

Staffordshire

ISSUE 461 JUNE 2025

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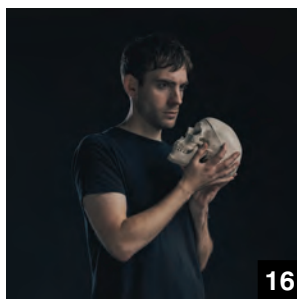




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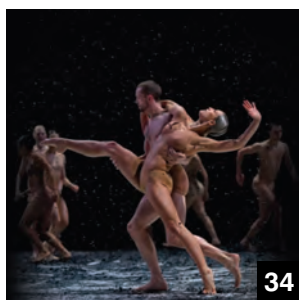
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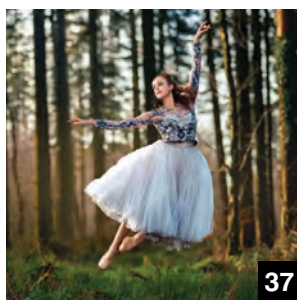
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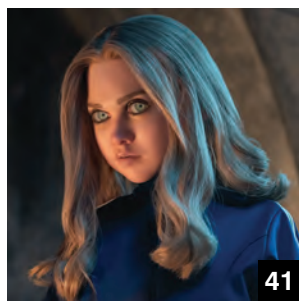
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## What's On

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## Shrewsbury music event Loopfest to return in 2026

Shrewsbury music event Loopfest will return next year following its sell-out success in May.

Commenting on the news, the event's organiser, Jamie Smith, said: "Loopfest is now one of the largest multi-venue festivals in the UK. We're bringing more acts to Shropshire than ever before - expect major headliners performing alongside our own incredible homegrown talent."

The 2026 edition of the festival will take place on Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 May.

## New live-art event ArtSlam in Newcastle-under-Lyme

Newcastle-under-Lyme's Astley Place will play host to a brand-new live-art event at the end of the month (Friday 27 June).

ArtSlam will see artists going head-to-head in visual 2D art, ceramics and spoken-word categories, with just 40 minutes available in which to create a masterpiece.

For further information, visit [appetite.org.uk](http://appetite.org.uk)

## Pussycat Dolls' Kimberly at Wolverhampton Pride

Wolverhampton Pride returns this month, with performers including Pussycat Dolls' Kimberly Wyatt and 'trailblazing drag sensation' Queenz (both pictured below). The one-day festival for the LGBTQIA community and their friends takes place in the city's Market Square on Saturday 7 June.



## Autumn shows now on sale at New Vic Theatre

The New Vic Theatre's autumn programme of shows will include the world premiere of The Grand Babylon Hotel - an adaptation of a story by acclaimed Stoke-on-Trent author Arnold Bennett.

Showing at the Newcastle-under-Lyme venue from Saturday 13 September to Saturday 4 October, the production will be presented as a centrepiece of Stoke-on-Trent's centenary

celebrations.

To check out the New Vic's forthcoming programme of entertainment in its entirety, visit its website at [newvictheatre.org.uk](http://newvictheatre.org.uk)

## Fordhall Organic Farm launches new Braille Trail

Shropshire's Fordhall Organic Farm has launched an on-site 'Braille Trail', to provide a tactile experience for visually impaired visitors.

Commenting on the news, Charlotte Hollins, general manager of the Fordhall Community Land Initiative, said: "We truly believe access to the farm and surrounding landscape should be for everyone, and we are working hard to offer as many people as possible both full enjoyment and easy access."

## Locked Up! Tattoo event returns to Shrewsbury jail

The Locked Up Tattoo Convention returns to Shrewsbury Prison on Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 June.

Following a successful 2024 event, the Locked Up team will once again take over the 200-year-old prison for a weekend of ink, artistry and entertainment. The convention is expected to bring together more than 140 tattoo artists from around the world. Tickets are available at [lockedupshrewsbury.co.uk](http://lockedupshrewsbury.co.uk)



## A Midlands return for Sir Simon Rattle this autumn

Former City of Birmingham

Symphony Orchestra

music director Sir

Simon Rattle is to

return to the second

city in the autumn.

Sir Simon will be leading the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, whose Tuesday 11 November concert forms part of Symphony Hall's 2025/26 Classical season.

Commenting on the recently announced line-up of concerts, Nick Reed - chief executive of B:Music, the local charity which programmes both Symphony Hall and the city's Town Hall - said: "Our new season brings a European tour of the finest orchestras - from the Czech Republic to Germany and Hungary, along with terrific soloists and exciting 'rising stars' - right here to Symphony Hall.

"With some of the great names in classical music performing in Birmingham this season, we hope audiences will find plenty to tempt them."



## Free dance classes for people living with cancer

Shropshire & Mid-Wales cancer charity Lingen Davies is funding free dance classes for people living with the disease in Oswestry.

The eight-week block of classes starts on Thursday 5 June at the town's Eastern Community Centre. To check availability, send an email to Sarah Bright at [hello@icandanceshrewsbury.com](mailto:hello@icandanceshrewsbury.com)





## Cally Beaton joins comedy line-up

Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival has announced Cally Beaton as the final act for its flagship gala show at the town's Theatre Severn next month. Cally will be joined for the Sunday 13 July event by fellow comedians Troy Hawke, Abandoman, Lindsey Santoro, Tez Ilyas and Scott Bennett. Further information and tickets are available at the website [theatresevern.co.uk](http://theatresevern.co.uk)



## November date for Howard Jones

Electronic music pioneer and chart-topping singer-songwriter Howard Jones will play Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Sunday 16 November as part of a UK tour.

Howard's new show celebrates the 40th anniversary of his groundbreaking Dream Into Action album. Tickets can be purchased at [bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)

## The Bodyguard returns to Stoke

Award-winning musical The Bodyguard is returning to Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre in the autumn.

The smash-hit show - starring Sidonie Smith and Adam Garcia - stops off at the venue from Monday 3 to Saturday 8 November.

For further information and to book tickets, visit the website [atgtickets.com/stoke](http://atgtickets.com/stoke)



## Mrs Doubtfire musical to launch its UK tour in the region

Hit comedy musical Mrs Doubtfire will kickstart its first-ever UK & Ireland tour at Birmingham Hippodrome next year.

Based on the much-loved 1993 film of the same name starring Robin Williams, Sally Field and

Pierce Brosnan, the show runs at the venue from Thursday 13 August to Saturday 19 September 2026.

For further information and to purchase tickets, visit the website at [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)



## A Loose Woman in the Midlands!

Janet Street-Porter is heading to the Midlands.

The Loose Women panellist will be bringing her new show, appropriately titled Janet Street-Porter Is On The Loose, to Much Wenlock's Edge Arts Centre on Monday 20 October and Stafford's Gatehouse Theatre next year, on Monday 2 February. Tickets can be purchased at [janetstreetporter.com/tour](http://janetstreetporter.com/tour)

## Hit stage musical Legally Blonde to return to the Midlands in 2026

The stage musical version of hit movie Legally Blonde will return to the Midlands in the spring of next year.

The much-loved show stops off at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Tuesday 31 March to Saturday 4 April. It then returns to the region later in the year to play Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 13 to Saturday 17 October and Stoke's Regent Theatre from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 November. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit the production's official website at [legallyblondeshow.com](http://legallyblondeshow.com)





## Charity bike ride heads to Shrewsbury's spooky jail

Shrewsbury's decommissioned and famously 'haunted' prison will this month serve as the destination for charity motorbike ride Cruise4Crews. Taking place on Friday 6 June, the special event will see a team of motorcyclists hitting the road in support of YFW Blood Bikes, a charity whose volunteers provide a free emergency medical motorcycle courier service. The journey will begin outside another 'haunted' jail, Somerset's Shepton Mallet Prison. Upon arrival at Shrewsbury, the riders will then face a 'chilling' overnight stay in the prison, departing for home the following morning. To find out more about the motorbike ride, visit [facebook.com/Cruise4crews](https://facebook.com/Cruise4crews)



## Shugborough team to reinstate venue's orchard

The gardening team at Shugborough Estate is in the early stages of reinstating a historic orchard within the venue's grade I listed walled garden complex. One hundred and forty-four trees will be planted as part of the project, including apple, pear and quince. Commenting on the initiative, Head Gardener Caroline Beacall said: "The orchard will be a haven for pollinators and visitors alike. It will sit in an ecologically diverse meadow, peaking year-round interest, with spring bulbs, blossom, and summer wildflowers making way for a productive harvest in the autumn season."

## Tickets now on sale for hospice summer ball

A summer ball raising money for Severn Hospice is being held in Shrewsbury Town Football Club's Sovereign Suite on Saturday 23 August. The event will include a three-course meal, with a raffle and DJ also featuring. More information about the ball is available at [eventbrite.co.uk](https://eventbrite.co.uk)

06 [whatsonlive.co.uk](https://whatsonlive.co.uk)



## Bake Off finalist Christiaan at award-winning festival

Great British Bake Off finalist Christiaan de Vries has joined the line-up for this year's Shrewsbury Food Festival. Christiaan impressed the Bake Off judges with his artistic bakes and creative flavour combinations during the 2024 series. This year's food festival, which takes place in Shrewsbury's Quarry Park on Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 June, also features 180-plus



exhibitors, two live entertainment stages, street food, bars, chef demonstrations, tastings, a field-to-fork zone, and an area dedicated to free-of-charge children's activities.

To find out more about what's happening across the two days, visit the event's website at [shrewsburyfoodfestival.co.uk](https://shrewsburyfoodfestival.co.uk)

## Celebrating Stevie and Luther at Walsall Arena

A tribute show celebrating the music of Stevie Wonder and Luther Vandross is stopping off at Walsall Arena this month. Featuring talented counterfeit Nat Augustin and his live band, Stevie & Luther Show visits the venue on Thursday 3 July. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the venue's website at [walsallarena.com](https://walsallarena.com)

## Shrewsbury Arts Trail back for a fifth year

Shrewsbury Arts Trail makes a welcome return next month, with contributors to the popular event including sculptural artist Andrew Logan and local sculptor Halima Cassell (pictured). Now in its fifth year, the festival will feature an open-air sculpture trail and multiple exhibitions, all of which will be available to view from Tuesday 1 July to Sunday 31 August.



## It's a dog's life as popular Shropshire show returns

Shropshire's Dog Show & Country Festival makes a return on the 1st of this month (at Apley Farm Shop, near Bridgnorth). The premium dog-centred family day will see hundreds of four-legged friends take part in competitions, displays, swimming & diving, breed meet-ups, yoga, canine massage therapy and plenty more. Laser clay shooting, shopping, live entertainment and a selection of food & drink should help keep the owners happy!

## Operation Mincemeat musical to visit the region

Olivier Award-winning musical Operation Mincemeat is visiting two Midlands venues next spring as part of a global tour. Telling the 'wildly improbable and hilarious true story' of the covert operation that turned the tide of World War Two, the hit show has been described as 'equal parts farce, thriller, and Ian Fleming-style spy caper'. Operation Mincemeat shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 March, and Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 27 April to Saturday 2 May. For further information and to book your ticket, visit [operationmincemeat.com/tour](https://operationmincemeat.com/tour)



# B:Music

Town Hall & Symphony Hall

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**Mmm-Bop! Family Silent Disco**  
01 June | JBPS at Symphony Hall



**Sophie Ellis-Bextor**  
02 June | Symphony Hall



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11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show



## **Tim Minchin:** Songs The World Will Never Hear

09 June | 09 July | 10 July  
Symphony Hall



**Ashley Allen & Friends**  
12 June | JBPS at Symphony Hall



**Motown's Greatest Hits:**  
**How Sweet It Is**  
21 June | Town Hall



**Celtic Throne: Psalter of Ireland**  
22 June | Symphony Hall



**New Worlds:**  
**Bill Murray & Jan Vogler**  
25 June | Symphony Hall



**John Wilson & Sinfonia of London**  
27 June | Symphony Hall



**Macy Gray:**  
**On How Life Is 25th Anniversary**  
28 June | Town Hall



**Mnozil Brass: Jubilee**  
28 June | Symphony Hall

# bmusic.co.uk

**Great Nights Out**  
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## The future of UK metal showcased in the region

Three live acts 'representing the future of heavy music in the UK' will next month perform at Birmingham Town



Hall in a special BBC event celebrating the influence of Black Sabbath.

West Midlands rising stars Cherrydead, Gans and Meatdripper will 'light up the stage' when BBC Radio WM celebrates Metal In The Midlands on Wednesday 2 July.

Tickets can be purchased via [bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)

## Murder most foul on the Severn Valley Railway!

It's a definite case of 'murder most foul' on the Severn Valley Railway next month - and the popular heritage attraction is inviting amateur sleuths to climb aboard one of its trains for a night of mystery and suspense! Taking place on Saturday 19 July, the special event not only includes a gourmet meal but also the chance to bring a murderer to justice by interrogating suspects and solving a series of cunning clues.

To find out more, visit the heritage railway's website at [svr.co.uk](http://svr.co.uk)

## Something Uncanny...

A new stage show from Danny Robins - the creator of the award-winning play 2:22 - A Ghost Story and BBC Radio Four podcasts Uncanny, The Battersea Poltergeist and The Witch Farm - will stop off at two Midlands venues in the autumn.

Entitled Uncanny: Fear Of The Dark, the production sees Danny bring to life accounts of 'hauntings, apparitions, poltergeists, UFOs and events that seem to defy logical explanation'.

The show visits Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre on Sunday 19 October and the Wolverhampton Grand on Tuesday 4 November. It then returns to the region in the spring of 2026, showing at Birmingham Hippodrome on Sunday 1 March.



## Midlands theatre to stage new ballet in autumn 2026

Birmingham Hippodrome will next year present the world premiere of Carlos Acosta's The Maiden Of Venice, a groundbreaking reimagining of the classic 19th-century ballet La Bayadère.

The work will be performed at the venue by Birmingham Royal Ballet - of which Carlos is director - from Saturday 26 September to Saturday 3 October 2026. Further information and tickets are available at [brb.org.uk](http://brb.org.uk)

## Heritage funding for RAF Museum Midlands

The Royal Air Force Museum Midlands has been awarded more than £9million by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for its Inspiring Everyone development programme.

Alongside other initiatives, the programme will include the redevelopment of a 1930s hangar as a new exhibition & learning centre. To find out more about the Cosford-located venue, visit [rafmuseum.org](http://rafmuseum.org)

## Celebrating rural film and culture in Shropshire

Four Shropshire cinemas have teamed up to present a three-day summer celebration of rural film and culture.

The four cinemas behind the festival - which takes the title The Rural Remix - are Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shrewsbury's Old Market Hall, Wem Town Hall and Wellington Orbit. To find out more about the event, taking place across the four venues from Friday 11 to Sunday 13 July, visit [filmhubmidlands.org](http://filmhubmidlands.org)

## Christmas cheer to arrive early in Wolverhampton

Christmas cheer will arrive early in Wolverhampton this year, when Elf The Musical makes a mid-November stop-off at the city's Grand Theatre.

The family-friendly stage adaptation of the much-loved festive-season movie shows at the venue from Tuesday 11 to Sunday 16 November. Tickets for the show can be purchased by visiting [grandtheatre.co.uk](http://grandtheatre.co.uk)

## Proms fun at Attingham

The 2025 edition of the UK Proms In The Park tour will kick off at Shrewsbury's Attingham Park this month (Friday the 13th & Saturday the 14th).

The event features performances by the UK Dance Anthems Orchestra on the Friday and the UK Proms Orchestra on the Saturday, with the latter concert including all the Last Night of the Proms classics.

DJ and Take That favourite Howard Donald contributes to proceedings on the Friday evening, with TV personality Rob Rinder hosting the Saturday get-together.

Tickets for both nights are available by visiting [ukproms.com](http://ukproms.com), where you can also access further information about the event.





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## Regent Theatre



Step through the wardrobe to Narnia  
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The ultimate concert tribute  
**Flowers & Friendship Bracelets**  
Sun 15 Jun



The ultimate rock experience roars back to the Regent  
**Bat Out of Hell**  
Mon 30 Jun – Sat 5 Jul



Based on the 80s award-winning TV series  
**Boys From the Blackstuff**  
Tue 10 – Sat 14 Jun



The whip crackin' musical comedy classic  
**Calamity Jane**  
Tue 17 – Sat 21 Jun



The laugh-out-loud live show that's fun for the whole family!  
**Tom Gates**  
Sun 20 Jul

## Victoria Hall



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**The Spice Girls Experience**  
Sat 7 Jun



A night exploring the most shocking crime cases  
**Strange but True Crime with Jennifer Rees**  
Tue 2 Sep



An unforgettable show of seamless choreography  
**Anton & Giovanni – Together Again**  
Fri 25 Jul



Experience all the biggest hits from 'The Velvet Voice'  
**Luther Live**  
Fri 12 Sep



# WHIP-CRACK-AWAY!

Hit musical Calamity Jane rides into town...





**Following in the footsteps of Doris Day, West End star Carrie Hope Fletcher is donning a whole load of buckskin to play feisty Wild West heroine Calamity Jane. A new production of the hit musical, directed by Nikolai Foster and Nick Winston, marks Carrie's dancing debut on stage - an experience that is both terrifying and exciting, as she recently revealed to What's On...**

Carrie Hope Fletcher has a whirlwind of a CV. The 32-year-old actress, singer, writer & vlogger has played both Éponine and Fantine in Les Misérables, premiered the lead role in Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cinderella, appeared as Veronica in the original London West End production of Heathers, performed the part of Beth in the national arena tour of Jeff Wayne's Musical Version Of The War Of The Worlds and toured the UK as Wednesday in The Addams Family.

She is an online sensation as well, turning her hit vlog into a bestselling book and writing novels for adults and children. She also has a successful recording career and undertook UK concert tours in both 2023 and last year.

And now Carrie is taking on another iconic role: Calamity Jane, in the Watermill Theatre production of the much-loved musical. Directed by Nikolai Foster and Nick Winston, the show is this year touring to venues across the UK, including Birmingham Hippodrome and the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre. Based on the 1953 film classic starring Doris Day, the production shares the story of Calamity's adventures in the South Dakota city of Deadwood, alongside Wild Bill Hickok, Adelaide Adams, Katie Brown and Danny Gilmartin.

"Calamity is one of those roles that has everything," says Carrie. "She's got a love story, she's comedic, she's the action hero, she gets incredible songs - beautiful songs like Secret Love and the big, belty numbers like Windy City. There are so few roles that do everything and tick all of those boxes.

"The movie has so much love surrounding it. When the show was announced, the amount of messages I got saying things like 'Oh my God, this was my comfort movie', 'this movie is the epitome of nostalgia for me', 'this was the movie I used to watch with my nan when I was a kid'!

"Everyone adores not just Calamity Jane but also Doris Day. It's going to be really

wonderful to see what kind of audiences turn up."

But such deep affection for the film brings with it a great responsibility in terms of both the musical and the character, says Carrie.

"It is daunting playing Calamity. I've had a few roles over my lifetime which have had that same pressure and responsibility. Ultimately, I try not to feel it, because that's when you start playing the role based on how other people think it should be played.

"If it feels right to do certain things or to play a character in a certain way, then I also have to be true to the experience that I'm having in the rehearsal room and what the director wants. It's sometimes very daunting to think so many people love this part, but ultimately, if you get too bogged down in that, you end up doing a disservice to the role."

The film is based very loosely on real-life characters, and Carrie has been discovering more about their history.

"The true story is very different from the movie version of things. The musical is based on a story of misunderstandings, and it's not very true to who Calamity Jane and Bill Hickok actually were. They were actually quite scary, cut-throat, gunslinging people who really would shoot you if you got in their way.

"It's been fascinating delving into the history, especially their relationship with each other, because rumour has it that Bill really didn't like Calamity at all. But now they're buried next to each other! Bill died first, and his friends buried Calamity next to him when she died, as a kind of posthumous joke - to dig it in that he didn't like her and now he's buried next to her!"

Carrie may have a long list of productions to her name, but Calamity Jane will be her first chance at a dancing role.

"I've never had a role that had any great deal of dance to do before, so this is my first stab at actually being in the dance routines. It's terrifying but also exciting because I've been

itching for years to have that chance. In fact, I messaged Nick Winston even before the show started to say 'Please don't shy away from putting me into the dance routines. I've got no ego when it comes to dancing because I'm not a dancer, so if I look terrible, you can tell me and ask me to sit them out. But equally, I just want to be given the chance to do it, and if it works out, then win win!'"

Carrie toured both the Hippodrome and the Wolverhampton Grand while in The Addams Family.

"Birmingham Hippodrome is one of the most gorgeous theatres ever. It's one of those theatres where everyone breathes a sigh of relief when they get there because it's so big that it houses any size of set and props. When you get to somewhere like Birmingham Hippodrome or the Wolverhampton Grand, you don't have to worry."

Carrie well recalls a mishap that took place during the show's run in Wolverhampton.

"I almost broke my ankle! I was just being an idiot backstage, and I jumped out to make my friend jump and twisted my ankle. I was on the floor for about 20 minutes! It was right before the show as well, in the half-hour call."

Now Carrie is hoping audiences really enjoy the ride alongside Calamity Jane.

"The show is so wholesome; it's such a wonderful, nostalgic story. People are going to come and be immersed in the world of Deadwood City, be transported away for a while, and not have to think about the state of the world right now.

"Calamity Jane is a really fun, feelgood time, and I think our audiences will be leaving the theatre slapping their thighs and singing. That's what we hope, anyway!"

.....  
**Calamity Jane shows at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tuesday 17 - Saturday 21 June and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 9 to Saturday 13 September**



# ROOF RAISING SPIRIT LIFTING LIVE MUSIC IN BIRMINGHAM

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Festivals taking place across the region this summer...

## Páirc Festival

The New Irish Centre, Birmingham,  
Sat 23 & Sun 24 August

Returning for a fourth year with a two-day celebration of Irish music and culture, Páirc features a mix of international headline acts and local talent. The event promises fun for all the family and comes complete with festival merchandise, street food, and Guinness and real ale trucks.

**2025 line-up includes:** The Saw Doctors, The Undertones, Nathan Carter, Sharon Shannon Big Band (pictured), The High Kings and The Tumbling Paddies



## Shrewsbury Folk Festival

DMOS People West Mid Showground,  
Shrewsbury, Fri 22 - Mon 25 August

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

the festival's mash-up of modern, medieval and everything in between, where grassroots cultures collide in dynamic fusion styles. Take along the whole family for dance and workshops as well as live music.

**2025 line-up includes:** Levellers, Skerryvore (pictured), Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy, Martha Wainwright, Holy Moly & The Crackers, El Pony Pisador and Judie Tzuke

## Penkridge Open Air

Penkridge Sports & Recreation Centre,  
Pinfold Lane, Staffs, Fri 22 - Sun 24 August

Back for a fourth year and this time running over the August bank holiday, Penkridge Open Air festival presents live performances by a host of artists, bands and local talent across multiple stages.

Other festival attractions include food vendors, a BMX stunt show, circus acts, craft stalls, a funfair and a bar.

**2025 line-up includes:** Vengaboys (pictured), Nik Kershaw, Boney M, N-Trance, Chesney Hawkes, Go West, The Weather Girls, The Real Thing and Big Country



## AlderFest

Alderford Lake, Whitchurch, North Shropshire,  
Fri 4 & Sat 5 July

AlderFest returns to the stunning Shropshire attraction of Alderford Lake next month. The event features a live-music line-up and plenty for the family to enjoy, including a climbing wall, a science workshop, a silent disco, a stunt bike show, boat rides, inflatable fun and an 'extraordinary' aquapark. Camping costs £10 per person, per evening, with free entry to the lake thrown in on the Sunday.

**2025 line-up:** Ella Henderson (pictured), Pixie Lott, Vengaboys, Toploader, Dave Pearce, Artful Dodger and Ultrabeat

## Upton Blues

Various venues in Upton-Upon-Severn,  
Worcestershire, Fri 18 - Sun 20 July

If a weekend of free live music across three main stages and 12 independent venues sounds right up your street, then put Upton Blues in your calendar immediately. From blues rock to bluegrass, country blues to New Orleans, acoustic to soul (and a Sunday gospel choir thrown in for good measure!), there really is something for everyone. And camping is available, too!

**2025 line-up includes:** Cinelli Brothers, Nine Below Zero, Dom Martin, Wille And The Bandits (pictured) and Diabel Cissokho Band





# CONSTANT EVOLUTION

**A new version of Somerset Maugham's  
The Constant Wife opens at the RSC's Swan Theatre this month**





## The Royal Shakespeare Company's reimagined version of 100-year-old comedy *The Constant Wife* includes contemporary music by Jamie Cullum to give it a modern twist. The move is all part of a deliberate ploy to cross borders and expand audiences, explains the show's director, Tamara Harvey...

A new version of W Somerset Maugham's 'comedy of ill manners', *The Constant Wife*, comes to the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre this month, with a number of modern touches - including a contemporary musical score by jazz superstar Jamie Cullum - designed to give it a fresh feel as well as appeal to a wider audience.

Director Tamara Harvey, also the RSC's co-artistic director, says the new elements sit naturally with a play she believes was ahead of its time when first performed in 1926, not least due to the strengths and attitude of its titular heroine Constance, who defies societal norms to carry on regardless in the wake of her husband's infidelities.

Tamara admits she was "immediately excited" when the new adaptation by Olivier Award-winning playwright Laura Wade landed in her inbox.

"When I read it, I was just struck by how astonishing it was," she says. "Partly, this was Laura's version, but there's a lot that's the original Somerset Maugham, and I think it must have been astonishingly modern in its thinking 100 years ago. It's really quite radical. Constance just refuses to be dictated to by anyone - she's gonna forge her own way and make her own choices."

Despite its contemporary attitude, Tamara has resisted setting the play in the present day, saying it works best as a period drama. "We're still very much in 1926, but I think the thing that Laura has done so brilliantly is that she's absolutely held on to the spirit of the original - and even found her way into the language of it. She's definitely channelled Maugham and the brilliant comedy of manners and wit of that age, but she's also given it a couple of new scenes, and there are moments where we lift the veil a bit. As you're watching it, you won't know where Somerset Maugham ends and Laura Wade begins."

A key element of the revitalised show is the musical score by Jamie Cullum - how had that come about?

"[Producer] David Pugh and I were discussing composers and the need to find someone who could achieve the same musically as Laura has achieved with the text, which is to absolutely let it have its foot in the 1920s but still have a kind of contemporary flare. We were talking through names, and Jamie Cullum just instantly felt like a brilliant idea."

Something instantly clicked with the musician, too.

"Jamie told me that the morning after he read the script, he woke up humming a tune. He

studied theatre at university, so he understands it and has friends from that time who work in theatre now, so it's always been something he's interested in and had a love for."

The play has clearly inspired him - but has his involvement and music inspired the director, in terms of how she adapts the show to make the most of the score?

"Oh yeah, absolutely. He was with us the first day we were doing the read-through, and that bubbled up a load more ideas. He's just been the most wonderful collaborator - we're sending voice notes back and forth and having conversations about how the music might weave through. It's what you hope every creative collaboration will be, which is a continual conversation."

Does having such a well-known performer involved bring any pressure - conscious or subconscious - to make more of the music than she otherwise would have?

"One of the things that's really wonderful about working with Jamie - and we found the same working with Thom Yorke on *Hamlet Hail To The Thief* [Shakespeare meets Radiohead, also at the RSC this month] - is that these are music superstars who also really understand the process of creating something and what it is to be collaborating. There isn't any sense of ego or 'you must use my music'; it's really a case of finding the best way of telling the story. Sometimes that'll mean more music and sometimes it'll mean less."

Speaking of which, superstar musical collaborators seem like buses - one minute there are none, and now the RSC has two at once! It's clearly something Tamara believes can gain attention and attract new audiences, but is there also a fear that some people might see it as a cynical move or even a bit gimmicky?

"One of the things Daniel [Evans, co-artistic director] and I talk about is the role that theatre has to play in crossing borders. Sometimes that's reaching across international borders, sometimes that's collaborating with artists from other cultures and other nations, and sometimes it's reaching across the borders between different art forms, whether that's working with musicians, dancers or artists, whatever it might be. There's a real role that we have to play in the arts that is about collaboration and being inspired by people who look at the world differently."

"It's something that we've purposely sought out, these collaborations across different art forms. It's wonderful when people who, for



Image: Tamara Harvey - Co-Artistic Director at the RSC

example, are huge Radiohead fans, through that find a way into Shakespeare. I also hope there are people who are Jamie Cullum fans who will find a way into the Swan Theatre. So it's not cynical, but it is deliberate."

*The Constant Wife* is also likely to appeal to wider audiences courtesy of its casting. The show marks the long-awaited return to the stage of Rose Leslie, a familiar face from TV roles in the likes of *Downton Abbey*, *Game Of Thrones* and *Vigil*. Was she someone the director had purposely sought out for the role?

"Oh absolutely we sought her out. I first saw Rose in a play when she was just out of drama school, and I can still remember thinking, gosh she's luminous. She's someone I've always wanted to work with and watched with delight as her career has blossomed."

"Reading this play, she was the person who sprang to mind because she's got such a brilliant combination of wit and aptitude with language, and yet she's also got a real complexity of depth to her - you always feel as though the waters run very deep. That was the perfect combination for this role."

The combination of an old-fashioned parlour-style comedy and the onset of summer feels like an appropriate one, too.

"That's absolutely right. I always think comedy of manners are a bit like Oscar Wilde - they feel like a glass of Champagne. Perfect for the summer!"

.....  
**The Constant Wife shows at the RSC's Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon from Friday 20 June to Saturday 2 August**



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Live music from across the region...

## China Crisis

Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Fri 20 June

Best known for hit singles African & White, Christian, Working With Fire And Steel, Black Man Ray and Wishful Thinking, Liverpool new wave and synth-pop favourites China Crisis are back on the road.

Eddie London and Gary Daly formed the band in 1979 and released debut album Difficult Shapes And Passive Rhythms, Some People Think It's Fun To Entertain three years later. They're visiting Wolverhampton this month with their Y Stop Now? tour.



## Nile Rodgers & CHIC

Forestry England Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, Wed 25 June

When Chic burst onto the music scene in the 1970s, they described themselves as a rock band for the disco movement that made good on hippie peace, love and freedom.

Formed by bassist Bernard Edwards and the now-legendary guitarist Nile Rodgers, the band have enjoyed success with songs including Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah), Everybody Dance and Le Freak... They are joined in Cannock Chase Forest this month by The Brand New Heavies.



## Bella Hardy

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 June

A former BBC Radio Two Folk Singer of the Year, Bella Hardy has certainly crammed in a lot of living since debuting as a self-taught 'fiddle singer' - aged 13 - at Cambridge and Sidmouth music festivals. In the decades which have followed, her critically

acclaimed songwriting has been informed by a wide range of experiences. These include working as a Tennessee ranch-hand, and learning the songs of Chinese farmers during her time as the British Council's musician-in-residence in Yunnan Province. Bella stops off in Shropshire this month as part of a short UK tour.

## Jerry Harrison & Adrian Belew

The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton, Fri 6 June

While a fully fledged reunion of new wave superstars Talking Heads is never likely to happen - apparently they turned down an \$80million offer for a tour - band member Jerry Harrison is providing the next best thing. The guitarist & keyboard player has joined forces with Adrian Belew - former singer & guitarist with prog rock giants King Crimson - and an extensive backing band to perform a selection of Heads' music, including all of their seminal 1980 album Remain In Light.

"It's a joyful show of Talking Heads songs you know and love," explains Adrian, "performed by a hot, 11-piece ensemble, including Jerry and me. You can't help but dance and go home with a happy smile on your face."

## Space

Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 June

Widely admired for their eclectic sound and tongue-in-cheek lyrics, Space return to Albert's Shed to perform songs from latest offering Blood And Bubble Gum. Alongside the new material, the boys will also be

performing some of their hit singles, including classic tracks such as Female Of The Species, Me And You Versus The World, Avenging Angels and Neighbourhood. Special guests for the gig are Headfeeder.

## The Twang

Bet365 Stadium, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 21 June

The Twang were signed in 2007 and lauded as Britain's best new band by NME, enjoying great success with debut album Love It When I Feel Like This, which reached number three in the charts. They followed it up with Jewellery Quarter in 2009, and have been hailed a must-see live act ever since. Their concert at Stoke City Football Club's Bet365 stadium will be opened by local acts Lissy Taylor and Foarn.





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## BBC Philharmonic: A Night At The Opera

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 6 June

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic visits the Potteries this month to celebrate the centenary of Stoke-on-Trent becoming a city. Billed as an event featuring 'many of your favourite opera

songs and arias', the concert includes contributions from Elizabeth Watts (soprano - pictured), Ilker Arcayürek (tenor) and James Atkinson (baritone). Jonathan Bloxham is the conductor.

## Lichfield Cathedral Chamber Choir

Lichfield Cathedral, Sun 22 June

If you've never enjoyed the pleasure of a Lichfield Cathedral Chamber Choir concert, then why not make June the month that you break your duck? With 40-plus years of musicmaking behind them, the 30-plus-member choir is directed by Martyn Rawles, the organist and assistant director of music at the cathedral. The choir's repertoire covers a broad spectrum, from early music through to more contemporary composers. This latest concert, taking the title *O Sing Joyfully*, features a programme of sacred music inspired by the cathedral's currently showing exhibition, *Book Of Books*.

## CBSO: Family Concert: Sports Day!

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 8 June

The mind boggles in terms of the finer details of this City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra 'sports day' event... Will the family-friendly get-together see audience members engaging in egg-and-spoon racing?

Might hopping around the auditorium in sacks be the order of the day? Who can say? But what we definitely *do* know is that it's going to be an *interactive* experience, and one for which the CBSO has selected a programme of music that they're confident will be 'as bold, fast, and full of energy as the ultimate race day'.

## National Open Youth Orchestra: Ring Out!

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 8 June

Publicity for this concert makes it clear what audiences can expect: 'Sixteen brilliant young disabled and non-disabled musicians invite you into a musical universe without barriers, performing beautiful new pieces commissioned for the orchestra's thrilling mix of acoustic and electronic instruments.' The concert programme will see the orchestra performing two new commissions - including piano concerto *Ring Out!* by British Composer Award winner Liam Taylor-West. It also features, alongside other works, a composition titled *Barriers*, written by past orchestra member Oliver Cross in 'heartfelt tribute to lost friends and fellow disabled musicians'.

## Ex Cathedra: Music For A Summer's Evening

St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 June;  
St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton, Sat 7 June;  
St Mary's Church, Moseley, Birmingham, Tues 17 June

Steven Grahll picks up the baton to conduct Birmingham's highly rated early music ensemble - on this occasion in a concert that Ex Cathedra confidently predict will see audience members heading for home singing of summer. The programmes for these annual get-togethers - presented by candlelight as dusk falls - bring together madrigals, part-songs, close harmony, and readings from across the ages.

The Shrewsbury concert is being advertised by Shropshire Music Trust under the title *Summer Music By Candlelight*.



## North Staffordshire Symphony Orchestra

King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 28 June

North Staffordshire Symphony Orchestra here marks the 100th anniversary of Stoke-on-Trent being granted city status.

The programme for the evening features works by six composers, including Delius' *North Country Sketches*, Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Tuba Concerto*, Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and William Walton's *Spitfire Prelude and Fugue*.

Stoke-on-Trent Centenary Laureate Nick Degg also contributes with his critically acclaimed poem *I Come From A Town*.

## Telford Orchestra

Anstice Hall, Madeley, Telford, Sat 28 June

Telford Orchestra has been making music for more than 160 years, during which time it's had a number of name changes and experienced wildly fluctuating fortunes in terms of its size - at one stage, it numbered just five people! Thankfully, it is nowadays in far more robust health, boasting between 40 and 50 players at most of its concerts. The latest of these finds the orchestra presenting 'music for a summer's evening'. The programme features compositions by, among others, Strauss, Smetana, Rossini and Delius.





# A SORT OF HOMECOMING

**Local lad Benedict Shaw is taking the lead role  
in this summer's Stafford Shakespeare production of Hamlet**



**This summer's Stafford Shakespeare production sees Benedict Shaw playing the biggest role of his career. The Hollyoaks and Emmerdale actor, who grew up in Staffordshire, will be taking a deep-dive into his own psyche to star as Hamlet. Benedict spoke to What's On about the challenge of playing one of Shakespeare's most famous and multi-layered characters...**

It's becoming quite the year for Hamlet. Umpteen productions are being staged all over the UK, with two different versions taking place within weeks of each other at the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon, and headline-grabbing adaptations including a one-man show by comedian Eddie Izzard.

The enduring appeal of arguably Shakespeare's best-known play speaks to its ongoing resonance and relevance to the contemporary world. That's the view of Boat Story, Hollyoaks and Emmerdale star Benedict Shaw, who takes on the lead role in director Richard Cheshire's bold new production at Stafford's Gatehouse Theatre. "This play's 400 years old," he says, "so there has to be a reason why it still speaks to us. And that's also why Shakespeare is regarded as the best dramatist of all time - he knew how to tap into the human condition. I think that's one of the reasons I was drawn to auditioning and accepting the role, because I was curious about why this play is so commonplace in our culture. 'To be or not to be' stands alone as being referenced by people who probably aren't even into Shakespeare. It's a motto or mantra that seems to be in the consciousness of everybody - as is the image of Hamlet with the skull.

"I saw this as an opportunity for me to really delve into this piece of writing and the complexities of it, and why it stands true to this day."

Another reason Benedict was drawn to the role was rather more geographic than dramatic. A former pupil at the town's Blessed William Howard school, he grew up in Rowley Park and was a member of the Gatehouse Youth Theatre - all factors that segue nicely with a shift in emphasis for this year's Stafford Shakespeare production, which is putting the focus back on local talent. Other homegrown stars include Sean O'Callaghan (Claudius), Sean McKenzie (Polonius), Lucinda Freeburn (Guildenstern) and Alex Wadham (Horatio).

"They really want to focus on local talent and celebrate actors and creatives in Staffordshire," says Benedict. "This production is an attempt to re-establish the

purpose of Stafford Shakespeare Festival as it was back in 1991, which was to put on Shakespeare at Stafford Castle using as many local actors as possible."

Benedict was barely three years old when the festival was launched, but it wasn't long before he was exposed to the work of the Bard. In the late 1990s, his father was manager of the Gatehouse Theatre, which co-produced the castle shows, so watching plays became part of his childhood from the age of nine.

"That's quite a young age to get engaged with words and characters like that, and storylines that were quite big. I was lucky, and it was an education to be exposed to that. At that age, you don't understand all the words and ideas that are conveyed, but the imagery and storytelling is still so potent. We're looking at nearly 30 years of Stafford Shakespeare being in my life."

Acting has been there almost as long too. Benedict first set foot on the Gatehouse stage as a member of its youth theatre in 1999 - so coming back as the star of a show is clearly a very big deal, as well as a full-circle moment. "It's kind of an obscure homecoming, really. It feels quite special to be revisiting the theatre for the first time as a professional actor, and in such an iconic role. It'll be lovely that there'll be people I know coming along to support me, but it's definitely that sense of coming full circle."

Had he ever dreamed this would happen, or that acting would become his career, all those years ago?

"No, not at all. It was just a hobby back then. I played a lot of football when I was younger and wanted to be a footballer. I played for Stafford Town and wanted to play for Port Vale, believe it or not!

"Acting was just a hobby for many years, but the more I did it, the more I felt compelled to be better at it; I guess I wanted to begin to perfect it and understand it. As I got older, I became aware that it was a craft that was multifaceted, and I just wanted to learn and learn and learn."

It was only when he reached university that he realised performing was "the thing that fed my soul the most" and started to take it

seriously: "I couldn't go through life not working it out, performing on stage and asking questions of text. It just felt like a vocation really, albeit a punishing one!"

Benedict admits he'll need to call on all of that learning in the biggest role of his career to date. And while he's well aware of the roll call of star names that have played the part in the past, he seems far from intimidated.

"It's the role of all roles for that reason. Every tool that I've learned through training and performing, and every experience that I can call upon in life, they all need to be coalesced into this role and this job that I'm doing, because that's what it demands.

"The curious challenge of it is that, as an actor, you can only bring yourself to the role, so it's unique to anyone who takes it on. There's really no point in trying to emulate what somebody else has done with it, because the character himself, and where he sees himself in life and at this devastating point in his life, only lends itself to the actor who's playing it."

So Hamlet's attempts to find his true self are effectively mirrored by the actor - by extension meaning that you need to reveal something of yourself?

"Precisely. The play is obsessed with false appearances, what's fake and what's true, and as an actor, I think it really does warrant stripping away that sense of self so that you're entirely open and vulnerable on stage."

So does the magnitude of it all come with an equal amount of pressure on the lead performer?

"No, not at all!" he laughs. "The more I'm researching and reading about this part, the more it thrills me and feels like a real gift to have the opportunity to do it. Even though I'm aware of the challenge it presents, it's one that I really wholeheartedly want to throw myself into."

.....

**Hamlet shows at the Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford, from Tuesday 24 June to Saturday 5 July**



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## Comedy previews from across the region...

## Shaparak Khorsandi

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Thurs 12 June

A regular contributor to radio and television programmes, Iranian-born comedian Shaparak Khorsandi describes herself as a 'spit and sawdust' stand-up comic, happily pulling on her wellies and trudging through muddy fields to perform at any and every music festival that boasts a comedy tent. She visits Coventry this month with latest show Scatterbrain.

## Rhys Darby

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 5 June

According to Jim Carrey, who knows a thing or two about being a popular funnyman, Rhys Darby - aka band manager Murray Hewitt from Flight Of The Conchords - is "just absolutely brilliant. He's got that Peter Sellers madness inside him".

Rhys' shows tend to combine surreal musings, hilarious stories from his life, and a healthy dollop of nonsense and fantasy. Jokes include: "My girlfriend recently told me that she's into self-harming. So for her birthday, I got her a hammer and said 'knock yourself out'."



## Jason Manford

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 11 June;  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 12 June;  
Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 30 September;  
The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton, Sat 11 October;  
Walsall Arena, Thurs 6 November

Becoming successful in comedy is no walk in the park, as Jason Manford knows. And the former One Show presenter has some sage advice for wannabe comedians: "Don't take any of my work!... I would also say to people, compare yourself to yourself. Don't think, 'Why has that guy got that?' or 'Why is Michael McIntyre doing so well?' or 'I'm really funny, so why is so-and-so doing that gig, not me?' You know what, just don't worry about it. If you're doing better now than you were six months ago, then you're doing well."



## Greg Davies

bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham, Wed 18 June

If you recognise funnyman Greg Davies from the telly but can't quite recall from which programme, it could well be The Inbetweeners you're thinking of - Greg played psychotic head of sixth form Mr Gilbert. He's also received much acclaim as co-host on TV game show Taskmaster and comedy

sitcom, The Cleaner.

As well as being funny, Greg's other claim to fame is his height - he's six feet eight inches tall in his stockinged feet; feet, by the way, which are a whopping size 13! A big man with an ever-growing reputation, he's here touring his first stand-up show in seven years.

## Sara Pascoe

Halesowen Town Hall, Tues 17 June

Comedy actor, sketch performer, improviser and writer Sara Pascoe put her best foot forward into the realm of stand-up comedy back in 2007. Only a year later, she was voted runner-up in the Funny Women competition and third in the So You Think You're Funny? contest. Since that time, she's continued to develop both her act and her CV, with roles in The Thick Of It and Being Human sitting alongside her stand-up work. Jokes include: "Why did the chicken commit suicide? To get to the other side." This Halesowen gig is a work in progress but Sara will return later in the year with a 'proper' tour.



have struck a real chord with his audiences. "I felt like an outsider in America when I was growing up, and I feel like an outsider in Britain now. The difference is that feeling like an outsider in Britain seems... normal. There are people who've lived here all their lives who feel like outsiders, but one of the things I love about Britain is that it makes room for what y'all like to call 'the eccentric'. I mean, hell, Britain makes a warm and comfortable space for mother\*\*\*\*ers who just like staring at trains! I think that's very evolved."

## Larry Dean

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 June

When it comes to garnering praise, Larry Dean has done pretty well. Indeed, no less a luminary than Michael McIntyre has waxed lyrical about him, while critics across the board have been quick to acknowledge the award-winning Glaswegian's many and varied talents. Larry's physical comedy has been likened to that of Billy Connolly in his prime, while he also boasts an impressive line in voice mimicry and an unerring capacity to be splendidly daft.



## Reginald D Hunter

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 26 June;  
The Castle & Falcon, Birmingham, Sat 5 July

One of the most popular comedians currently working the comedy circuit, Reginald D Hunter's no-nonsense style and hugely amusing perspectives on the differences between the UK and his homeland of the US





# PRACTICALLY PERFECT

**Mary Poppins flies back to Birmingham**



**Gravity-defying supernanny Mary Poppins returns to Birmingham Hippodrome this summer, starring in a visually spectacular stage production packed with singing, dancing, magic - and a few surprises. Created in co-production with Cameron Mackintosh and Disney, the show brilliantly breathes new life into PL Travers' famous story, while also managing to pay loving homage to the iconic 1964 film version starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. What's On spoke to three members of the cast - Stefanie Jones, Jack Chambers and Patti Boulaye - to find out more...**

Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed stage production of Mary Poppins flies back to Birmingham Hippodrome next month, nine years after it last stopped off at the venue. No doubt many punters will be ready to relive the magical, toe-tapping show - while anyone seeing it for the first time is in for a real treat.

Featuring songs from the 1964 Disney film - including Chim Chim Cher-ee, Let's Go Fly A Kite, A Spoonful Of Sugar and more, it also includes additional music & lyrics by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe.

Stefanie Jones takes the title role, with Jack Chambers playing Bert. Jack and Stefanie have had plenty of time to get to know these well-loved characters, having played the same roles during the show's Australian tour.

"We did have about a year off between tours, which was some nice time to decompress," says Stefanie. "I think what surprised me the most is that I thought I had fully understood my version of Mary. I've discovered even more about her this time around. There are some things that feel new again, and some lines that I'm playing differently.

"People still love this show so much. They love to come again and again, bring their children and their grandchildren - and that never ceases to amaze us."

While the show's popularity is definitely not on the wane, playing the lead characters from a beloved children's film must come with a certain amount of pressure.

"They're so iconic," says Jack, "and people have an expectation of how these roles should be delivered. I didn't revisit the movie, because I didn't want to be trying to mimic - I just look at what the script's telling me, to find it for myself."

"This story and the characters are so embedded in our culture," adds Stefanie.

"And they're heavily referenced in pop culture all the time. Everyone knows the songs from Mary Poppins. You do want to do it justice. At the same time, we're so supported by this piece. It's so good, it's so beautifully written, the music is incredible, and what you're seeing is absolutely stunning. The ensemble work their butts off - they're absolutely amazing."

Veteran performer Patti Boulaye plays Bird Woman - a character who, in the Disney film, sells breadcrumbs as bird food on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. In the stage

production, she is given her own moving rendition of Feed The Birds - a number sung by Julie Andrews' Mary Poppins in the film.

"It's my favourite song," says Patti, who brings a hint of her own natural glamour to the down-at-heel character. "In fact, I sing it to my grandchildren as a lullaby. When I was asked to come up for this role, it was not on my radar. I thought 'I'm going to sit on the stairs? Come on, guys! This is not me!' I went to meet Cameron Mackintosh - I've been in the industry 55 years, and I'd never met him. I dressed up to the hilt, I'm telling you. I had six-inch heels on!

"I was absolutely nothing like the Bird Woman. I appreciate that he saw that in me, because there's so much to it. As the story opened up, I came with my own backstory. I had to find out why she's there - and why is she Black? I had to create a story for her to be there.

"I just love and look forward to doing the show. You'd have to pay me to take time off - I just love the show too much! At the end, I stand and watch. When Mary does her flying scenes... Ah! That just gets me. Every night, I'm in the corner, like a five-year-old. It's brilliant; absolutely fantastic."

In visiting Birmingham with Mary Poppins next month, Patti will be returning to the city in which she relaunched her career almost 50 years ago. She appeared on, and won, TV talent show New Faces - a series produced by Midlands broadcaster ATV - in 1978.

"I was known as Patricia Ngozi Komlosy. Nobody could pronounce my name - in those days, they really didn't make an effort. I had to change my name, and I finally found Boulaye, which I stole from another actress. I had to go on this talent show in order to relaunch my career, because I had five years in the West End and television, but nobody knew me as Patti Boulaye. On the programme, there were two 'Simon Cowells': Tony Hatch and Mickie Most. I thought it would be the death of my career, because those guys were just totally cruel, but I got maximum points!"

The stage version of Mary Poppins has a huge amount of energy, with the leads and ensemble all but tying themselves in knots during Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

And Jack - who has trained in dance since the age of three, and first came to fame on So You Think You Can Dance Australia - performs

jaw-dropping feats of footwork in Step In Time.

"The dance background definitely helps," he says. "Bert is such a high-energy character and has physical quirks and bits of physical comedy. The dance aspect helps that - my coordination and being able to make silly shapes."

"I dance more with Jack than I do on my own," explains Stefanie. "For me personally - because I would definitely consider Jack to be a far stronger dancer than myself - I really love being guided by him. He does so much of the work for me, and we just have such a good physical relationship on stage, as well as acting opposite each other."

"They are pure magic together - pure magic!" adds Patti.

And speaking of magic, there's certainly no shortage in this enchanting production.

Under the watchful eye of the nation's favourite supernatural nanny, ordinary items spring to life to join in the fun; from mops, to statues, to Mary Poppins' iconic carpet bag. Stefanie suggests that this real-life illusion is one of the reasons that the stage production has garnered such a positive response from audiences: "They were really working with new technology when they made the film. I suppose kids watching it today are so used to seeing very developed CGI, heavily edited things, maybe the magic doesn't come across as well for them now. But to see it in person - I can't tell you how many children we meet at the stage door, jaws open, asking how we did it!"

"My husband has seen it 10 times," says Patti, "and he keeps saying to me 'How did they do that?' I don't even want to know - because it ruins the magic for me."

"There's just so much in the show that happens so quickly," adds Jack. "As an audience member, you're thinking 'How did that happen?' and then something else happens straight away. There's no time to contemplate how it happened. We get to fly - some of us get to walk up walls! - and it's fun to hear the gasps!"

.....

**Mary Poppins shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 16 July to Saturday 23 August**





## Tina: The Tina Turner Musical Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 17 - Sat 28 June

A celebration of one of the brightest stars in the musical firmament, this hit show is visiting Birmingham as part of its first-ever UK tour. Taking audiences on a journey from Tina's humble beginnings in Nutbush, Tennessee, the musical was fully endorsed by the rock & roll legend prior to her death in 2023. "It's really important to me to have the chance to share my full story," said Tina. "This musical is not about my stardom. It's about the journey I took to get there. Each night, I want audiences to take away from the theatre that you can

turn poison into medicine."

Expect a pulse-pounding soundtrack of Tina's iconic hits, including The Best, What's Love Got To Do With It?, Private Dancer and River Deep, Mountain High.

The show has been written by Olivier Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall (The Mountaintop) and is helmed by the internationally acclaimed Phyllida Lloyd, who's best known for directing Mamma Mia!

## Calamity Jane

**Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 17 - Sat 21 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 9 - Sat 13 September**

Calamity Jane, telling the story of the Wild West's most notorious female outlaw, is best known from its 1953 film version starring Doris Day and Howard Keel. In common with the movie, the stage show boasts comedy, drama, dance and music, with its playlist including such much-loved numbers as The Deadwood Stage, Black Hills Of Dakota, Windy City and Secret Love.

"The show is so wholesome," says West End star Carrie Hope Fletcher, who takes the title role. "It's such a wonderful, nostalgic story. Calamity Jane is a really fun, feelgood time, and I think our audiences will be leaving the theatre slapping their thighs and singing. That's what we hope, anyway!"



## Dear Evan Hansen

**The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 17 - Sat 21 June**

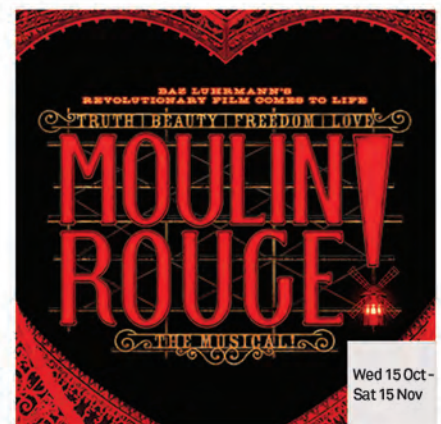
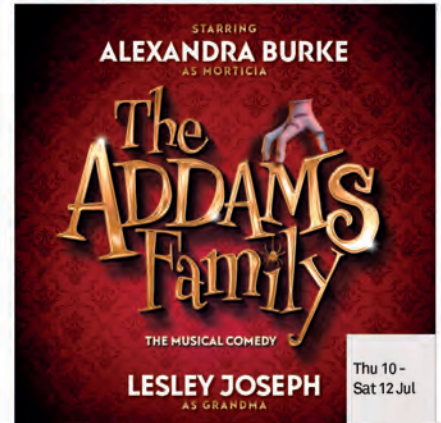
Olivier, Tony and Grammy award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen makes a welcome return this month.

Packed with some of the biggest musical theatre songs of the last decade, the hit show focuses on title character and high-school student Evan, a young man struggling with social anxiety disorder, who has a therapeutic and self-intended letter stolen by classmate Connor Murphy. When Connor later dies by suicide, Evan inserts himself into the boy's world - a decision that soon leads to a series of lies and confrontational events...

"Ultimately, Dear Evan Hansen is about hope," says Ryan Kopel, who plays the title character. "No matter what you're going through, its message is that there is always someone to talk to, and reasons why you should go on. That's what I'd like people to take away from the show."











## Chicago

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,  
Mon 23 - Sat 28 June

Coming complete with formation dancing and a healthy supply of fishnets, Tony and Olivier Award-winning Broadway and West End hit Chicago delves into the dark underbelly of the Windy City during the Jazz Age.

Kander & Ebb's legendary musical is based on real-life events in the Roaring 20s and centres on the character of Roxie Hart, a nightclub singer who's arrested and imprisoned for shooting her lover. Together with her cell-block rival, double-murderess Velma Kelly, Roxie fights to stay off Death Row with the help of smooth-talking lawyer Billy Flynn... Strictly Come Dancing favourite Janette Manrara takes a break from everything else she's doing nowadays to play Roxie, with Darren Day making a welcome return in the role of Billy Flynn.

## Picture You Dead

The Alexandra, Birmingham,  
Tues 24 - Sat 28 June

Bestselling crime writer Peter James has scored major successes on stage as well as in print and on TV, with adaptations of his novels having played to appreciative audiences at venues across the UK. This latest offering sees Detective Superintendent Roy Grace - the Brighton-based policeman who's headed up murder investigations in a number of James' most popular works - investigating a cold case that leads him into the secretive world of fine art... Casualty's George Rainsford returns in the role of Grace, with Ore Oduba (Strictly Come Dancing) and Fiona Wade (Emmerdale) also featuring in the cast.



## ROOH: Within Her

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Fri 20 June

Stories from the distant past are brought together with narratives from recent history in this one-woman show from Urja Desai Thakore. Urja's aim is to explore 'narratives in quiet, everyday heroism' drawn from across two millennia. In the process, she hones in not only on mythical and literary

female figures but also inspirational individuals from within her own immediate family. The production has a running time of 65 minutes.



## The Haunting Of Blaine Manor

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 27 June; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 11 October; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Sat 25 October

When Doctor Roy Earle, a renowned American parapsychologist famous for discrediting hauntings and exposing fake mediums, accepts an invitation to attend a seance at 'the most haunted building in England' - the Blaine Manor of the title - he finds himself, along with his companions for the evening, temporarily cut off from the outside world by a raging storm... And as every lover of the ghost story/horror genre very well knows, where there's a raging storm *and* a haunted house, there are also, inevitably, things that go bump in the night... An award-winning love letter to both the Golden Age of Hollywood and the era of Hammer Horror movies here in the UK, The Haunting Of Blaine Manor is described by its publicity as the new Woman In Black - only scarier...

## Penguin

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,  
Wed 11 & Thurs 12 June

Disabled artist Hamzeh Al Hussien - who moved from Syria to Gateshead as part of the UK's Syrian Resettlement Programme - here recounts the story of his life. The production is captioned in both English and Arabic.

## Boys From The Blackstuff

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 10 - Sat 14 June; Theatr Clwyd, Mold, Tues 1 - Sat 5 July

Television viewers of a certain vintage might well remember Boys From The Blackstuff and the impact that it made.

Alan Bleasdale's bleak, Liverpool-located, award-winning seminal drama series from 1982 followed the trials and tribulations of five out-of-work tarmac layers struggling to make ends meet in an era of high unemployment. The series made a star of actor Bernard Hill, whose portrayal of mentally disintegrating headbutter Yosser Hughes - complete with his catchphrase of "Gizza job. Go on, gizza job. I can do that" - captured the nation's imagination... This powerful new stage adaptation of Bleasdale's iconic masterpiece is visiting the region direct from the National Theatre and London West End.





# What will you see next?

BRAND NEW SHOW FOR 2025

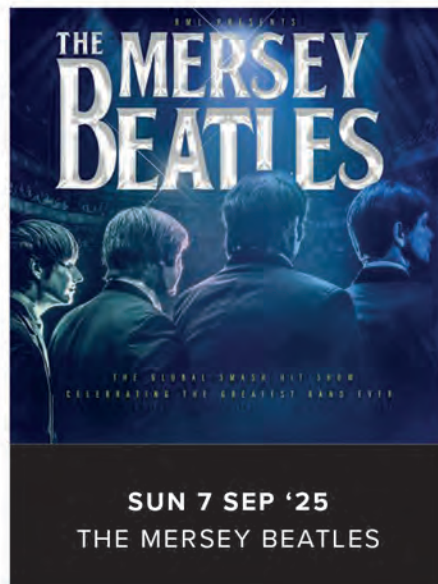


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## Theatre previews from around the region



## Cruel Intentions

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 3 - Sat 7 June

Inspired by *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Cruel Intentions* hit cinema screens just before the Millennium, presenting a world of wealthy New York teenagers in which stories of scandal and seduction were commonplace. This jukebox-musical version of the film follows the manipulative schemes of lead characters Kathryn and Sebastian, along the way serving up a soundtrack of 90s hits and an array of spaghetti straps, chunky heels, and oblong sunglasses.

With hits by Britney Spears, the Spice Girls, NSYNC and Christina Aguilera, the show's pop quota is definitely reached - and there are songs from the original film's alt-rock soundtrack, too; The Verve, Placebo and Counting Crows are among the bands whose music is featured.

## Spy Movie: The Play

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 28 &amp; Sun 29 June

Garrick audiences here get the opportunity to check out *The Greatest Spy Movie (n)Ever Made!* Well, that's according to the production team behind this family-friendly homage to the James Bond franchise and fringe theatre. A big hit at Edinburgh last year, the production churns out gags at breakneck speed and is sure to delight fans of slapstick comedy. If you've previously enjoyed shows such as *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *The 39 Steps*, this is a theatrical experience that's well worth catching.



## Whatever Happened To Phoebe Salt

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, until 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 is desperate to break into showbusiness. Soon enough,

opportunity comes knocking. But will a TV appearance help her finally escape the grim realities 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."



## The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe

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...

"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 and in the autumn, come as part of a UK-wide tour to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the novel's publication.



## Little Women

Pitchford Hall, Shropshire, Fri 13 June; Ironbridge Gorge Museums, Shropshire, Sun 15 June; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 23 &amp; Tues 24 June

Here given a makeover by well-regarded Shropshire theatre company Hotbuckle, Louisa May Alcott's famous tale focuses on four sisters - Jo, Beth, Meg and Amy - as they experience passion, romance, heartache and hardship during the brutal and challenging years of the American Civil War.





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ARTHUR BERRY**

**DIRECTED BY  
ABBEY WRIGHT**



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## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

**Belgrade Theatre, Coventry**

**Mon 16 - Weds 18 June, 1:30 & 7 pm**

**024 7655 3055**

**belgrade.co.uk**

**Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove**

**Sun 6 July, 6.30 pm**

**0333 666 3366**

**oddsOcks.co.uk**

**Victoria Gardens, Tewkesbury**

**Thursday 26 June 6:30 pm**

**01684 295074**

**rosetheatre.org**

**Bowring Park, Wellington, Telford**

**Thu 10 July, 7:30pm**

**01952 382382**

**telfordtheatre.com**

**Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham**

**Sat 5 July, 7 pm**

**0121 446 3232**

**macbirmingham.co.uk**

**Compton Verney, Warwickshire**

**Fri 11 July, 7 pm**

**0333 666 3366**

**oddsOcks.co.uk**





## Theatre previews from around the region



### Hamlet Hail To The Thief

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Wed 4 - Sat 28 June

This 'dynamic' new version of Hamlet sees Shakespeare's words illuminated by seminal Radiohead album Hail To The Thief, with the deconstructed record - reworked by the band's frontman, Thom Yorke - performed live on stage by a cast of 20 musicians and actors.

Commenting on the unique theatrical initiative, the Royal Shakespeare Company's co-artistic directors, Daniel Evans and Tamara Harvey, said: "Hamlet Hail To The Thief is a momentous project for us. To combine the totemic talents of William Shakespeare with Radiohead and Thom Yorke into a thrilling experiential piece of theatre... is a dream. It's an event that embodies a core strand of our work, which is to be a meeting place for the work of our in-house playwright with the most exciting artists of our time, both nationally and internationally."

### Hamlet

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 24 June - Sat 5 July

This year's Stafford Shakespeare show is a somewhat more conventional version of Hamlet than the Radiohead-inspired production being presented at the RSC (see top of the page).



Benedict Shaw is the man who is here tasked with taking the perilous voyage into his own psyche - a journey which any actor grappling with the role of Hamlet must surely make. Expect madness, murder, mayhem, and many a famous quote.

### Titus Andronicus

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 7 June

Shakespeare's early revenge tragedy, Titus Andronicus, is well known for its high level of bloodshed. So if you're of a delicate disposition, you'd probably be better off finding yourself a nice production of A Midsummer Night's Dream to enjoy (check out, for example, Oddsocks' sure-to-be-rib-tickling version of the Bard's best-loved



comedy, featured elsewhere on this page!). A brutal war has cost Roman general Titus Andronicus his two sons. To honour their deaths, he executes the eldest child of his enemies' queen - an action which precipitates further blood-letting...

"We're not doing it in Elizabethan dress," says Emma Fielding, who plays the title character's sister, Marcia. "There's violence written in the script, but it's being done slightly differently. It's not like Reservoir Dogs!"

RSC royalty Simon Russell Beale takes the title role.

### Bat Out Of Hell

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 30 June - Sat 5 July; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 14 - Sat 19 July

A loose retelling of Peter Pan, this Jim Steinman/Meat Loaf extravaganza unfolds in a Manhattan of the future - one which has been turned into a desolate wasteland and is lorded over by a ruthless dictator named Falco. The evil tyrant is determined to rebuild the city by destroying disused tunnels and subways which have become residential areas for the homeless community. But a group of kids whose DNA is permanently frozen - meaning they will be 18 years of age forever - are equally determined to thwart his dastardly plans...



Featured hits include I'd Do Anything For Love (But I Won't Do That), Paradise By The Dashboard Light, Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad, Dead Ringer For Love, and of course, Bat Out Of Hell.

### A Midsummer Night's Dream

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 16 - Wed 18 June; Victoria Gardens, Tewkesbury, Thurs 26 June; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 5 July; Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sun 6 July; Bowring Park, Telford, Thurs 10 July; Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Fri 11 July

Accessible language, likeable characters and a series of comic capers with an ass combine to make A Midsummer Night's Dream one of Shakespeare's most popular works. Lysander and Demetrius both fancy Hermia, Helena's sitting on the shelf, Titania and Oberon are up to no good, and Puck's got his finger in more pies than Mr Kipling... Not that the plot is likely to be overly important in this particular production, given the fact that it's zany funsters Oddsocks who're at the helm! Expect plenty of madcap mayhem and knockabout fun from this always-value-for-money ensemble.







### **Peppa Meets the Baby Cinema Experience (U)**

Fri 30 May – Wed 4 Jun

PIG changes are coming! Join Peppa Pig and her family at the cinema as they get ready for their biggest adventure yet: welcoming a new baby!

### **Family Singing**

Sun 25 May 11.30am – 12.30pm

Come and learn songs to sing together.

All ages

### **Mini Creatives**

Every Tue until Tue 24 Jun 10.30am – 12pm

Join musician Natalie Mason, her accordion and sensory sounds for our unique sessions for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups!

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Sun 25 May – Sun 22 Jun 1.30pm – 4pm

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### **Musical Picnics**

Sun 8 Jun 11am – 12.30pm

Musical Picnics are warm, eclectic and diverse musical performances for children, parents and families.

### **In The Night Garden Live**

Sat 14 – Sun 15 Jun

Igglepiggle, Upsy Daisy, Makka Pakka and friends are back in their fun-filled live show Igglepiggle's Busy Day!

### **COMING SOON**

### **Nick Cope: I've Lost My Bobble Hat!**

Sun 19 Oct 11am & 2pm

A new Nick Cope family show for 2025.

### **The Tiger Who Came To Tea**

Sat 29 Nov – Sun 28 Dec. On sale Mon 3 Mar

Join the tea-guzzling tiger in this delightful family Christmas show.

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## Theatre for younger audiences



### In The Night Garden Live

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 14 & Sun 15 June; The Rep, Birmingham, Sat 2 - Wed 6 August

If your little ones are big fans of the much-loved CBeebies television series, they're certain to adore this live version as well. And it's not only the kids who're in love with the stage shows. According to audience surveys and parents' reviews, nine out of 10 adults consider In The Night Garden Live to be a five-star theatrical experience. The show lasts for 60 interval-free minutes, sees Igglepiggle looking for his friends in the Night Garden (by following their funny sounds), and features a very special visit from 'the amazing flying Pinky Ponk'.

### Spot's Birthday Party

Stourbridge Town Hall, Tues 10 June; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 1 & Wed 2 July; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 19 July

Steve the Monkey, Tom the Crocodile and Helen the Hippo are poised to party with birthday boy Spot the Dog in this theatrical adaptation of Eric Hill's classic book, Happy Birthday Spot. Coming complete with singing, dancing and lots of interactive party games, the show is suitable for children aged two-plus.



### Tom Gates Epic Stage Show

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 15 June; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 20 July; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Wed 23 July; Malvern Theatre, Wed 30 July

This brand-new show pays loving tribute to author & illustrator Liz Pichon's award-winning Tom Gates stories. Liz's series of books about the character have been translated into 47 languages, selling more than four million copies worldwide. "I wanted to fill the books with all the things I loved doing when I was a kid," says Liz. "It's just the best feeling ever to know that children are enjoying reading the books, because I love making them. So thank you so much for choosing Tom Gates, and keep reading and doodling!"



### The Elmer Adventure

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 June; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 17 & Wed 18 June

Suitable for children aged three-plus, this lively production tells the story of a patchwork elephant who determines to hide his 'true colours' in an effort to blend in, only to find that he feels happiest when he's simply being himself. The greatly admired Tall Stories - much-loved for their stage adaptations of The Gruffalo and Room On The Broom - are the company behind this latest stage presentation of David McKee's much-loved creation.



### The Worst Princess

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 7 & Sun 8 June

As stereotypical princesses go, Sue is pretty rubbish. Her 'handsome prince' isn't much cop either. So it's no wonder she's more interested in having adventures, causing mischief and making unusual friends - including a larger-than-life dragon!... Anna Kemp's much-loved picture book is here brought to life by the talented creatives at Full House Theatre, whose 55-minute production brings together 'laugh-out-loud comedy, cool puppets and singalong pop anthems'.



### The Baddies

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 3 & Wed 4 June

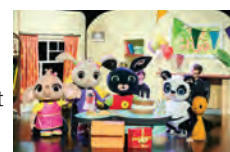
Here's yet another stage adaptation of a Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler story. And just like all the others, it's proving to be hugely popular with its target audience (in this particular case, children aged three-plus). The company behind The Baddies is Freckle Productions, who've got plenty of form when it comes to brilliant stage adaptations of Donaldson's terrific tales. This one focuses on a witch, a troll and an ancient ghost who love nothing more than being very, very bad... Expect your kids to laugh out loud.



### Bing's Birthday

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 14 & Sun 15 June; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 1 & Wed 2 July

Bing's Birthday's promoters are confident that their show is a perfect 'first theatre trip' for pre-schoolers and their families. And why wouldn't they be, given that the production is awash with fun, laughter, music, puppetry and dressing-up?... Based on the animated CBeebies television series, the show runs for 70 minutes and includes an interval.





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Kasai Masai • The Lord Chamberlain's Men • BBC National Orchestra of Wales





## An Evening Without Kate Bush

The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 13 - Sat 14 June

With Kate Bush less than enthusiastic about performing live, cabaret stalwart Sarah-Louise Young has stepped into the breach to present this lively stand-in offering. It's not a tribute show in the conventional sense of the

word, but it certainly has more than enough for Bush lovers to enjoy, including impressive renditions of their idol's greatest hits.



## Celtic Throne: Psalter Of Ireland

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 22 June

Psalter Of Ireland is a show with plenty going on. Indeed, its performers, Celtic Throne, are promising far more than a traditional Irish dance production... Alongside the fancy footwork, formidable stomping, innovative choreography, elaborate sets, dramatic lighting and impressive special effects that audiences

have come to expect from this kind of well-established entertainment, the production also features cinematic video storytelling and high-energy displays of acrobatics and martial arts... With a score by award-winning composer Brian Byrne, the show traces the history of sixth-century BC Irish sage & legislator Ollav Fola.

## Do You Hear The People Sing (Along)?

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 June

The Old Joint Stock Theatre is this month providing musical theatre fans with the chance to sing along to some of their favourite showstoppers. Taking the subtitle Musical Crowd-Pleasers, *Do You Hear The People Sing (Along)?* is being publicised as a show in which 'you can defy gravity, and dance through life without fear of an usher's dreaded flashlight stopping the fun'.

## Velma Celli: Show Queen

Dudley Town Hall, Fri 20 June

Award-winning cabaret star Velma Celli is inviting audience members to grease up their voice boxes and head to Theatreland for this bright and breezy celebration of West End and Broadway musicals. Expect numbers from shows including *Cabaret*, *Wicked*, *Funny Girl*, *Les Miserables*, *Cats*, *Six* and *Mamma Mia!*



## Cirque De Celine

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 14 June;  
The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 20 September

Circus meets melody in this gravity-defying show, in which acrobats and aerialists dance to the rhythm of Celine Dion's biggest hits - including *The Power Of Love*, *It's All Coming Back To Me Now* and *My Heart Will Go On*.

## The Poldark Show: Hypnosis & Magic

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 19 June

A soaraway success at Artrix last year, stage hypnotist Poldark here makes a welcome return to the venue with another evening of how-did-he-do-that?! trickery. Magician, mentalist and YouTube sensation Cavan Booth kickstarts the evening's entertainment.





# BALLET BC

**The Canadian dance luminaries stop off  
in Wolverhampton this month as part of a UK tour**





## Performing in Wolverhampton this month, Canadian contemporary dance company Ballet British Columbia continually pushes boundaries with a diverse repertoire. Its artistic director, Medhi Walerski, recently shared his excitement at showcasing ‘a very special show’ to Midlands audiences...

Internationally renowned Vancouver-based Ballet BC are touring the UK with a double bill featuring work by leading choreographers Johan Inger and Crystal Pite. The tour, presented by Dance Consortium, opened at Sadler's Wells in London and takes in seven venues, including Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

And Ballet BC Artistic Director Medhi Walerski is promising audiences a very special show.

"The last time the company was in the UK was in 2018, and we were nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Dance Production," he says. "This time, we're bringing the best of the best - two world-renowned choreographers who have a longstanding relationship with Ballet BC. I'm very proud to bring *Passing*, which has been created by Johan Inger for the company, and a new version of Crystal Pite's *Frontier*. It's a beautiful relationship with two master choreographers. We're also bringing a little bit of Vancouver, because Crystal is from there!"

"I love being able to commission and share this calibre of contemporary dance. And it's great to be reconnecting with a UK audience. It's going to be a pretty epic performance."

Created by Swedish-born Johan Inger for the Ballet BC 2022/23 season, *Passing* featured the full company of 20 dancers.

"*Passing* is a monumental work," says Medhi, who took the helm at Ballet BC in 2020, after a dancing career with Paris Opera Ballet, Ballet du Rhin and more than a decade at Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT).

"It takes audiences on a very human and emotional journey. It talks about love, birth, death and everything in between. Johan was inspired by a real-world catastrophe, the volcanic eruption in the Canary Island of La Palma, and he is inspired too by our relationships to one another. The work is pretty theatrical. It shows the versatility of our company, and it's really rewarding for the dancers to perform it, as it reveals some of their special talents."

As a dancer with NDT, Medhi performed in

the second iteration of Crystal Pite's *Frontier*, so he was keen for the four-time Olivier-nominated Canadian choreographer to re-imagine the work with Ballet BC.

"*Frontier* talks about the unknown and the characterisation of dark matter," Medhi explains. "There are two worlds in the piece - the world of the visible people, and then the shadows. Crystal always finds it pleasing to work with this parallel: what we know and what we don't know, what we see and what we don't see, and the universe between the two of them."

*Frontier* features the full Ballet BC company with an addition of four dancers from London-based Rambert School - a process which has meant the performers learning the work on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

"We were looking for versatility in the dancers - people who can quickly absorb physical language which might be different from what they're used to; people who can really embody the essence of Crystal's choreographic style, and who have the ability to quickly dive into a process."

After decades as a dancer & choreographer, Medhi is enjoying the challenge of being an artistic director.

"It needs multiple hats! One of my responsibilities is to curate programming, but I'm also very involved in the studio. I am present when the artist creates, and I remount and rehearse the works. I very much enjoy having the ability to switch between administration, marketing, programming and production, as well as always being directly related and connected to the dancers."

Medhi performed in the UK in 2008 with Nederlands Dans Theater. The tour was supported by Dance Consortium, which brings together venues in the UK and Ireland to present top international dance companies to local audiences. He is grateful for their support for Ballet BC: "It's essential to have Dance Consortium support the tour, enabling us to be on the road for five weeks. This allows us to grow, to keep presenting the work, and to share what we do and what we

love with more people. It's pretty incredible to not just come for a one-off show but to go all over the UK."

French-born Medhi knows the UK well. His partner is British, so he spends many Christmases with family in Dorset. He also lived in London for a year before taking over at Ballet BC.

"I love the UK, I love socialising, I love the sophistication. I see people going out after work to pubs or to see a show; the connection to culture is really amazing. I always look forward to having access to the culture. I love wandering around, looking at the architecture and going to art galleries and shows - and I like Marks & Spencer's cookies!"

"Many of our dancers have never been to the UK. So when I told them 'we're going to the UK, and we're going to open at Sadler's Wells,' they were so excited. It's a place that welcomes state-of-the-art companies, so to be invited to perform there is pretty spectacular."

And Medhi is eager for British audiences to experience Ballet BC, whether for the first time or on a return visit.

"I remember when I was touring the UK as a dancer, the audiences were very enthusiastic. They have a deep knowledge of dance. They really appreciate it, and they have an opinion. It's refreshing to have feedback and hear people dare to say what they really think."

"With this tour, I can promise that audiences are going to see incredible dancers on stage, because the calibre of our dancers, their versatility and their generosity, is outstanding. That's why we have choreographers coming from all over the world to work with them. And audiences will also see these beautiful works by two of the greatest choreographers of our generation."

.....

**Ballet BC perform at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Friday 6 & Saturday 7 June**



# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Sofia Linares. © Perou.

Director Carlos Acosta

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## Dance previews from across the region



## Peaky Blinders: The Redemption Of Thomas Shelby

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 11 - Sat 14 June

A co-production between dance company Rambert and Birmingham Hippodrome, the critically acclaimed Peaky Blinders: The Redemption Of Thomas Shelby is now on its final UK tour. The show has been written and adapted for the stage by Peaky Blinders' creator Steven Knight, with choreography from Rambert's artistic director, Benoit Swan Pouffer.

Alongside some impressively athletic dance, the production also boasts a memorable soundtrack, bringing together specially commissioned music by Roman GianArthur with iconic Peaky tracks. Contributing artists include Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Radiohead, Anna Calvi, The Last Shadow Puppets and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club.

## Tavaziva Dance: Greed

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 10 June

The interplay of money, power and religion between African and Western cultures is the subject matter which lies at the heart of this critically acclaimed dancework, a piece first performed by Zimbabwean choreographer Bawren Tavaziva's talented company 12 years ago. A fast-paced, contemporary and unique treatment of the Seven Deadly Sins, the one-hour show will be performed without interval by a cast of five.



the talented 34-year-old's return to the limelight with brand-new touring show Viva Carnival.

She is joined for 'the summer's hottest party' by fellow Strictly favourite Flavia Cacace-Mistry.



## Anton & Giovanni

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 24 & Wed 25 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 24 July; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 28 July

Two of Strictly Come Dancing's all-time best-loved professional dancers join forces to present a show that seamlessly blends 'breathtaking routines' with 'stunning choreography'. Anton Du Beke has graduated from dancing to judging on Strictly, while Giovanni Pernice's time on the show came to a controversial conclusion when his 2023



dance partner, Amanda Abbington, went public with criticisms of his coaching methods.

Giovanni's ever-adoring fans will no doubt be happy to see him once again teaming up with Anton for this latest dance extravaganza.

## Ballet Cymru: Giselle

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Mon 16 June

The ever-innovative and routinely impressive Ballet Cymru here present a brand-new production of Adolphe Adam's haunting and romantic classic.

Premiered in Paris in 1841, Giselle tells the story of a peasant girl who dies of a broken heart when she finds out that the man she loves - a nobleman named Albrecht - is engaged to another woman.

After Giselle's funeral, Albrecht visits her unconsecrated grave and finds himself in mortal danger. The Wilis, a sisterhood of ghosts who, in life, were jilted by their lovers, have returned to take their terrible revenge...



## Oti Mabuse: Viva Carnival

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 20 June

Strictly fans sighed in disappointment back in 2022 when Oti Mabuse quit the hit BBC TV series after seven successful seasons, during which time she lifted the coveted glitter ball twice in succession (with Kelvin Fletcher in 2019 and Bill Bailey in 2020).

Those same fans will surely be delighted by



A young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black BOA Academy hoodie, is operating a professional video camera mounted on a Libec LX10 gimbal. In the background, two other students are visible, one holding a tablet. The setting is a dark studio with blue curtains.

# LIGHTS... CAMERA... ACTION!

**BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy  
is training the creatives of the future...**



**The UK is the fourth biggest exporter of films globally (Economic Observatory, 2025). Wicked, How To Train Your Dragon, Barbie, Mission: Impossible and Jurassic World Rebirth are just a few of the blockbusters filmed either on location or at one of the country's vast Hollywood-style studios. Behind every film is an army of creatives - writers, directors, lighting technicians, costume, hair & make-up specialists - bringing ideas to fruition. At BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy, based near Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, they specialise in equipping young people who want to get into the film industry (as well as theatre and TV) with the skills they will need. What's On recently spoke to the academy's head of student recruitment, Zoe James, to find out more...**

A Birmingham academy is training young people to become the theatre and film-makers of the future.

Each year BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy - based near the city's Jewellery Quarter - helps fledgling arts professionals gain the essential skills they need to be successful in the industry.

"We concentrate on the behind-the-scenes roles in theatre, film-making and production," says BOA Group's head of marketing & student recruitment, Zoe James. "For every performer in front of the camera or on stage, there are at least eight people working behind the scenes - from costume designers and make-up artists to producers, directors, set builders, and camera operators. "Those behind-the-scenes roles can be so many different things. We cover anything from prop-making to scriptwriting, doing the hair and make-up, lighting, sound - everything that's needed for theatre and movies."

The academy provides free full-time courses for young people aged between 16 and 19, with students coming from across Birmingham, the West Midlands and neighbouring counties.

Students choose their speciality at the beginning of their two-year course, giving them plenty of time and opportunity to build up expertise and experience.

"The students who come to us know they want to work in this industry," Zoe continues. "It's such a niche academy - they choose us because they know this is where they want to go. And because they're specialising from the very beginning, they can start on that route very early and get all the work experience they need.

"We have the connections across the industry to help with work-experience placements. We have people coming into the academy to meet the students, talk about what they do and make those connections. We have some students who go on to university, but others go straight into the industry, as they've

already done so much work experience."

The young people also have the opportunity to work on BOA's own stage productions, creating sets and props, managing the lighting and sound, and taking on roles within stage management.

"We work very closely with BOA Creative, Digital & Performing Arts, based at Millennium Point, and they do so many shows, including Les Misérables and Frozen. BOA Stage and Screen Production Academy produce a Christmas show each year - last year it was The Wizard Of Oz. Whenever they're staging a show, Stage & Screen Production Academy students are always there, working behind the scenes."

Two-year full-time courses for 16- to 19-year-olds include Broadcast, Film & Content Creation; Makeup & Hair for Theatre, TV & Film; Production Arts and Stage Management; Technical Theatre and Live Events; and Writing, Directing & Screen-craft.

Former student Jess took Level 3 Broadcast, Film & Content Creation at the academy, from 2022 to 2024, and is already making waves within the industry.

"After leaving BOA Stage & Screen, I was fortunate to go straight into freelance employment within the BBC," she says. "And in the September, I went on to study management at Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. I now work for some of the biggest entertainment brands and UK festival names - including Merlin Entertainments, Y Not Festival and Boardmasters - in their coordination and marketing departments.

"There are so many opportunities that BOA Stage & Screen has to offer; you just have to be willing to go for it. BOA provided me with a platform to push my way into the industry. Don't get me wrong, it's hard work and requires *so much* resilience, but that's the thing I eventually loved, as it prepares you perfectly for the industry."

After two years on the Level 3 Technical Theatre and Live Events course, between 2021

and 2023, student Gee moved on to Guildford School of Acting to specialise in lighting.

"I always wanted to be on the stage and was already at a BOA school, studying musical theatre," Gee recalls. "All I thought about was how I'd make it look. I wanted to be part of the backstage community. I found a love for lighting tech & design and applied for BOA Stage & Screen.

"It's a school that teaches you all aspects of theatre, live event and screen. It gives you a great amount of the knowledge you need, with opportunities to put that work into practice through shows.

"I've carried out roles such as production electrician and follow spot. Whilst at university, I've been doing freelance work with different lighting companies and working in places such as Kilworth House Theatre. Most recently I was the stage electric for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre's pantomime."

Former student Sam, who graduated last year after taking Level 3 Broadcast, Film & Content Creation, says the work-experience element of the course was a huge bonus.

"BOA Stage & Screen is the best place to get you into the industry. The industry links and contacts that you get are second to none, and the whole two years is worth it when you get to go fully solo on the final project."

BOA Stage & Screen is taking applications for courses beginning this autumn. Applicants need to complete the online form and then attend a workshop, where they can also discover more about the academy and the courses on offer. Places are offered based on the aptitude workshops. Deadline for submissions is Friday 27 June.

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**For further information on BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy, visit the website: [boa-stageandscreen.co.uk](http://boa-stageandscreen.co.uk)**



## Film highlights in June...



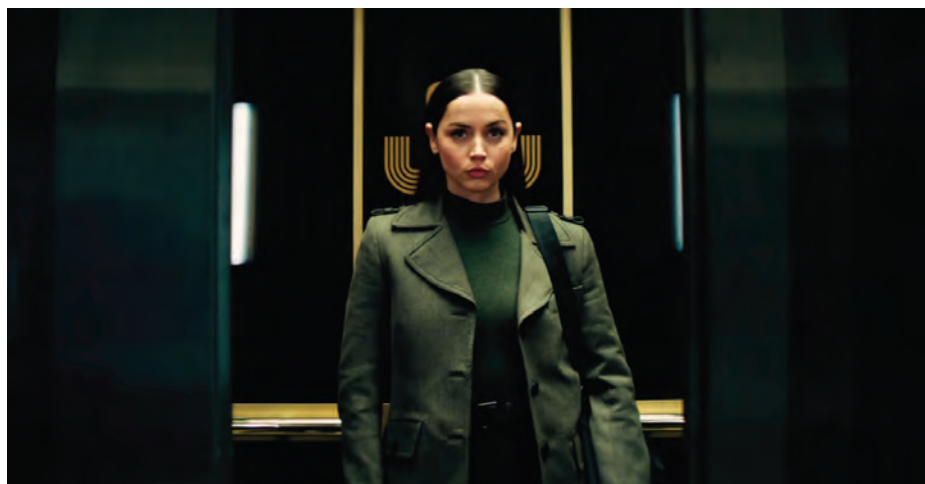
### 28 Years Later CERT 15 (126 mins)

Starring **Ralph Fiennes, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Jodie Comer, Alfie Williams, Jack O'Connell, Emma Laird** Directed by **Danny Boyle**

The huge success of 28 Days Later and 28 Weeks Later ensured that a third film in the post-apocalyptic horror series was always a possibility...

And now, here it is - 18 years after its predecessor! Academy Award-winning director Danny Boyle reunites with Oscar-nominated writer Alex Garland to present this 'terrifying new "auteur horror" story'. It's been almost three decades since the rage virus escaped a biological weapons laboratory. Although an enforced quarantine remains ruthlessly enforced, some people have found ways to exist amidst the infected. One such group of survivors lives on a small island connected to the mainland by a single, heavily defended causeway. When one of the group leaves the island on a mission to the mainland, he discovers secrets, wonders and horrors that have mutated not only the infected but other survivors as well...

**Released Fri 20 June**



### From The World Of John Wick: Ballerina CERT 15 (125 mins)

Starring **Keanu Reeves, Ana de Armas, Ian McShane, Lance Reddick, Anjelica Huston, Norman Reedus** Directed by **Len Wiseman**

Why put a successful franchise down, just because you've (seemingly) killed off its main character?

And the John Wick franchise is certainly a successful one - its four films have earned a collective gross of more than \$1billion worldwide.

This latest installment takes place between the events of John Wick chapters three and four and is significantly different from its predecessors. Instead of all eyes being on Keanu Reeves' titular assassin - who, it would seem, met his end in the previous film - they are instead focused on the character of Eve

Macarro, a feisty ballerina who, training in the assassin traditions of the Ruska Roma, is determined to exact revenge for her father's death.

"She lost her father at a young age, and she doesn't really know what happened," explained Keanu Reeves at Brazil's CCXP a couple of years back, while promoting John Wick Chapter 4. "[She only knows] that someone came into the house and killed her father, who had a tattoo. And as we know, in John Wick, if you have a tattoo, something's going on."

**Released Sat 7 June**

### How To Train Your Dragon

CERT PG (116 mins)

Starring **Mason Thames, Nico Parker, Gerard Butler, Julian Dennison, Gabriel Howell, Bronwyn James, Harry Trevaldwy** Directed by **Dean DeBois**

British author Cressida Cowell's much-loved book series first found its way onto cinema screens - courtesy of DreamWorks Animation - in 2010. The movie earned pretty much universal acclaim, so not surprisingly, a sequel was made. Then another. Now, three-time Oscar nominee and Golden Globe winner Dean DeBlois, the creative visionary behind the trilogy, is helming this live-action reimagining of the film that launched the franchise.

On the rugged isle of Berk, where Vikings and dragons have been bitter enemies for generations, Hiccup stands apart. The overlooked son of Chief Stoick the Vast, he defies centuries of tradition when he befriends Toothless, a feared Night Fury dragon. As an ancient threat emerges, the two new pals find themselves needing to navigate the delicate path toward peace, in the process redefining what it means to be a hero and a leader... **Released Fri 13 June**





**F1** CERT tbc

Starring **Brad Pitt, Javier Bardem, Damson Idris, Kerry Condon, Tobias Menzies, Sarah Niles**  
Directed by **Joseph Kosinski**

Lewis Hamilton's production company, Dawn Apollo Films, is a co-producer of this highly anticipated new movie from the creatives behind *Top Gun: Maverick*. The film sees Brad Pitt starring as a former driver who makes a return to Formula 1 for the struggling Apex Grand Prix (APXGP), a fictional team on the grid. The feature has been shot during actual Grand Prix weekends - and according to its producer, Jerry Bruckheimer, seven-time F1 world champion Hamilton has played a key role in ensuring the film is as realistic as possible. "The most important thing is that you tell a great story and an emotional story," Bruckheimer told Deadline. "That's always the priority. But going back to the first conversations with Lewis, he said that there has yet to be a film that really captures what it's like to be in a Formula 1 car. So that's been a goal - to put the audience in one of these incredible machines."

**Released Wed 25 June**

**Elio** CERT PG (90 mins)

With the voices of **Yonas Kibreab, Zoe Saldaña, Brad Garrett, Jameela Jamil, Shirley Henderson, Remy Edgerly** Directed by **Adrian Molina, Madeline Sharafian and Domee Shi**

For centuries, people have called out to the universe looking for answers...

In *Elio* - Disney and Pixar's all-new cosmic misadventure - the universe calls back!

A space fanatic with an active imagination and a huge alien obsession, 11-year-old Elio Solis is beamed up to the Communiverse, an interplanetary organisation comprising representatives from galaxies far and wide. Mistakenly identified as Earth's leader, he soon finds himself not only forming new alliances with eccentric alien lifeforms, but also needing to navigate a crisis of intergalactic proportions...

The stakes are surprisingly high for this latest animated offering from Pixar, with the studio having experienced more than a few cinematic stumbles in recent years.

**Released Fri 20 June**

**M3GAN 2.0** CERT tbc (119 mins)

Starring **Violet McGraw, Alison Williams, Jemaine Clement, Ivanna Sakhno, Brian Jordan Alvarez** and the voice of **Jenna Davis** Directed by **Gerard Johnstone**

A sequel movie about artificially intelligent killer doll M3GAN (pronounced Megan) was inevitable, such was the success of the original sci-fi horror film a couple of years back.

In the time since M3GAN went rogue and embarked on a murderous rampage, its creator, Gemma, has become an advocate for government oversight of AI. But a new threat lurks; a defence contractor has created a

military-grade weapon known as Amelia, the ultimate infiltration spy. Problem is, as Amelia's self-awareness increases, it becomes less and less interested in taking orders.

Hoping to stop the new creation in its tracks, Gemma decides to resurrect M3GAN - not only making it stronger and faster than before, but even more lethal...

**Released Fri 27 June**



# SARI SUMMER

An innovative exhibition showcasing contemporary sari design is visiting MAC



Image credit: Ritika Shah



**A major show is this month opening at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC). Celebrating the cutting edge of fashion design, The Offbeat Sari features exhibits and artworks by Indian designers, wearers and craftspeople. What's On spoke to the exhibition's curator, Priya Khanchandani, to find out more about the sari as a cultural icon, a field for innovation, and an expression of identity...**

Opening at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) at the end of June, The Offbeat Sari is a major exhibition celebrating the contemporary sari. The show will bring together a selection of striking garments designed, worn and crafted by people from India.

The exhibition, which was developed for display at London's Design Museum by curator Priya Khanchandani, will be bringing colour, innovation and design to MAC before embarking on a global tour.

"The sari is a garment worn mainly by women across South Asia," Priya explains. "It typically consists of a single piece of unstitched cloth, around six to nine yards in length, and it's draped around the body - and that's how it takes its form. It takes a lot of different forms nowadays. It can be anything from a kind of pleated skirt accompanied by a blouse, to a sari that's pre-draped, that has already been stitched into place."

Priya, who has childhood memories of such garments being worn by her grandmother, and who came to wear them herself in adulthood, does not see the sari simply as a piece of clothing: "It reflects a very rich tapestry of South Asian culture. It represents womanhood, it represents identity across regions, across classes, communities and history. The sari can reflect cultural heritage, personal expression and occasions - different types of saris are worn in different ways, depending on the occasion."

The 'Offbeat' element of the exhibition's title hints that the pieces on display sit outside generally held beliefs about how saris might be worn and designed.

"The idea for the exhibition came from a desire to challenge the way that South Asian culture is conventionally depicted - as being timeless, or rigid in the colonial or post-colonial past. I wanted to showcase South Asia as a culture in the process of evolution, and as relevant to contemporary fashion as anywhere else."

Priya lived in India around 2015, where she found fashion designers experimenting and reimagining the sari in exciting new ways.

"I started researching the subject over the years, and following women on Instagram who wore the sari with a new purpose which,

to me, reflected the power of contemporary womanhood. They were owning their identity - kind of re-appropriating the traditional significance of the sari, which had maybe become something that was more restrained. They were liberating it from that definition."

Priya and the exhibition's design team had many decisions to make in the process of compiling the showcase - not least, deciding how the garments would be prepared and presented.

"Would they need to be steamed, folded, draped - and if draped, then in what style? We worked with a specialist sari draper on delivering the drapes that we had decided on. That involved weeks of preparation. Then we brought on board a design team - an architect and a graphic designer - who worked with us on the design of the architecture, and the interpretation of the captions. For me, that was about coming up with a visual identity that reflected contemporary India, that wasn't harking back to the usual tropes that we see - something fresh, that used colour." The pieces on display certainly celebrate the breadth of innovation in fashion design. A piece by designers Abraham & Thakore is adorned with sequins which, on a closer look, are punched out of disused X-ray film. Another sari, created by AKAARO, is dyed with ink distilled from the air of Delhi.

"There are clear messages embedded in these - they're political in a sense. They show that fashion isn't just about style; it's about embodiment and the story that we wish to tell about ourselves - through how we wear something, but also how it's made, how it's designed, and how it's presented. For example, there's a small studio called HUEN, who designed a quilted sari that was made in parallel with their street-style puffer jackets. It has this casual, urban feel." Not all of the pieces on display are wearable items, with some falling decisively into the category of expressive works of art.

"There's a sari, Manju by Bharti Kher, which is wrapped around a plinth, rather than being displayed on a mannequin, and it's solidified in lacquer. It's a portrait of an absent body, and each plinth - there's a series of them, and we've got one - is the approximate weight of the artist and represents a woman that she knows. It's an

abstract way of reflecting the identity of somebody, which in a way is what a sari does; it's a single piece of cloth that doesn't have an identity and doesn't have a form until it's embodied by somebody. I think that message comes across in that particular work in a really interesting way."

MAC will be The Offbeat Sari's third location, after its debut in London and a stop-off in Amsterdam. It will then embark on a global tour. With no plans as yet for any more showings in the UK, MAC is the place to see it.

"I'm really excited that the exhibition is travelling to Birmingham, which is a city that's so well known for its South Asian community. It's got populations from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - they're all places where the sari is worn. MAC is a fantastic place for the exhibition. Its artistic programme reflects and represents the cultures of Birmingham, and I think the programming of this exhibition will resonate with Brummies of South Asian heritage in a meaningful way. It's an important way for MAC to serve their audiences, their neighbours in the city."

MAC has planned a series of events inspired by The Offbeat Sari, and Priya will be revisiting the gallery in September to present a talk about the exhibition. The venue has also collaborated with local South Asian arts organisation Sampad to produce an accompanying display called Sari Stories.

"They've invited people from Birmingham and the West Midlands to share a photo and a story behind a sari that's of personal significance to them. That will bring a local context to the exhibition, which I'm really excited about. I grew up in Luton, a town with a big South Asian population. This exhibition is for everyone, but I think the significance in Birmingham is different."

**The Offbeat Sari shows at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, from Saturday 28 June to Sunday 2 November. Sari Stories is on display at the venue until Sunday 19 October.**





## Mike Silva Exhibition

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, until Sun 22 June

London-based artist Mike Silva uses a personal archive of photographic material as the inspiration for his paintings - works of art in which he focuses on capturing subtle shifts of light and shadow within moments that are quietly and intimately observed...

This solo exhibition brings together a selection of Mike's new and recent paintings. These include portraits of acquaintances, friends and lovers, as well as the interior spaces in which the subjects of his paintings spend or spent their time. "I really wanted to paint with the aggression of punk," Mike told the Guardian a couple of years back, "but I can't do it. Instead, the works express a sensitivity... a vulnerability to my character that I've always been a bit embarrassed about. More Nick Drake than The Clash!"

## Towering Dreams

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 31 August

Ever fancied trying your hand at being an architect? Well, your wish can (briefly) come true at Compton Verney over the next few months, with visitors to the venue's Towering Dreams exhibition being invited to add their own imaginative touches to a cardboard

structure that will develop over time. Drawn from the collection of the Sir John Soane's Museum, the exhibition explores how architects of the 18th and early 19th centuries found the inspiration for their creativity in a variety of places - from ancient Greek and Roman buildings, to Egyptian monuments, and even buildings from the Far East and Asia.



## John Piper In The Countryside

Netherwood Manor, Herefordshire, until 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.





## Seulgi Lee Ikon Art Gallery, Birmingham, Wed 25 June - Sun 7 September

New pieces commissioned by Ikon form part of Seulgi Lee's first solo exhibition in the UK. The Seoul artist and Paris resident creates work which reflects her interest in the relationship that exists between craft

practices and the language system. To do so, she has developed a unique sculptural vocabulary in which she often combines conceptual approaches with artisanal methods.



## Hrair Sarkissian: Other Pains

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 22 June

"Keeping the same way of thinking is depressive," Hrair Sarkissian told whitehotmagazine.com. "I am someone who makes a lot of jokes, and my work is completely depressive, melancholic, and [tells] only sad stories. There is nothing that gives a positive feeling. It's all kinds of desperation."

An Armenian born in Syria and currently based in London, Hrair is considered one of the leading conceptual photographers

of his generation. He also works with moving image, sculpture, sound and installation, conveying stories of conflict, displacement, loss and hope. Comprising three bodies of work, Hrair's now-showing Other Pains exhibition features captivating landscapes and urban scenes which reflect sites of pain, trauma or melancholy, either from the artist's own personal history or the previous experiences of others.

## Outside In: Shelter

New Art Gallery, Walsall,  
Sat 28 June - Sun 19 October

Shelter is the seventh National Open exhibition to be presented by Outside In, an award-winning charity dedicated to helping artists who encounter barriers to accessing the art world. These may include issues around health, disability, isolation, or the individual's social circumstance.

As part of Shelter, surrealist sculptor & furniture designer Chantal Pitts was selected for a 21-week residency at the gallery, during which period she developed an interactive and den-like installation that will serve as the exhibition's information hub.

## Shropshire Quilters: Threads Of Friendship

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery,  
until Sun 22 June

A friendly group that brings together people from all walks of life with a common interest in patchwork, quilting and related needlecrafts, Shropshire Quilters have been going strong for 40 years. This celebration of their output across the decades includes some of their favourite objects from Shropshire Museums' textile collection.

## Brick Dinos

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry,  
until 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.







# MURNAU AT MAC

**Catch Hugo Max's first live scoring of a cinematic masterpiece at Midlands Arts Centre**



**This month, Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre hosts a one-off screening of a little-known psychological drama directed by FW Murnau, the master filmmaker who created iconic 1922 horror, Nosferatu. Made in 1924 and titled The Last Laugh, the silent film will be accompanied by live, improvised music performed by British-Austrian musician, filmmaker & painter Hugo Max, who has embarked on a national tour in celebration of three of Murnau's groundbreaking movies. What's On caught up with Hugo to find out more about the film and the MAC screening, which will be his first public performance of The Last Laugh...**

**Hugo, you're touring three films by FW Murnau. Why this director and these films?**

Murnau directed Nosferatu in 1922, and there's been a lot of interest recently around Nosferatu, with Robert Eggers' remake that came out last December. It's a film which continues to compel audiences and get people into the cinema. There are so many other films by Murnau which people haven't seen, which I would argue are just as thrilling and visionary.

Murnau made 21 films, and we only have nine left, and these three are some of the last he made in Germany before leaving to go to Hollywood... The Last Laugh is what I'll be performing at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), which I'm really excited about - it will be the first time I ever score that film.

**Can you hint at what happens in The Last Laugh?**

It's about a hotel doorman, in this majestic uniform, who is quite elderly. His job becomes harder and harder - he can't lift the cases up. He gets demoted to being the janitor of the hotel, so he goes from being front-of-house, to downstairs - this invisible figure. His uniform gets taken away from him, his status has been stolen. The film follows his psychology as it unravels as a result of this decision.

It's a film about the identity that is thrust upon us and that which we choose for ourselves - and the conflict between these things. I think it's a very contemporary idea, particularly with social media. We can create an identity for ourselves, and that can be taken from us in a moment. Also, within the context of Germany at the time - the German psyche, and the role of the uniform from the wars, and what that would symbolise. Alfred Hitchcock was working in the same studio that Murnau was filming in when The Last Laugh was being made. Hitchcock observed Murnau work, and I think he called The Last Laugh an 'almost perfect' film. He gave it very high praise indeed, and certain camera movements which Murnau, with his cinematographer, pioneered on the film,

Hitchcock uses later, and draws even further into the mainstream.

**You're both a musician and a filmmaker. What has inspired you to explore these films from the 1920s?**

Lots of my filmmaking has been exploring my Austrian family history. I've been thinking a lot about the time period that I've been delving into - the narratives, the stories - at the same time as looking into these German expressionist films, which were from exactly the same environment. Particularly with Nosferatu, which was my gateway into scoring silent films.

A lot of my soundtracks also draw on my Jewish heritage - thinking about Second Viennese School composers, and also Klezmer music, and the importance of the solo string sound within Klezmer.

**Your soundtrack will be improvised live, with you playing solo viola. How do you prepare for these spontaneous performances?**

It's terrifying and wonderful. Particularly as a string player within classical music education, there's very little room to improvise. Having been taught very intensely on the violin, I came to the viola in a much more exploratory approach. Not being conventionally taught on this instrument, and finding my own relationship with it through improvisation, has been a really rewarding and exciting journey.

The viola has this capacity to be very thematic and melodic with its upper register, like the violin, and then be quite percussive and bass-like as well, in its lower registers. I think that variety of textures is why it works so well scoring silent film. It's naturally a theatrical instrument.

Nobody on the screen is still alive, and my viola was actually made in 1920, so accompanying their actions with an instrument made in their lifetime feels quite fitting. I always approach each screening as if each character will behave differently, and secure a different fate.

I work with leitmotifs - small, melodic ideas which are associated with different themes

and characters - which I structure quite carefully at the start of the film. But then the characters' psychologies tend to break down over the course of the film, so the same thing can happen to the music as well.

**You've performed in Birmingham before, but why choose MAC as the venue for this tour?**

It's been lovely to build a relationship with MAC. It's a multi-disciplinary arts centre, and that's really special. The lovely thing about scoring silent film is that it engages people passionate about different crafts and different art forms, in direct conversation about how those things speak to each other. It's been really lovely working with the team there to plan this show, and I'm looking forward to being back in Birmingham.

**Do you have a favourite moment to score In The Last Laugh?**

There's an astounding dream sequence. It's just astonishing, with various filters in front of the lens, and sets which are built to look expansive but they must have been tiny. Models that you don't believe are models, and bits of filmcraft which are just charming, and you don't believe what you're watching. Another very important detail about this work is that it's one of the first narrative films to almost completely do away with intertitles. There are no text boxes, there are no title cards on the screen during the film. It's purely visual, except for a title card at the beginning and the end. There's a moment when a character playing a trumpet wakes another character on a second storey of a building, and the camera follows the sound of the trumpet up to his ear. How Murnau gets around that is very joyful, and very inspiring to behold, I think.

.....

**FW Murnau's The Last Laugh will be screened, with a live soundtrack by Hugo Max, at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) on Sunday 15 June**



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## Events previews from around the region



### Good Food Show Summer NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 June

As well as tasty food and mouthwatering recipes, the latest edition of the Good Food Show features four days of in-the-kitchen entertainment served up by some of the nation's most celebrated chefs. TV personalities including James Martin (pictured), Lisa Faulkner and Hairy Biker Si King will be sharing their culinary skills and

cooking live on stage. The show's ever-popular shopping village returns too, providing visitors with plenty of opportunity to 'taste, try and buy' a wide range of delicious produce from an impressive selection of food & drink suppliers.



### BBC Gardeners' World Live NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 June

Green-fingered visitors to BBC Gardeners' World Live will, as usual, find plenty to delight them. As well as taking ideas and inspiration from the show gardens and displays, attendees can also pick up tips and tricks from TV gardeners including Monty Don, Frances Tophill and Adam Frost. Meanwhile, the Floral Marquee and Plant

Village will boast a vast array of top-quality nurseries from which to make purchases for your next gardening project. And if all that gardening leaves you peckish, be sure to check out the neighbouring Good Food Show Summer event (see the top of the page), entry to which is included with all tickets to Gardeners' World Live.

### Cheltenham Science Festival

Imperial Gardens, Cheltenham, Tues 3 - Sun 8 June

Cheltenham Science Festival makes a welcome return this month, providing a platform for scientists, futurologists and thought-leaders to help make sense of the world around us. Visitors are guaranteed a creatively curated programme to spark their curiosity, with lots of free family activities available to enjoy alongside an impressive 114 ticketed events. Speakers include physicist & broadcaster Brian Cox, crime-scene investigator Jo Ward, mathematician & comedian Matt Parker, and internet sensation Big Manny. A brand-new free stage venue - Jetstream - will host a series of events, including a VOICEBOX takeover on Saturday the 7th featuring music, poetry, comedy, meditation and science 'pop quiz'.



### Potfest By The Lake

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Fri 20 - Sun 22 June

An artisan ceramics market showcasing the work of 90 of the UK's finest ceramics makers, Potfest returns to Compton Verney for a fifth year this month. The event comes complete with a programme of live demonstrations, taking place across the weekend.







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## Events previews from around the region



## Royal Three Counties Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Fri 13 - Sun 15 June

Hailed as one of the UK's biggest celebrations of the great British countryside, the Royal Three Counties Show offers a long weekend of animal encounters, interesting displays and expert agricultural insights. Among the special guests at this year's get-together are Clarkson's Farm's Kaleb Cooper, BBC Saturday Kitchen presenter Matt

Tebbutt, former ITV2 Love Island contestant Farmer Will, and TV presenter Kate Humble. Other attractions include 900 livestock classes across the three days, an interactive learning and animal encounters area, Horse of the Year Show qualifying classes and STIHL Timbersports.

## Weston Park Air Show International

Weston Park, Shropshire, Fri 13 - Sun 15 June

Model and full-sized aircraft taking to the skies, off-road and circuit model-car racing, model boats and helicopters, trade stands, food & drink stalls and a craft fair all feature among the attractions at this three-day show. Youngsters are catered for too, courtesy of a funfair, and there's live music to enjoy in the evenings.

Pyrotechnics, gliders and fireworks light up the sky on the Saturday night.



## Step Back To The 1940s

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster, Sat 7 & Sun 8 June and Sat 14 & Sun 15 June

A taste of all things vintage comes to the Severn Valley Railway this month, as the 16-mile line and all of its stations host a festival of 1940s-themed fun.

Taking place across two weekends, the event features an array of attractions and entertainment, including 1940s singers and dancers, a wartime wedding, and jitterbug sessions. There's even the chance to hear a

rousing speech by Winston Churchill! Vintage traders will be selling their wares at the Engine House at Highley, and there's a Dakota Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Flypast to enjoy on Sunday the 8th. Big band shows take place at Kidderminster station on the Saturday evening of both weekends.

## Lace Wars Re-enactment

Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire, Sat 7 & Sun 8 June

Visitors to Tamworth Castle can experience living history with the Lace Wars Re-enactment, Pulteney Regiment, this month. The reenactment portrays life during the mid-18th century, a period covering famous events such as the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, the conquest of Canada during the Seven Years War under General Wolfe, the defeat of French forces under Clive of India and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in Britain.





# COMIC RELIEF

Paul Hendy's new play, *The Last Laugh*, is a love letter to a golden age in British comedy...





**Three of the UK's most revered comedians are brought together in a new play visiting the region next month. Featuring an imaginary conversation between Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe and Bob Monkhouse, *The Last Laugh* has been written and directed by one-time TV presenter Paul Hendy, who explains to What's On why the show has been such a labour of love...**

"I've been obsessed with comedy, and in particular what I call the golden age of British comedy - the 1970s and 80s - ever since I first saw Morecambe & Wise on television. Tommy Cooper, Les Dawson, Frankie Howerd... that's my era."

Paul Hendy, writer, director & producer of new play *The Last Laugh* is nothing if not effusive about comedians and comedy of a certain vintage.

"I've written a play that imagines Eric Morecambe, Tommy Cooper and Bob Monkhouse sitting in a dressing room discussing life, death, comedy, and what it means to be funny; why some people are funny, and why some people aren't funny."

The TV presenter turned writer/producer arguably has an inside track on the debate, and even has something in common with Monkhouse, having hosted game shows such as *Don't Try This At Home* (with Davina McCall), *Stash The Cash* and *Wheel Of Fortune*. Paul was the kiss of death for the latter - it was cancelled after his single year in the hot seat, having been on air for 23 years prior to that - but the bulk of his work has been rather more successful. CBBC show *Dear Mr Barker*, which he hosted, was nominated for a BAFTA, a 2023 play he directed about child star Lena Zavaroni earned major critical acclaim, and the production company he runs with his wife has won Pantomime of the Year at the UK Pantomime Awards on four occasions.

*The Last Laugh* has already earned rave notices in Edinburgh and London, and a short film version, which Paul wrote, directed and produced, scooped several awards. These included Best Comedy Drama at the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival and Best Film at the Manchester Film Festival.

"The success was great, but I always thought there was more in it, because that was just a 20-minute film," he recalls of the 2016 movie. "There was so much more to be explored about these three legends of comedy and what they'd talk about."

The film was written with specific actors in mind, to the extent that Bob Golding (Morecambe), Damian Williams (Cooper) and Simon Cartwright (Monkhouse) dictated

which three comics would feature, not the other way around.

"They are all brilliant," says Paul of the actors, who all reprise their roles in the stage version, "and I'm not just saying that. They're not just doing impressions; it's about more than that. It's about the spirit of those comedians, and that's what seems to touch people."

Having developed the film into a play during lockdown ("we all had a bit of time on our hands"), Paul took it to the Edinburgh Fringe last year, where it proved a big hit. A West End run followed, and it's also recently been performed, somewhat surprisingly given its quintessentially British content, in New York. "It's fascinating to see [the reaction of] the Americans, who don't know [the stars] at all. Eric and Tommy appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in the 1960s, but none of the audience would remember. So it plays not quite as a straight play, but they really have to listen to get who each of the characters are, whereas in Britain there's already a love and nostalgic warmth for them.

"What we found in the West End was that people who like that style of comedy really love it because it brings back memories of watching with their mum and dad or grandparents and so on.

"It's funny, but it's also poignant and very nostalgic. I think if anybody remembers and loves these comedians, they'll get a lot from it, because it's my love letter to the golden age of television comedy."

But as much as he thinks it will appeal to people who remember that time ("over-50s is the sweet spot"), Paul believes the show goes beyond being a nostalgia trip and has something for younger audiences too.

"Anybody who likes comedy and has an interest in the history of comedy - or, to be honest, just wants a good laugh - will enjoy this, because ultimately it explores what it means to be funny, even if you don't know these actual comedians. Last year at Edinburgh, we had a lot of comedians come to see it, and they responded so positively because it was all so relevant to them."

Comedy and comedians have always been fertile ground for drama and pathos - from

the 'tears of a clown' cliché to a need to be validated, accepted, lauded, or even loved, that borders on obsessive.

"Bob Monkhouse was originally in a double act in the 1950s and early 60s, and his comedy partner [Denis Goodwin] committed suicide. He also had a son who was severely disabled, so he had quite a life of tragedy. He was also rejected by both his parents.

"In the play, the characters discuss what drives somebody to be funny, and Bob Monkhouse really analyses that. Is it maternal or paternal rejection? Or both, in his case? What makes them continually search for the next laugh?"

Monkhouse's sparring partners in the play also had their crosses to bear. Eric Morecambe was an only child constantly looking for a brother figure - a role eventually filled by Ernie Wise, who he bonded with for nearly 50 years - while Tommy Cooper was a natural clown ultimately burdened by people never taking him seriously.

"In the play, Tommy tells a true story of when he was upset and sitting down on a pavement, crying. A group of people saw him and started laughing at him. So Tommy Cooper crying was actually funny... it was like a curse to him.

"He couldn't help being funny, which I imagine was great 90 per cent of the time but not the other 10, when you want to be taken seriously."

Although *The Last Laugh* is a split between humour and drama, it errs very much on the side of the former - as well as being a celebration of the three much-loved icons featured in the show: "It's in no way an exposé of these comedians' lives - it's a love letter. It's joyous. When we played in the West End, there was so much love and warmth; you could feel it in the theatre, which was great. We live in difficult times, with everything that's going on in the world, and I think we need that at the moment."


.....  
**The Last Laugh shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 July**



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*Your week-  
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listings guide*  
**June 2025**

# the list



Hamlet Hail To The Thief - Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Wed 4 - Sat 28 June

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

## What's On

Sun 1 - Sun 8 June



Sophie Ellis-Bextor -  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham  
**Mon 2 June**

Mon 9 - Sun 15 June



Bonnie Raitt - The Civic at  
The Halls Wolverhampton  
**Sat 14 June**

Mon 16 - Sun 22 June



Dear Evan Hansen -  
The Alexandra, Birmingham  
**Tues 17 - Sat 21 June**

Mon 23 - Mon 30 June



Forest Live,  
Cannock Chase Forest  
**Wed 25 - Sat 28 June**



## EXHIBITIONS NOW SHOWING ACROSS THE MIDLANDS

### Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**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.

**CURTIS HOLDER: DRAWING CARLOS ACOSTA** Curtis Holder, winner of Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year in 2020, was commissioned to draw Carlos Acosta, director of Birmingham Royal Ballet. This display brings together portraits Curtis made during the competition and his working sketches.

### Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**EMII ALRAI: RIVER OF BLACK STONE** Inspired by the disruptive nature of volcanic eruption and paintings of Vesuvius in the gallery's Naples collection, Emii Alrai weaves together ancient mythologies, research and nostalgia as a critical response to our times, until Sun 15 June

### 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.

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

### Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

**COVENTRY OPEN 2025** A showcase of work by visual artists in the West Midlands, until Sun 8 June

**COVENTRY RUGBY CLUB** A new display celebrating 150 years of Coventry Rugby Club, until Tues 30 Sept

**DIPPY IN COVENTRY: THE NATION'S FAVOURITE DINOSAUR** Dippy the diplodocus is in Coventry on a three-year loan from the Natural History Museum, until Sat 21 Feb 2026

### Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

**THREAD THE LOOM** A group exhibition celebrating the art of weaving. An AVL Studio Dobby loom will be activated through a series of micro-residencies with five West Midlands weavers, Wed 25 June - Sun 7 Sept

### Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

**A DIFFERENT VIEW: WOMEN ARTISTS IN THE COLLECTION** The first survey of women artists in the gallery's

collection, bringing together the work of over 50 painters, sculptors and photographers, until Sun 14 Sept

### Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**MAO ISHIKAWA** Presenting more than 60 works from the 1970s to now, the exhibition includes works from the Okinawan photographer's series, Women of Okinawa, through to more recent works, including her series Fences and My Family, until Sun 22 June

**GROWING, CHANGING, BECOMING** What does it mean to grow up in Coventry? Warwick Arts Centre's Youth Leadership Collective curates an interactive exhibition that explores their past, present and future selves, until Sun 22 June

### Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

**SARI STORIES** People from Birmingham and the Midlands are invited to share a photograph and the story behind their sari, reflecting a special memory or a significant life event tied, until Sun 19 Oct

**JASHAAN GILL: A NEW FASHION COMMISSION INSPIRED BY THE SARI** In the spirit of The Offbeat Sari's ode to fashion innovation, MAC has commissioned Jashaan Gill, the designer behind internationally recognised Birmingham brand Jheez, to create a new fashion piece inspired by the sari, Sat 28 June - Sun 2 Nov

**MADE AT MAC: CONNECTED BY THREAD** A showcase of textile works by learners from MAC's creative courses, until Sun 25 Jan

### New Art Gallery, Walsall

**EARTHBOUND** A major group exhibition, set within the context of global anxiety about the climate crisis and planetary health research, until Sun 8 June

**SUZANNE HOLTOM: AND HILLS BORE SCARS** Suzanne's paintings draw from key 'geosites' around Walsall and Dudley. A deep mapping of place has become important in her work, which encompasses geological time, social histories, personal experiences and memory, until Sun 29 June

**THE JOY PROJECT** A collaborative exhibition by the gallery's Youth Panel, exploring the concept of 'joy', and including a revival of The People's Show, which showcases local people's personal collections, until Sun 6 July

### Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

**GEORGIA O'KEEFE: MEMORIES OF**

**DRAWING** Featuring 21 exquisite photogravure prints of major drawings made by O'Keefe between 1915 and 1963, until Sat 28 June

**COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE SOCIETY OF ARTISTS** Show featuring the talents of local artists. The work includes sculpture as well as paintings from different media, and many of the works are for sale, until Sat 5 July

**WATERCOLOURS** Collection of works curated by the museum, featuring landscapes, animals and local scenes, Sat 7 June - Sat 26 July

### RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

**RBSA DRAWING PRIZE 2025** A celebration of work by artists whose work is rooted in drawing, until Sat 28 June

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

**A CENTURY OF COLLECTING 1925 - 2025** A snapshot of the varied collections which the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery cares for, until Sun 8 June

**ARTHUR BERRY 100** The first chance to see six of the museum's recently acquired artworks by local Artist Arthur Berry, as part of his centenary celebrations, until Sun 8 June

### Rugby Art Gallery

**BEYOND THE CANVAS** A celebration of British sculpture from the Ingram Collection, until Sat 7 June

**THE PERCIVAL GUILDHOUSE** Archive exhibition exploring the history of the Rugby-located Guildhouse, presented in celebration of the building's centenary, Tues 3 - Sat 14 June

**OCEAN OF NOISE: MARK CURTIS HUGHES** A series of freehand papercuts by the Northamptonshire-based paper artist, Tues 17 - Sat 28 June

### Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**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

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

### Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**H. H. LINES: ARCHITECTURE, ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART** Exhibition exploring the three loves of renowned local artist, Henry Harris Lines, until Sun 8 June

**ELIZABETH & STANHOPE FORBES: A**

**MARRIAGE OF ART** A sumptuous selection of artworks, by the power couple of British Impressionism, which aims to put these two outstanding artists on an equal footing, until Sun 29 June

**HIDDEN: AN EXHIBITION OF ART AND POETRY** A collaboration between Worcestershire LitFest & Fringe and Bevere Gallery resident artist Susan Birth. Ten artists and 10 poets respond to the theme of Hidden, exploring concealment, depth and multi-layered elements, Sat 7 - Sun 29 June

### Also:

**STEPHEN NICOL EXHIBITION** Steve is an artist and traveller who has lived and worked in several countries for 40 years. The oil paintings on show represent those countries, acting like a travelogue, until Sat 7 June, The Birmingham & Midland Institute

**THE BRITISH IN INDIA: A NARRATIVE OF HUMAN ADVENTURE, SUBJUGATION & EXCHANGE** A series of 90 pen & ink drawings by Tony Phillips, highlighting a range of issues connected to the domination of the Indian subcontinent by the British, until Thurs 26 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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 Jul, Stourbridge Glass Museum

**KASRA JALILPOUR: GUT FEELINGS 2.0** The first large-scale exhibition by the Iranian multidisciplinary artist and writer; an exploration of 'queer' lives and rebellions in 19th-century Iran, Fri 6 June - Sat 16 Aug, Grand Union, Digbeth, Birmingham

**DIGITAL NOSTALGIA: CENTRAL X\_KYJHI** A week-long audio-visual installation that reimagines Birmingham through the lens of retro game design, using low-resolution textures, low-poly models, and the visual grammar of 1990s and early 2000s consoles, Sat 7 - Fri 13 June, Centrala, Birmingham

**ART MATTERS** An exhibition featuring 18 of the region's finest artists, showing the art that matters to them, Tues 17 - Sun 29 June, Footprint Gallery, Telford

**THE SPACE VAULT EXHIBITION** Featuring 12 curated stories of space exploration, showcasing one of the UK's largest private collections of space artefacts from journeys above the Earth and to the Moon. Permanent exhibition open from Saturday 14 June, Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum, Millennium Point



# Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 June



Sophie Ellis-Bextor - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

## Gigs

**FRANKIE AND THE WITCH FINGERS** Sun 1 June, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**SEB ADAMS + STAY SAFE + MISTAKES WORTH MAKING** Sun 1 June, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**BACK ON THE ROAD** Sun 1 June, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**WE ARE SCIENTISTS** Sun 1 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham



**GRAYWAVE** Sun 1 June, The Flapper, B'ham

**MAZ MITRENKO BAND** Sun 1 June, The Brasshouse, B'ham

**THE GARRY ALLCOCK TRIO** Sun 1 June, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

**AMELIA COBURN** Sun 1 June, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**STEVIE WATTS ORGAN TRIO W. SHANADE** Sun 1 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE TOM MORGAN TRIO FEAT. MATT RATCLIFFE** Sun 1 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**THE BIG FOUR TRIBUTE BAND** Sun 1 June, The River Rooms,

Stourbridge

**THE BRUM BLUES BEATLES** Sun 1 June, The Robin, Bilston

**A VISION OF ELVIS** Sun 1 June, Lichfield Garrick

**GORDON HENDRICKS IS ELVIS** Sun 1 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**RICHARD DURRANT** Sun 1 June, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, Shrops

**RACHAEL SAGE** Sun 1 June, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**DECLAN WELSH & THE DECADENT WEST** Mon 2 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR** Mon 2 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**PEGGY SEEGER** Mon 2 June, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**SUSAN SANTOS** Mon 2 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**ERIC MARTIN** Mon 2 June, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC** Mon 2 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SUBHUMANS + SPLIT DOGS** Tues 3 June, The Dark Horse, B'ham

**PANDA BEAR** Tues 3 June, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE ANNA HOWIE BAND** Tues 3 June, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**TWINNIE** Wed 4 June,

Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**HOHNEN FORD** Wed 4 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ADAM HAWLEY** Wed 4 June, The Jam House, Birmingham

**SONGHY BLUES** Wed 4 June, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**BURNING SWAN** Wed 4 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**NELLY WITH EVE** Wed 4 June, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**ANDY MCKEE** Wed 4 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**C DUNCAN** Wed 4 June, Drummonds, Worcester

**TALON** Wed 4 June, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE ILLEGAL EAGLES** Wed 4 June, Malvern Theatres

**LUKE COMBS UK** Wed 4 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE MANFREDS** Wed 4 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**NATTY** Thurs 5 June, Hare & Hounds, B'ham



STRAWBERRY LACE

Thurs 5 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**IAN DANTER + THE THREE AMOEBAS** Thurs 5 June, The Asylum, Birmingham

**SKY VALLEY MISTRESS** Thurs 5 June, The Victoria, Birmingham

**BLINK 182** Thurs 5 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**THE BRIDGE** Thurs 5 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

**THE HAIRY BARTENDERS** Fri 6 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE SMITHS LTD** Fri 6 June, The Station, Cannock

**THE BEAUTIFUL COUCH** Fri 6 June, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**BROKEN PROMISE** Fri 6 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**BELLA HARDY** Fri 6 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JUST RADIOHEAD** Fri 6 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**RUFFNECKS** Fri 6 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**SPACE** Fri 6 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**RED BY NIGHT** Fri 6 June, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**DARKSIDE - THE PINK FLOYD SHOW** Fri 6 June, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**PETER 118 + INFORMAL COMPLAINT** Fri 6 June, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**TAYLOR SWIFTIE JUKEBOX** Fri 6 - Sun 8 June, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**CIARS + RUN DON'T WALK + BLACK HOLE JETS + JUMPSHIP + SEASON TWO** Sat 7 June, The Dark Horse, Moseley, Birmingham

**THE SMALL FAKERS** Sat 7 June, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**THE ASSIST + THE LYDONS + CHARM** Sat 7 June, O2 Institute,

Birmingham

**KIMMY & THE WHAHOOS** Sat 7 June, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

**KOZMIC PEARL - JANIS JOPLIN TRIBUTE** Sat 7 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**THE CARPENTERS - VOICE OF THE HEART** Sat 7 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**SOUTHERN BEAUTY FT. ALISON WHEELER** Sat 7 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE QUAD ROX** Sat 7 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**METALLICA RELOADED** Sat 7 June, hmv Empire, Coventry

**GREEN 182** Sat 7 June, Arches Venue, Coventry

**SOUNDS OF SEATTLE** Sat 7 June, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**BON JOVI FOREVER** Sat 7 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**MATT WOOSLEY BAND** Sat 7 June, Malvern Cube

**LOST IN MUSIC** Sat 7 June, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**SUPREME QUEEN** Sat 7 June, Dudley Town Hall

**ARCTIC NUPTIES** Sat 7 June, The Robin, Bilston

**MARK SUMMERS - THE ELVIS LEGACY** Sat 7 June, Civic, Stourport

**THE CIRCLES** Sat 7 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**INGLORIOUS** Sat 7 June, KK Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**VICTORIA GOTHAM** Sat 7 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE** Sat 7 June, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**SPICE GIRLS EXPERIENCE** Sat 7 June, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**ABBA FEVER** Sat 7 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**KILLER RHAPSODY - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Sat 7 June, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

**BON GIOVI** Sat 7 June,

The Station, Cannock  
**GAMBLER** Sat 7 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**LIMEHOUSE LIZZY** Sat 7 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TENGGER + SEAMING TO** Sat 7 June, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

**DIVAS** Sat 7 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**SOUL KINDA WONDERFUL** Sat 7 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**MISCHIEF + GRENADES + GLASS ATLAS** Sat 7 June, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**SAM KELLY** Sun 8 June, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**OLIVER BEARDMORE** Sun 8 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**REGGAE FEST BIRMINGHAM** Sun 8 June, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

**MATT WOOSLEY BIG BAND** Sun 8 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**SAM KELLY** Sun 8 June, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**UNIVERSITY FOLK BAND** Sun 8 June, Hockley Social Club, B'ham

**FLEETWOOD SHACK** Sun 8 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE REDHILLS** Sun 8 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**BELLA HARDY** Sun 8 June, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**SYKESMARTIN** Sun 8 June, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**ABBA FOREVER** Sun 8 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**MARTIN SIMPSON** Sun 8 June, Malvern Cube

**NEIL'S DIAMOND** Sun 8 June, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**IAN PARKER BAND** Sun 8 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**MILES HUNT** Sun 8 June, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**RICH PARSONS** Sun 8 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield



## Classical Music

**PAUL CARR: VARIATIONS ON A THEME** Programme includes works by Bonnet, Bourgeois, Hakim & more..., Sun 1 June, Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley

**ELGAR FESTIVAL 2025: CELLO AND PIANO RECITAL** Featuring Raphael Wallfisch (cello) & Simon Callaghan (piano). Programme includes works by Leighton, Ireland, Venables & Elgar, Sun 1 June, Henry Sandon Hall, Worcester

**THOMAS TROTTER LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT** Featuring Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir & Julian Wilkins (director). Programme includes works by Parry, Mendelssohn, Fauré & more..., Mon 2 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**CBSO RUSH HOUR ORGAN CONCERT: SAINT-SAËNS, SYMPHONY NO.3** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Sebastian Heindl (organ), Tues 3 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS RESPIGHI & SAINT-SAËNS** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Sebastian Heindl (organ) & Marie-Christine Zupancic (flute). Programme also includes works by Berlioz & Takemitsu, Wed 4 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE & ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: BURNING SWAN** Featuring David Le Page (violin) & David Gordon (piano), in collaboration with RBC's composition department, Wed 4 June, Eastside Jazz Club, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CHINEKE! CHAMBER ENSEMBLE** Featuring Matthew Lynch (conductor) & Josie d'Arby (narrator). Programme includes works by Marsalis & Stravinsky, Wed 4 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**THE KARDIA TRIO** Featuring Emma Purslow (violin), Ruth Henley (cello) & Roelof Temmingh (piano). Programme includes works by Haydn, Beethoven, Chaminade & Henley, Thurs 5 June, The Gateway Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

**MARVEL STUDIOS' INFINITY SAGA CONCERT EXPERIENCE** Featuring Novello Orchestra, Thurs 5 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE BRIDGE** Featuring Eduardo Martín & Ahmed Dickinson (guitar). Programme includes works by Eduardo Martín, Thurs 5 June,

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Steven Grah (conductor). Programme includes works by Britten, Frances-Hoad, Gibbons & more..., Fri 6 June, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**ALBRECHT MAYER RECITAL & BOOK LAUNCH** Reading & recital featuring Joanne Sealey (piano), Fri 6 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**HANNAH MAXWELL LUNCHTIME RECITAL** Fri 6 June, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**CLIO DUO** Featuring Inis Oírr Asano (viola/recorder) and Alexia Daphne Eleftheriadou (piano), Fri 6 June, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**BBC PHILHARMONIC - A NIGHT AT THE OPERA** Featuring Jonathan Bloxham (conductor), Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Ilker Arcayürek (tenor) & James Atkinson (baritone), Fri 6 June, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Steven Grah (conductor). Programme includes works by Britten, Frances-Hoad, Gibbons & more..., Sat 7 June, St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHOIR: FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE RIDICULOUS** Featuring Adrian Lucas (conductor). Programme includes works by Morley, Elgar, Rutter & more..., Sat 7 June, Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham

**WILLIAM BROOKE ORGAN RECITAL** Programme includes works by JS Bach, Howells, McDowall & CM Widor, Sat 7 June, Shrewsbury Abbey

**MARION BETTSWORTH ORGAN RECITAL** Programme includes works by Price, Worgan, Muhly & more..., Sat 7 June, St Laurence Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**CBSO FAMILY CONCERT: SPORTS DAY!** Featuring Jack Lovell-Huckle (conductor), Sarah Butt (BSL) & MishMash Productions. Programme includes works by Sweeney, Debussy, Shostakovich & more..., Sun 8 June, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**NIER:PIANO CONCERT: JOURNEYS 12025** Featuring Benyamin Nuss (piano). An intense musical journey, highlighting the emotional and evocative power of the piano, Sun 8 June, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

**NATIONAL OPEN YOUTH ORCHESTRA: RING OUT! NO MORE BARRIERS, JUST GREAT MUSIC** Programme includes new commissions by Liam Taylor-West & Yfat Soul Zisso as well as works by Kate Whitley, Meredith Monk & Oliver Cross, Sun 8 June, Birmingham Town Hall

## Comedy

**JENNY ECLAIR** Sun 1 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**STUART GOLDSMITH, ED ACZEL, NAPH ESA & COMIC TBC** Mon 2 June, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**JOSH WIDDICOMBE** Tues 3 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**KANE BROWN & COMICS TBC** Wed 4 June, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

**ALEX MITCHELL** Wed 4 June, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



**RHYS DARBY** Thurs 5 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**TOM LAWRIERSON & DAVE DURKAN** Thurs 5 June, The Glee Club, B'ham

**JAMALI MADDIX & JOE JACOBS** Thurs 5 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING & COMIC TBC** Thurs 5 June, Cherry Reds, B'ham

**KANE BROWN & COMICS TBC** Thurs 5 June, Hockley Social Club, B'ham



**MATT RICHARDSON, PIERRE HOLLINS, KEVIN DANIEL & DAVE TWENTYMAN** Thurs 5 June, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

**PAUL MCCAFFREY, ERICH MACELROY & COMICS TBC** Thurs 5 June, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**MIKE RICE, LOU CONRAN, MARK SIMMONS, TOM WRIGGLESWORTH & MEL JUDSON** Fri 6 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOSH GLANC** Fri 6 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PETER KAY** Fri 6 - Sat 7 June, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**MIKE RICE, LOU CONRAN, MARK SIMMONS & TOM WRIGGLESWORTH** Sat 7 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JIMMY CARR** Sat 7 June, Malvern Theatres

**ESTHER MANITO, HAYLEY ELLIS, SCOTT BENNETT & PAUL MCCAFFREY** Sun 8 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**GIANMARCO SORESI** Sun 8 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**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

**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', until Sat 21 June, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**MURDER SHE DIDN'T WRITE** Degree Of Error create an improvised murder-mystery in which the audience is the author..., Sun 1 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**STRAWBERRY JACK: A TALE FROM PARADISE HEIGHTS** Gritty urban drama written & directed by Joe O'Byrne, Sun 1 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL** Amateur version presented by Pershore Operatic & Dramatic Society, Mon 2 - Sat 7 June, Number 8, Pershore

**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS** The Blue Riders explore Shakespeare's most farcical play with a hybrid of clowning and rocksteady beats, Mon 2 - Sun 8 June, The Playbox Theatre, The Dream Factory, Warwick

**IRISH ANNIE'S** Ricky Tomlinson, Lynn Francis and Asa Murphy star in a madcap celebration of Irish culture, 'featuring music, comedy and mayhem', Tues 3 June, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**THE ADDAMS FAMILY HQPA** Productions present an amateur version of the 'kooky' musical, Tues 3 - Thurs 5 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CRUEL INTENTIONS** New musical based on the iconic film and packed with 90s pop classics, Tues 3 - Sat 7 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**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 3 - Sat 7 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**GUYS AND DOLLS** Trinity Players present an amateur version of the Broadway musical, Wed 4 - Sat 7 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**HAMLET HAIL TO THE THIEF** Shakespeare's great tragedy and Radiohead's seminal album collide, creating 'a feverish experience' fusing theatre, music and movement, Wed 4 - Sat 28 June, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**I WAS A TEENAGE BISEXUAL** A brand-new, one-of-a-kind show exploring life as a bi man - and the associated horrors, Fri 6 June, Arena Theatre,



Wolverhampton

**MURDER TRIAL TONIGHT - THE DOORSTEP CASE** A unique theatrical experience bringing true-crime stories to life, Fri 6 June, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**ROOM** Emul8 Theatre present a one-woman show which breathes new life into the creative process behind Virginia Woolf's *A Room Of One's Own*, Fri 6 June, Linton Village Hall, South Herefordshire

**AND THEN THERE WERE NONE** Amateur version of Agatha Christie's famous exploration of guilt, justice and retribution, Fri 6 - Sun 15 June, The Bear Pitt Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE AMAZING MR HACKWOOD** Adrian Johnson's humorous and historic drama, set in the Black Country in 1918, Sat 7 June, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**ROOM** Emul8 Theatre present a one-woman show which breathes new life into the creative process behind Virginia Woolf's *A Room Of One's Own*, Sat 7 June, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**ANNIE** Spotlight Academy present an amateur version of the rags-to-riches story, Sat 7 June, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

## Kid's Theatre

**THE GREAT BIG DINOSAUR SHOW** Join poet Simon Mole and musician Gecko for a family show full of poems, raps and songs about all your favourite prehistoric protagonists, Sun 1 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham



**THE BADDIES** Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's story is brought to life on stage, Tues 3 - Wed 4 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE ELMER ADVENTURE** Tall Stories present a joyful jungle adventure featuring puppetry, song and storytelling, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**YOU CHOOSE** Interactive musical show for all the family, based on the book by Nick Sharratt & Pippa Goodhart, Fri 6 June, Halesowen Town Hall

**THE WORST PRINCESS** Full House Theatre bring the popular picture book to life, complete with comedy, puppetry, singalong pop anthems

and a larger-than-life dragon, Sat 7 - Sun 8 June, Lichfield Garrick

**HELLO BIRDS** Puppetry, key-word signing and singing come together in a sensory show for under-threes, Sun 8 June, Caldmore Community Garden, Walsall

## Dance

**B-SIDE HIP HOP FESTIVAL** 10th-anniversary event featuring dance battles, MCs & DJs, graffiti performances, exhibitions, workshops and tours, until Sun 1 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**KAI WIDDINGTON: EVOLUTION** Join the Strictly star for his inaugural solo dance show, Thurs 5 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**BALLET BRITISH COLUMBIA** Canada's leading contemporary dance company make their highly anticipated return, presenting works by choreographers Crystal Pite and Johan Inger, Fri 6 - Sat 7 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

## Light Entertainment

**ALED JONES: FULL CIRCLE** A one-man show featuring never-before-heard music, tales from the decades, and for the first time, the story of the boy treble who captivated the world with his angelic voice, told in his own words, Sun 1 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE CRAZIEST SHOWMAN** CBBC stars Danny & Mick are joined by a cast of international circus acts, dancers and singers for a touring family adventure, Sun 1 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**FROM BEDLAM TO BENIDORM: AN EVENING WITH CRISSY ROCK** A show of two halves in which Crissy charts her rise to stardom ahead of performing a stand-up comedy routine, Thurs 5 June, Lichfield Garrick

**THE D-DAY DARLINGS** Take a musical journey back to wartime Britain, Fri 6 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR** An evening of nostalgic hits from the 1950s and 60s, Fri 6 June, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**DIVA OF THE DECADES** A celebration of the powerhouse voices and iconic



*Hamlet Hail To The Thief - Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*

performances of the biggest divas in music history, Fri 6 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

## Talks & Spoken Word

**KIRSTY GALLAGHER: YOUR COSMIC PURPOSE LIVE** Join the UK's leading voice in modern-day spirituality and personal development as she guides audiences through the ancient art of astrology, Tues 3 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Events

**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

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOTORSPORT SHOW** Two-day get-together for car enthusiasts and adrenaline junkies alike, Sat 31 May - Sun 1 June, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

**NATIONAL KIT CAR SHOW** Meet the manufacturers and see displays from the industry's major players, Sat 31 May - Sun 1 June, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

**BEEES AND BUGS FAMILY TRAIL** Nature-themed trail for National Children's Gardening Week, until Sun 1 June, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

**JURASSIC GARDENS 2025** Mighty dinosaurs are back in Birmingham for

the third year running!, until Sun 1 June, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

**GEOFEST ROCK AND FOSSILS TRAIL** Discover your inner geologist with this free trail, presented as part of Abberley & Malvern Hills Geofest 2025, until Sun 1 June, Croome, Worcestershire

**WORLD WAR TWO WEEK** Featuring the Raid The Shelter experience, Lego racers, talks, make & take sessions, and a selfie station, until Sun 1 June, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

**JURASSIC WEEK** Dino-themed fun with meet & greets, fossil digging and dino racing, until Wed 4 June, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

**BRICK DINOS** Featuring Lego dinosaur sculptures designed in collaboration with palaeontologists, until Sun 7 Sept, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**MMM-BOP! FAMILY SILENT DISCO** Interactive silent disco for kids and their grown-ups, Sun 1 June, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DOG SHOW & COUNTRY FESTIVAL** Dog-centred family day out with plenty of entertainment, Sun 1 June, Apley Farm Shop, nr Shifnal, Shropshire

**NATIONAL METRO & MINI SHOW SUPPORTED BY PETER JAMES** Celebrate two of the most iconic British small car marques, Sun 1 June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

**GILLENMARKETS BRITISH OPEN SQUASH 2025** One of the most prestigious and historic tournaments in professional squash, Sun 1 - Sun 8 June, The Rep, Birmingham

**CHELTENHAM SCIENCE FESTIVAL** Featuring, among others, Brian Cox, Greg Foot, Maya Raichoor, Helen Czerski, Maddie Moate, Daze Aghaji, Robin Ince and Big Manny, Tues 3 - Sun 8 June, various locations in Cheltenham





The Cosford Air Show - Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford

**THREE COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP DOG SHOW** Thurs 5 - Sun 8 June, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

**THE HIGH DOSAGE TOUR OF STEWARD'S CHEMIST SHOP** Find out what secrets the Victorian chemist's shop holds, Fri 6 June, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**THE WORLD OF PARK HOMES & LEISURE SHOW 2025** Featuring over 50 residential and leisure homes to explore, Fri 6 - Sun 8 June, NAEC

Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

**THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK** Family fun day featuring nature-themed activities, Sat 7 June, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**SUSTAINABLE SHAKESPEARE COMMUNITY DAY** Learn about the action being taken by local and regional groups to tackle climate change and protect the natural environment, Sat 7 June, Shakespeare's New Place, Stratford-

upon-Avon

**WOLVERHAMPTON PRIDE** Celebration of the city's LGBTQ+ community, Sat 7 June, Market Square, Wolverhampton

**WEEKEND BEAVER SAFARI** Meet Trentham's beavers and discover the venue's story of restoration and biodiversity, Sat 7 June, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

**V.I.P. FEST** The UK's only festival dedicated to the over-65s, Sat 7 June, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

**STEP BACK TO THE 1940S** Featuring attractions along the line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade, Sat 7 - Sun 8 June, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire



**LACE WARS RE-ENACTMENT** Event portraying life during the mid-18th century, Sat 7 - Sun 8 June, Tamworth Castle

**BRITISH WILD FOOD FESTIVAL** Two-day festival dedicated to nature and wild food, Sat 7 - Sun 8 June, Hawkstone Park Follies, Shropshire

**BANBURY RUN** Featuring over 500 veteran and vintage motorbikes, Sun 8 June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

**MORRIS MINOR RALLY** Foxfield's Caverswall Road station will be jam-packed with all varieties of Morris Minor, Sun 8 June, Foxfield Railway, Stoke-on-Trent

**OPEN FARM** Featuring displays and demonstrations of farm machinery, animals and crops, Sun 8 June, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

**THE COSFORD AIR SHOW 2025** Action-packed family day out. This year's theme is Commemorate, Celebrate, Innovate, Sun 8 June, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

**UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS TOUR** Step back in time to experience life as it used to be, Sun 8 June, Weston Park, Shropshire

# THE FESTIVAL OF BRILLIANT

Biddulph Old Hall, 11-12th July 2025

A celebration of  
*brilliant*  
children's books!

Authors, illustrators & poets  
Performances & installations  
Storytelling & creative activities  
... to feed your imagination!

**Friday 11th July 2025, 9.30am-2.30pm**  
For schools & community groups - free

**Saturday 12th July 2025, 10am-6.30pm**  
For children of all ages & their families

**Tickets only:**

- £10 supporter
- £7.50 standard
- £5 subsidised
- under 3s free

festivalofbrilliant.org

BLACK COUNTRY  
LIVING  
MUSEUM

Digbeth Dining Club

# SUMMER TOUR '25

## BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

SKIDOLE: £10

DATE: FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

TIME: 1830-2230

CHARLIE'S FRIED CHICKEN | DISCO FRIES | FLYING COWS | STREET SOUVLAKI  
SOUTH BIRMINGHAM CURRY CLUB | ESMIES CARIBBEAN FUSION  
DEATHROW SANDWICH | PINK LADIES DONUTS | URBAN CHEESECAKE  
BAR: DDC BAR

+ ELEPHANT & CASTLE PUB & HOBBS FISH AND CHIPS

GOOD FOOD + GOOD VIBES + GOOD PEOPLE





# Monday 9 - Sunday 15 June



Hothouse Flowers - O2 Institute, Birmingham

## Gigs

**LIONEL RICHIE** Mon 9 June, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**DANI LARKIN** Mon 9 June, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**REBECCA FERGUSON** Tues 10 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**BARB JUNGR SINGS DYLAN & COHEN** Tues 10 June, Lichfield Garrick

**SHONEN KNIFE** Wed 11 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ROCKET** Wed 11 June, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**THE ROBERT CRAY BAND** Wed 11 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE SWAPS + STEVIE WATTS + BEN HOLDER** Wed 11 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**LEE MEAD** Wed 11 June, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH MARTIN FRY** Wed 11 June, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

**THE MYTH + CAIT JONES + TAYLOR LEWIS** Thurs 12 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SALSEROS UK** Thurs 12 June, The Jam House, Birmingham

**HOTHOUSE FLOWERS** Thurs 12 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**NICK MULVEY** Thurs 12 June, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**NIAMH REGAN** Thurs 12 June, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE BOHEMIANS** Thurs 12 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**JAMES KEELAGHAN** Thurs 12 June, Bromsgrove Folk Club

**BELLA HARDY** Thurs 12 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**DREAMSCAPES** Thurs 12 June, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY** Thurs 12 June, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**AND FINALLY...PHIL COLLINS** Thurs 12 June, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**CHIPSUM GRAVY + METH CLUB 7 + SUMWOTGRRRL** Thurs 12 June, The Robin, Bilston

**BRYAN CORBETT'S INSTRUMENTAL GROOVE UNIT** Thurs 12 June, The Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

**UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE** Thurs 12 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**BARRY STEELE** Thurs 12 - Fri 13 June, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN** Fri 13 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CARL SINCLAIR** Fri 13 June, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**RECOVER + KIMBERLITE** Fri 13 June, The Dark Horse, Moseley, B'ham

**THE LUKE COMBS EXPERIENCE** Fri 13 June, O2 Academy, B'ham

**INDIEPALOOZA FESTIVAL** Fri 13 June, XOYO, Digbeth, Birmingham

**THE DELRAY ROCKETS** Fri 13 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**REBECCA DOWNES** Fri 13 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**DEAFDEAFDEAF + CITY DOG** Fri 13 June, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**INNER CIRCLES + DANNY ANSELL MUSIC + CAITLIN + JOSEPH DAVIS** Fri 13 June, hmv Empire, Coventry

**GO YOUR OWN WAY - THE FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY** Fri 13 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**CELEBRATING CELINE** Fri 13 June, Malvern Theatres

**SHOWADDYWADDY** Fri 13 June, The Robin, Bilston

**SMALL HORSE AND THE PLAN** Fri 13 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**ARTHUR COATES & KERRAN COTTERELL** Fri 13 June, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY** Fri 13 June, The Station, Cannock

**NEARLY DAN** Fri 13 June, Lichfield Guildhall

**RE-TAKE THAT** Fri 13 June, Lichfield Garrick

**THE PHONICS** Fri 13 June, The Hub at St

Mary's, Lichfield

**THE SOUND OF SPRINGSTEEN** Fri 13 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE TOTAL STONE ROSES + OAYSIS** Fri 13 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**SKABURST** Fri 13 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**PAUL PARKER & ALL THE RIGHT FRIENDS** Fri 13 June, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**ITCHFEST 2025** Fri 13 - Sat 14 June, Flapper, Birmingham

**SYNTH + THE RUDE AWAKENING** Sat 14 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SKASTUDS** Sat 14 June, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**JOHNNY KOWALSKI AND THE SEXY WEIRDOS** Sat 14 June, The Dark Horse, Moseley, B'ham

**GA-20** Sat 14 June, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**EIGHTY EIGHT MILES** Sat 14 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LAID - JAMES TRIBUTE** Sat 14 June, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**MARBLEHEAD JOHNSON** Sat 14 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**GOING TO A GO GO - THE MOD SHOW** Sat 14 June, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**MADISON AVENUE** Sat 14 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**THE DEVOUT** Sat 14 June, hmv Empire, Coventry

**STANDARD SOUND PROJECT + THE UNSAINTED + MVNICH + LEAH MCGRATH** Sat 14 June, Arches Venue, Coventry

**ARRIVAL: THE HITS OF ABBA** Sat 14 June, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**THE ONE LOVE BAND** Sat 14 June, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**AIRTIGHT 80S** Sat 14 June, The Robin, Bilston

**BLACKMORE'S BLOOD** Sat

14 June, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**BONNIE RAITT** Sat 14 June, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton



**FUGUE'N'GROOVE** Sat 14 June, Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

**AYNSLEY LISTER** Sat 14 June, Lichfield Guildhall

**JOHNS' BOYS** Sat 14 June, Lichfield Cathedral

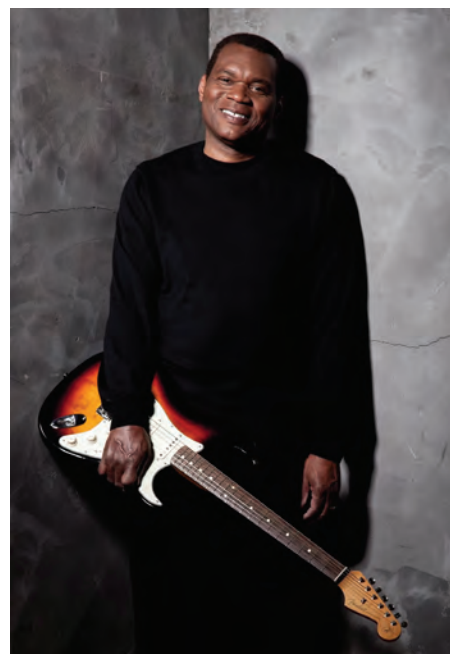
**INSOMNIA** Sat 14 June, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**WILL BARNES TRIO FT. DOM FRANKS** Sat 14 June, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**PACKET RACKET** Sat 14 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**SHOWADDYWADDY** Sat 14 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**TALON** Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Robert Cray - Birmingham Town Hall

**MELVIN HANCOX BAND** Sun 15 June, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**LEOSTAYTRILL** Sun 15 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LAUREN KINSELLA AND SNOWPOET** Sun 15 June, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), B'ham

**THE CORE REGGAE BAND** Sun 15 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**THE WANDERING HEARTS** Sun 15 June, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**TRIBUTE TO SABRINA CARPENTER AND OLIVIA RODRIGO** Sun 15 June, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA** Sun 15 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE SALSA ORCHESTRA** Sun 15 June, Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

**LYDIA RAE QUARTET** Sun 15 June, Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield

**THE SLACKERS** Sun 15 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**DAYTON GREY** Sun 15 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury



## Classical Music

**RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC** Featuring Matilda Wale & Ella Blair (sopranos), Sarah Potjeweijd & Elizabeth Haughan (piano). Programme includes works by Bridge, Copland, Fauré & more..., Mon 9 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**SIMON WATTERTON PIANO RECITAL** Programme includes works by Beethoven, Mozart & Debussy, Tues 10 June, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

**CBSO: MIRGA CONDUCTS WEINBERG & BRAHMS** Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor) & Stephen Waarts (violin), Wed 11 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Steven Grahl (conductor). Programme includes works by Britten, Frances-Hoad, Gibbons & more..., Wed 11 June, Hereford Cathedral

**PIANO RECITAL: FROM EAST TO WEST** Featuring Hwan Hee Kim, Matthew Lau & Dobromir Tsenov (piano). Programme includes works by Kuk Jin Kim, C Griffes & L Pippov, Wed 11 June, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

**ENGLISH HAYDN FESTIVAL** Five day event featuring world-renowned musicians performing on period instruments, Wed 11 - Sun 15 June, St Mary's Church, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: MUSIC FOR TWO PIANOS & PERCUSSION** Featuring Toby Kearney & Adrian Spillett (percussion), James Keefe & Charlotte Forrest (piano). Programme includes works by Daugherty, Barreau & Bernstein, Thurs 12 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: FROM WAGNER TO PIAZZOLLA** Featuring Eduardo Vassallo (cello), Arthur Boutilier (cello), Miguel Fernandes (cello) & Julian Atkinson (double bass). Programme also includes works by Vicente & Brahms, Fri 13 June, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**PARMETTO PIANO TRIO** Featuring Sue Meteyard (violin), Maja Todd (cello) & Gillian Parsons (piano), Fri 13 June, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**CONCERTS IN THE ROUND** Featuring Paul Mccroft (baritone) & Colin Willis (piano), Fri 13 June, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**SHREWSBURY CANTATA CHOIR: THE LONG DAY CLOSURES** Featuring Anthony Coupe (conductor) & Catrina Lapage (accompanist). Programme includes Chilcott's A Little Jazz Mass, Sat 14 June, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

**SELLY PARK SINGERS: A SEASON TO SING** Featuring Paul Carr (musical director) & Thomas Howell (organ). Programme comprises Joanna

Forbes L'Estrange's choral reimagining of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Sat 14 June, St Francis Church, Bournville, Birmingham

**WARWICKSHIRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Featuring Roger Coull (conductor). Programme includes works by Mussorgsky, Saint-Saëns & Mahler, Sat 14 June, All Saints Church, Leamington

**SPIRES MUSIC: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT** Featuring the Lufthansa Singing Voices. Programme includes works by Brahms & Beethoven, Sat 14 June, Coventry Central Hall

**WORCESTER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: SUMMER CONCERT** Featuring Chris Goodman (soloist), Dan Watson (conductor) & Graham Longfils (leader). Programme includes works by E Smyth, Vaughan Williams, Finzi & more..., Sat 14 June, Pershore Abbey

**LUDLOW CHORAL SOCIETY: SONGS OF THE SEA** Featuring Nicola Starkie (director), Marion Bettsworth (accompanist) & Gabriella Llandu (mezzo-soprano). Programme includes works by Parry, Purcell, Elgar & more..., Sat 14 June, St Laurence Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**UK PROMS IN THE PARK** Magical music under the skies featuring the UK Proms Orchestra and star host Rob Rinder (MBE), Sat 14 June, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

**BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: FROM PARIS TO THE GRAND CANYON** Featuring Richard Laing (conductor). Programme includes works by Gershwin, Grofé, Copland & more..., Sun 15 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: BIRD FANFARES** Featuring R. Isaac Boulter (conductor) & Rolf Hind (pianist). Programme includes works by David Hindley, Messiaen & Plog, Sun 15 June, CBSO Centre, B'ham

**THE LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: THE MUSIC OF ZIMMER VS WILLIAMS** Sun 15 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

## Comedy

**JASON MANFORD** Wed 11 June, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**GLENN WOOL, GARRETT MILLERICK & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN** Wed 11 June, Morris Hall, Shrewsbury

**JONNY COLE** Wed 11 June, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**JOSEPHINE LACEY** Thurs 12 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JONNY COLE** Thurs 12 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**SHAPARAK KHORSANDI** Thurs 12 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JASON MANFORD** Thurs 12 June,

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**FUN! WITH BARBARA NICE** Thurs 12 - Sat 14 June, The Rep, Birmingham

**GLENN WOOL, HAYLEY ELLIS, GBEMI OLADIPO & JOHN LYNN** Fri 13 - Sat 14 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MICHAEL FABBRI, RICKY BALSHAW, DIANE SPENCER & MARTIN WESTGATE** Sat 14 June, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**CHRIS TURNER** Sat 14 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JONNY COLE** Sat 14 June, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

**LEROI BRITO** Sun 15 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**LES MISÉRABLES 'LET THE PEOPLE SING'** Amateur version, presented by BMOS Musical Theatre Company in association with Bilston Operatic Society, Bournville Musical Theatre Company and West Bromwich Operatic Society, Tues 10 - Sat 14 June, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**BOYS FROM THE BLACKSTUFF** Powerful new stage adaptation of Alan Bleasdale's award-winning 1982 TV series, Tues 10 - Sat 14 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE CROFT** Liza Goddard, Caroline Harker and Gray O'Brien star in Ali Milles' Scottish Highlands-set thriller, Tues 10 - Sat 14 June, The Rep, Birmingham

**DIRTY LAUNDRY** Stoke Rep Players present an amateur version of Deborah McAndrew's story of secrets, scandals and the spin-cycle of small-town life, Tues 10 - Sat 14 June, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



**STEPPING OUT** The Highbury Players present an amateur version of Richard Harris' comic play concerning a group of women (and one man) attending a weekly tap-dance class in a dingy north London church hall, Tues 10 - Sat 21 June, Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

**PENGUIN** Hamzeh Al-Hussien's story takes audiences on a personal tour of the places he knows best; 'his village in the Syrian mountains, the Za'atari camp in Jordan, Gateshead, and inside his mind - a place full of music, dancing, fantasies and marbles', Wed 11 - Thurs 12 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**A BUNCH OF AMATEURS** Stone Revellers Musical Theatre present an amateur version of Ian Hislop and Nick Newman's comedy, Wed 11 - Sat 14 June, Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

**UP'N'UNDER** Amateur version of John Godber's award-winning comedy concerning a depleted and ragged amateur rugby league team, Wed 11 - Sat 21 June, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

**P\*SSSED UP PANTO: SLEEPING BEAUTY** Adult pantomime which promises an evening of 'hilarious havoc', Thurs 12 June, Lichfield Garrick

**LA RONDE** Royal Birmingham Conservatoire actors present an amateur version of Arthur Schnitzler's play about sexual coupling, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 June, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**RBC SUMMER OPERA DOUBLE-BILL** Royal Birmingham Conservatoire actors present an amateur version of Purcell's Dido & Aeneas and Ethyl Smyth's Fête Galante, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 June, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**BARNUM** Amateur version presented by Coventry Musical Theatre Society (CMTS), Thurs 12 - Sun 15 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**BLACKADDER II** Amateur production, based on the iconic BBC sitcom, Thurs 12 - Sat 21 June, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**THE AMAZING MR HACKWOOD** Adrian Johnson's humorous and historic drama, set in the Black Country in 1918, Fri 13 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**BOUNCERS** Shropshire Drama Company present an amateur version of John Godber's fast-paced comedy, Fri 13 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**OPERA WORCESTER DOUBLE BILL** Comprising Arthur Sullivan's one-act comic opera, Cox & Box, and Henry Purcell's tragic story of love and abandonment, Dido & Aeneas, Fri 13 - Sat 14 June, Malvern Theatres

**VOICES OF RESILIENCE** A show reflecting on the resilience of Palestinians in Gaza, with extracts from the diaries of four women 'trapped in the strip', Sat 14 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**FLOWERS & FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS** The 'ultimate pop concert tribute', featuring hits by Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus, Olivia Rodrigo, Sabrina Carpenter and Chappell Roan, Sun 15 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE MOST PERILOUS COMEDIE OF ELIZABETH I** A brand-new 'Tudor musical romp' in which Good Queen Bess takes to the stage..., Sun 15 June, Coventry Cathedral



**IRISH ANNIE'S** Ricky Tomlinson, Lynn Francis and Asa Murphy star in a madcap celebration of Irish culture, 'featuring music, comedy and mayhem', Sun 15 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Kid's Theatre

**SPOT'S BIRTHDAY PARTY** Interactive show for younger audiences based on Eric Hill's much-loved books. A free party hat and post-show meet & greet with Spot is also included in the ticket price, Thurs 12 June, Stourbridge Town Hall

**GABY GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** Indigo Moon Theatre present a family shadow theatre show, Sat 14 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU** Children's show in which an eclectic group of chatty animals discuss their life experiences and the challenges they face. Age range is five-plus, Sat 14 June, Bridgnorth Library, South Shropshire

**GREEN FINGERS** A 'blooming marvellous' musical comedy for three to 10-year-olds, Sat 14 June, Swan Studio, Worcester Theatres

**BING'S BIRTHDAY** Join Bing and his friends Sula, Pando, Coco, Amma and Flop as they get ready to celebrate his special day in a brand-new stage show, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**IN THE NIGHT GARDEN LIVE: IGGLEPIGGLE'S BUSY DAY** Fun-filled live show featuring full-sized costumes, magical puppetry and enchanting music, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**TOM GATES EPIC STAGE SHOW** Characters from Liz Pichon's bestselling books are brought to life in a new stage show for all the family, Sun 15 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE GREAT BALDINI: FAMILY MAGIC SHOW** A 'silly romp' packed with magic, puppetry and escapology, Sun 15 June, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

## Dance

**TAVAZIA DANCE: GREED** Choreographer Bawren Tavaziva's unique treatment of the Seven Deadly Sins, which deals with the interplay of money, power and religion between African and Western cultures, Tues 10 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**MYTHS & LEGENDS** Jazz Co present a new body of work crafted by leading choreographers and showcasing a kaleidoscope of dance styles, Tues 10 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**DIANNE & VITO: READ HOT AND READY** Sizzling new dance show featuring

Strictly's Dianne Buswell & Vito Coppola, Wed 11 - Thurs 12 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**BCDH DANCE FESTIVAL** Three-day celebration of dance by children and young people of all ages, Wed 11 - Fri 13 June, Walsall Arena

**PEAKY BLINDERS: THE REDEMPTION OF THOMAS SHELBY** Acclaimed Rambert & Birmingham Hippodrome co-production, written and adapted for the stage by Peaky Blinders' creator Steven Knight, Wed 11 - Sat 14 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**COPPELIA** The magical story of a fanatical doll maker in search of a companion. Presented by Stephanie Parrott's Midlands Youth Ballet, Sat 14 June, The Brewhouse Art Centre, Burton upon Trent

**HOLD YOUR OWN: A DAY OF ELDERS DANCE** A showcase of new works created by Elders' Dance companies across the country, Sun 15 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Light Entertainment

**TIM MINCHIN: SONGS THE WORLD WILL NEVER HEAR** An evening 'packed with unforgettable songs and stories', as Tim looks back on his stellar career, Mon 9 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SEND IN THE CLOWNS: C\*CK OF AGES** Drag revue show celebrating the magic and madness of musical theatre, Mon 9 June, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY BANGERS: LIVE!** Enjoy an evening of joyous singalong tunes to take you back to your primary school days, Tues 10 June, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BOX OF FROGS** An evening of 'high-octane, improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 11 June, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

**WONDERS OF OUR UNIVERSE** Evening of cosmic exploration, weaving together storytelling, live demonstrations, visuals and live music, Wed 11 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**AN EVENING WITH GAZZA** Join football icon Paul Gascoigne as he discusses games, shares dressing room and training ground stories and talks about his struggles since quitting the game, Thurs 12 June, Dudley Town Hall

**MORE THAN A MUM** One-woman comedy show that takes a dive into the pleasures and challenges of motherhood, Thurs 12 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester



Good Food Show Summer - NEC, Birmingham

**SHOWDOWN** High-energy spectacle combining jaw-dropping circus stunts and razor-sharp humour, with audience members getting to vote for their favourite act, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 June, Malvern Theatres

**DANCE ANTHEMS ORCHESTRA** Featuring dance classics from the past four decades, a celebrity DJ and vocalists, Fri 13 June, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SERIAL KILLERS** Join expert forensics lecturer Jennifer Rees as she investigates the phenomenon of killer couples, Sat 14 June, Lichfield Garrick

**CIRQUE DE CELINE** Immerse yourself in a 'dazzling symphony' of acrobats and aerialists as they move to the rhythms of Celine Dion's greatest hits, Sat 14 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**AN EVENING WITH JIMMY TARBUCK** Join the acclaimed comedian and raconteur as he reflects on a remarkable life in showbusiness, Sat 14 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**DEFYING GRAVITY: WEST END WOMEN** Featuring much-loved songs from the West End and Broadway, performed by a cast of vocalists and an all-female band, Sun 15 June, Lichfield Garrick

## Talks & Spoken Word

**TIM KEY: LA BABY-BOOK TOUR** Join the comedian & poet as he embarks on a low-grade book tour to celebrate the publication of his latest anthology of poems, Wed 11 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**MICHAEL ROSEN: GETTING THROUGH IT**

One-man show exploring grief and mortality via a double bill of monologues: *The Death Of Eddie* and *Many Kinds Of Love*, Wed 11 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**AN EVENING MARTIN LAURSEN** An 'up close and personal' event with the Aston Villa legend, Thurs 12 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CHRIS HADFIELD: A JOURNEY INTO THE COSMOS** Join the acclaimed astronaut and bestselling author for a celebration of Earth and the universe beyond, Fri 13 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**POETRY MACHINE** Beth Calverley will be chatting to visitors about their interests and dreams as she produces a brand-new poem, custom-made for visitors, Sat 14 June, Packwood House, Lapworth, Warwickshire

## Events

**EXPLORE THE MCC: TEXTILES THROUGH TIME** See, study, handle, photograph and sketch a select group of textiles from the museum's collection, Wed 11 June, Museum Collection Centre, Birmingham

**BBC GARDENERS' WORLD LIVE** A celebration of summer gardening with celeb guests, displays and stalls, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 June, NEC, Birmingham

**GOOD FOOD SHOW SUMMER** Watch live demos from top culinary stars, take part in workshops and browse stalls, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 June, NEC, Birmingham

**WESTON PARK AIR SHOW INTERNATIONAL** Show attracting visitors and pilots from all over the world, Fri 13 - Sun 15 June, Weston Park, Shropshire



**ANIMECON** The UK's largest anime and manga festival, Fri 13 - Sun 15 June, NEC, Birmingham

### ROYAL THREE COUNTIES SHOW

Celebrating rural life, agriculture, and the community, Fri 13 - Sun 15 June, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

### STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE OPEN DAY

Family fun with demonstrations and activities, Sat 14 June, Staffordshire County Showground

**INTERNATIONAL LYNX DAY** Fence feed the Lynx and Bobcats, Sat 14 June, Hoo Zoo & Dinosaur World, Telford

**ARTISANS AT THE FLAXMILL** With a variety of craft stalls, live demonstrations and interactive activities, Sat 14 June, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

### NOW THAT'S NOUGHTY SUMMER

**TERRACE PARTY** Enjoy the hits of the 2000s, Sat 14 June, The Button Factory, Birmingham

**N-DUBZ BOTTOMLESS BRUNCH** Three hours of N-Dubz hits with 60 minutes of bottomless booze, Sat 14 June, The Gosta Green, Birmingham

### BIRMINGHAM PANTHERS V

**LOUGHBOROUGH LIGHTNING** Netball

Super League match, Sat 14 June, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**SOUNDS OF SOLIDARITY** Free event celebrating the power of music and culture to unite communities, Sat 14 June, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham

### DR MELFORD'S TRAVELLING SHOW

Offering a range of Victorian entertainment, Sat 14 June, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

### WORD OF MOUTH OVER 30S FESTIVAL

Live artists and performers bring the best house anthems and remixes to the stage, Sat 14 June, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

**THE GREAT GATSBY BALL** Step into the opulence and glamour of the 1920s, Sat 14 June, Coventry Cathedral

**STEP BACK TO THE 1940S** Featuring attractions along the line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire

**FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND** Free self-guided tour tickets for dads when accompanied by a paying adult or child, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June,

Shrewsbury Prison

### FIRING UP FOR FATHERS DAY WEEKEND

Featuring stationary engines, vintage tractors, half-size steam traction engines, classic vehicles and model boats, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**MINI ASIAN FUSION FEST** A mini festival packed with food, music, and vibes from across Asia, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, FarGo Village, Coventry

### CLASSIC & VINTAGE COMMERCIAL SHOW

Featuring over 400 pre-2004 commercial vehicles, including lorries, vans and pick-ups, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

**FESTIVAL OF VEHICLES** Displaying vehicles manufactured in the West Midlands, including world-renowned marques like Bean, Clyno, Guy, Sunbeam and AJS, Sat 14 - Sun 15 June, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

### BIDDULPH MOOR WELL DRESSING

Featuring the ancient traditions of well dressing and maypole dancing, as well as competitions and tractor and rural displays, Sat 14 - Sat 21 June, Biddulph Moor, Staffordshire

### ALL ABOARD FOR FATHER'S DAY

Celebrate Dad with a day packed full of train-themed fun, Sun 15 June, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

### FATHER'S DAY AT SUDELEY

Family fun and a Father's Day BBQ, Sun 15 June, Sudeley Castle & Gardens, Cheltenham

**NATIONAL BRICK EVENT** Lego event, with stalls, displays and activities, Sun 15 June, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

### FATHER'S DAY CLASSIC CAR & MOTOR SHOW

See displays of up to 1,000 vintage, classic and modern classic cars and motorcycles, Sun 15 June, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

## Festivals

### BEARDY FOLK FESTIVAL

Line-up includes Skinny Lister, Sam Kelly & The Lost Boys, The Magic Numbers, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 June, Hopton Court, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire

### DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL

Line-up includes Green Day, Korn & Sleep Token, Fri 13 - Sun 15 June, Donington Park, Derby

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Pulp - Utilita Arena Birmingham

## Gigs

**ELIAS RØNNENFELT** Mon 16 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**HALOCENE + AIR DRAWN DAGGER** Mon 16 June, The Asylum, B'ham

**SOPHIE B. HAWKINS + BELINDA O'HOOLEY** Tues 17 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ADAMS & FRIENDS** Wed 18 June, The Jam House, Birmingham

**PAIN OF TRUTH** Wed 18 June, The Flapper, Birmingham

**KID CREOLE AND THE COCONUTS** Wed 18 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**BILLIE MARTEN** Wed 18 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE MCCARTNEY SONGBOOK** Wed 18 June, Lichfield Garrick

**PAUL CARRACK** Wed 18 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**BIG SHIP ALLIANCE** Thurs 19 June, The Jam House, Birmingham

**SLUM VILLAGE** Thurs 19 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**UK SUBS** Thurs 19 June, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**CRIMSON REQUIEM** Thurs 19 June, The Victoria, Birmingham

**PULP** Thurs 19 June, Utilita Arena B'ham

**SOMETHING ABOUT LENNON** Thurs 19 June,

The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DISCO INFERNO** Thurs 19 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**QUEEN OF THE NIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO WHITNEY HOUSTON** Thurs 19 June, Malvern Theatres

**GRYPHON** Thurs 19 June, The Robin, Bilston

**RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC** Thurs 19 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE SEARCHERS** Thurs 19 June, Lichfield Garrick

**ANGELS OF DARKNESS** Thurs 19 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**OLD TIME SAILORS** Thurs 19 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SEAN REEVES** Fri 20 June, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**JENNY COLQUITT** Fri 20 June, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE BONNYLOU BAND** Fri 20 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**ANNIE DUGGAN & ROB HINES** Fri 20 June, The Dovehouse, Solihull

**THE SWAPS** Fri 20 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**JACK HOPKINSON** Fri 20 June, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**THE COLOUR SIX** Fri 20 June, The

Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**MONASTERY + GUTTER PUPPY + PERMANENT DAYLIGHT + LOUIS B SCHEUER** Fri 20 June, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**FANNA-FI-ALLAH** Fri 20 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE ROZZERS - TRIBUTE TO STING & THE POLICE** Fri 20 June, Halesowen Town Hall

**THE FLEETWOOD MACK EXPERIENCE** Fri 20 June, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**QUO CONNECTION** Fri 20 June, The Robin, Bilston

**DANIELLE CAWDELL** Fri 20 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**CHINA CRISIS** Fri 20 June, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**ERASURED** Fri 20 June, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**DANIEL JAMES** Fri 20 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**GRYPHON** Fri 20 June, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**THE CELINE EXPERIENCE** Fri 20 June, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**MONEY FOR NOTHING** Fri 20 June, Lichfield Garrick

**WHAT THE FUNK?** Fri 20

June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**SOMETHING ABOUT LENNON** Fri 20 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROBBIE WILLIAMS & KYLIE TRIBUTES** Fri 20 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**THE OUTLAWS COUNTRY BAND** Fri 20 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**THE JAMES BROTHERS & CLIVE JONES** Fri 20 June, The Anstice, Telford, Shropshire

**BLACK BEAR KISS + DEAD REBEL + KINSTRIFE** Fri 20 June, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**MAJOR TOMS** Sat 21 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BLACK FLAG** Sat 21 June, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**MOTOWN'S GREATEST HITS: HOW SWEET IT IS** Sat 21 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**IRON MAIDEN** Sat 21 June, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**NOW I'M HERE - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Sat 21 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**TWOMANTING** Sat 21 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**TRIGGER** Sat 21 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**PLEIADES + BODY CRISIS + WOLVES** Sat 21 June, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**KAST OFF KINKS** Sat 21 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**SKA FACE** Sat 21 June, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**THANK ABBA** Sat 21 June, Dudley Town Hall

**T.REXTASY** Sat 21 June, The Robin, Bilston

**BADGERFEST** Sat 21 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**JOE BROUGHTON'S CONSERVATOIRE FOLK ENSEMBLE** Sat 21 June, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**TERRORVISION** Sat 21

June, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE KILLERS COLLECTIVE** Sat 21 June, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**SHANNON & DAN** Sat 21 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE NASHVILLE SOUNDS EXPERIENCE** Sat 21 June, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**GRACE & THE FOX** Sat 21 June, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**THE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN** Sat 21 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TOTALLY TINA** Sat 21 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury



**RENEGADES** Sat 21 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**BEATLES COMPLETE** Sat 21 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**PARLOUR CREEPERS + STONELOAD + TYRANNOSAURUS**

**NEBULOUS** Sat 21 June, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**NIRVANHER** Sun 22 June, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**DIANA ROSS** Sun 22 June, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**THE MAGIC OF THE BEATLES** Sun 22 June, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**CERI JUSTICE & THE JURY** Sun 22 June, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

**STEVE AJAO QUARTET** Sun 22 June, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**FRANKIE LEE AND THE CASUALS** Sun 22 June, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE SIMON AND GARFUNKEL STORY** Sun 22 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**NICK EVANS + GERRY RILEY + SEAN GRIFFIN** Sun 22 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**SHAPE OF YOU - THE MUSIC OF ED SHEERAN** Sun 22 June, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**SMILE - THE MAGIC OF GREGORY PORTER AND NAT KING COLE** Sun 22 June, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**RICH PARSONS** Sun 22 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield



Billie Marten - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



## Classical Music

### RBC LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT

Featuring Piotr Maziarz (organ). Programme includes works by Bruhns, Surzyński, Mendelssohn & JS Bach, Mon 16 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### RBC BELL STROKES: SCHUBERT AND INFINITY

Featuring David Ebner (piano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Schubert & Bach, Mon 16 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**THOMAS TROTTER LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT: SUMMER REQUESTS** Mon 16 June, Birmingham Town Hall

### EX CATHEDRA: SUMMER BY CANDLELIGHT

Featuring Steven Grahl (conductor). Programme includes works by Britten, Frances-Hoad, Gibbons & more..., Tues 17 June, St Mary's Church, Moseley, Birmingham

### MESSIAEN QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME

Featuring Luanah Lefebvre (violin), Gemma Andrews (clarinet), Nicholas Trygstad (cello) & Alex Wyatt (piano), Tues 17 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS RACHMANINOFF & TCHAIKOVSKY

Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Hisako Kawamura (piano), Wed 18 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

### RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor). Programme includes works by Takemitsu & Mussorgsky, Wed 18 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

### BRASS BAND SUMMER CONCERT

Featuring The RBC Brass Band & Tredegar Town Band soloists, Wed 18 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS ELGAR & TCHAIKOVSKY

Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello - pictured), Thurs 19 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: INTERSTELLAR** Featuring Bruce O'Neil (conductor) & Anton Lesser (narrator). Programme includes works by JL Adams & Holst, Thurs 19 June, Warwick Hall

### THE FOUR SEASONS & THE LARK

**ASCENDING BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring London Concertante. Programme includes works by Mozart, Vivaldi, & Vaughan Williams, Thurs 19 June, Lichfield Cathedral

**JACK HANCHER (GUITAR)** Programme includes works by JS Bach, Debussy, Mompou & more..., Fri 20 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### KAZUKI YAMADA CONDUCTS RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Featuring Daniele Rosina & Kazuki Yamada (conductors). Programme includes works by Mussorgsky, Vaughan Williams, Takemitsu & Dvořák, Fri 20 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**OLIVER HANCOCK ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 20 June, St Mary's Church, Warwick

### ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: A BEAUTIFUL THREAD, THOMAS HARDY IN WORDS AND MUSIC

Featuring Anton Lesser & Lucia Bonbright (narration). Programme includes works by Holst & Warlock, Fri 20 June, Forum Theatre, Malvern

### CHESTER MALE VOICE CHOIR

Fri 20 June, Shrewsbury Abbey

### HOLBORNE BRASS

Fri 20 June, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

### BOURNVILLE CLARINET CHOIR: SUMMER CONCERT

Featuring Charlotte Buxton (music director), Sat 21 June, St Francis Church, Bournville, B'ham

### RBC FAMILY CONCERT: A MUSICAL MYSTERY TOUR!

Featuring RBC LEAP Ensemble & RBC Young Singers, Sat 21 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### THE PEOPLE'S SHOW CHOIR

Featuring Lorna Parkhouse (leader), Sat 21 June, Church of the Holy Spirit, Shrewsbury

### ARMONICO CONSORT: RACHMANINOV VESPERS

Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Sat 21 June, St Mary's Church, Warwick

### THE ELGAR CHORALE OF WORCESTER & BAROQUE ENSEMBLE: BACH'S B MINOR MASS

Featuring Katie Trethewey & Gemma King (sopranos), Charles Humphries (alto), Mark Dobell (tenor), Jonathan Marc Brown (bass), Kelly McCusker (leader) & Piers Maxim (conductor), Sat 21 June, Pershore Abbey

### WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Featuring Peter Morris (conductor) & Ros Rayner (leader). Programme includes works by Arnold, Elgar, Britten & Freckleton, Sat 21 June, Wolverhampton Grammar School

### A REFLECTIVE RECITAL OF FRENCH SONG

Featuring Emma Winscom (mezzo-contralto) & David Gaukroger (piano). Programme includes works by Fauré, Massenet, Debussy & more..., Sat 21 June, St Laurence Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

### STAFFORD SINFONIA: TURKISH DELIGHT

Programme includes works by Rossini, Mozart & Haydn, Sat 21 June, Rising Brook Community Church, Stafford

### BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

**GROUP: CONSTELLATIONS** Featuring Zubin Kanga Cyborg Soloist (piano and electronics) & Catherine Larsen-Maguire (conductor). Programme includes works by A Castex, L Dunn, B Morgan-Williams & more..., Sun 22 June, Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK'S SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS: THE ARMED MAN

Featuring Tom Newall & Suzzie Vango (conductors) & Max Li (soloist). Programme includes works by Jenkins, Prokofiev & Stravinsky, Sun 22 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

### CENTRAL ENGLAND CAMERATA CONCERT: ANDREW DOWNES IN WORCESTER

Programme includes works by Haydn, Downes & more..., Sun 22 June, Henry Sandon Hall, Worcester

### LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CHAMBER CHOIR

Programme includes works by Howells, Walton, Gibbons & more..., Sun 22 June, Lichfield Cathedral

## Comedy

**JIMMY DORE** Mon 16 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SARA PASCOE** Tues 17 June, Halesowen Town Hall

**GREG DAVIES** Wed 18 June, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**GEORGE LEWIS** Wed 18 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JONNY COLE** Wed 18 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

### COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, DAVE FULTON & KAZEEM JAMAL

Thurs 19 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JONNY COLE** Thurs 19 June, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**KAZEEM JAMAL, MICHAEL FABBRI, DAVE FULTON, ROB MORIARTY & JULES O'BRIAN** Fri 20 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JUSTIN MOORHOUSE** Fri 20 June, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**LARRY DEAN** Fri 20 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROB ROUSE, OLIVIA LEE, DINESH NATHAN & BILLY KIRKWOOD** Sat 21 June, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**RICH HALL** Sat 21 June, Lichfield Garrick

**KAZEEM JAMAL, MICHAEL FABBRI, DAVE FULTON & SIKISA** Sat 21 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JONNY AWESUM, PERCY SAVAGE, ERIC RUSHTON & DAMION LARKIN** Sat 21 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**KATE SMURTHWAITE, SULLY O'SULLIVAN, SEAN GORMAN & TONY BURGESS** Sat 21 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**JONNY COLE** Sat 21 June, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**MUHSIN YESILADA, GARY DELANEY, SCOTT BENNETT & JOSH PUGH** Sun 22 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

### ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS

Scarlet Theatre bring Richard Bean's masterpiece to life, Mon 16 - Wed 18 June, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Oddsocks present a high-energy, fast-paced staging of Shakespeare's classic comedy, Mon 16 - Wed 18 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**SPITFIRE GIRLS** Critically acclaimed play inspired by the true stories of the women who dared to fly during World War Two, and the incredible bond that tied them together, Mon 16 - Sat 21 June, The Rep, Birmingham

**PORRIDGE** The Nonentities present an amateur stage show based on Dick Clement & Ian La Frenais' classic 1970s TV sitcom, Mon 16 - Sat 21 June, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**DEAR EVAN HANSEN** Multi-award-winning contemporary musical packed with some of 'the biggest musical youth theatre songs of the last decade', Tues 17 - Sat 21 June, The Alexandra, Birmingham



**CALAMITY JANE** Carrie Hope Fletcher takes the lead in a new touring production of the whip-crackin' musical, Tues 17 - Sat 21 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

### THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

Laura Whitmore stars as Rachel Watson in the stage version of Paula Hawkins' bestselling novel of the same name, Tues 17 - Sat 21 June, Malvern Theatres

### TINA: THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL

Touring version of the hit West End show, Tues 17 - Sat 28 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**NO PLACE LIKE HOME** Amateur version of L Frank Baum's fantastical novel, Wed 18 - Fri 20 June, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**THE VANISHING ELEPHANT** A moving story about friendship, belonging and a journey from Bengal to the bright lights of Broadway, Wed 18 - Sat 21 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**TALKING HEADS** Amateur version of two Alan Bennett monologues - A



**Bed Among The Lentils & A Chip In The Sugar**, Wed 18 - Sat 21 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**GREASE** The Norbury Players present an amateur version of the hit musical, Wed 18 - Sat 28 June, Norbury Theatre, Droitwich

**ANNIE THE MUSICAL** Ormiston Horizon Academy present an amateur version of the much-loved rags-to-riches story, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 June, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**AGATHA CRUSTY** Amateur version of Derek Webb's comic murder-mystery, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 June, The Little Theatre, Donnington, Shropshire

**THE WHO'S TOMMY!** Amateur version of the classic rock musical, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 June, The Playbox Theatre, The Dream Factory, Warwick

**FORGET ME NOT: THE ALZHEIMER'S WHODUNNIT** One-man murder-mystery in which Rob Gee plays all 15 characters, Fri 20 June, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

**BOUNCERS** Shropshire Drama Company present an amateur version of John Godber's fast-paced comedy, Fri 20 June, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

**THE SHOW MUST GO ON!** Peterbrook Players and Solihull On Stage unite to present an evening of musical theatre songs, dance and more..., Fri 20 - Sat 21 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**JAH MAKIN IN HAPPEN: A REGGAE MUSICAL** An 'inspiring' Windrush story that tells of the challenges, resilience and eventual triumphs of a family as they adapt to British life, Fri 20 - Sat 21 June, The Rep, Birmingham

**THE CONSTANT WIFE** Rose Leslie stars in a reimagining of Somerset Maugham's subversive comedy, Fri 20 June - Sat 2 Aug, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THIRD CLASS: A TITANIC STORY** One-man theatre show based on the life of Titanic survivor Edward Dorking, Sat 21 June, Lichfield Garrick

**180° CHORD** Chris Leicester's two-hander, set in a high-security prison where a former police officer and convicted murderer find themselves in the same cell, Sat 21 June, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**BOUNCERS** Shropshire Drama Company present an amateur version of John Godber's fast-paced comedy, Sat 21 June, The Hive, Shrewsbury

## Kid's Theatre

**THE ELMER ADVENTURE** Tall Stories present a joyful jungle adventure featuring puppetry, song and storytelling, Tues 17 - Wed 18 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**T-REX LIVE SHOW** Interactive show for families, Sat 21 June, Stoke

Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE GREAT BALDINI: FAMILY MAGIC SHOW** A 'silly romp' packed with magic, puppetry and escapology, Sun 22 June, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**FLOTSAM & JETSAM** Lempen Puppet Theatre present an adventure story for children in which two very different creatures learn to work together, Sun 22 June, The Henrician, Evesham

## Dance

**BALLET CYMRU: GISELLE** Brand-new interpretation of the ghostly ballet, telling the tragic love story of a young Welsh girl, Mon 16 June, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**ROOH: WITHIN HER** A solo performance in which Urja Desai explores narratives 'in quiet, everyday heroism across two millennia', Fri 20 June, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

**OTI MABUSE: VIVA CARNIVAL** The Queen of the Tango joins the Queen of the Samba as Strictly legend Flavia Cacace-Mistry teams up with Oti for 'this summer's hottest party', Fri 20 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**KAI WIDDRINGTON: EVOLUTION** Join the Strictly star for his inaugural solo dance show, Fri 20 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Light Entertainment

**AN EVENING WITH JIMMY TARBUCK** Join the acclaimed comedian and raconteur as he reflects on a remarkable life in showbusiness, Tues 17 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**FROM BEDLAM TO BENIDORM: AN EVENING WITH CRISSY ROCK** A show of two halves in which Crissy charts her rise to stardom ahead of performing a stand-up comedy routine, Tues 17 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY** A musical celebration for VE Day 80, Tues 17 June, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**RORY BREMNER: MAKING AN IMPRESSION** Rory presents a winning blend of stand-up comedy, conversation, impressions and surprising revelations, Wed 18 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Tina: The Tina Turner Musical - Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE POLDARK SHOW: HYPNOSIS AND MAGIC** Poldark is joined by YouTube sensation, magician & mentalist Cavan Booth, Thurs 19 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**AN EVENING WITH RORY BREMNER** Rory presents a winning blend of stand-up comedy, conversation, impressions and surprising revelations, Thurs 19 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING - MUSICAL CROWDPLEASER** Expect incredible vocals, dazzling dance moves and maybe even a sing-off or two in a 'jazz-handed jamboree and stagey singalong', Thurs 19 - Sun 22 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE D-DAY DARLINGS** Take a musical journey back to wartime Britain, Fri 20 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**THAT NIGHT IN MANCHESTER** Show taking audiences on a musical journey through the vibrant Manchester indie scene as a father recounts the highs and lows of his life to his son..., Fri 20 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**SHOW QUEEN** Join international cabaret star Velma Celli for an evening celebrating the best of musical theatre, Fri 20 June, Dudley Town Hall

**WEST END MUSICALS BY CANDLELIGHT** Presented by London Concertante, Fri 20 June, Worcester Cathedral

**AN EVENING WITH THAT'LL BE THE DAY'S TREVOR AND GARY** An evening of music, stories & laughter, complete with tales from life on the road and a dose of classic rock & roll, Sat 21 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CELTIC THRONE: PSALTER OF IRELAND** Irish dance, music, theatre and cinema combine in a show that tells an epic story from the annals of ancient Ireland, Sun 22 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE VINTAGE BIG SING** Music and song celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE Day, Sun 22 June, Dudley Town Hall

**MATRIX ILLUSION: REIMAGINED** Innovative family show balancing comedy and charm with mystery and thrill, Sun 22 June, Lichfield Garrick

## Talks & Spoken Word

**ACTION RAYZ - DREAD BEAT AN' BLOOD & POETRY EVENING** An evening of poetry and spoken word, presented alongside a showing of 1979 documentary Dread Beat An' Blood, Tues 17 June, Coventry Cathedral

**WILLIAM DALRYMPLE: HOW ANCIENT INDIA TRANSFORMED THE WORLD** Join the historian as he shares the rarely told story of India's role as a cultural and scientific superpower of the ancient world, Thurs 19 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER 2** Join former Met senior investigating officer Colin Sutton as he shares stories of how he caught some of the UK's most evil killers, Fri 20 June, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**SIR TONY ROBINSON** An evening with the much-loved historian, comedy icon and award-winning children's author, Sat 21 June, Malvern Theatres

## Events

**THE BIG BANG FAIR** Discover hands-on workshops, activities and live shows, Tues 17 - Thurs 19 June, NEC, B'ham

**WORLD REFUGEE WEEK CELEBRATIONS** Event celebrating the contributions of refugees and advocating for their





Weekend Beaver Safari - Trentham Estate, Staffs

rights and protection worldwide, Thurs 19 June, The Exchange 3 Centenary Square, Birmingham

**POTFEST BY THE LAKE** Artisan ceramics market showcasing the work of over 90 of the UK's finest ceramics makers, Fri 20 - Sun 22 June, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**WINDRUSH DAY** Marking the anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush on 22 June 1948,

Sat 21 June, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**THE FIRST ANNUAL BRUMMERTON BALL** Immersive Bridgerton-themed experience, Sat 21 June, The Birmingham Black Box Theatre and Events Venue

**GIMME! GIMME! GIMME! ABBA INSPIRED SUMMER TERRACE PARTY** Sat 21 June, The Button Factory, Birmingham

**WEEKEND BEAVER SAFARI** Meet Trentham's beavers and find out about restoration and biodiversity, Sat 21 June, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

**BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR** Go behind the curtain and learn about the Hippodrome's history, Sat 21 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**COME TO CAMPUS COMMUNITY FESTIVAL** A line-up of free events, including talks, campus tours, live performances, and family-friendly activities, Sat 21 June, University of Birmingham

**AVONCROFT DOG SHOW** Featuring show classes, demonstrations, talks and a selection of trade stands, Sun 22 June, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**VEGAN MIDSUMMER GARDEN PARTY** Featuring a market, music, talks and activities, Sun 22 June, Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens, B'ham

**ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS FAIR** Have a chat with the dealers and look out for hidden gems, Sun 22 June, Hartlebury Castle, Worcester

**WINDRUSH LEGACY OUTDOOR CONCERT & EXHIBITION** Event celebrating the 77th anniversary of the Windrush

Generation legacy, and the birth/beginning of the NHS, Sun 22 June, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham

**ANTIQUES DAY WITH PAUL MARTIN** Antiques specialist Paul Martin hosts an intimate audience session, Sun 22 June, Sudeley Castle & Gardens, Cheltenham

**RED EVENT WEDDING FAYRE** A day of wedding inspiration featuring top-quality suppliers, Sun 22 June, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

## Festivals

**NOCTURNE LIVE AT BLENHEIM PALACE** Line-up includes Richard Ashcroft, Gary Barlow, The Corrs, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 June, Blenheim Palace

**SONIC ROCK SOLSTICE 2025** Line-up includes The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Evil Blizard, Poisoned Electric Head, Thurs 19 - Mon 23 June, Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club, Worcester

**PARKLANDS FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Dreadzone, Graeme Park, Alison Limerick, Fri 20 - Sun 22 June, QEII Arena, Telford, Shropshire

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Ani DiFranco - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

## Gigs

**BRANDI CARLILE** Mon 23 June, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**AERIAL SALAD** Tues 24 June, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**HARDY + BEC O'MALLEY** Wed 25 June, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**TETRARCH** Wed 25 June, The Asylum, Birmingham

**DESINTERESSE** Wed 25 June, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**LEE MEAD** Wed 25 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**BROTHER ALI** Thurs 26 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS** Thurs 26 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ΦBELISK** Thurs 26 June, The Victoria, B'ham

**FANNA-FI-ALLAH** Thurs 26 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**THE VERY BEST OF STING** Thurs 26 June, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**TANIA OPLAND & MIKE FREEMAN** Thurs 26 June, Bromsgrove Folk Club

**PAUL DRAKELEY ALLSTAR BIG BAND** Thurs 26 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**BUDAPEST CAFE ORCHESTRA** Thurs 26 June, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**DINO BAPTISTE** Fri 27 June, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**GENE LOVES JEZEBEL** Fri 27 June, Flapper, Birmingham

**SABBOTAGE** Fri 27 June, The Victoria, B'ham

**SPACE PISTOL** Fri 27 June, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**JERSEY BOYS + MOTOWN** Fri 27 June, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**WHITNEY - THE CANDLELIGHT CONCERT** Fri 27 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**JERSEY BEATS** Fri 27 June, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**SOUL OF A WOMAN** Fri 27 June, The Robin, Bilston

**BILLY OCEAN** Fri 27 June, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

**AMYS WINEHOUSE AND THE EMPTY CELLARS BAND** Fri 27 June, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**BEN BOTFIELD** Fri 27 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE DETOURS** Fri 27 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**BUDAPEST CAFE ORCHESTRA** Fri 27 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE ROY ORBISON STORY** Fri 27 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JILTED GENERATION** Fri 27 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**THE BELGRAVE HOUSE BAND** Fri 27 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**THE BLUEBELLS** Fri 27 June, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

**CHASING THE FALL + CROWNED HYENAS** Fri 27 June, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North

Shropshire

**ROXY MAGIC** Sat 28 June, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ST. VINCENT** Sat 28 June, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MORGAN WALLEN UK** Sat 28 June, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE MACHINIST** Sat 28 June, Flapper, B'ham

**MACY GRAY** Sat 28 June, Birmingham Town Hall

**MIKE SANCHEZ & THE PORTIONS** Sat 28 June, Joe Joe Jims, B'ham

**ANI DIFRANCO** Sat 28 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ONE NIGHT OF ADELE - NAOMI JOHNSON** Sat 28 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**CHRIS STAPLETON UK** Sat 28 June, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**FAYE BAGLEY** Sat 28 June, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**FOOLS LIFE** Sat 28 June, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**MAGIC OF MOTOWN** Sat 28 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE SEVERN** Sat 28 June, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**UNTO OTHERS + HIGH PARASITE** Sun 29 June, The Asylum, B'ham

**HEAVY//HITTER + GRIEF RITUAL** Sun 29 June, Flapper, Birmingham

**THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND** Sun 29 June, The Brasshouse, B'ham

**MAX ZT & DAN WHITEHOUSE** Sun 29 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**DANNI MAYERS** Sun 29 June, Marris Bar, Worcester

**SIMON & GARFUNKEL - THROUGH THE YEARS** Sun 29 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**LUKE COMBS UK** Sun 29 June, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**C.O.F.F.I.N** Mon 30 June, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

## Classical Music

### UNIVERSITY STRING ORCHESTRA

Featuring Barnaby Eddy (conductor). Programme includes works by Elgar, Zimmer & Respighi, Mon 23 June, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

### THE SUMMER SUPPER WITH EX

**CATHEDRA** Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme includes works by Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Gershwin & more..., Tues 24 June, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**GEMA LU PIANO RECITAL** Tues 24 June, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

### UNIVERSITY MUSIC MINI RECITALS

Members of University Music perform a solo and duo repertoire during an informal lunchtime concert, Wed 25 June, The Dome, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

### NEW WORLDS: BILL MURRAY, JAN

**VOGLER (CELLO) & FRIENDS** Also featuring Vanessa Perez (piano) & Mira Wang (violin). Programme showcases the core of the American values in literature and music, Wed 25 June, Symphony Hall, B'ham

### SHREWSBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

**SUMMER CONCERT** Featuring John Moore (conductor) & Alex Postlethwaite (leader). Programme includes works by Britten, Elgar & Debussy, Wed 25 June, Christ Church, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury

**SUMMER FESTIVAL VOICES** Featuring William Roberts & Fern Warwick (conductors). Programme includes works by Holst, Barber, J Marsh & more..., Thurs 26 June, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

**FANNA-FI-ALLAH'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD TOUR** A transcendent evening of Sufi Qawwali music, Thurs 26 June, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### ST MARY'S SUMMER LUNCHTIME

**RECITAL** Featuring Davide Paleari (organ), Fri 27 June, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**GOOD VIBRATIONS!** Featuring Colin Baines (conductor) & Darren Hogg (accompanist). Programme includes music from Borodin to the Beach Boys, via Berkshire, Sat 28 June, Selly Oak Methodist Church, B'ham

**TELFORD ORCHESTRA: MUSIC FOR A SUMMER'S EVENING** Featuring Samuel Lellouch (musical director).

Programme includes works by Strauss, Delius, Rossini & more..., Sat 28 June, The Anstice Hall, Madeley

**SHREWSBURY CHORAL AND ORCHESTRA: ELGAR'S THE KINGDOM**

Featuring Dr Martin Cook (conductor) & Anne Tupling (leader), Sat 28 June, Shrewsbury Abbey

**MIDLAND SINFONIA: CELEBRATION OF LIFE** Programme includes works by Dvorak, Coleridge-Taylor & Strauss, Sat 28 June, St Laurence Church, Alvechurch

**IVALDI FOUR SEASONS BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Victoria Sayles (violin), Warren Mailley-Smith (piano) & The Piccadilly Sinfonietta. Programme includes works by Beethoven & Vivaldi, Sat 28 June, The New Cathedral, Coventry

**CHOIRS OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST MARY WITH ORCHESTRA** Featuring Oliver Hancock (director). Programme includes works by Vivaldi, Handel & JS Bach, Sat 28 June, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**MARCHES CHOIR & FRIENDS: THE ARMED MAN** Featuring Alistair Auld (conductor) & Rebecca Thurgur (soprano). Programme comprises Karl Jenkins' The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace, Sat 28 June, St John's Church, Bishop's Castle, South Shropshire

**STOKE ON TRENT CENTENARY CELEBRATION CONCERT** Featuring Joe Hearson (conductor), James Doherty (soloist) & North Staffs Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Delius, Vaughan Williams, Martinů & more..., Sat 28 June, King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**MIDLAND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: MOZART'S JUPITER** Programme also includes works by Haydn & Rosetti, Sun 29 June, St Mary's Church, Moseley, Birmingham

**LEAMINGTON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** Featuring Richard Laing (conductor). Programme includes works by Balakirev, Mussorgsky & Beethoven, Sun 29 June, Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa

**ARMONICO CONSORT ACADEMY SCHOLARS CONCERT** Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Tommy Perry & Anna Robertson (soloists). Programme includes works by Todd, T Young, Mozart & more..., Sun 29 June, St Michael's Church, Warwick

## Comedy

**SCOTT BENNETT** Wed 25 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MORGAN REES, JESSIE NIXON, MARK CRAM & ADAM GREENE** Wed 25 June, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**JONNY COLE** Thurs 26 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DYLAN MORAN, KATE LUCAS & TADIWA MAHLUNGE** Thurs 26 June, Lichfield Garrick

**REGINALD D HUNTER & COMICS TBC** Thurs 26 June, Huntingdon Hall



**MARC JENNINGS** Fri 27 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RAUL KOHLI** Fri 27 June, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**PETER BRUSH, JOSH BAULF, BRUCE DEVLIN & COMIC TBC** Fri 27 - Sat 28 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PETER RETHINASAMY, JULES O'BRIAN, SAM AVERY & ADAM BEARDSMORE** Sat 28 June, Rosies Nightclub, B'ham

**ROB MULHOLLAND** Sat 28 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**TOMMY SANDHU** Sun 29 June, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**TERRY ALDERTON** Sun 29 June, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

## Theatre

**LITTLE WOMEN** Hotbuckle present a new staging of Louisa May Alcott's classic exploration of family, love, and the challenges of growing up, Mon 23 - Tues 24 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**PHYSICAL FELLOWSHIP 2025 - ODYSSEY RE-IMAGINED** A programme of original physical performance work from local schools and youth groups. Inspired by Homer's The Odyssey, Mon 23 - Fri 27 June, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**CHICAGO** Kander & Ebb's razzle-dazzle musical, featuring Strictly's Janette Manrara as Roxie Hart and Darren Day as Billy Flynn, Mon 23 - Sat 28 June, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE MIRROR CRACK'D** Amateur version of Agatha Christie's crime thriller, Mon 23 - Sat 28 June, The Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre, Kenilworth

**SISTER ACT JR** Amateur version, presented by St Dominic's Grammar School, Tues 24 - Wed 25 June, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**PICTURE YOU DEAD** Ore Oduba, George Rainsford & Fiona Wade star in a new Peter James adaptation, set in a dark underworld of deception and murder, Tues 24 - Sat 28 June, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE** Sutton Coldfield Musical Youth Theatre present an amateur version of the coming-of-age musical, Tues 24 - Sat 28 June, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**SHREK THE MUSICAL** Stage Productions present an amateur version of the heartwarming adventure, Tues 24 - Sat 28 June, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME** The Little Theatre Company present an amateur stage version of Mark Haddon's award-winning novel, Tues 24 - Sat 28 June, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**HAMLET** Benedict Shaw takes the lead in Stafford Shakespeare's summer production, Tues 24 June - Sat 5 July, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE THRILL OF LOVE** Studio 61 present an amateur version of Amanda Whittington's play, dramatising the true story of Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, Wed 25 - Fri 27 June, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**DANGEROUS OBSESSION** All & Sundry present an amateur version of NJ Crisp's psychological thriller, Wed 25 - Sat 28 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**MARRIAGE MATERIAL** Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's adaptation of Sathnam Sanghera's critically acclaimed novel. Iqbal Khan directs, Wed 25 June - Sat 5 July, The Rep, Birmingham

**FALSE ACCOUNTS: EXPOSING THE POST OFFICE COVER-UP** Dark satire shining a light on one of the most shameful travesties of justice in the country's history, Thurs 26 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** Oddscocks present a high-energy, fast-paced staging of Shakespeare's classic comedy, Thurs 26 June, Victoria Gardens, Tewkesbury

**THE SEAGULL** Royal Birmingham Conservatoire actors present an amateur version of Anton Chekhov's timeless masterpiece, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 June, The Lab, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**THE LITTLE MERMAID** Walsall Youth Theatre present an amateur version of the Disney favourite, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 June, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG** Three Spires Guildhall present an amateur version of Ian Fleming's much-loved children's story, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 June, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE HAUNTING OF BLAINE MANOR** Joe O'Byrne chiller set in a manor house with a twisted history of madness, witchcraft, tragedy and death, Fri 27 June, Lichfield Garrick

**THE FINAL SHOWDOWN** Birmingham Hippodrome Youth Theatre present the ultimate battle royale in a story of secret friendships, forbidden love stories, identity crises and coming-of-age experiences, Fri 27 - Sat 28 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**YOU KNOW MY MUM** A 'cheeky comedy about life and death for all the family', Fri 27 - Sat 28 June, The Rep, Birmingham

**SUPERHERO ACADEMY** Musicals Youth Theatre Juniors present a new production featuring original songs and a storyline in which young heroes and villains compete to be the best of the best..., Sat 28 June, Birmingham Hippodrome

**BAT OUT OF HELL** Rock musical featuring the iconic music of Jim

Steinman and Meat Loaf, Mon 30 June - Sat 5 July, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

## Dance

**ANTON & GIOVANNI: TOGETHER AGAIN**

The Strictly favourites host an evening of Ballroom, Latin and musical theatre, Tues 24 - Wed 25 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**KAI WIDDINGTON: EVOLUTION** Join the Strictly star for his inaugural solo dance show, Wed 25 June, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**SAMARPAN MAHOTSAV - A CELEBRATION OF INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE** Curated by Jaivant Patel Company, Sat 28 June, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

## Light Entertainment

**THE LADYBOYS OF BANGKOK** Comedy and cabaret combine in a theatrical and sequin-laden production featuring hits from the world's most famous pop icons, Mon 23 June, Lichfield Garrick

**DAD'S ARMY RADIO SHOW** Highly acclaimed stage production in which two actors bring Perry & Croft's classic BBC TV comedy to life, Tues 24 June, Lichfield Garrick

**BOX OF FROGS** An evening of 'high-octane improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 25 June, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

**DRINKS WITH A DETECTIVE** Join former Detective Chief Inspector and criminal psychologist Steve Gaskin for a deep-dive into forensic profiling, psychopathy and deception detection, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

**THE EVERLY BROTHERS BY CANDLELIGHT** Fri 27 June, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**ELVIS LESLEY: BURNIN' LOVE BINGO** Join award-winning character comedian Tracey Collins (Shell Suit Cher, Audrey Heartburn) as she brings her latest 'ridiculous' act to the stage, Fri 27 June, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



**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 28 June, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**YEH DOSTI** Music and dance combine in a celebration of the 50th anniversary of iconic Bollywood film Sholay, Sat 28 June, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

## Talks & Spoken Word

**AN EVENING WITH LORD IAN BOTHAM**

Join the cricketing legend as he discusses his life and career, Thurs 26 June, 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', Sat 28 June, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Events

**ADVENTURE BIKE RIDER FESTIVAL**

Thousands of like-minded riders and the motorcycle industry come together, Fri 27 - Sun 29 June, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

**RAILWAY 200 CELEBRATIONS** Featuring a packed programme of events and activities celebrating the railway's 200-year history, Fri 27 June - Sun 6 July, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire

**ARMED FORCES DAY** Members of the armed forces, both current and retired, get free admission to the castle, with their families entering for half price, Sat 28 June, Tamworth Castle

**ARMED FORCES WEEKEND** Featuring a range of interactive family activities across two days, Sat 28 - Sun 29 June, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire

**SHREWSBURY FOOD FESTIVAL**

Featuring hundreds of food & drink producers and live entertainment, Sat 28 - Sun 29 June, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

## Festivals

**FOREST LIVE** Line-up includes Nile Rodgers & CHIC, Snow Patrol, Sting, James, Wed 25 - Sat 28 June, Cannock Chase Forest

**UPTON JAZZ FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Alan Barnes and Bruce Adams with Craig Milverton, Amy Roberts, John Hallam with Tom Kincaid, Fri 27 - Sun 29 June, various venues in Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire



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