night, Tues 13 - Wed 14 May, Birmingham Hippodrome
NIKITA KUZMIN - MIDNIGHT DANCER The Strictly star's first-ever solo show

sees him joined by a cast of talented dancers and vocalists in what promises to be 'an unforgettable night of entertainment', Sat 17 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

AN EVENING WITH THE TWO TOMS Join viral star Thomas Benjamin Wild Esq and London cabaret virtuoso Tom Carradine for an evening of singalong fun and musical humour, Fri 16 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham
BOX OF FROGS An evening of 'high-octane improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Fri 16 May, Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield
AN EVENING WITH JIMMY TARBUCK Join the comedian & raconteur for an evening of anecdotes and jokes as he reflects on a remarkable life in showbusiness, Sat 17 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
AN EVENING WITH JORDAN ADAMS: ONE NIGHT ONLY A 'fusion of music, fun and laughter' with the musical theatre and classical crossover performer, Sat 17 May, Lichfield Garrick



OPERA BOYS: A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS Sun 18 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Talks & Spoken Word

BRIAN BILSTON & HENRY NORMAL An evening of poetry from 'Twitter's unofficial Poet Laureate' (Bilston) and the founder of Manchester Poetry Festival (Normal), Tues 13 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
EMILY CHAPPELL'S EPIC TALES OF CYCLING ADVENTURE The inspirational adventurer and endurance cyclist shares stories from her epic travels, Wed 14 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury
BRIAN BILSTON & HENRY NORMAL An evening of poetry from 'Twitter's unofficial Poet Laureate' (Bilston) and the founder of Manchester Poetry Festival (Normal), Thurs 15 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire



1960s Weekend - Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

VOICES FROM THE PEAK - LIVE!

Derbyshire-born poet & recording artist Mark Gwynne Jones takes audiences on a journey through the Peak District via words, film and sound, Fri 16 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek

EMMA KENNY'S KILLER COUPLES Join the leading psychological therapist & crime commentator as she explores the psychology of couples turned killers, Sat 17 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Events

MUSEUM TOUR Join staff members for a guided tour of the museum, Mon 12 May, Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham

SPRING DIESEL FESTIVAL A feast of diesel traction across four intensively-timetabled days, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

CHRIS MOYLES 90S HANGOVER

RACENIGHT An evening of jump racing followed by live music, Sat 17 May, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

BAT WALK AND TALK Led by Phillip Playford from the Staffordshire Bat Group, Sat 17 May, Reedswood Park, Walsall

BARK FARM Featuring dog demonstrations, dog shows and have-a-go games, Sat 17 May, Shugborough Estate, nr Stafford

BCIMO FAMILY DAY Celebrate 200 years of rail as part of 'Railway 200', Sat 17 May, Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre, Dudley

BIRMINGHAM TOUR: WARSTONE LN CEMETERY UNDERGROUND TUNNEL Explore Warstone Lane's underground tunnel, used as air-raid shelters during World War Two, Sat 17 May, Vyse Street, Birmingham

90'S BABY BOTTOMLESS BRUNCH Get ready to party like it's 1999 at this 'totally rad 90s-themed brunch', Sat 17 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WAR WHEELS Steam and military meet with period entertainment and living history dioramas, Sat 17 - Sun 18 May, Foxfield Railway, Stoke-on-Trent

MAKERS CENTRAL Bringing together

makers, creators and inventors from all over the world, Sat 17 - Sun 18 May, NEC, Birmingham



1960S WEEKEND A weekend of 'far-out fun', Sat 17 - Sun 18 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

STORM THE CASTLE A duathlon set against the backdrop of Ludlow Castle, Sun 18 May, Ludlow Castle, Shropshire

FAMILY EXPLORERS: BUG HUNTING Join conservation ranger Sila to explore the site's woodland areas, Sun 18 May, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

SPECIALIST GLASS FAIR Run by Premier Glass Fairs, Sun 18 May, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

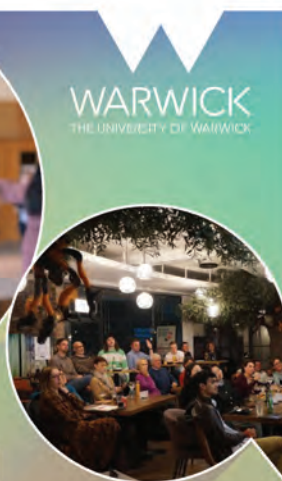
BIRMINGHAM GAMING MARKET Find rare and collectible video games, Sun 18 May, The New Bingley Hall, Birmingham



A free programme of inspiring and interactive events

Designed for all ages to spark ideas, curiosity, and creativity. Join us across Coventry and Warwickshire for talks, workshops, hands-on activities and more!

For more information visit www.resonatefestival.co.uk



Gigs

BROGEAL Mon 19 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KRS-ONE Mon 19 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TATE MCRAE Mon 19 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

WAYSIDE + POST PROFIT Mon 19 May, The Asylum, B'ham

CHINA CRISIS Mon 19 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SOMETHING ABOUT LENNON Mon 19 May, Aston Hall, Wrexham

KANEKOAYANO Tues 20 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PIXIES + BIG SPECIAL Tues 20 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

TOO DARN HOT Tues 20 May, Dudley Town Hall

SUNDAY (1994) + BEAUX Wed 21 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

OLD TIME SAILORS Wed 21 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

EDWINA HAYES + EMILY SLADE Wed 21 May, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

NASHVILLE SOUNDS IN THE ROUND Wed 21 May, Justham Family Room & Jane How Room, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DARYL HALL + GLENN TILBROOK Wed 21 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CATHERINE MACLELLAN & LUCY FARRELL Wed 21 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

TOM HILL & PHIL BOND JAZZADELIC EXPERIENCE Wed 21 May, Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

KROKE Wed 21 May, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

ABORTED + CRYPTA + THE ZENITH PASSAGE + ORGANECTOMY Thurs 22 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

DONNY BENET Thurs 22 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

UNDER THE SURFACE Thurs 22 May, Dead Wax, Birmingham

WITNESS + DATURA Thurs 22 May, Subside Bar, B'ham

THE JINS Thurs 22 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

MISHRA Thurs 22 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

THE REAL THING + MEL DAY Thurs 22 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

GIN ANNIE Thurs 22 May, The Robin, Bilston

ROGER PARKES ELECTRIC DREAMS Thurs 22 May, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

SHE'KOYOKH Thurs 22 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

EAST STREET BAND Thurs 22 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Thurs 22 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HUEY MORGAN + MELYS Fri 23 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

GREEN JELLY + THE CONVALESCENCE + THRASHATOUILLE + CAPTAIN GOBSHITE & THE BAWBAGS Fri 23 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

THE OUTCHARMS Fri 23 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

RIZWAN-MUAZZAM QAWWALS Fri 23 May, Birmingham Town Hall

OASIS Fri 23 May, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

THE ELO SHOW Fri 23 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

TINA LIVE - THE TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE Fri 23 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

PINK + BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA Fri 23 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE AMERICAN



Daryl Hall & Glenn Tilbrook - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Fri 23 May, The Robin, Bilston

SABBOTAGE - BLACK SABBATH TRIBUTE Fri 23 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE PLUCKERS Fri 23 May, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

SPEAR OF DESTINY Fri 23 May, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

'BOTH SIDES NOW' PLAY THE JONI MITCHELL SONGBOOK Fri 23 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

ARRIVAL - THE HITS OF ABBA Fri 23 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

IO EARTH Fri 23 May, The Station, Cannock

BACK INTO HELL: A TRIBUTE TO MEATLOAF & JIM STEINMAN Fri 23 May, Lichfield Garrick

A DIFFERENT THREAD Fri 23 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

SIGHT N SOUND Fri 23 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

XENNA AS TAYLOR SWIFT + OLIVIA RODRIGO TRIBUTE Fri 23 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE RONALDOS Fri 23 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

ZION TRAIN Fri 23 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CALLUM & THE POOKIES Fri 23 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

SANCTUM SANCTORIUM Sat 24 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WUNDERHORSE + JUNODREAM Sat 24 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CANAAN COX Sat 24 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

AN AFTERNOON OF OLLY MURS + BLUE Sat 24 May, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

BORN IN THE 80S V 90S Sat 24 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BON GIOVI Sat 24 May, The Robin, Bilston

FRIENDS OF URIAH HEAP Sat 24 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

FRANCIS ROSSI Sat 24 May, The Wulfrun at The Halls, Wolverhampton

DOLLY FOREVER Sat 24 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ETERNITY ROAD Sat 24 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC Sat 24 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FEE FEE & THE

SENTIMENTS Sat 24 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SWING FROM PARIS Sat 24 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

HALF•ALIVE Sun 25 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SCISSOR SISTERS Sun 25 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

LAUREN HOUSLEY & THE NORTHERN COWBOYS Sun 25 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

LUKE COMBS SHOW UK Sun 25 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE TIDALS Sun 25 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE NEW BUSHBURY MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS Sun 25 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

AHMED DICKINSON AND EDUARDO MARTIN Sun 25 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE BIG WOLF BAND Sun 25 May, The Station, Cannock

RICH PARSONS Sun 25 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

MORGAN WALLEN UK Sun 25 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WILD CANDY Sun 25 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL YOUNG MUSICIANS Tues 20 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

IAN TRACEY ORGAN PROM Programme includes works by Walton, Bonnet, Mendelssohn & more..., Tues 20 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

VITAMIN STRING QUARTET: THE MUSIC OF TAYLOR SWIFT, BRIDGERTON, AND BEYOND The celebrated classical crossover ensemble promises an unforgettable night blending the beauty of classical instruments with the vibrancy of modern hits, Wed 21 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ALEXANDRA WHITTINGHAM GUITAR RECITAL Programme includes works by Coste, Tárrega, Shand & more..., Wed 21 May, Keele University Chapel

CBSO SYMPHONIC SESSIONS: MAX RICHTER'S THE FOUR SEASONS Programme includes Max Richter's Recomposed - a 21st century reimagining of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, Thurs 22 May, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

CBSO: VIDEO GAMES IN CONCERT Featuring Eimear Noone (conductor - pictured) & CBSO Chorus. Programme includes orchestral arrangements of video game soundtracks, Sun 25 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



DUDLEY INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION FINAL Sun 25 May, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, Birmingham

Comedy

DAN TIERNAN Tues 20 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JACK SKIPPER Wed 21 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JAMALI MADDIX Wed 21 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE ALTER COMEDY CLUB Wed 21 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

CARL HUTCHINSON Wed 21 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NICK MOHAMMED Wed 21 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

AL MURRAY Thurs 22 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



David O'Doherty - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LAURA BELBIN Thurs 22 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, CRAIG HILL & COMIC TBC Thurs 22 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL PETERS Thurs 22 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

DAVID O'DOHERTY Thurs 22 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SCOTT CAPURRO, MICHAEL MAY, CRAIG HILL, HANNAH BYCZKOWSKI & ROB MORIARTY Fri 23 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ED NIGHT Fri 23 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Fri 23 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ELLIE TAYLOR Sat 24 May, Birmingham Town Hall

KATE MARTIN, ASHLEY FRIEZE, FREDDIE FARRELL & DANI JOHNS Sat 24 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

SCOTT CAPURRO, MICHAEL MAY, CRAIG HILL & COMIC TBC Sat 24 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JULIAN CLARY Sat 24 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

JONNY COLE Sat 24 - Sun 25 May, Lichfield Garrick



BENJI WATERHOUSE Sun 25 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FREDDY QUINNE, JACOB NUSSEY, ELERI MORAHAN & JACK GLEADOW Sun 25 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PROJECT MAYHEM COMEDY Sun 25 May, Cherry Reds Cafe Bar, B'ham

Theatre

HANSARD Highbury Players present

an amateur version of Simon Woods' domestic drama concerning an MP's troubled marriage, Mon 19 - Sat 24 May, Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield

SHERLOCK HOLMES STRIKES BACK! One-man show starring Jonathan Goodwin in which Holmes pits his wits against Professor Moriarty and Colonel Moran, Tues 20 May, Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent

12TH NIGHT (ALL INCLUSIVE) & WHAT YOU WILL South Staffordshire College present a new adaptation of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, Tues 20 - Wed 21 May, Lichfield Garrick

GHOST STORIES A 'truly terrifying' theatrical experience, co-created by The League Of Gentleman's Jeremy Dyson, Tues 20 - Sat 24 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

LITTLE WOMEN Belinda Lang, Honeysuckle Weeks, Jack Ashton and Grace Molony star in Anne-Marie Casey's new version of Louisa May Alcott's classic tale, Tues 20 - Sat 24 May, The Rep, Birmingham

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT Panto favourite and award-winning comic Matt Slack stars as the roof-raising Pharaoh in Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's smash-hit musical, Tues 20 May - Sun 1 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

MARSHMALLOW ME The 'heartfelt and hilarious' story of Ruby, a young Scarborough girl who moved to the big city in pursuit of her acting dreams, Wed 21 - Thurs 22 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

RENT Five Towns Theatre present an amateur version of Jonathan Larson's hit musical, Wed 21 - Sat 24 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

A SHODDY DETECTIVE AND THE ART OF DECEPTION A laugh-out-loud slapstick whodunnit featuring four actors, a dozen characters and whole load of chaos, Fri 23 - Sat 24 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BOSIE One-man play focusing on the

self-imposed exile of Oscar Wilde's beau, Bosie (Lord Alfred Bruce Douglas), Fri 23 - Sat 24 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SUNNY SIDE Northern Rascals examine the 'modern young male' experience, exploring the pain and loneliness that shape the journey from adolescence to adulthood, Sat 24 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Kids Theatre

THE ELMER ADVENTURE Join three friends on a joyful jungle adventure in Tall Stories' adaptation of David McKee's much-loved Elmer books, Wed 21 - Thurs 22 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

FAIRYTALES, FABLES & OTHER ASSORTED NONSENSE Theatre for younger audiences featuring 'ridiculous mishaps, outlandish love stories and a barnyard full of animals that won't stop talking'. Suitable for audiences aged seven-plus, Sat 24 May, Lydbury Village Hall, South Shropshire

LITTLE BULB - FOUR SEASONS A theatrical love letter to nature for children and their families, Sun 25 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Dance

ONE NIGHT ONLY Dance showcase presented by the Viv Kelly School of Dance & Theatre, Mon 19 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHARITY DANCE SHOW HEADLINED BY AMY DOWDEN & CARLOS GU Amy will be supported by her students from Art In Motion Dance Academy, Loyd Griffiths, Bailey Ariyah School of Dance, Sorella Academy of Dance and MHSOD, Thurs 22 May, Dudley Town Hall



BIBI RUKIYA'S RECKLESS DAUGHTER Amina Khayyam Dance present a new work exploring conditioned patriarchy enforced by women in family structures, Thurs 22 - Fri 23 May, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

ALJAZ & JANETTE: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER Join the Strictly favourites in a brand-new show that features routines performed to a wide selection of music - from the Great American Songbook through to

modern-day classics, Fri 23 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOSS ARNOTT DANCE: EMERGENCE Brand-new triple bill of adrenaline-fuelled dance, performed by a new company of dancers, Fri 23 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Light Entertainment

SHOWTIME! Performed by leading West End showband Too Darn Hot, Tues 20 May, Dudley Town Hall

PULMAN & STILGOE: A COUPLE OF SWELLS Music and laughter with two unique entertainers: songstress and one-third of Fascinating Aida, Liza Pulman, and virtuoso pianist, songwriter & singer Joe Stilgoe, Thurs 22 May, Lichfield Garrick

DANNY BAKER: AYE AYE! AHOY HOY! Broadcaster, journalist & podcaster Danny returns with a new show celebrating 50 years of staying afloat on the showbiz seas, Thurs 22 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



TALE OF A PORK CHOP Join drag performer Just May for an evening of knock-off Ginger Spice, giant wigs, silly games and stupid songs, Fri 23 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SING THE MUSICALS Singalong spectacular featuring hits from Mamma Mia!, The Greatest Showman, Rocky Horror, Oliver!, We Will Rock You, Mary Poppins and more..., Fri 23 May, Dudley Town Hall

BOTTOMS UP: BURLESQUE & CABARET 'The creme de la creme of the cabaret world take to the stage to surprise and delight with sultry striptease, witty wisecracks and saucy songs', Sat 24 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

DANNY BAKER: AYE AYE! AHOY HOY! Broadcaster, journalist & podcaster Danny returns with a new show celebrating 50 years of staying afloat on the showbiz seas, Sat 24 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE D-DAY DARLINGS - VE DAY 80 ANNIVERSARY TOUR Brand-new tribute show, Sun 25 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

TERRY CHRISTIAN RELIVE THE WORD One-man comedy show in which the award-winning broadcaster, comedian & writer celebrates legendary TV show The Word. Expect

rarely seen clips and a no-holds-barred Q&A, Sun 25 May, Foxlow Arts Centre, Leek

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH LEVISON WOOD Join the world-renowned explorer as he celebrates the transformative power of travel and shares stories from his own remarkable adventures, Tues 20 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER 2 - THE REAL MANHUNTER A 'chilling, thrilling night at the theatre' as the former head of a Metropolitan Police murder squad, Colin Sutton, shares stories of how he caught some of the UK's most notorious killers, Wed 21 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

NIGEL HAVERS: TALKING B*LL*CKS Nigel invites his audience to join him for 'an entertaining trot' through his five decades in showbiz, Wed 21 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ADHD UNMASKED Join ADHD speaker, coach, former TV & radio presenter and late-diagnosed ADHDer Hester Grainger for 'an evening of conversation, laughter, and a refreshingly honest look at life', Thurs 22 May, Birmingham Town Hall

ALISTAIR MCGOWAN: ERIK SATIE Join the impressionist & actor as he tells of the bizarre, brave and lonely life of French composer Erik Satie. Vocal contributions come from singer Charlotte Page, Thurs 22 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

LESLEY SMITH AS NELL GWYNNE Talk given by local historian Lesley Smith, Thurs 22 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

DAME SHEILA HANCOCK 'DESERT ISLAND PIANO' A unique insight into Dame Sheila's sparkling 70-year career on stage and screen - with a host of piano pieces played in between the chat by leading pianist Anthony Hewitt, Sat 24 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SERENDIPITY: AN EVENING OF POETRY Featuring works from curator Gregory Leadbetter and special guests, including New Delhi-based writer Uttaran Das Gupta, Sun 25 May, Eastside Jazz Club, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Events

THE PIE TRAIN Relaxing and leisurely journey through the Severn valley with Paisley Flour, Wed 21 - Thurs 22 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE OPEN DAY Explore Court 15 and the ground-floor rooms

of the back-to-back houses, Sat 24 May, Birmingham Back to Backs

YARNIES AT THE FLAXMILL Spinners, weavers, dyers, knitters and fibre artists come together to celebrate all things yarn, Sat 24 May, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

WHITCHURCH FOOD FESTIVAL Celebrate the food & drink scene with local producers, Sat 24 May, Jubilee Park, Whitchurch, Shropshire

BONGO'S BINGO The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 24 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SHROPSHIRE COUNTY SHOW Celebrating 150 years of the Shropshire & West Midlands Agricultural Society, Sat 24 May, West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE Celebrating the city's LGBTQ+ community, Sat 24 - Sun 25 May, Birmingham City Centre

ENDON WELL DRESSING Annual traditional well dressing festival, Sat 24 - Mon 26 May, Endon, Staffordshire

PREHISTORIC PLANTS TRAIL Explore plants from prehistoric times on this special trail, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

YUCKY JOBS Find out about some of the horrible jobs that Victorian men, women and even children had to do, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

JURASSIC GARDENS 2025 Mighty dinosaurs are back in Birmingham for the third year running! Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

SLIME SCHOOL Chance for youngsters to mix and make as many slimes as they can, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Enginuity, Ironbridge, Shropshire

TUDOR GAMES AND TRAIL Play some Tudor games in the outer bailey and follow a special trail, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

TIME TRAVELLERS CHALLENGE Fix the historical errors made by the mischievous time traveller, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Tamworth Castle

WORLD WAR TWO WEEK Featuring the Raid The Shelter experience, Lego racers, talks, make & take sessions, and a selfie station, Sat 24 May - Sun 1 June, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

JURASSIC WEEK Dino-themed fun with meet & greets, fossil digging and dino racing, Sat 24 May - Wed 4 June, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring traders selling a wide range of items from yesteryear, Sun 25 May, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

VEGAN MARKET Featuring a host of independent and eco-focused companies, Sun 25 May,



Weston's Spring Fling - Weston Park, Shropshire / Staffordshire border

Winterbourne House & Garden, Birmingham

ASIANA LIFESTYLE SHOW South Asian celebration of culture, fashion, entertainment, food and more, Sun 25 May, The New Bingley Hall, Birmingham

SUPERHERO FAMILY FUN RACEDAY FT THE CLARKE CHASE Featuring horse racing and family entertainment, Sun 25 May, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

MEET THE TUDORS Featuring King Henry VIII, his wives and Prince Arthur, Sun 25 - Mon 26 May, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

WESTON'S SPRING FLING Featuring a line-up of local artisan food producers, unique crafts, street food, live music from the Dirty Rockin Scoundrels (pictured) and fairground rides, Sun 25 - Mon 26 May, Weston Park, Shropshire / Staffordshire border

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THE COMMANDERY
 WORCESTER
Civil War Battle HQ & Historic Building

Gigs

SCOTTY MCCREERY Tues 27 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SHEEPDOGS Tues 27 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

ANDY WHITE Tues 27 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

CHANTEL MCGREGOR Tues 27 May, The Robin, Bilston

CONTINENTAL LOVERS + TRENCH DOGS + SUICIDE BOMBERS Tues 27 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ONE NIGHT AT THE DISCO Tues 27 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE LUMINEERS + MICHAEL MARCAGI Wed 28 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

JON GOMM Wed 28 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY Wed 28 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE JOE TATTON TRIO Wed 28 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

SIMPLY DYLAN Wed 28 - Thurs 29 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

GUTTER PUPPY Thurs 29 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CALL OF CTHULHU Thurs 29 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SEMATARY + GHOST

MOUNTAIN + HACKLE + ANVIL Thurs 29 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GRACE PETRIE Thurs 29 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

PARLIAMO Thurs 29 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

SONNY TENNET Thurs 29 May, The Rainbow, B'ham

THE LITTLE MIX SHOW Thurs 29 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

TAYLORMANIA Thurs 29 May, Dudley Town Hall

WE ARE SCIENTISTS Thurs 29 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WOMBATS Thurs 29 May, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

JOE BROUGHTON'S CONSERVATOIRE FOLK ENSEMBLE Thurs 29 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

THE TAKE THAT EXPERIENCE Thurs 29 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE Thurs 29 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RICHARD DURRANT Thurs 29 May, Harley Village Hall, South Shropshire

THE EVERLY BROTHERS STORY Thurs 29 May, Aston Hall, Wrexham

JOJO Fri 30 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham



My Darling Clementine - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COMBICHRIST + EXTISE + CRIMSON VEIL + ESOTERIK Fri 30 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KIP MOORE Fri 30 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SPEAR OF DESTINY Fri 30 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

DEAFDEAFDEAF Fri 30 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

JOHN LEGEND Fri 30 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

MONKEY BUSINESS Fri 30 May, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

SHOWADDYWADDY Fri 30 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

BLINK - 182 + PARAMORE - STILL INTO YOU Fri 30 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED QUEEN Fri 30 May, The Robin, Bilston

POIZON VS SHEF LEPPARD Fri 30 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE Fri 30 May, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

BORN GAGA Fri 30 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE DAVIDSON TRIO + THE SOUL REVIVAL Fri 30 May, The Station, Cannock

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Fri 30 May, Lichfield Garrick

THE BEAT INSTITUTE Fri 30 May, The

Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE YOUNG'UNS Fri 30 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BEAST DECOYS + THE MACHINE RAGES ON + CYPR-ISH HILL Fri 30 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE SALOPIAN MIXTAPE Fri 30 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

OASIS FOREVER Fri 30 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE GLEN LEON BAND Fri 30 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

THE BREAKS + JAKE Y BOY HUGHES Fri 30 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SEXTILE Sat 31 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BIG SKY ORCHESTRA Sat 31 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE LOVELESS Sat 31 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BRELAND Sat 31 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE TWANG Sat 31 May, Birmingham Town Hall

KYLIE Sat 31 May, bp pulse LIVE, B'ham

SUPERSONIC QUEEN Sat 31 May, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

CELEBRATING GEORGE MICHAEL Sat 31 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

UB40 - LABOUR OF

LOVE Sat 31 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

JOHNNY2BAD Sat 31 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE CLASSIC BLUES SHOW Sat 31 May, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

RED HOT CHILLI PIPERS Sat 31 May, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

JORJA SMITH + MYCHELLE Sat 31 May, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

OASISH Sat 31 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE LACK OF COMMITMENTS Sat 31 May, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

JUDIE TZUKE Sat 31 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

TALON Sat 31 May, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

FLEETWOOD MAD Sat 31 May, The Station, Cannock

LOADED REVOLVER Sat 31 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

INTO THE SHADOWS Sat 31 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SPECIAL KINDA MADNESS Sat 31 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

RUFFNECKS Sat 31 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

WREKIN HAVOC Sat 31 May, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

Classical Music

MARIA LINARES PIANO RECITAL Tues 27 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO: MENDELSSOHN & WAGNER Featuring Pierre Bleuse (conductor) & Jamie Barton (mezzo soprano). Programme also includes work by Roxanna Panufnik, Wed 28 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BBC NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF WALES Featuring Ryan Bancroft (conductor) & James Ehnes (violin). Programme includes works by Bartók & Mahler, Thurs 29 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: BEST OF BOLLYWOOD Featuring Michael Seal (conductor), Shin DCS, Priti Kaur, Navin Kundra, Rekha Paurana (vocalists) & Dancers from Sampad Arts. Programme features an orchestral performance of best-loved Bollywood songs, Fri 30 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WOLF HALL IN CONCERT Featuring Grace Davidson (soprano - pictured), Anton Lesser (reader) & Locrian Ensemble of London. Programme includes works by Debbie Wiseman, Fri 30 May, Birmingham Town Hall



THE PHOENIX SINGERS: SURE ON THIS SHINING NIGHT Programme includes works by Brahms, Coleridge-Taylor, Byrd & more..., Sat 31 May, Shrewsbury United Reformed Church

Comedy

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, ABIGOLIAH SCHAMAUN & MARC JENNINGS Thurs 29 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PATRICK LEWIN Thurs 29 May, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SEANN WALSH, BRENNAN REECE, JONNY AWSUM & JAY NEALE Thurs 29 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

COMEDY IN THE MET Fri 30 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

KATE LUCAS, DAVE LONGLEY & COMICS TBC Fri 30 May, Lichfield Garrick

JONNY PELHAM, JARRED CHRISTMAS, ABIGOLIAH SCHAMAUN & MARC JENNINGS Fri 30 - Sat 31 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham



Kylie - bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

GLENN WOOL, MAXINE WADE, RUSSELL ARATHOON & ERIC LAMPAERT Sat 31 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

PAUL CHOWDHRY Sat 31 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

MARCUS BRIGSTOCKE Sat 31 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire



Theatre

A SHODDY DETECTIVE AND THE ART OF DECEPTION A laugh-out-loud slapstick whodunnit featuring four actors, a dozen characters and whole load of chaos, Tues 27 May, Lichfield Garrick

RUM Darkly humorous new play that wrestles with masculinity, mental health and addiction in the plastering trade, Tues 27 - Wed 28 May, The Rep, Birmingham

JARMAN Solo play in which Mark Farrelly (Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope, Howard's End) tells the story of renowned filmmaker Derek Jarman, Tues 27 - Wed 28 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

CHICAGO TEEN EDITION Curtain Call Studios present an amateur version of the award-winning musical, Tues 27 - Wed 28 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE Step through the wardrobe into the magical kingdom of Narnia. Based on CS Lewis' classic children's story, Tues 27 - Sat 31 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL JR Amateur show presented by Stage Productions, Tues 27 - Sat 31 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MARIE & ROSETTA Beverly Knight stars as 'godmother of rock & roll' Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Tues 27 - Sat 31 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE WIZARD OF OZ Fanny Galore stars as Glinda Galore alongside a cast of professional West End performers, Thurs 29 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MATILDA THE MUSICAL JR. Amateur show presented by Stage Productions, Thurs 29 - Sat 31 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY Get Your Wigle On present an amateur version of Roald Dahl's

adventure story, Thurs 29 - Sat 31 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO PHOEBE SALT World-premiere production of local playwright Arthur Berry's drama, which brings to life the 'grit and resilience of the people of Stoke-on-Trent', Sat 31 May - Sat 21 June, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Kids Theatre

PIRATES LOVE UNDERPANTS Swashbuckling story of pirates searching for the fabled Pants of Gold for the captain's treasure chest. Music and puppetry combine in this stage adaptation of the popular picture book by Claire Freedman, Mon 26 - Tues 27 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

YOU CHOOSE Interactive musical show for all the family, based on the book by Nick Sharratt & Pippa Goodhart, Tues 27 - Wed 28 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS BALL Join Chester the castle jester as he goes on an adventure to meet Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Princess Rapunzel and the Snow Queen, Fri 30 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Dance

DANCE WITH MISS NESS Showcase of student work, Fri 30 - Sat 31 May, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

Light Entertainment

BOX OF FROGS An evening of 'high-octane improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 28 May, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

THAT'LL BE THE DAY A celebration of the most iconic moments in music and comedy from the 1950s, 60s, 70s & 80s, Wed 28 - Thurs 29 May, Lichfield Garrick

PATRICK LEWIN: DELUSIONAL (WORK IN PROGRESS) Join the comedian, content creator and occasional show-tune belter for an evening in which he takes audiences through 'the ups, the downs, and the fabulously awkward moments of living life in his (tap) shoes', Thurs 29 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

RICHARD DURRANT: THE GUITAR WHISPERER Beautiful acoustic music performed by 'one of the world's greatest guitarists', Thurs 29 May, Harley Village Hall, Shropshire

SING THE MUSICALS Singalong



You Choose - The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

spectacular featuring hits from Mamma Mia!, The Greatest Showman, Rocky Horror, Oliver!, We Will Rock You, Mary Poppins and more...., Fri 30 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE D-DAY DARLINGS - VE DAY 80 ANNIVERSARY TOUR Brand-new tribute show, Fri 30 May, Halesowen Town Hall



RICHARD DURRANT: THE GUITAR WHISPERER Beautiful acoustic music performed by 'one of the world's greatest guitarists', Fri 30 May, Leintwardine Community Centre, North Herefordshire

MC HAMMERSMITH An evening with the award-winning hip-hop comedian, who's known for his creation of 'freestyle rap comedy' based on audience suggestions, Fri 30 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

WEST END WEEKEND: AN EVENING WITH KERRY ELLIS An intimate concert with the musical-theatre icon, Fri 30 - Sat 31 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

RICHARD DURRANT: THE GUITAR WHISPERER Beautiful acoustic music performed by 'one of the world's greatest guitarists', Sat 31 May, Bitterley Village Hall, South Shropshire

YEH DOSTI: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SHOLAY Music & dance show honouring a movie that has captivated viewers for half a century, Sat 31 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

MC HAMMERSMITH An evening with the award-winning hip-hop

comedian, who's known for his creation of 'freestyle rap comedy' based on audience suggestions, Sat 31 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LEE MEAD: THE BEST OF ME Featuring songs from the world of musical theatre, contemporary hits, and tracks from Lee's brand-new EP, Sat 31 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE RAT PACK LAS VEGAS LIVE Featuring David Alacey (Lovejoy) as Frank Sinatra, Tim Harwood as Dean Martin and Ashley Campbell (Coronation Street, Hollyoaks) as Sammy Davis Jr, Sat 31 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

Talks & Spoken Word

WORDS WITH LUCY SPRAGGAN Interactive journalism event for anyone with an interest in introspective writing, Tues 27 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

BLACK BALL 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Join Steve Davis and Dennis Taylor as they recreate the match that gripped a nation - the 1985 World Snooker Final, Wed 28 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AN EVENING WITH PHIL 'THE POWER' TAYLOR Join the 16x world darts champion for an inside look at his incredible achievements and personal experiences, Wed 28 May, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Events

VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA Travel in style in a luxurious vintage carriage and indulge in a spread of sandwiches, cakes, tea & coffee, Mon 26 May, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

WHAT'S IN YOUR GARDEN? Create your



Staffordshire County Show - Staffordshire County Showground

own wild art, enjoy mini den building, and learn about the animals just beyond your back door, Mon 26 May, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

MAY HALF TERM ACTIVITIES Journey back to 1945 and explore the stories of those who lived and served 80 years ago, Mon 26 - Fri 30 May, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

ROVING ROBOTS FAMILY SHOW Learn how space rovers are powered by electricity, what they might be up to on other planets, and how they get there, Mon 26 - Fri 30 May, Thinkthank Birmingham Science Museum

SEPHORA X THE BRIDAL BEAUTY CO. MASTERCLASS With panel talks, mini treatments and a beauty goody bag,

Wed 28 May, Sephora Bullring, Birmingham

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY SHOW The return of the two-day agricultural show, Wed 28 - Thurs 29 May, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford

JUNIOR FALCONRY EXPERIENCE Opportunity for under-16s to get up close to owls and birds of prey, Fri 30 May, Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens, Birmingham

UK GAMES EXPO The largest tabletop games convention in the UK, Fri 30 May - Sun 1 June, NEC Birmingham

ADVENTURE CINEMA The touring outdoor cinema brings 'the biggest films' to Himley, Fri 30 May - Sun 1 June, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

MIDLANDS AIR FESTIVAL Returning for a seventh year, Fri 30 May - Sun 1 June, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

VANLIFE FESTIVAL Festival for free spirits who enjoy vanlife and the great outdoors, Fri 30 May - Sun 1 June, West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

B-SIDE HIP-HOP FESTIVAL 10th anniversary event featuring dance battles, MCs & DJs, Graffiti performances, exhibitions,

workshops & tours, Fri 30 May - Sun 1 June, Birmingham Hippodrome



HERITAGE OPEN DAY Unique journey across the railway, with exclusive backstage access, Sat 31 May, Churnet Valley Railway, Froghall, Staffordshire

LDN WRESTLING Top American wrestling stars square up to the very best home-grown talent and fans' favourites, Sat 31 May, Dudley Town Hall

FARM DAY Discover more about farming on Park Farm, Sat 31 May, Shugborough Estate, near Stafford

STAFFORDSHIRE MOTORSPORT SHOW Two-day get-together for car enthusiasts and adrenaline junkies alike, Sat 31 May - Sun 1 June, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

BIRMINGHAM COCKTAIL WEEKEND



SUMMER
EDITION

10 - 13 July

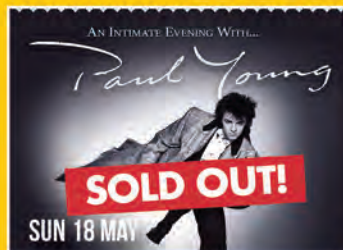
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