

Worcestershire

ISSUE 464 SEPTEMBER 2025

# What's On

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### inside:

#### METAL MAGIC

BRB's Black Sabbath The Ballet returns to the stage



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Railway**



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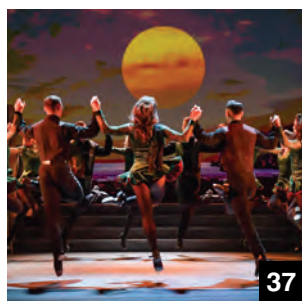
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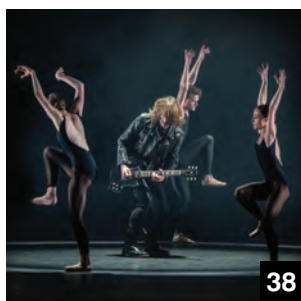
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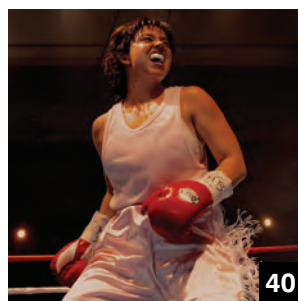
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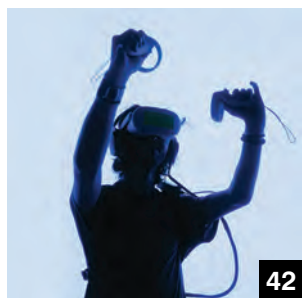
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## What's On

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Image credit: Dave Proak

## Grease is the Word!

Grease is definitely the Word this autumn as far as Worcester Operatic & Dramatic Society are concerned, with the well-regarded amateur company next month presenting their very own version of the legendary musical. The show runs at the city's Swan Theatre from Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 October. Tickets are available via the website at [wods.co.uk](http://wods.co.uk)



## Orchestra 'play day' date

Coventry's Spire Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus are hosting an orchestra 'play day' based around Prokofiev's Romeo & Juliet on Saturday 20 September at the city's West Orchard Church. For further details and to secure your place, visit [spiresmusic.org](http://spiresmusic.org)

## Solihull's comedy club is Funny To The Core!

A new comedy club is launching in The Studio at Solihull venue The Core this month. Taking the title Funny To The Core, the event debuts on Saturday 6 September, with local comedian Lindsey Santoro headlining. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website [thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk](http://thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk)

## James, Oz and Armonico get on their bikes!

Former Top Gear presenter James May is swapping horsepower for pedal power to front a charity bike challenge in Warwickshire this month.

James and wine expert Oz Clarke will be teaming up with 'singing cyclists' from Warwick-based classical-music ensemble Armonico Consort to raise funds for Armonico's community singing projects. As part of the three-day event, James and Oz will also join forces with guest choirs for concert performances at three local churches. To find out more about the Wednesday 10 to Friday 12 September charity initiative, visit [armonico.org.uk/bike2025](http://armonico.org.uk/bike2025)

## New theatre director at Coventry's The Albany

Nationally renowned playwright & TV writer Alan Pollock is the new CEO and artistic director of Coventry's Albany Theatre.

Commenting on the appointment, David Meredith, Chair of the Albany Theatre Trust, said: "We are delighted that Alan has offered to join us. He is a Coventry kid with wide experience in the arts in the city. He is passionate about what The Albany can offer to the arts scene locally. Alan brings relentless energy and enthusiasm to The Albany and is already having a significant impact in all ways. This is a very exciting moment for us."



## Christmas attractions at Severn Valley Railway...

The Severn Valley Railway got into the Christmas spirit early last month when it launched two new attractions for the festive season 2025: Santa's Steam Specials and the Elf Express. Both train rides will run at

## Coventry venues to host British Art Show 2026

Three Coventry venues - Warwick Arts Centre's Mead Gallery, the Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, and Coventry University - will co-host the 10th edition of the British Art Show next year.

Developed and produced by Hayward Gallery Touring, the show is the largest and most significant recurring exhibition of contemporary art in the UK. Previous editions having featured works by David Hockney, Tracey Emin, Anish Kapoor and Sonia Boyce. The 2026 edition will open in September, after which it will head to four other cities across the UK. To find out more, visit the website at [southbankcentre.co.uk](http://southbankcentre.co.uk)

weekends from Saturday 29 November - and also on Christmas Eve, which this year falls on a Wednesday. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [svr.co.uk](http://svr.co.uk)



## Literature festival returns with over 400 events

Cheltenham Literature Festival returns next month (Friday 10 - Sunday 19 October) with an extensive programme of entertainment comprising in excess of 400 events.

The longest-running event of its kind in the world, the festival brings together the best new voices in fiction and poetry alongside literary greats, stars of stage and screen and incisive political thinkers.

Performances and literary happenings will be taking place at locations across the town throughout the 10 days.

Tickets are on general sale from 4 September at [cheltenhamfestivals.org/literature](http://cheltenhamfestivals.org/literature)



Image credit: Still Moving Media for Cheltenham Festivals

## Museum's Ozzy show to stay open

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery has announced that its exhibition celebrating the late Ozzy Osbourne, who died in July, will remain available to view until the end of the year. Working Class Hero was originally due to close on the final Sunday of this month. Making the announcement, Zak Mensah and Sara Wajid, the co-chief executives of Birmingham Museums Trust, said: "We are delighted to announce the extension of the exhibition to the end of the year. The public response to Working Class Hero has been overwhelming, demonstrating the love and affection for Ozzy from the people of Birmingham and beyond."



## Rugby trio return to the Midlands

The Good, The Bad & The Rugby is hitting the road again - and will be making two West Midlands stop-offs next month. The popular weekly podcast, featuring England legends James Haskell and Mike Tindall, alongside broadcaster Alex Payne, visits Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre on Wednesday 29 October and Birmingham theatre The Alexandra the following night (Thursday the 30th). For more information and to book tickets, visit the website of the relevant venue.



## A giant of an RSC Christmas for Midlands-born John

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is turning to the brilliant mind of Roald Dahl for its festive-season family show this Christmas. Showing in the main theatre from Tuesday 25 November to Saturday 31 January, The BFG is a co-production by the RSC, Chichester Festival Theatre and Roald Dahl Story Company.

Birmingham-born John Leader will step into the (very large) shoes of the loveable BFG.

John's previous roles at the RSC include the 2024 productions of The Merry Wives Of Windsor and School For Scandal. To find out more about the BFG, and to book tickets to see the production, visit the company's website at [rsc.org.uk](http://rsc.org.uk)



## Bat Out Of Hell on the big screen

Critically acclaimed stage show Bat Out Of Hell: The Musical is hitting the cinema next month - just in time for Halloween. Jim Steinman & Meat Loaf's iconic rock musical shows on the big screen from Thursday 30 October. To find out at which cinemas the production is being screened, visit the website at [batoutofhellincinemas.com](http://batoutofhellincinemas.com)

## Leamington Music's 2025/26 season set to start at the end of the month

Leamington Music's 2025/26 programme begins on Friday 26 September and comprises 14 concerts featuring music from across the centuries.

The string quartet concerts will this season take place in the town's Holy Trinity Church, while the Royal Pump Rooms undergoes extensive repairs to its roof.

The Marman Quartet (pictured) will present a programme of works by Haydn, Bartok and Debussy at the venue on Friday 10 October... To check out the whole programme and purchase concert tickets, visit the website at [leamingtonmusic.org](http://leamingtonmusic.org)



## ShakeltUp shaking up Shakespeare at Warwick's Bridge House Theatre

London-based improv troupe ShakeltUp stop off at Warwick's Bridge House Theatre next month (Friday 3 October) to create a brand-new Shakespeare play live on stage!

The critically acclaimed ensemble are promising their audience a night of 'big laughs, high drama, and plenty of Bard-based bedlam!' For further information and to book tickets, visit the venue's website at [bridgehousetheatre.co.uk](http://bridgehousetheatre.co.uk)



## Married At First Sight UK coach in the Midlands

Married At First Sight UK relationship expert Paul C Brunson is taking his skills from screen to stage this autumn, courtesy of his Love Better tour. Paul brings the show - in which he explores how to build deeper, more authentic connections - to Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday 4 November. For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at [bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)

## 'Thrilling' music festival makes a Stratford return

The Stratford-on-Avon Music Festival makes a return at the end of next month. Featuring 'thrilling live performances, from jazz to classical to contemporary', the event runs at locations across the town from Tuesday 28 October to Saturday 1 November. To check out this year's line-up of performers, and to purchase tickets, visit the event's website at [stratfordmusicfestival.com](http://stratfordmusicfestival.com)

## Storytelling explored at Warwickshire venue

A groundbreaking exhibition exploring the art of storytelling opens at Compton Verney next month (Saturday 25

October - Sunday 22 February).

Curated by the writer Marina Warner, The Shelter Of Stories will bring together historic objects and images, presented alongside works by leading contemporary artists. To find out more, visit [comptonverney.org.uk](http://comptonverney.org.uk)



## Best of folk at Bromyard

Paul Downes and Phil Beer will kickstart this year's Bromyard Folk Festival when it opens on Thursday 11 September (running until Sunday the 14th).

The popular duo feature in a strong line-up of talent across the four days, with Dervish (pictured) and Breabach also contributing. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at [bromyardfolkfestival.co.uk](http://bromyardfolkfestival.co.uk)



## Star-studded line-up at Stratford's literary festival

Sir Philip Pullman, Graham Norton, John Cleese and Gyles Brandreth head a stellar line-up at next month's Stratford Literary Festival.

The popular get-together, which runs from Thursday 30 October to Sunday 2 November in the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, will feature a packed programme of events. Commenting on the festival, its director, Annie Ashworth, said: "This is the biggest autumn festival we've staged yet, and we're

really excited by the stature of some of the speakers and the broad reach of the programme, which we think includes something for everyone - whether your interest is comedy, history, world affairs, great fiction, wine, crafting, or you simply want to come and hear experts and learn new things." To check out the whole programme of events, visit [stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](http://stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk)

## Phantoms & fireworks for Halloween at Sudeley

Gloucestershire's Sudeley Castle will be marking Halloween next month by opening its gates after dark for Phantoms & Fireworks - a brand-new celebration which will transform the venue's historic grounds into a spectacle of 'light, sound, and eerie delight'.

To find out more about the Friday 31 October event, visit [sudeleycastle.co.uk](http://sudeleycastle.co.uk)

## Comedy in Coventry

Coventry Building Society Arena is this month launching a new live comedy showcase.

CBS Laughs will take place for the first time on Friday 12 September and feature a set from award-winning stand-up & podcaster Adam Rowe. Tickets can be purchased at [eticketing.co.uk/cbsarena](http://eticketing.co.uk/cbsarena)

## Florence Nightingale: the lady with the... hammer?!

Zany funsters Oddsocks are returning to the Midlands this autumn with a brand-new show about Florence Nightingale. More usually found presenting high-spirited versions of Shakespeare plays - they even ramp up his comedies! - the long-established theatre company's latest offering instead takes a look at 'the bloody background of Britain's most famous nurse'. Florence Nightingale The Lady With The

Hammer shows at The Artrix, Bromsgrove, on Saturday 8 November. Tickets can be purchased via [oddssocks.co.uk](http://oddssocks.co.uk)



## Let them bake cake...

Cake International - 'the world's premier cake decorating and baking show' - returns to Birmingham's NEC next month (Friday 31 October - Sunday 2 November).

Co-located with the also-returning Bake International, the show is being publicised as 'the most spectacular yet, with new features, industry-leading exhibitors, hands-on workshops, and a landmark celebration to launch the Cake & Bake International Awards'. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website: [cakeinternational.co.uk](http://cakeinternational.co.uk)



# B:Music

## Town Hall & Symphony Hall

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**Man in the Mirror**  
 05 September | Symphony Hall



**Brass Gala 2025**  
 07 September | Symphony Hall



**National Youth Brass Band | Have A Go Brass**  
 07 September | Symphony Hall

**FREE FAMILY FUN!**



**Eric Idle: Always Look on the Bright Side of Life, LIVE!**  
 10 September | Symphony Hall



**Classic Albums Live performs The Beatles White Album**  
 15 September | Symphony Hall



**ISMO: Woo Hoo!**  
 16 September | Town Hall



Pop in & try!

**Rice Bowls Four Ways B:Eats at Symphony Hall:**  
 11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show



**The Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines: Live in Concert**  
 18 September | Symphony Hall



**A Night of Ska ft Bad Manners, The Beat ft Rankin Jnr & more**  
 20 September | Town Hall



**Lindisfarne**  
 27 September | Town Hall



**Björn Again**  
 27 September | Symphony Hall



**The Billy Joel Songbook**  
 28 September | Symphony Hall

**bmusic.co.uk**

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# BELGRADE



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## The return of Heritage Open Days...

**Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history & culture, taking place every September and involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations. Stories are told, traditions explored and histories brought to life. The festival provides members of the general public with the chance to see usually hidden places and try out brand-new experiences. And what's more, it's all absolutely FREE... The event returns this year from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 September - and here are just some of the venues you can explore around the region...**

### Warwickshire

#### Astley Castle

**Astley Castle, 1 Church Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV10 7QN**

The ancient moated site of Astley Castle boasts award-winning modern accommodation within the shell of a medieval castle. This is a rare chance to see inside The Landmark Trust's conversion, normally let for short holiday breaks. Weekend visitors can also enjoy a new documentary film about Astley Castle, produced by Salford University media department. Author Sarah Jane Downing will be holding a free talk, *The Architecture Of Dress*, on the Saturday.

**Fri 12 - Sun 14 Sept | 10am - 4pm, pre-booking preferred**



#### Coventry Cathedral

**Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5AB**

For this year's Heritage Open Days event, Coventry Cathedral will be opening Wyley Chapel to the public. The Chapel is the place where, in 1940, Provost Dick Howard conducted a Christmas Day service which was broadcast live around the world, just weeks after Coventry Cathedral had been bombed by the Germans. There will also be a short talk and audio-visual presentation on the history of the Chapel, presented by local historians Adam Neale and Adam Wood.

**Mon 15 - Fri 19 Sept | 11am - 3pm, no pre-booking required**

#### Coughton Court

**Coughton Court, Coughton, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5JA**

Coughton Court has been home to the Throckmorton family for more than 600 years. You can discover their story on your visit, and find out about the family's intriguing link to the infamous Gunpowder Plot. The Throckmortons still live at the venue and have created and managed the gardens, highlights of which include a bog garden and a beautiful display of roses in the walled garden.

Reopened this year, the Tower Roof provides visitors with impressive views over the estate.

**Sat 20 Sept | 10am-5pm, no pre-booking required**



#### The Fusilier Museum

**Pageant House, 2, Jury Street, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 4EW**

For this year's Heritage Open Days event, the Fusilier Museum is providing free access to a temporary exhibition entitled *Home & Away*. Featuring original trophies and a collection of paraphernalia and photographs, the display explores the impact of football on the lives of soldiers.

The exhibition also spotlights the teams that were created by the female workforce of the ammunition factories, and explores the role the sport played in terms of rehabilitating injured soldiers.

Related and family-focused activities will take place during the week, including a competition to win prizes.

**Fri 12 - Sat 13, Tues 16 - Sat 20 Sept | 10am-5pm, no pre-booking required**

#### Kenilworth Abbey Museum and Heritage Centre

**Abbey Fields, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1BP**

Kenilworth Abbey Museum & Heritage Centre is housed in a 14th-century red sandstone building which was once part of the medieval Abbey. The ground-floor exhibition tells the story of the Abbey and its buildings.

On Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 September only, members of the Kenilworth History & Archaeology Society will be leading a guided walk of the Abbey ruins, bringing to life the people who lived and worked there, and explaining why so little is left of the once-magnificent Augustinian Abbey.

**Sat 20 & Sun 21 Sept | 2.30pm-4.30pm, tour 3pm, book on the day**



#### Lunt Roman Fort Tours

**Coventry Road, Baginton, Coventry, CV8 3AJ**

Join Roman soldiers as they lead groups on a two-hour tour around this historic site, which dates back to 60AD. Take in the sites of Baginton, and further afield, as you climb up the newly renovated ramparts. Experience the world-famous Gyrus, where it's believed Ancient Roman soldiers trained their cavalry. Explore the reconstructed granary and learn about the Roman legions, their armour, and the other items on display from Culture Coventry's collections.

**Sat 20 Sept | 10am - 12.30pm & 1.30pm - 3.30pm, pre-booking required**

31 MAY - 7 SEPT 2025



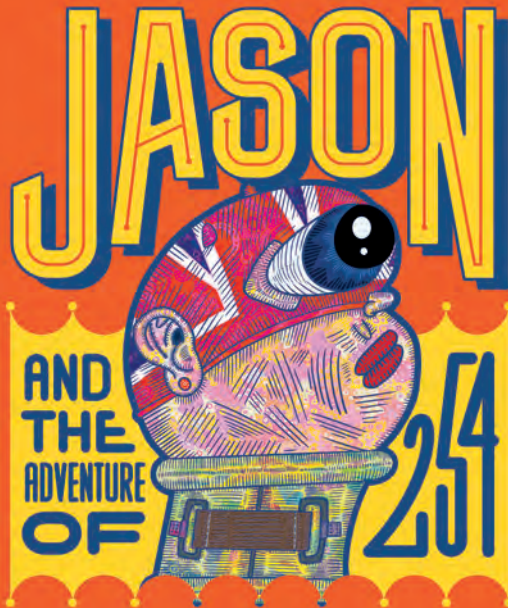
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**[www.thewavecoventry.com](http://www.thewavecoventry.com)**

The Wave Waterpark, City Centre, Coventry CV1 2PS.

The return of Heritage Open Days, continued...

## Roman Alcester Museum

Globe House, Priory Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5DZ

Roman Alcester Museum displays Roman artefacts that have been found within the town from over 100 archaeological excavations, spanning the last 100-plus years and including a mortarium thought to be nearly 2,000 years old.

Visitors can find out what life was like in Roman times - from the 1st to 4th centuries AD - and take advantage of the opportunity to handle genuine Roman pottery and other artefacts. A Roman history expert will give a guided tour of the museum on both days.

**Sat 13 | 10am-4pm & Sun 14 Sept | 10am-4pm, no pre-booking required**



## Worcestershire

### The Commandery

Sidbury, Worcester, WR1 2HU

Set in the heart of historic Worcester, The Commandery is famous for being the Royalist headquarters during the deciding battle of the English Civil War: the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

Heritage Open Days visitors will be able to enjoy the museum and beautiful gardens for free. They will also have the option of listening to a talk by Nick Joyce, one of the Midlands' leading architects specialising in building conservation. Nick will be chatting about his work with The Commandery across the decades.

**Sun 21 Sept | 10am-3pm. Talks at 10.30am and 1pm, pre-booking required**



## Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

Needle Mill Lane, Redditch, B98 8HY

Forty years after Queen Elizabeth II opened the museum, Forge Mill is this month celebrating local heritage in the company of a number of community groups. Motorbikes will be on display courtesy of the Royal Enfield Owners Club, model boats will be provided by the Little Radford Model Boat Club, and there will be live music from Indigo Arts. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust will also be playing a part in proceedings.

Visitors can enjoy free entry to the museum and join an informative tour led by one of the experienced volunteer guides.

**Sun 21 Sept | 10am - 4pm, no pre-booking required**



### The Guildhall Worcester

The Guildhall, High Street, Worcester, WR1 2EY

Situated on the High Street, The Guildhall boasts the remarkable Assembly Room, described by King George III as "a handsome gallery" when he stopped off there in 1788. Visitors can retrace footsteps to admire the Italianate ceiling and numerous striking portraits of royals and former mayors. Free tours provide an opportunity to discover fascinating stories about the Guildhall's rich past and find out how the building is being used in modern times. There will also be spooky visits to the venue's cells, where many prisoners once awaited their grim fate.

**Sat 13, Fri 19 & Sat 20 Sept | Sat 13 10am - 3pm, Fri 19 2pm - 3.30pm, Sat 20 10am and 11am, no pre-booking required**



## Hampton Lovett Church and Parish Rooms

The Forest, Hampton Lovett, Droitwich, WR9 0LU

Celebrating 200 years of the railways, visitors to the church can check out the Hampton Lovett Heritage Railway - which looks at Hampton Lovett's relationship with the railways, and in particular the Worcester & Wolverhampton railway line, which opened in 1850.

Visitors can also explore the Grade I listed church and discover its notable architectural features and monuments. Guided tours of the tower, and video tours, are also available.

**Sat 13 & Sun 14 Sept | Sat 10am - 4pm, Sun 10am - 2pm, no pre-booking required**

## The Tudor House Museum

38-42 Friar Street, Worcester, WR1 2NA

Tudor House Museum is hosting family-friendly curator tours (suitable for children aged seven-plus),



which will take a look at the architecture of the 16th-century timber-framed building. Visitors can investigate all the nooks and crannies and find out more about Tudor builders, building techniques and special features. Children will receive a building investigators tick-list, to record all the architectural features they spot along the way.

**Sat 13 & Sun 14 Sept | Sat tours 10am, 12pm and 2pm, Sun tours 12pm and 2pm, pre-booking preferred**

## Worcester News Newspaper Archives

Friary Walk Shopping Centre, Worcester, WR1 3LE

Worcester Civic Society will be hosting guided tours of the Worcester News newspaper archives at Friary Walk Shopping Centre in Worcester.

The archives contain 100 boxes of press cuttings & photographs, millions of black & white and colour negatives, 1,500 glass plate negatives dated from 1936 to 1965, and 254 editions of the Berrows journals, dated from 1801 to the 1990s.

**Sat 20 Sept | 12pm & 2pm, pre-booking preferred**

# SISTER ACT

**Playwright Amy Rosenthal talks about bringing the scandalous story of the Mitford Sisters to the stage**



**A powerful new drama based on the true story of six glamorous siblings with widely disparate political beliefs in pre-war Britain comes to the region this month. The background might be an unlikely mix of high society and violent extremism, but *The Party Girls* is really about families and love - as its writer, Amy Rosenthal, explains to What's On...**

The fascinating, as well as disturbing, story of the Mitford Sisters - six aristocratic siblings who lived in pre-war Britain - was pretty much tailor-made for dramatic interpretation. The family courted public attention and controversy in equal measure, living eccentric lives fuelled, defined and ultimately divided by glamour, scandal and polarised political views that embraced both communism and fascism. One sister (Unity) idolised Hitler, another (Diana) married British fascist leader Oswald Mosley, another (Jessica) became a communist, two (Nancy and Jessica) became novelists, one (Deborah) managed opulent stately home Chatsworth House.

They were certainly a fascinating brood. Their story was intriguing to playwright Amy Rosenthal, too. She'd read some of Nancy's novels as a youngster and knew about the sisters' notorious political affiliations, but she quickly became obsessed with their legend after being commissioned to write a play about them in 2017.

"I came to it quite naively, really," she explains, in talking about the play, which she titled *The Party Girls*. "It began as an enquiry into how a family of aristocratic young women became so violently politicised and polarised, and it turned into a passion project. I love research projects so was happy to jump in and see what I found - I didn't imagine I would discover something, or that I'd write something, that I felt so passionately about, and which felt so personal in lots of ways."

Amy, who studied to be a playwright at the University of Birmingham and is the daughter of dramatist Jack Rosenthal and actress Maureen Lipman, has a track record for writing fact-based historical dramas - her best-known play, *On The Rocks*, was all about a crucial time in author DH Lawrence's life. It's a genre that she loves.

"It's something about finding a story that fits with something that you feel and want to say about the world anyway. That can be really unexpected, or you discover it along the way. "There's something about a biographical play where you're writing about a person or people but there's a whole other play going on underneath which is probably much more personal in some ways."

But as much as *The Party Girls* is personal to Amy, the story of the Mitford Sisters has become increasingly universal, not least because it has just been turned into a TV series titled *Outrageous*, currently airing on

the U and U&DRAMA channels. Did she see it as unwelcome competition, or extra publicity for her stage version?

"When I heard about it, my feeling was slightly despairing because I've been working on it for so long. I said to our director, it's a bit like someone announcing that they're pregnant at your wedding. There's a bit of upstaging, especially as it's TV and it's big, but on the whole I suppose it's good news, and good to have them back in the zeitgeist." The one thing which many feel isn't welcome in the zeitgeist is the increasing prevalence of Far Right political views in modern society. It's a situation which makes the play both important and prescient, according to Deborah Shaw, chief executive of Marlowe Theatre, where the drama premieres: "Amy's play captures the wit of Nancy Mitford's novels and tells a cracking love story across continents, to a backdrop of the rise of extremism and dangerous populist leaders, intent on remaking the world order. *The Party Girls*, with its great shifts of history seen through a female lens, could not be more resonant for our times."

Amy agrees, believing the world has shifted dramatically since she began work on the play eight years ago.

"The play has had a long journey because the initial version got derailed by Covid, and it's a very different world now. There's definitely been a rise of the Far Right that makes the play feel much more resonant. A lot of the areas it touches on suddenly feel more topical than they did in 2017."

She also sees parallels between the sisters' views and actions and the almost unwitting way large portions of society have veered to the political right, steadfast in the belief that they are right.

"We've been talking about all these things in rehearsals, and all sorts of parallels come up. One of the things that's been really interesting to talk about, and is really interesting to write about, is how nobody ever feels that they're going to be judged by history. Everybody believes themselves to be right and good and fair, and would justify their argument passionately."

"That's why these women are so interesting to write about, because you have to put yourself in the shoes of people that I, as a playwright, profoundly disagree with. The job is to try and understand and feel your way into their skin somehow, which is very exciting as a writer, and I think as an actor as well."

Amy says it's also crucial to remember that the sisters weren't all fascists. Jessica Mitford ("the lynchpin of our story") was a communist - which effectively split the family - while two of the sisters were relatively apolitical. And much of the siblings' unconventional nature came from being self-educated ("the father wouldn't let them go to school because he thought they'd get thick ankles from playing hockey"), so everything they learned came from the strange collection of books in the family library. "They're eccentric, they're witty, and bonded like a load of animals brought up together without much sense of an outside world. It's the constellation of all of them that's interesting, and what it did to them as sisters."

Amy is keen to acknowledge that the play is as much a family drama as a political one: "Richard Beacham, our director, said he described it to someone as a play about love, and it really is - a play about family love, romantic love, and in a way about self-acceptance and self-love. The context is violent extremism and the rumblings of various forms of hatred, but the actual arc of the play is about love."

The playwright is also keen to stress that it contains plenty of humour, to balance the darkness of some of the drama.

"That's the most important thing to say! I would absolutely never want anyone to leave a play of mine not having laughed. I passionately believe that you can hold the dark and the light simultaneously, and that audiences are intelligent enough to understand and enjoy that. It's something that we all know from life - that comedy and tragedy are two sides of the same coin and deeply intertwined."

"Also, I always want my audiences to leave with a sense of hope, so the play is constructed in a way that that should be the case. I hope it will speak to people in a provocative way that makes them think - at the same time as having a good time!"

.....

**The Party Girls shows at The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 9 to Saturday 13 September; Malvern Theatres, from Tuesday 16 to Saturday 20 September; and The Rep, Birmingham, from Monday 6 to Saturday 11 October**

# Leamington Music Autumn Season 2025



**Friday 26 September • 7.30pm**

Unitarian Chapel, Warwick

**Penelope Appleyard** *soprano*

**Jonathan Delbridge** *square piano*

*Sense and Musicality* – in celebration of Jane Austen's 250th anniversary.

**Friday 10 October • 7.30pm**

Holy Trinity Church, Leamington

**Marmen String Quartet**

*Haydn • Bartók • Debussy*

**Tuesday 21 October • 7.30pm**

St Mary's Church, Warwick

**Stile Antico**

*The Golden Renaissance*

**Tuesday 4 November • 7.30pm**

St Mary's Church, Warwick

**The York Waits**

*Fortune My Foe* – music and readings from the time of the Gunpowder Plot

**Friday 14 November • 7.30pm**

Holy Trinity Church, Leamington

**Gildas String Quartet**

*Jessie Montgomery • Alwyn • Beethoven*

**For full details visit**

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**Thursday 4 December • 7.30pm**

Unitarian Chapel, Warwick

**The Mellstock Band**

*The Christmas Hearth*

*A seasonal mix of jovial songs, stirring dance music, and haunting carols*

**Tuesday 16 December • 7.30pm**

St Mary's Church, Warwick

**Joglaresa**

*Here We come a-Carolling!*

*Raising the rafters with joyous medieval and traditional 'caroles'*

# Autumnal



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**David Le Page**

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**Vivaldi**

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Guitar

**Mark Ashford**

Director

**David Le Page**

**[orchestraoftheswan.org](http://orchestraoftheswan.org)**



QUOTIDIAN

Classical music from across the region...



## Chineke! Orchestra Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 24 September

"Chineke! is not only an exciting idea but a profoundly necessary one," said Sir Simon Rattle a handful of years ago, in talking about the emergence of Europe's first orchestra to feature a majority of black and minority ethnic musicians. "It's the kind of idea which will deepen and enrich classical music in the UK for generations. What a thrilling prospect!" Chineke! have certainly lived up to Sir

Simon's expectations since making their debut, and are here celebrating a decade of musical excellence. They are joined for the occasion by soloists Sheku Kaneh-Mason, his sister Isata, and Tai Murray. Featured works include Coleridge-Taylor's adventurous and poetic Ballade In A Minor and William Dawson's long-overlooked Negro Folk Symphony. The conductor for the evening is Roderick Cox.

## Kazuki Conducts The Dream Of Gerontius

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 17 September

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's music director, Kazuki Yamada, is here joined by the ever-impressive CBSO Chorus, contralto Jess Dandy, tenor David Butt Philip and baritone Roderick Williams to perform Edward Elgar's The Dream Of Gerontius. The piece was premiered at Birmingham Town Hall in 1900 and is widely considered to be the Worcestershire-born composer's finest choral work.



## London Concertante: A Night At The Opera

Worcester Cathedral, Sat 20 September

While it's a given that they take the business of musicmaking extremely seriously, there's certainly nothing stuffy about London Concertante. Indeed, 50 percent of people who attend a performance by this 34-year-old chamber orchestra are first-time classical music concert-goers. It's a statistic which speaks volumes for the ensemble's commitment to remaining at all times light-of-touch and refreshingly accessible. The Concertante are here presenting an evening of opera, performing works by Puccini, Verdi, Rossini and Mozart.

## Peter Donohoe: Celebrity Piano Recital

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Tues 16 September

Unquestionably one of the foremost pianists of modern times, Peter Donohoe has built up an impressive repertoire during the course of a glittering half-century career.

The 72-year-old opens the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's new season with a concert that sees him perform three much-loved works: Mozart's Piano Sonata in D K576; Messiaen La Fauvette des jardins (1972); and Beethoven's monumental Sonata in B flat Op106 - Hammerklavier.

## Armonico Consort: JS Bach Mass in B Minor

Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, Sat 27 September; Malvern Theatre, Sun 28 September

Armonico Consort here turn their attention to JS Bach's Mass in B Minor - a work which, in a sense, is a homage to the composer's own music.

Created over the final quarter-century of his life, the piece is scattered with music and references that Bach considered to be his best work. It also features movements which he'd allowed to develop over time, and to which he'd returned at a later date to make perfect. The Mass was never performed complete in Bach's lifetime.

Armonico's performance of it will be given under the directorship of their founder & conductor, Christopher Monks.

## Sense & Musicality

Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa, Fri 26 September

What better way to mark the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth than by whiling away an evening exploring the legendary author's relationship with music, emotion, and romance?

Featured pieces include some of Jane's favourite compositions, and works from the Austen family collection that she played and sang. A new song, Ode To Pity - a rare musical setting of an Austen poem - is also included.

The performers, in period dress, are early-music specialist Penelope Appleyard and pianist Jonathan Delbridge.



**Stratford  
Literary  
Festival**

# Autumn Festival

30<sup>th</sup> October - 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025

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Sir Philip Pullman  
John Cleese  
Lyse Doucet  
Gyles Brandreth  
Mick Herron  
Tony Robinson  
Nicola Sturgeon  
Lady Brenda Hale  
Alice Loxton  
Mark Radcliffe

Joanna Page  
Andrew Lownie  
Martin O'Neill  
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Live music from across the region...

## Nadia Reid

The Tin at The Coal Vaults, Coventry,  
Tues 23 September

Nadia Reid is on a long journey - and with her latest album, *Enter Now Brightness*, she is moving still further away from her folk-music roots. "I still feel uncomfortable about the word folk and being a folk singer," says the 34-year-old New Zealander. "It makes me sort of cringe. It's too confining."

There's certainly no sense of Nadia feeling confined on the new album, which effectively blends textural pop with country-leaning folk-rock and showcases a sound which is distinctly her own. "I'm so much better off now that it exists," she says of the record. "Now feels like a new time."



## Jake Bugg

hmv Empire, Coventry, Thurs 11 September

If you want a reminder of how quickly time flies, how about this: precocious singer-songwriter Jake Bugg, who performed at Glastonbury at the age of 17 and had a number-one album the following year, is now 31! In the interim period, he's released five more albums, toured the world, supported the Rolling Stones and even recorded the soundtrack to a documentary about football superstar Ronaldinho. It's been a whirlwind 14 years for the boy from a Nottingham council estate, a background that keeps him grounded as well as amiably matter-of-fact. Jake's Coventry gig sees him performing two sets; one acoustic, one electric.



## The Rheingans Sisters

Malvern Cube, Tues 16 September

The Rheingans Sisters have been described as 'a truly unique and unmissable act on the folk and world music stage'. And it's easy to see why. With their adventurous use of fiddles, voices, banjo, bansitar, tambourin à

cordes, spoken word, dancing feet and percussion, the award-winning siblings have developed a rich artistic approach to the deconstruction and reimagining of traditional music. They visit Malvern a year after the release of their most recent, and fifth, studio album, *Start Close In*.

## The Leylines

The Marris Bar, Worcester, Fri 5 September

The Leylines are a firm favourite on the UK festival circuit, drawing comparisons with the likes of Levellers, Mad Dog Mcree and Ferocious Dog.

With a genre-defying sound that ranges from traditional folk to full-blown festival rock, the West Country band have just released third studio album *Phosphores*. Six years in the making, the record sees them seamlessly blending expansive, cinematic rock with the heartfelt authenticity of indie-folk.

## Sarah McQuaid

Nuneaton Folk Club, Wed 3 September; West Malvern Social Club, Wed 17 September

Playing music that invites reflection, connection, and a deep appreciation of the quiet power of a well-crafted song, Cornwall-based singer-songwriter Sarah McQuaid blends a lush, velvety voice with excellent musicianship, insightful storytelling and an engaging personality. It's a powerful combination, and one which has seen her gather around her a small-but-growing army of loyal and appreciative fans.

## Amit Dattani

Temperance, Leamington Spa,  
Sun 21 September

Musically speaking, nimble finger-picking and expertly crafted songwriting are Amit Dattani's stand-out talents, and they've secured him a solid reputation on the folk circuit in the 20-plus years he's been plying his trade. Amit is here making a welcome return to Leamington to launch his latest album, *Wrong Kind Of One*.





# HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

**Jason Byrne brings his new show to Birmingham Town Hall next month...**

Jason Byrne is the kind of comedian who thrives on chaotic audience interaction - but how does he decide who to select from the crowd?

Well, for starters, he's probably going to go for someone sitting near the front, as, by now, those are the punters who'll know there's a good chance of them getting involved in his high-energy shows. He also tends to pick men, because their ineptitude at following instructions makes things even more entertaining.

"Every time I've picked a woman, they've done what I've asked them perfectly," says Jason, on the eve of taking his Edinburgh Festival Fringe show, *Head In The Clouds*, out on tour. "When a man does it, he's often facing the wrong way, he doesn't know what I'm saying, he's gone off and come back. Men between the ages of 30 and 60 are normally so used to being guided by their wives that they don't know what they're doing. Once, this guy couldn't hear what I was saying because his wife had forgotten to give him his hearing aids - to actually put them in his ears for him!"

Jason says the name for the new show comes from him having got lost in his own imagination as a kid. "The teachers would tell me I had my head in the clouds. I was obviously creating my own little world, and they were always telling me to stop daydreaming and go back to maths."

It's something he spoke about with the late Irish poet & playwright Seamus Heaney, some of whose teachers would regularly reprimand him for favouring scribbling away over following the rules. Imagine the art that would've been lost had that type of teacher succeeded in beating the dreams out of kids like that.

Jason's on a mission to get adults to enjoy the giddiness of mucking around - the sort of ridiculous fun you used to see on Vic Reeves & Bob Mortimer's shows, such as fruit being tromboned off people's heads.

"I'm not talking about things like office team building, which is horrendous. Nobody likes that," says Dubliner Jason. "This is just me orchestrating a silly night with some nice bits of stand-up."

One of the stunts he's got planned for the tour occurred to him after he received a shipment of clouds that he'd ordered from Temu. He put one on his head, and looking in the mirror, was reminded of Jamiroquai. So,

of course, he started dancing. It then got him thinking about the *Virtual Insanity* video, and how that might be recreated on the (comically) cheap. Without wanting to give too much away, it's going to involve sheets of lino and enthusiastic but baffled participation. And it might well result in Jason falling over.

In recent years, he's been saying he's got to be less physical on stage than he used to be. He does, after all, now have six stents in his body and is supposed to be taking things a bit easier. But, although what he's doing now is less dangerous than what he's done in the past (such as swinging on a mock wrecking ball in white vest and pants in 2013/14), he's never going to be the sort of comic who stands behind a microphone for the whole show.

In last year's outing - titled *No Show*, as it was largely improvised - he only really did one big bit of physical comedy, and that was miming the guy who works on the waltzers at the fair ground - walking around the stage backwards. Simple but hilarious.

One of the ideas he's playing with for the new show is a sort of acknowledgement of the multi-generational appeal of his comedy. "I hate the way younger people get dissed for being on their phones," he says, after underlining how much he likes seeing all ages in his audience. "I always say that if we had phones in the 1980s, we'd have been on the phones! We wouldn't have been saying, 'I'm not going on the phone, oh no, I'm going to build a raft or a fire.' We'd have been holding those things and going: 'Look at this!'"

So, again, without wanting to give too much away, he'll be calling a few younger people up on stage and getting them to guess the purpose of certain now-obsolete objects from the 1980s and 90s. This will all happen while somebody else does something ridiculously distracting (and specific) in the background. It's all carefully planned chaos.

Jason doesn't really have a problem with hecklers; if anything, his biggest on-stage challenges have involved audience members wanting to join in, but that always ends up in a fun time for everyone. On the odd occasion when someone isn't being terribly nice, he has, in the past, had a brilliantly creative way of dealing with it. He used to have Deal Or No Deal-type boxes across the back of the stage, and when someone was giving him a hard time, he'd say: "Ah, let's not fight. Do you

want to win some money?" They'd always say yes, and when they picked their number, he'd open the corresponding box to reveal the word, 'c\*\*t'. Jason never uses that word on stage, so the effect is always jaw-dropping.

He's also had audience members heckle each other. Once, a Londoner described himself as a "building manager" and a Scot at the back of the auditorium said: "Ah, he's a janny."

"I was confused, so I asked what that is. A Scottish lady said: 'A janny is a janny.' Then, another woman stood up and went 'Janitor, Jason. She's trying to say janitor.' I went: 'Oh, who are you?' and she went, 'I'm a protestant,' and sat down. The crowd were killing themselves."

As well as putting together *Head In The Clouds*, Jason is currently working on an animation project which he hopes will be a sort of Irish version of *The Simpsons*. Based on Paddy Lama, his play about his late father, is an adult, 1980s/90s-set sitcom about an Irish family. It's being developed with Boulder Media, who make cult shows like *Captain Fall* and *Grimsbury*. Some of the people behind *Rick & Morty* are involved, and if it gets financed and commissioned, Jason will do some of the voices, working alongside a few well-known actors.

In the meantime, though, he's focusing on *Head In The Clouds* - and trying to anticipate how long various stunts will take. He recently watched a YouTube video about the 1974 World Diddling Championships (all about the art of making Celtic-sounding musical noises with one's mouth, and known variously as 'fiddling' or 'lilting' in Ireland). He can't stop thinking about how funny it is.

"You sometimes have men in a pub with no talent, no ability to sing, and the whole place goes quiet while they start going 'fiddledee-dee'. The reason they do it is that the English took our instruments off us hundreds of years ago," he laughs, hinting at some comical onstage retribution being planned.

At a time when grim news is around every corner, it's the kind of silly fun we could all do with. As he puts it: "In case World War Three starts, it'll be really good if I get the show in just before then."

.....

**Jason Byrne plays Birmingham Town Hall on Friday 10 October**



## Mark Watson

Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Fri 26 September; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 27 September; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Wed 1 & Thurs 2 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 2 November; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 16 May

Well established on the UK comedy circuit, Mark Watson was born in Bristol to Welsh parents and initially delivered his act with a Welsh accent, claiming he felt more comfortable talking in a voice that he didn't quite recognise as his own.

"Comedy is certainly a time-consuming element of my life," he admits, "but then while I'm out touring and on stage, there are people at home doing far less glamorous things. There have certainly been times when I've been very happy to say, 'Of course I'd like to stay and help out with that plumbing crisis, but the Midlands awaits!'"

## Dara Ó Briain

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 17 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 5 & Thurs 6 November

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

Jokes include: "If we were truly created by God, why do we occasionally bite the insides

of our mouths?" and "Even though you're still allowed to smoke in your own house, do you have to stub it out when a burglar breaks in, as your house is now his workplace?"

Dara stops off in the region with his latest touring show, *Re:Creation*.



## He Huang

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 14 September

Dating failures, travel disasters, and life's dark absurdities. Nothing is off-limits to He Huang, who describes herself as 'single, Chinese, and navigating adulthood like it's an obstacle-course designed by my worst enemy'.

Born in the city of Chongqing, He is visiting the Midlands this month with her star very much in the ascendant, some three years after scoring a major hit on television's *Australia's Got Talent*. Her audition for the show went viral, garnering more than 60 million views worldwide.

## Shaparak Khorsandi

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 17 September; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 30 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 1 March

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 the Midlands with long-touring show *Scatterbrain*.



## Live At The Belgrade

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 19 September

The Belgrade's latest 'uplifting night of laughter' brings together a strong line-up of comedians: Tez Ilyas, Nabil Abdulrashid, and the Midlands' very own Josh Pugh, Gary Delaney and Lindsey Santoro (pictured).



## Eric Idle

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 10 September

You don't *need* to be of a certain vintage to know who Eric Idle is, but it probably helps, given that he's best known as a member of legendary comedy troupe *Monty Python*, whose heyday was way back in the 1970s. Eric's done plenty more besides, mind, in a career spanning 60-plus years. So he'll have no shortage of material for this brand-new one-man show - a nostalgic deep-dive into his life and times.

Ahead of the mid-month Symphony Hall stop-off, Eric is warning audience members to brace themselves for an evening containing comedy, music, philosophy and, er, "one fart joke".

## Alan Davies

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 29 September; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 17 October

Alan Davies has been a high-profile television face for more than 30 years now, first coming to prominence in hit detective series Jonathan Creek.

Further and numerous TV credits have followed - perhaps most notably QI and Taskmaster - ensuring he's remained very much in the public consciousness...

He is here making a relatively rare headline appearance with brand-new touring show Think Ahead.



## Angela Barnes

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Fri 26 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 14 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 6 December

When Angela Barnes' inspirational father died, it proved to be the catalyst for her to follow his advice - *finally* - and hurl herself into the rough, tough world of standup comedy...

And her success since then has proved that she definitely made the right decision.

A BBC New Comedy Awards winner, Angela is this month visiting the region with Angst, a new show that 'mostly features stories of unmitigated failure, a distinct lack of wisdom, a little bit of German and loads of jokes'.

## Cally Beaton

Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Thurs 18 September; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 19 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 6 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 21 February

Comedian Sally Phillips is among Cally Beaton's many and varied admirers. "She spins tales like Aisling Bea," says Bridget Jones star Sally, "has the hair and strength of Pippi Longstocking, and the punk edge of Debbie Harry. Do I want a Cally Beaton rebrand? Hell yeah!" Cally is visiting the Midlands with Namaste Motherf\*ckers, a show described by its publicity as 'a quick-witted, unexpected and unapologetic insight into life in midlife'.



## ISMO: Woo Hoo! World Tour

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 16 September

Finnish comedians causing a stir on the UK comedy circuit are hardly ten-a-penny, so ISMO's Town Hall gig offers a perfect opportunity to bag yourself a novel experience. Combining sharp observational humour with a unique perspective on everyday life, the 46-year-old funnyman - full name Ismo Mikael Leikola - shot to stardom

in the United States a decade ago when he won comedy club Laugh Factory's Funniest Person In The World competition. Life since then has been pretty good for the Jyväskylä-born laughter merchant, whose clever wordplay and humorous takes on English quirks have helped him chisel out a refreshingly unique style of comedy.



## Emmanuel Sonubi

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 26 September; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 9 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 11 November; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 13 November

Emmanuel Sonubi has been clambering up comedy's greasy pole at spectacular speed and looks set to achieve big things in the coming years.

An Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee, he's visiting the Midlands with a show in which he contemplates his life after surviving heart failure, in the process exploring the 'strange and funny ways we all find to keep going when life gets hard'.

## Tom Stade

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 11 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 26 September; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 2 October; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 20 November; Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton, Sat 29 November

Clever, controversial and Canadian pretty much sums up Tom Stade, a familiar face on television programmes including Live At The Apollo and Mock The Week.

Having racked up 30 years on the comedy frontline, Tom is visiting the region with brand-new touring show Naughty By Nature.



# FELINE GROOVY

**Griff Rhys Jones is happy to be back on the road  
with stand-up comedy show The Cat's Pyjamas**



## Comedian, writer, actor, TV presenter and national treasure Griff Rhys Jones brings his latest stand-up tour to the region next month. It's less about jokes and more about chatting to the audience, he tells What's On - which is just as well, because he does like to talk...

Remember Rowley Birkin QC, the rambling old barrister from *The Fast Show* who would witter on about randomly disparate events before admitting he was "very, very drunk"? Interviewing Griff Rhys Jones is a bit like that. A consummate raconteur, the 71-year-old (no, I couldn't believe it either) talks non-stop - with barely a pause for breath - regularly chuckles to himself and continually veers off-topic to another unconnected yarn. It's mercifully more endearing than infuriating, and in many ways reflects the haphazard nature of his varied career, which he cheerily admits can no longer be easily pigeonholed.

"I don't know what to put in my passport anymore - I have to fake it. If someone asks me what I do for a living, I say 'God knows.'" Griff has been performing for 50 years, and is probably best known as one of the stars of award-winning sketch show *Not The Nine O'Clock News*, where he forged a hugely successful double act with Mel Smith that saw them front their own prime-time TV series between 1984 and 1998 - and even introduce Queen at Live Aid.

Since then, he's gone on to embrace a range of roles, including stage acting - he has two Olivier Awards to show for it - and presenting TV shows (including 10 years of *It'll Be Alright On The Night*) and travel documentaries, the latter of which he admits came from his "inability to say no", as well as his curiosity about... well, pretty much everything.

"When the BBC said they'd like me to become one of their people who goes around the world saying how beautiful things are, I said okay," he claims. That attitude has also seen him risk life and limb by doing stunts like bungee jumping and riding shotgun in a drag race car ("you'll see me trying to find the seatbelt") just to appease the director's "need for jeopardy".

It all provides great material for anecdotes and tall tales, of course, and his autumn touring show, entitled *The Cat's Pyjamas*, is sure to feature a few. Or will it?

"I have a couple of people I work with, Mike and Will, and they say it's very difficult to organise my show, as I never tell the same story twice," chuckles the comic, instantly digressing into one. I drag him back on to the origins of the show's unusual title.

"I just like the expression - we had all sorts of funny titles about being groovy, but then I decided on *The Cat's Pyjamas*. My daughter said 'You can't call it that,' and I said why not, and she said 'Well, you'll have to be good.'

"As I explain to the audience, all this doesn't mean I'm the cat's pyjamas; it means *they're* the cat's pyjamas."

My query about whether the title is in fact the family-friendly version of a well-known expression involving part of a canine's anatomy takes him down an especially interesting rabbit hole.

"Well yes, and I do know a bit about this actually," he says, almost conspiratorially. "I thought I'd call it *The Dog's Bollocks*, but there was a general feeling that I couldn't. Then I looked up the dog's bollocks in the Oxford English Dictionary, and do you know the term is accredited to Mel Smith!

"I don't think the idea is that Mel made it up entirely - I think most of London would dispute that - but the truth is, he is the first person to officially use it in a publication. He wrote a play [with Peter Brewis and Bob Goody] called *The Gambler*, and it was in that.

"It's crazy. In 30 years of working with Mel, he never wrote a useful or good sketch for the two of us to do, and there he is."

Rather than dwell on the poignancy of this nod to his late comedy partner (who died in 2013), he's already off on another flight of fancy.

"Apparently, 'the cat's pyjamas' was invented in the 1920s when American journalism was at its finest, and it was all about some woman who used to take her cat for a stroll while wearing pyjamas."

Cats became quite a theme of our conversation at this point - how Griff unwittingly adopted one (Henry), which was then joined by a pregnant one, followed by kittens ("Henry is clearly not the father") and so on. "Maybe I should do a whole show about cats," he mused, having already noted how he likes to talk to audience members about their dogs, before guessing the breed based on the theory that owners end up looking like their pets.

Interacting with the audience is a key part of *The Cat's Pyjamas*, but unlike the first leg of

the tour, the upcoming shows will see the advertised Q&A element brought forward in the running order, simply to ensure there's time to fit it in.

"I used to say there'd be a chance for questions at the end, but by the time I got to the end of the show, I was looking at my watch thinking, there isn't time, because the last buses are all going."

Relying on the audience to provide interesting questions is obviously a risky business, but Griff's wide-ranging interests and penchant for diversion make for fairly easy pickings - although he *has* noticed that the topics (topiary and elastic-waisted trousers among them) tend to reflect the demographic of the ticket buyers.

"My audience have a wide range of interests, which corresponds to their general age and maturity," he says, acknowledging that interaction with younger people has become increasingly fraught with age-related woe in recent years.

"I used to get stopped in the street and people would say 'Griff, I'm your biggest fan.' Then it was 'My mum is your biggest fan,' then 'My grandmother is your biggest fan' - which is really alarming. Soon, it's going to be 'My ancestors were your biggest fans.'"

And as much as he enjoys the variety of his other work - he'll return to acting next year to star in a stage version of *I'm Sorry Prime Minister*, an update of the TV show *Yes, Prime Minister* - he admits that his return to stand-up comedy, which began soon after Smith died, has been hugely rewarding.

"There's something liberating about being able to walk on stage and just start with whatever has just happened to you," he says. "It's such a wonderfully new thing for me, even though I've now been doing it for 10 years.

"But I love doing it - I'm a comedian again."

.....

**Griff Rhys Jones' *The Cat's Pyjamas* visits Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Tuesday 14 October; Malvern Theatres on Sun 2 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry on Thursday 13 November; Cheltenham Town Hall on Wednesday 26 November**



## Calamity Jane

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tuesday 9 - Saturday 13 September

Boasting songs such as *The Deadwood Stage*, *Black Hills Of Dakota*, *Windy City* and *Secret Love*, *Calamity Jane* tells the story of the Wild West's most notorious female outlaw, along the way offering an all-in combination of music, comedy, drama and dance.

The famous 1953 film version, starring Doris Day and Howard Keel, remains one of the best-regarded Hollywood musicals of its era.

Multi-award-winning West End performer Carrie Hope Fletcher takes the title role for this stage version.

"Calamity is one of those parts that has everything," says Carrie.

"She's got a love story; she's comedic; she's the action hero; she gets incredible songs. There are so few roles that do everything and manage to tick all of those boxes."

## Blood Brothers

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 23 - Sat 27 September; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Tues 20 - Sat 24 January; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 27 - Sat 31 January

Although it's effectively a class-driven 'scouse melodrama', to describe *Blood Brothers* as such is to greatly underestimate the emotional response it produces within its audience.

The show features adult actors playing children, a narrator who wanders through the scenes with warnings of impending doom, a good helping of sharp social awareness to counteract the sticky sentimentality, and a raft of much-loved musical numbers, including *Bright New Day*, *Marilyn Monroe*, and the emotionally charged *Tell Me It's Not True*.

Musical theatre veteran Vivienne Carlyle stars as Mrs Johnstone.



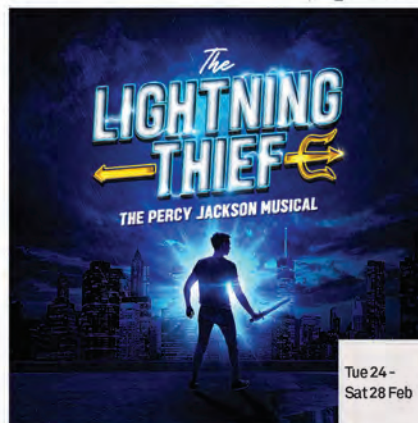
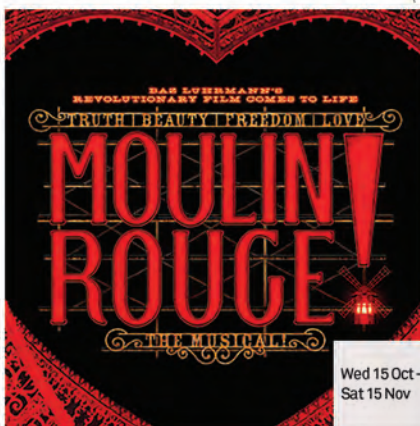
## Fat Ham

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 13 September

Hot on the heels of its terrific traditional version of *Hamlet* and an extraordinary Radiohead mashup entitled *Hamlet Hail To The Thief*, the Royal Shakespeare Company is now presenting the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fat Ham*, a hugely imaginative take on the Bard's most famous tragedy by American playwright James Ijames.

"I've just taken the elements and shaken them in a box," says James. "When I was writing it, reading it in a writers' group, and even when we were first doing it, I was like 'I hope people don't perceive this as a mockery of it', because I am really leaning into the humour of human folly. It's not jokes with setups and punchlines; it's much more than that. It feels in line with how Shakespeare used humour in his plays."







## Juliet & Romeo

Thimblemill Library, Smethwick, Sun 21 September; Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Tues 23 September; Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge, Wed 24 September

Shakespeare's famous teenage lovers, Romeo and Juliet, didn't die in a tragic misunderstanding. Instead, they lived into middle age, with at least one of them then succumbing to a midlife crisis...

That's the scenario being explored in this interesting play from Lost Dog, a company whose productions brilliantly blend dance, theatre and comedy.

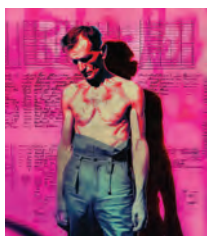
This latest show has certainly gone down well with the critics. Its Olivier Award-nominated director, Ben Duke, has been roundly praised for his smart and inventive writing and beautifully assured handling of the material.

## The Pink List

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Sat 6 September

The Second World War came to an end in 1945, but the persecution of gay people in Germany continued well beyond the Nazi party's reign of terror; into the decades which followed, in fact. To make matters worse, the post-war prosecutions of homosexuals were based on information which had been gathered *by the Nazis* - the so-called Pink Lists...

This little-known real-life story is the subject of Michael Trauffer's one-man musical, this month showing in Birmingham on the back of a hugely successful run in Edinburgh during the summer.



## Surinderella

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 23 - Sat 27 September

Christmas is coming early to Wolverhampton this year, courtesy of this British South Asian pantomime, co-produced by the city's Grand Theatre and Rifco Theatre Company. Fusing the British tradition of panto with 'a spectacular Desi vibe', the show offers a delightfully fresh, all-singing, all-dancing take on the much-loved fairytale of, yes, you guessed it (the clue's in the title!), Cinderella. Expect a fabulous Devi Godmother, 'a cow with more attitude than a desi girl', two selfie-obsessed, Insta-vlogging stepsisters, and all the glitz and glamour of a Bollywood Ball.

## American Candy Studio Tour

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 20 September

While many are legitimate businesses, some American candy stores here in the UK have been the subject of investigation, with claims being made that they may be connected to numerous questionable practices; think, tax evasion, money laundering and the selling of counterfeit goods.

As such, they make an ideal setting for Tom Murray's dark comedy about capitalism and corruption...

Candy-store employees Zaynab and Connor want to close up the shop for the night, but one customer refuses to leave. Ten minutes later, her unconscious body is in the basement - and what Zaynab and Connor uncover from there has a profound effect on the course of their lives...

"The American candy store is a perfect metaphor," playwright Tom is quoted as saying by [broadwayworld.com](http://broadwayworld.com). "A shop no one asked for, no one visits, and whose real purpose remains unknown - a 'front', not unlike the artificial roles many of us play in today's economy."

## The Talented Mr. Ripley

The Rep, Birmingham, Mon 22 - Sat 27 September

The Crown's Ed McVey and EastEnders actor and Strictly Come Dancing finalist Maisie Smith star as Ripley and Marge respectively in this first-ever UK tour of The Talented Mr Ripley.

Adapted for the stage from the famous Patricia Highsmith novel - which is this year

celebrating its 70th anniversary - it tells a tale of deception, desire, deadly ambition, lies, identity theft, and murder. The show's producers are promising a production boasting razor-sharp dialogue, simmering tension, and a dangerously charismatic anti-hero.

## The Complete Works Of Jane Austen (Abridged)

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 29 - Tues 30 September; Lichfield Garrick, Mon 6 October

Now, if you feel you really should pay more attention to the works of one of the world's greatest-ever romantic-fiction writers, but you really don't fancy ploughing your way through her brilliant but weighty tomes, then this is definitely the show for you!

All of Jane Austen's beloved heroines, friends, and love interests are here presented by 'three nimble actors'. And the talented trio do so pretty much in the blink of an eye, too - allowing you not only to become very knowledgeable very quickly about Austen's canon of work, but also to get down the pub in time for last orders...

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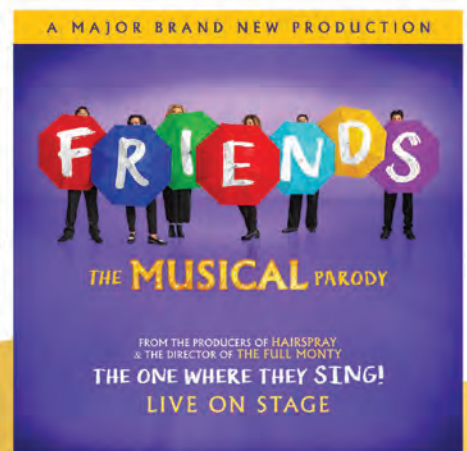
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# LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE

**The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical promises to be epic in more ways than one...**



**Rick Riordan's hit series of fantasy books, Percy Jackson And The Olympians, follows its titular teen hero on an adventure of mythic proportions - an adventure undertaken after Percy learns that he's the son of the Greek god Poseidon... Previously adapted into a blockbuster film and a Disney+ TV show, the series' first book, The Lightning Thief, has now found new life as an on-stage musical, which visits the Midlands this month as part of a UK tour. Cast members Vasco Emauz, Kayna Montecillo and Cahir O'Neill share their perspectives on bringing the legendary tale into theatres...**

This year marks 20 years since the publication of *The Lightning Thief* - the first novel in the Percy Jackson And The Olympians series by Rick Riordan. Riordan's books have sold more than 180 million copies worldwide, and to commemorate the special anniversary, a musical adaptation of that first novel has set off on a UK tour.

The Percy Jackson stories have already been adapted into blockbuster films and a Disney+ TV series. *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical*, with a book by Joe Tracz and music & lyrics by Rob Rokicki, is the latest incarnation of the hit story.

In it, New York teenager Percy learns that he is the half-blood son of the Greek god Poseidon. With newly discovered powers that he can't control, a destiny he doesn't want, a whole textbook's worth of mythical monsters on his trail, and the future of the world hanging in the balance, Percy must learn what it means to be a hero, as he and his friends embark on an epic, edge-of-the-seat adventure.

Vasco Emauz is thrilled to be playing Percy: "I really love him as a character, and I think a lot of people will see themselves in him. Throughout our lives we've all felt misunderstood or lost. On his journey, Percy finds where he belongs and finds his value as someone who is worthy of love.

The actor sees a lot of himself in the character: "Like Percy, I'm also quite resilient, but when I was younger, I never felt like I had a place where I belonged, and I didn't really feel understood. Now that I'm a bit older, I'm a lot more self-assured and I know who I am."

This is only Vasco's second professional role. He previously played Marty McFly in *Back To The Future The Musical* at London's Adelphi Theatre. "It was a pipe dream to be in London doing musical theatre, let alone leading a whole show. Playing such an iconic character was beyond my wildest dreams. It was a blast!"

*The Lightning Thief* presents some new challenges - including mastering stage combat. "I've never toured before, and it's a whole different beast to doing a show in a static place. But that's exciting, and I can't wait to explore other parts of the country... I've never played with swords before, so that's a great new skill to learn. The fights look really cool."

And is there a message amidst all the fun and spectacle of *The Lightning Thief*? "Definitely. Percy's mum sings a song where she says that

'normal' is a myth, and that everyone has their own issues to deal with, which is a beautiful lyric - and it's true. Everyone is different in their own way, so what's normal anyway? Just be who you are and you will find your people and your place in the world."

Vasco is joined on stage by Kayna Montecillo, playing Annabeth, and Cahir O'Neill, who takes the role of Grover. And, as is the case for Vasco, *The Lightning Thief* is also the second professional appearance for his two young co-stars.

Wise and fearless Annabeth is the daughter of Athena (the goddess of wisdom and warfare) and has been waiting for someone to take her on a quest.

"When Percy turns up, she realises it's finally her moment," Kayna explains. "She's very ambitious and smart, and she has confidence in her skill set. She expects a lot of herself, and she wants the best for herself - as do I." Kayna admits she wasn't much of a reader when growing up, so she first encountered the Percy Jackson universe through the films. "They got me into Greek mythology, which I found fascinating, and I loved the stories - but most of all, I really loved the friendships."

She made her debut in the revival of *Starlight Express* at the Troubadour Theatre in Wembley Park, where she had to hone her skating skills. "When I landed the job, I was so excited, but then I thought 'Oh God, I've got to be on roller skates for a year!' I ended up having the most amazing time, and it made me so much stronger as a performer."

The daughter of Filipino parents, Kayna adds: "One time there was a young Asian girl in the audience who was clearly so excited to see someone who looked like her on stage. Since then, I've strived to be a person that younger people can see in a show and be like 'If she looks like me and she's up there doing it, I can do it as well.'"

Kayna also hopes that *The Lightning Thief* will engage a young audience. "With *Starlight Express*, I remember seeing so many little kids in the audience, and their eyes would just light up every time they saw the set come down for the first time. It's going to be the same with *The Lightning Thief*, because the set is incredible. The costumes, the props and the puppetry make it magical, too."

Co-star Cahir O'Neill concurs. "It's going to be pure magic, especially for young audiences. This kind of story is the

foundation of them getting into musical theatre, and they're going to be blown away by it."

Cahir plays Grover, who is Percy's satyr sidekick and protector. "But he's a bit different from the other satyrs, who are usually very cocky in the way they present themselves. Grover is the complete opposite. He's such a shy, loving, heartwarming character, and you can't help but fall in love with him."

The Ireland-born actor was quite shy himself when he was a youngster, so his parents encouraged him to take up musical theatre to help bring him out of his shell. "It worked! My confidence has grown over the years, and now Grover is showing me how to become an even more open and optimistic person, because he always tries to find the good in every situation... I'd never have thought I would learn so much from a half-goat!"

Cahir had seen the films, but hadn't read the books before landing the role. "Then I read *The Lightning Thief* and found it so funny and just a delight. I couldn't put it down, and the musical adaptation takes it to a whole other level."

Singing the praises of the musical's score - "vocally demanding, in the best possible way" - Cahir has also had a challenge getting used to the goat legs.

"They're actually quite comfy, and there's a lot of padding in them, so during rehearsals people would sometimes lie on my legs and take little naps!"

He, too, sees the show as one that empowers people to express their differences. "It touches on individuals who feel like outsiders and who suffer from, say, ADHD or dyslexia. It says that there's no such thing as being normal. We get people telling us 'Percy Jackson has meant so much to me over the years, so now to have it come to my hometown is great, because I get to see it with my family and friends.' That's so wonderful to hear."

.....  
**The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 October, and at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre from Tuesday 14 to Saturday 18 October.**

**The production then returns to the region next year, showing at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 February**



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## Theatre previews from around the region



### The Rocky Horror Show

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 22 - Sat 27 September; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 13 - Sat 18 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 6 - Sat 11 July

Hook up your fishnets, tighten your corsets and prepare to 'do The Time Warp again' - The Rocky Horror Show is returning to the Midlands! Richard O'Brien's cult production tells the tale of the straight-laced Brad and the deliciously corruptible Janet, who arrive at the castle of the alien transvestite Frank N. Furter and witness the birth of the monster, Rocky. Along the way, they take the audience through a selection of love-'em-or-loathe-'em musical numbers, including Damn It Janet, Sweet Transvestite, and The Time Warp. Great fun's a guarantee - particularly if you get into the spirit of things and attend the show dressed in your very best stockings & suspenders (as many patrons do)!

### The Grand Babylon Hotel

The New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Sat 13 September - Sat 4 October

This new adaptation of the Arnold Bennett novel of the same name is being described by its producers as a 'rollicking' comedy thriller. Written by the Potteries-born author in the early 20th century, the story focuses on the mysterious disappearance of a German prince...

"I've been itching to adapt The Grand Babylon Hotel for ages," says award-winning playwright Deborah McAndrew, who has indeed scripted this stage version of the novel. "It's a fast-paced story, with vivid, likeable characters, plenty of good jokes, and lots of twists and turns along the way. I'm looking forward to seeing it come to life."

### Ideal: Jonny Vegas

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 15 September

Comedian Johnny Vegas makes a one-night-only stop-off in Shrewsbury, to star in a stage adaptation of his same-named noughties TV comedy series. The storyline follows the misadventures of Moz, a small-time, Manchester-based cannabis dealer who needs to dispose of a dead body. But when he and gangsters Psycho Paul and Cartoon Head discover priceless diamonds inside the corpse, the situation spins dangerously out of control...



### Austentatious

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 13 September

Taking the subtitle 'an improvised Jane Austen novel', Austentatious visits the Midlands having garnered plenty of praise on its previous visits. Lighthearted and delightfully throwaway, the show sees the performers utilising audience suggestions to develop a play that not only pays homage to Austen but also generates plenty of laughter along the way.

Performed in period costume with live musical accompaniment, the production is described by its publicity as 'a riotous, razor-sharp show where swooning is guaranteed'. Great fun's a certainty - and who doesn't love a bit of a swoon?



### Cyrano De Bergerac

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 27 September - Sun 15 November

Edmond Rostand's famous 1897 play tells the tale of the French poet and soldier of the title, Cyrano de Bergerac, who is desperate to win the love of the beautiful Lady Roxane. His efforts to do so, however, are somewhat complicated by the fact that he's got a proboscis that's almost as big as the Eiffel Tower (that's an exaggeration for effect,



obviously, but you get the idea). Making the situation even trickier for the big-hooted Cyrano is the fact that Roxane has fallen for the ever-so-handsome Christian. But wait... the course of true love never runs smooth, and Christian has a major problem of his own. He gets tongue-tied, and knows he needs to woo Roxane with poetic words. Enter, the magnificently verbose Cyrano, with a clever plan to save the young man's bacon... Birmingham-born actor Adrian Lester takes top billing in the title role.

### Consumed

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 3 - Sat 6 September

Winner of the Women's Prize for Playwriting 2022, Consumed is a black comedy that sees four generations of Northern Irish women begrudgingly reunited for a 90th birthday party. It's a get-together that beautifully highlights how national identity, dysfunctional family dynamics and generational trauma can manifest themselves in emotional and mental health issues. "I don't want to depress anyone!" says the play's writer, Karis Kelly. "My style is very much dark comedy, and I love making people laugh. I think that's a very specifically Northern Irish experience - finding humour in even the darkest of moments and making people laugh, because otherwise you might cry. That's very much the style of the piece. It's dealing with heavy themes but in a way that keeps the audience laughing - and I hope the ending is sufficiently uplifting."





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## Theatre previews from around the region



### 2:22 A Ghost Story

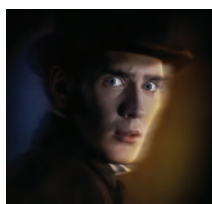
Malvern Theatres, Mon 22 - Sat 27 September;  
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 29  
September - Sat 4 October; The Alexandra,  
Birmingham, Mon 13 - Sat 18 October;  
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 18 - Sat  
23 May

Husband & wife Jenny and Sam are divided. Jenny believes their new home is haunted; Sam isn't having any of it. But something certainly feels strange and frightening. Determined to find out the truth once and for all, they decide to stay up until 2:22 - at which time, all will be revealed. Or not... 2.22 A Ghost Story premiered in the West End back in 2021, not only becoming a major hit but also providing both Lily Allen and Cheryl with an opportunity to tread the boards. This latest touring version of the show stars real-life couple Kevin Clifton and Stacey Dooley alongside Grant Kilburn and Shvorne Marks, pictured.

### The Woman In Black

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 30  
September - Sat 4 October; The Alexandra,  
Birmingham, Tues 27 - Sat 31 January;  
Malvern Theatres, Tues 31 March - Sat 4 April

Adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from the same-named Susan Hill novel, *The Woman In Black* is a classic ghost story first performed in 1989. It has since become one of the West End's most successful plays, and was memorably made into a film starring Daniel Radcliffe in 2012. Solicitor Arthur Kipp believes that his family have somehow been cursed by a mysterious woman in black. In an attempt to tell his story, and to exorcise the evil curse which he's convinced hangs over him, he hires a young actor to assist him in recounting his experiences...



### The Ripper Files

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,  
Tues 16 September

The Ripper in question here is Jack, not 'The Yorkshire' - and as this 'spine-tingling whodunnit' has been making its way around the country, it's been met with mixed reviews. The 'action' - taking place some 13 years after Jack's 'autumn of terror' in Victorian-era Whitechapel - finds two policemen and a music-hall star touring a show in which they revisit the Ripper murders for audiences still fascinated by the macabre killings... There's certainly plenty to admire here, but

critics have complained that there's way too much exposition - and maybe a little less drama than a theatre production focusing on Jack the Ripper should provide.

### Measure For Measure

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 13 September - Sat 25 October

The darkest of Shakespeare's comedies, *Measure For Measure* is usually considered a problem play, which basically means that it asks more questions than it answers. The structure is simple enough. Poor old Angelo is left in charge of an anarchic Vienna, whilst the Duke pretends that he has work overseas. Instead, he uses the opportunity to spy on his diligent though misguided deputy, waits for a mistake, then reappears to make Angelo a convenient scapegoat for Vienna's woes. A stitch-up, or just judicial authority? No wonder politicians of all parties quote Shakespeare to justify their dark deeds...

### Murder At Midnight

The Rep, Birmingham,  
Tues 16 - Sat 20 September

According to its producers, 'deliciously twisted crime caper' *Murder At Midnight* will keep its audience guessing until the very end - which is pretty much what you're looking for from a high-quality murder-mystery. The show stars four well-known television faces in Jason Durr (Heartbeat), Susie Blake



(Victoria Wood's *As Seen On TV*, Coronation Street), Max Bowden (Ben Mitchell in *EastEnders*) and Katie McGlynn (Waterloo Road, Coronation Street). It also comes complete with a cast of intriguing characters: a notorious gangster, his glamorous wife, his trigger-happy sidekick, his mother - who's seeing things - her somewhat jittery carer, a vicar with something to hide, and a nervous burglar dressed as a clown. Throw in a suitcase full of cash, a stash of deadly weapons, one infamous unsolved murder, and ask yourself the question: what could possibly go wrong?... The award-winning Original Theatre is the talented company behind this latest offering from acclaimed playwright Torben Betts.

### Diane's Deli

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,  
Wed 24 September

If you've seen and enjoyed *The Haunting Of Blaine Manor*, which toured to the region not so long ago, *Diane's Deli* could well be for you - it's been written (and directed) by the same fella: Joe O'Byrne. Telling a story of madness and murder, its action unfolds in a quiet café in Paradise Heights, where a burnt-out and bitter cop has quiet and unassuming café owner Sean Ginty under surveillance. Sean is a father figure to both his staff: Jake, a literary student, and Gabrielle, an artist and scarred survivor of a horrific fire that left her orphaned. When a woman turns up late in the café one night, a chain of events is set in motion that will have a devastating effect on the lives of all of them...

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## Theatre for younger audiences



## Pirates Love Underpants

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 27 and Sun 28 September; Dudley Town Hall, Wed 15 October; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 18 & Sun 19 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 28 - Wed 29 October

Claire Freedman certainly knows a thing or two about writing for children. And she's no slouch on the subject of underpants either,

with her picture books including *Aliens Love Underpants*, *Aliens Love Panta Claus* and *Aliens In Underpants Save The World...*

It turns out pirates are pretty keen on underpants too, as evidenced by this stage adaptation of yet another of her publications.

Shrewsbury Theatre Severn's legendary pantomime Dame, Brad Fitt, has written the show, which features a winning combination of 'music, puppetry and glittering pants of gold'.

## Horrible Histories

Albany Theatre, Coventry,  
Tues 23 & Wed 24 September

If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then this two-for-one presentation is a show well worth catching. Featuring both Gorgeous Georgians and Vile Victorians, the production asks such searching questions as: Are you ready to swing with a Georgian king? Dare you dance the Tyburn jig? And does the Duke of Wellington get the boot?

All will be revealed in a show that advertises itself as 'a horrible history of Britain, with all the nasty bits left in!'.



## Spot's Birthday Party

Stourbridge Town Hall, Sat 27 September

Steve the Monkey, Tom the Crocodile and Helen the Hippo are poised to party with birthday boy Spot the Dog in this well-regarded 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.

## 2Faced Dance: Fish Boy

Malvern Theatres, Wed 24 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 14 October

As part of the journey towards their stated aim of becoming 'a worldwide leader in the production of breathtaking, physical and inspirational dance', Herefordshire-based 2Faced Dance Company here present the story of Tommy Minton, a young fella who's determined to discover where his best friend 'fish' has gone.

Bringing together dance and circus - and based on real stories - the show has been co-created with 115 primary school children from across Herefordshire.

## Dinosaurs Live!

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 20 & Sun 21 September; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 27 September

Dinosaurs are once again roaming the region this year, thanks to this interactive show for all the family to enjoy.

Presented by the Natural History Museum in association with Mark Thompson Productions, *Dinosaurs Live!* provides youngsters with the chance to meet a host of impressive prehistoric creatures from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Taking audiences on a fun- and fact-filled journey, the show is suitable for children aged three-plus.



# BODY LANGUAGE

**Adam Garcia stars in smash-hit musical  
The Bodyguard at The Alexandra this month**



**Australian actor, singer & dancer Adam Garcia appears as former secret-service agent Frank Farmer in award-winning musical *The Bodyguard* when it visits the Midlands this month.**

**Based on the Oscar-nominated 1992 movie starring Whitney Houston and Kevin Costner, the musical features a host of irresistible and classic songs, including *Queen Of The Night*, *I Have Nothing*, *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*, and one of the biggest hits of all time: *I Will Always Love You*.**

**What's On caught up with Adam to find out more about his life and career...**

Smash-hit musical *The Bodyguard* visits Birmingham this month, starring Adam Garcia as Frank Farmer, the titular character. Based on the 1992 movie of the same name, with Kevin Costner in the title role and Whitney Houston making her film debut, the story follows former secret-service agent Frank as he is hired to protect a superstar singer after she receives death threats from an unknown stalker.

"Frank is resolute, loyal and honourable," explains Adam. "He's kind of quiet, and speaks when he needs to. He's efficient, well-trained and possibly slightly jaded, but he's a good man. Am I anything like him? Not at all! I was speaking to my wife about this, and she was like 'Now, if you could just be like Frank...' The same thing happened when I did a show called *If/Then*, and she said 'The guy you played was really lovely... Maybe it'll wash off!'"

Adam and his family spend their time between the UK, Australia and the United States. It was in London that his interest in *The Bodyguard* was first piqued.

"I remember seeing opening night when it first played the Adelphi, and I loved it. The choreography is amazing, as is the way it's staged and structured. To transpose that from film to stage isn't easy because the film is grand gestures and small gestures at the same time."

Being a lover of both the movie and stage versions, Adam has his own ideas about why the story has been so successful.

"It's about heroes and villains, and it's about how these two people are drawn to one another - yet it's a forbidden love. There's something about the need of these two people, and yet they're not meant to have this, which is quite a beautiful story. I guess you can go into tropes, but there's a fantasy element of a knight in shining armour, or someone always there in the background to take care of you and your family. That's got romantic overtones, too. I'm looking forward to delving into how Frank and Rachel contrast, why they get on, why they might not get on, and where the friction is - because that's the exciting bit."

The film's Grammy Award-winning soundtrack, recorded by Whitney Houston,

features a host of well-known hits, including her chart-topping version of *I Will Always Love You*, written and originally recorded in 1973 by Dolly Parton. However, Adam's favourite number is a bit more upbeat.

"I've always loved *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*. I grew up with that song, and watching the dancers in the video. If I'm out somewhere and it comes on, then I'm up and dancing straight away; no problem, no questions asked!"

Adam quit Sydney University to appear in a touring production of the musical *Hot Shoe Shuffle*, but he has no regrets about his move into showbiz from academia.

"Every now and then, I look at universities or online universities to see whether I can still do a degree in ecology or soil biology. I was interested in mangroves and intertidal environments, of which there are lots in England because it's an island. And I love soil biology. I think it's a really important part of agriculture."

Adam came to fame in the stage-musical version of *Saturday Night Fever*, playing the lead role of Tony Manero in the original West End production in 1998.

"It was a blur at the time, but it has sort of crystallised the older I've got. I don't remember the fatigue of it all, but when I went into the Palladium recently, I saw the scale of it. When I was there in *Saturday Night Fever*, it didn't occur to me how big or how monumental it was. I think that was a benefit, otherwise it would've overwhelmed me. I just got on with the job."

Since then, he's played Fiyero in *Wicked* - alongside Idina Menzel - worked with Trevor Nunn and Hannah Waddingham in *Kiss Me*, Kate, and made appearances in numerous plays and musicals. He's also taken on the role of judge on *Got To Dance*, alongside Ashley Banjo and Kimberly Wyatt.

Although dancing has been a cornerstone of his career for over 20 years, Adam has managed to avoid any serious mishaps.

"I've been lucky - touch wood! On *Singin' In The Rain*, I had a torn calf, but other than that, I've had nothing that's really restricted me. And I still get to dance - which is pretty surprising for a 52-year-old!"

Having kept fit enough to strut his stuff on stage, has Adam ever considered becoming a bodyguard in real life?

"Yes, and no. Many years ago, I went to a club in London that was really hard to get into. There was a table that I really wanted to sit at, so I pretended to be a bodyguard for some other people who were there. It was all about the attitude of being unflinching, and scanning the room, and I did manage to get a good couple of feet in front of me where no one would come into the same space. They assumed the people I was pretending to be guarding were important. I don't actually think that they were, but it was about creating an illusion or a presence of power and authority. So, after that, I can say that I've had a taste of it!"

For now, however, Adam is sticking to the stage - and looking forward to touring different venues around the UK.

"The real joy is getting to see the country and getting to see different audiences and how they respond. For me, it's also about going to really lovely old theatres and phenomenal theatre towns where audiences love plays and musicals and the venues are packed every night. And it's about visiting relatively new theatres, too. The theatre scene and the touring scene around the UK seem really healthy to me - with audiences who support their local theatres and go regularly - so I'm very grateful for that."

And as Adam prepares for life on the road again, there's one commonplace item that he couldn't live without.

"I have a very special backpack that I've been touring with for a while. It's really efficient, and it packs everything I need. I also have a suitcase that goes on the bus, of course, but I like my trusty backpack. That, and a set of good headphones."

.....

**The *Bodyguard* shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Saturday 20 to Saturday 27 September, and then at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 3 to Saturday 8 November**



# FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE THE LADY WITH THE hammer

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## Light entertainment from around the region



## Crooners Uncaged

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 20 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 1 November; Dudley Town Hall, Fri 14 November; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 15 November; Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Thurs 27 November

A lighthearted evening of song awaits Midlands theatre-goers when Crooners Uncaged hits town. The show's creatives are promising a production in which Big Band swing, 'hilarious one-liners' and 'laugh-out-loud silliness' receive 'a splendiferous injection of Britishness'. Expect sounds from the nice'n'easy songbooks of crooning legends Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr, Matt Monro, Nat King Cole and Bobby Darin.

## Dead Ringers

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 27 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 29 September & Sun 26 October; Malvern Theatres, Thurs 23 October

Topical satire show Dead Ringers has been delighting BBC Radio Four audiences for the last quarter century with its veritable smorgasbord of uncannily accurate and routinely amusing comedy impressions. To celebrate the 25th anniversary, long-standing cast members Jon Culshaw, Jan Ravens, Lewis MacLeod and Duncan Wisbey are hitting the road with the show's first-ever UK tour.



## Attention All Shipping

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 11 September; Lichfield Garrick, Mon 15 September; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent, Fri 14 November

Bestselling author and award-winning broadcaster Charlie Connelly considers the shipping forecast to be the greatest invention of the modern age. So given that it's just celebrated its 100th birthday, it's perhaps not surprising that he's decided to celebrate it. Taking a deep-dive into the history of the quirky broadcast, Charlie will be offering answers to all manner of shipping forecast-related questions, not least among which is, where the hell is North Utsire?! The show has been inspired by Charlie's bestselling book on the subject.

## The James Bond Concert Spectacular

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 28 September; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 21 December; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 26 September 2026

Caroline Bliss, who played Miss Moneybags in both Timothy Dalton James Bond films - The Living Daylights and Licence To Kill - is the compere for this celebration of music from the long-running film franchise. Expect to hear 007 classics aplenty, including Goldfinger, Diamonds Are Forever and Live And Let Die.

## Send In The Clowns: Little Flop Of Horrors

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 10 - Sat 13 September

Raucous drag revue night Send In The Clowns makes a welcome return with a show featuring unique takes on The Little Mermaid, Hometown, Cabaret, Wicked and Little Shop Of Horrors. Described by its publicity as a celebration of the madness and magic of musical theatre, the production is hosted by drag-cabaret favourite Fatt Butcher.

## Paul Zerdin: Jaw Drop

Lichfield Garrick, Wed 10 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 1 October; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 30 October

"As a ventriloquist, I can get away with jokes that other comedians can't," explains Paul Zerdin. "I've got the luxury of taking the p\*ss out of myself, but through the characters, rather than me just being relentlessly self-deprecating.

"I can get away with having a go at the audience much more, too; you get to be

cheekier. Mocking the front row is a trademark of my characters, but I'm evolving my audience interaction beyond that." Comedian & ventriloquist Paul, who won the 10th season of America's Got Talent back in 2015, here returns to the Midlands with brand-new show Jaw Drop.

## Dragged To The Musicals

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Thurs 25 September; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Fri 3 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sat 11 October; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Thurs 16 October; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 25 October

RuPaul's Drag Race UK favourite Divina De Campo tops the bill in a show that brings together a quintet of camp-as-Christmas drag queens with some super-slick showstoppers from the world of musical theatre. And what's more, there won't be a lip-synch in sight - 'just unbelievable vocal talent, sprinkled with sass'.

## Myra DuBois

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 19 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 17 October

"Most people would spend some time idling on the shores of some far-off semi-private island after enduring the workload 2024 dumped on my plate, but not me!"

So speaks much-loved drag queen Myra DuBois in talking about her latest tour. "How could I desert my public, right as I need them the most? I've consulted my own wellness guide, the very Reverend Dr Guru Malcolm, and he tells me that, right now, every star of the cosmos is looking at me with expectation. I don't think my new show, Cosmic Empath, shall let them down!"





# THE HUMAN TOUCH

Motionhouse explores connection and togetherness in new production Hidden...

**Renowned for gravity-defying choreography and groundbreaking projections, Warwickshire-based dance-circus company Motionhouse hit the road again next month with their 2025 production, Hidden. An exploration of how, in an increasingly divided world, light can come out of darkness in times of crisis, the show received rave reviews at Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre earlier this year. Motionhouse's co-founder & artistic director, Kevin Finnan, and the company's associate director, Daniel Massarella, explain more...**

Dance-circus company Motionhouse's latest show, Hidden, has been wowing audiences in the UK and Europe - and this autumn it comes to Birmingham Hippodrome for two nights and a Saturday matinee.

The show, which brings together agility, acrobatics, dance, digital projection and a shape-shifting set, is the Warwickshire-based company's most ambitious theatre production so far - and, say the team, audiences have been responding brilliantly, both to its jaw-dropping feats and its important message.

Created by Motionhouse co-founder & artistic director Kevin Finnan, together with the company's associate director, Daniel Massarella, and the dancers, Hidden contemplates our sense of shared humanity. It also explores how, even in the darkest of times, people will come together to support each other.

"The reaction from audiences has been quite overwhelming," says Daniel. "We've had standing ovations at every venue. When a work is being created, you think it's going in the right direction, but it's only when it's in front of an audience that you really get to see its success.

"What's great about the work is that it's not one-dimensional. You can take away from it, however you are feeling on that day, or whatever has come out in the press or has happened in the world at that point.

"Hidden strips people back to their basic humanity, when all we have is each other, and that's the only way we can get through life's challenges."

The show makes bold use of projection, with performers interacting with moving images of land and cityscapes, speeding trains and digital screens.

"It's the first time we've used this amount of projection, and people are blown away by that," continues Daniel. "People are also blown away by the skill level of the company. It's one of the 'danciest' shows we've done, integrated with the highest level of circus. So there's something for everyone. Some people like the digital, the gaming and the more cinematic experience, while the 'more emotional' people really like that emotional draw, and the fact that it makes you feel something."

Kevin was inspired to create Hidden after

watching international catastrophes, including floods, wildfires and war. With every disaster, there emerges a resilience, which is achieved through human connection and kindness.

"Hidden is a show about us," he explains. "There are things that are very dark moments for people all around the world. And as well as this, within our own lives, everyone encounters moments that are really, truly dark.

"But then Hidden is the thing that comes through in the darkest moments - it's when people can be at their very best, and work together and be together. So, rather than worrying about 'us' and 'them', we help each other and support each other.

"As well as the darkness, we are seeing that element of support which is so often hidden. We need to celebrate that, and celebrate humanity and the very good people we can all be."

Founded in 1988 and based in Leamington Spa, Motionhouse has built a reputation for breathtaking outdoor spectacle and imaginative indoor productions. These visual and physical effects are the company's way of telling its stories.

"When I make a show," Kevin explains, "all of the flying and the film - what that's there for is to engage and make the show entertaining to a wide range of people. But the reason to make the show is to connect with people as best we can.

"When someone comes up to me in tears and says 'That moved me more than I've been moved in a long time,' even if it's just one person on the tour, that's the point. The fact that we are getting that in most venues on this tour is the whole point of everything we do.

"You come to the theatre to be together with the artists and share the experience. Then, hopefully, after the show the audience will take something away. For me, the most important thing is saying 'we are not alone and you can communicate' - and that's what we should all be doing."

Motionhouse has a longstanding connection with Birmingham Hippodrome, and the team are looking forward to sharing Hidden with audiences there.

"It's a great thing that we're taking it to Birmingham at this point in the tour," says

Kevin. "We are one of the Hippodrome's associate companies, and they have supported us in the creation of the show and shown belief in it.

"It's absolutely invaluable in these times to have partners like the Hippodrome, who will support you. We now need to do our part and give their audiences a great show."

And the team promise there will be plenty of thrills both for people familiar with Motionhouse and for those for whom Hidden is their first experience of the company.

"It's not a dance show, it's not a circus show, it's not a film show," explains Daniel. "It combines all of those art forms. It's like having a smoothie with very different flavours which ultimately makes a very nice cocktail.

"When you come in, having seen what we do before, there is definitely a pressure and expectation there, especially for Kevin, because you always have to be better than your last show. But we did it, and the audience response speaks volumes for that."

The company are hoping that Birmingham audiences who have enjoyed their outdoor shows - including Wondrous Stories, which launched the Birmingham 2022 Festival in the city - will now come and experience Hidden.

"Motionhouse is a completely different experience outdoors and indoors," Daniel continues. "The same language is used, but the messaging and staging is very different. It touches lots of people who wouldn't normally go into a theatre setting, and we hope that will bring people indoors. The joy of theatre is something you can't buy online; you can't replicate it unless your bum is on the seat. Being in the theatre, watching a show like Hidden together, is something very special."

.....

**Motionhouse presents Hidden at Birmingham Hippodrome on Friday 10 & Saturday 11 October. The company then returns to the region in early 2026, performing at Lichfield Garrick on Wednesday 25 February and at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Friday 20 March**

# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Sofia Linares. © Perou.  
Illustration © Beth Ingleton

Director Carlos Acosta

*The Heavy Metal dance experience*

## Black Sabbath – The Ballet

18 – 27 September

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## BRB: Black Sabbath The Ballet

Birmingham Hippodrome,  
Thurs 18 - Sat 27 September

Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) once again turn up the volume with this full-length, three-act show featuring eight Black Sabbath tracks re-orchestrated for the Royal Ballet Sinfonia.

The production returns to the Hippodrome stage following a summer in which the heavy-metal stars from Aston have been very much in the news. The original quartet's homecoming concert at Villa Park - their first performance together since 2005, bringing down the curtain on a breathtaking 57-year journey - was then followed some 17 days later by the unexpected death of Ozzy Osbourne.

"The ballet is a great ambassador for the city," says Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi. "The exciting part is that there will be people in the audience who are Black Sabbath fans who have never been to a ballet before, and people in the audience who are ballet fans who don't know much about Black Sabbath. It's educating people in a different way; getting them to discover something new that they like."

## Riverdance 30

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 4 - Tues 9 September;  
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 28 - Fri 31 October

When a show's been seen by millions of people across thousands of performances across the globe, it's fair to say it's one big mother of a hit!

Such are the statistics behind the mesmerising Riverdance, Michael Flatley's breathtaking dance extravaganza that's been wowing audiences for a staggering three decades.

Riverdance started out as a seven-minute

interval piece at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1994. Within a couple of years, it had become the brand-new craze, not only bringing traditional [Irish] dance to a contemporary audience but also inspiring spin-off shows such as Spirit Of The Dance and Lord Of The Dance.

If you've never before sampled its delights, this 30th anniversary tour is the perfect time to find out what all the fuss has been about.



## ACE Dance & Music: The World As We See It

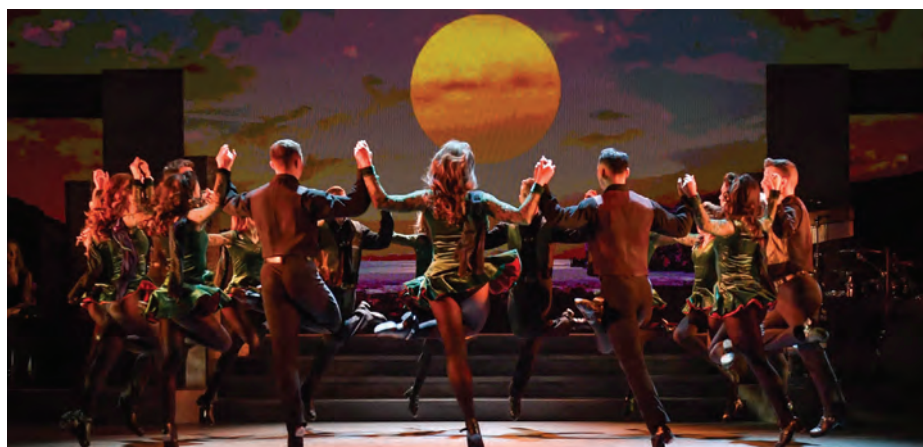
Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham,  
Thurs 25 & Fri 26 September; Malvern  
Theatres, Tues 21 October

What are you willing to die for?...

That's the thought-provoking question being posed by ACE Dance & Music in their latest double bill, a production which presents 'powerful and contrasting visions of our world today'.

Serge Aimé Coulibaly's piece, driven by a fierce soundscape and fusion of African and contemporary dance, captures the chaos of conflict...

In stark contrast, Vincent Mantsoe's work takes audiences to far-flung corners of the earth, where spirituality and harmony shape everyday life.



# SABBATH SPECTACULAR

**BRB's Black Sabbath - The Ballet  
returns to the Hippodrome stage**



**Following Black Sabbath's last-ever gig in July, and Prince of Darkness Ozzy Osbourne's death just 17 days later, Birmingham is this month welcoming the return of an epic celebration of heavy metal in the city: Black Sabbath - The Ballet. Created in 2023 by Birmingham Royal Ballet, as part of a Birmingham-focused trilogy of shows, the production features full orchestrations of Sabbath's legendary tracks, with appearances by guitarist Marc Hayward. What's On spoke to Marc to find out more...**

This month sees an iconic Birmingham institution celebrate the city's greatest band, as Birmingham Royal Ballet's Black Sabbath - The Ballet returns to the Hippodrome stage. Following Sabbath's epic final gig at Villa Park on Saturday 5 July, and Ozzy Osbourne's death less than a month later, the ballet serves as a fitting tribute both to the band and their lead singer, brilliantly celebrating the legacy of the Birmingham legends.

Prior to Ozzy's death, What's On spoke to guitarist Marc Hayward, who appears onstage in the ballet, alongside the dancers. The production features orchestral versions of the band's iconic tracks, including Paranoid, War Pigs and Sabbath Bloody Sabbath. Marc's contribution to proceedings is the icing on the cake.

"I'd previously worked with Richard Thomas, who was the dramaturge," he told What's On. "I got a text out of the blue saying 'I'm working on this thing called Black Sabbath - The Ballet, and they want a guitarist - would you be interested?' How can you not be interested?! Before I knew it, I'm in a dance studio with trained ballerinas! I didn't quite know what to expect. That leaves you prepared for everything and nothing at the same time. You take everything in your stride, because you don't know what that stride is. 'Is it okay if we lift you up and carry you around? Can you still play guitar doing that?' Yeah, let's do it!"

The ballet features three acts, each created by a different choreographer and exploring a part of the band's legacy. Marc takes to the stage in Acts One and Three.

"I'm down as the Guitar Spirit. Act One is about the creation of Heavy Metal and Black Sabbath. The Guitar Spirit is moving the dancers, and moving with the dancers, as various songs from the Sabbath catalogue are coming in and out. It's quite a fluid scene - it's really fun. Later on in the ballet, I come back, and that particular act is about the fans, and the band's relationship with the fans. It's a joyous celebration of the power of the music."

Marc is usually found in more traditional gig settings, so being introduced into the world of ballet brought with it a few surprises -

particularly when creating the production alongside Birmingham Royal Ballet's dancers.

"They're such a wonderful team to work with. From the off, it felt like a huge band. Everyone was working together, and they were very supportive of bringing in someone else. I felt like part of the team. And being on stage with the dancers... they're incredible! They're absolute machines. The physicality of what they do is breathtaking. Every time you're with them, you're reminded of that - they're at the peak of their powers; it's quite awe-inspiring. It's like being in a band, but full widescreen. The stage is bigger, there are so many more things happening on stage, and then aside from that, the music is even bigger as well. With an orchestra, and the beautiful way that the composers, and especially Chris Austin, have taken the tracks - reimagined, reworked, and new pieces of music as well - it's an honour to play every time. Overriding the entire thing is the legacy of Sabbath, and what that means to everyone there."

The production is in a unique position, with the potential to reach two very different audiences. For those less familiar with the world of ballet, Marc is able to bridge the gap between the dancers and the crowd.

"I'm kind of putting my guitar through the fourth wall. The show has been attracting people who go to see ballet but perhaps are not so used to seeing a rock gig, and people coming from the rock world, who are at a ballet for the first time. Hopefully, I fit somewhere in the middle. The audience really gets into it. We've just got back from the States, and the audiences out there were crazy - it was great. As soon as the curtain went up, you saw the devil horns in the crowd. They knew they were in for a good night."

The influence of Black Sabbath stretches around the world - and for Marc, it goes right back to the start of his musical career.

"It's always been there. I remember doing a battle of the bands thing at school, and the older kids - who are always that little bit taller than you, the ones you look up to and ask to borrow their amps - they came out and

did a cover of Iron Man. You can't escape the influence; it's through everything. The breadth of their work - no matter which album you delve into, you can hear what has come since."

The ballet has offered up a few surprises in the past. At the world premiere at the Hippodrome in 2023, Marc was joined on stage by Sabbath's legendary guitarist, Tony Iommi.

"Again, one of those things you don't expect to happen! It was an honour to play alongside him - and no added pressure for opening night! You've got pre-match jitters, and then the person who actually wrote the music you're playing is going to be right there next to you... What an honour to play those riffs in sync with the man himself! Looking at him playing Paranoid, there's no-one else that sounds like him."

While Iommi's appearance at the premiere was a one-off, fellow guitarists might recognise the instrument that Marc uses on stage as being Tony's signature guitar.

"He's known for the Gibson SG, so it was kind of a prerequisite that I'd be playing one of those. I've always had a soft spot for them - the second guitar I owned was an SG, so it always felt like home. I've still got it upstairs somewhere! Great guitars. They lend themselves quite well to jumping around and running around a lot. Aerodynamic!"

Having been introduced to the world of ballet, Marc hopes to carry the spirit of the show into his future projects.

"It's been a game changer. Not only through the musicianship - having to delve deep into the work of someone who's regarded as one of the greatest guitarists of all time - but also the scale of the production, which is massive; the way that we're using the stage, and trying to occupy the space. I'd hope that a little fragment of that I can take with me. It's definitely an experience I'll never forget."

.....

**Black Sabbath - The Ballet shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Thursday 18 to Saturday 27 September**



# FAMILY TIES

**Vivienne Carlyle talks about playing Mrs Johnstone in a new touring production of Willy Russell's iconic musical, Blood Brothers...**

**For people who are new to the show, what's Blood Brothers all about, Vivienne?**

Blood Brothers is by the amazing Willy Russell, who wrote the book and also wrote the music, and it's about a mother named Mrs Johnstone, who is trying to make ends meet. She's very poor. Her husband leaves her, she's left with seven children, and she then discovers she's pregnant again. When she finds out she's having twins, Mrs Johnstone confides in her employer, Mrs Lyons, who is childless and who persuades

her to give her one of the babies. Fast-forward to seven years later, and the two boys end up meeting. The show is about their story as well as their mother's, and how their lives are intertwined even though they're separated. They're brought back together with tragic results, but it's not just a heartbreaking show. There are huge comedy elements in it, and you have adults playing kids, which also strikes the imagination of our younger audiences. You become connected to these characters, and then you see them grow up, and you follow on their journey with them.

It's a very interesting piece of theatre, and in my opinion, one of the best shows I've ever performed in.

**What do you like about the character of Mrs Johnstone?**

I love her strength and her resilience. No matter how hard life is for her, and despite her feeling guilt for what she's done, she still tries to do the best she can with as much grace as she can muster. In spite of everything that happens, she still rises up at the end. I love that, and I think it's a great

message for us in life, because that's what we have to do. We've all had terrible things happen in our lives, and it's about how we deal with them, recover, move on, and live the rest of our lives.

### **Can you relate to her in any way?**

Both of my parents were very encouraging in terms of how, when you have a problem, you work through it. They set the bar high for me in terms of saying 'We don't run away from our problems, we stand up to them, we do the best we can, we keep going and never take no for an answer' and all that sort of thing. I was very lucky that they instilled that in me, and in that way I can relate to Mrs Johnstone because I think I'm quite strong. I'm a feisty Scot, and Mrs Johnstone is a feisty scouser. She's a beautiful character to play.

### **What's your history with the show, and what's it been like returning to it for the UK tour?**

I played Mrs Lyons in 2006, when Maureen Nolan was playing Mrs Johnstone, and I was also her understudy, so I got to play the lead for my first time back then. In 2007 and 2008, I played Mrs Johnstone for the Scottish dates of the tour, then returned to the role in 2012 for nine months at the Phoenix Theatre in London. Being back in the show now is just amazing, and hopefully I'm bringing new things to it. You grow as a person, and I feel like a completely different person now. Emotionally, I would say I'm tougher in some ways and more vulnerable in others. As an actor, you use your life experiences and try to dig deep. Our director, Bob Thomson, wants us to be as raw, as authentic, and as real as we can possibly be.

### **What makes Mrs Johnstone such an iconic musical-theatre character?**

She starts out at around age 18, so you get to play this huge arc of a beautiful story and a beautiful journey. Life keeps throwing things at her, and she keeps rising. She keeps getting knocked down again, but she keeps going. I think that's what makes her so relatable, because that's what we all do. People watching it - and I don't mean just women, I think it's the same with men who come to see it as well - go 'Well, that's life, isn't it?'

### **How's the reaction been to the show from audiences on the tour so far?**

They laugh, they cry, and they are very emotional at the end. It really touches people, a lot of whom come back to see it again. We get a lot of return visitors who have seen the show many times over the years. They come back, they see a different cast and

they fall in love with it all over again in a different way.

### **What's the nicest feedback you've received about it?**

One time we were in Skegness and a boy aged around 14 or 15 had been to see it with his school the day before. He brought back his mum and dad the following night, and I was so touched by that because he had felt such a connection to the piece. He was really quite overwhelmed by it, and I just felt 'How fantastic is it that the show is still relevant to this age group when, you know, there's not a mobile phone in sight and none of the technology that we have today?' The show starts in the 50s and goes through to the 80s.

### **Blood Brothers premiered in 1983. Why do you think it has endured for all these years?**

I think the story is really unique and gripping, and the characters are very strongly drawn. No matter who you are - whether you're in your teens, your 30s, your 70s, or whatever stage of life you're at - you'll come and see the show and there'll be some character in it that you can connect with. You go on this journey with the person that you connect with the most, and it moves you emotionally.

### **How would you sum up the magic of musical theatre?**

Theatre is live, so you immediately connect with it, and it's got that sense of urgency. The stakes are higher when you're watching something that's unravelling in front of you. You can't press pause, which you can with streaming and things like that. Anywhere there's live theatre and live music, there's a level of excitement that you don't get anywhere else. It's like coming together as a community and watching something that bonds you. And, of course, with a musical, the emotions are heightened. As a performer, when I'm on stage, it's the music that moves me in an almost primal way.

### **What first sparked your interest in acting as a career?**

My dad and gran started an amateur group in Glasgow called The Apollo Players, which is where he met my mum. I was pretty much raised in a trunk. They used to do two shows at the King's Theatre in Glasgow every year, so I was kind of weaned on musical theatre. One time, they were doing Gypsy, and I remember sitting in the audience, aged six or seven, listening to the orchestra tune up. Then they played the overture, and I just started crying. I felt so connected to it. As for what led to me taking it up as a profession, I'd gone to university thinking that acting

was something I'd like to do but never imagining it would happen. Then I was cast as the principal girl in panto at the King's Theatre in Glasgow, in *Babes In The Wood*, and that led to other work. I eventually travelled down to London and gave myself three months, vowing 'If I haven't got anything within that time, I'm going back to Scotland.' Within two months I was the Narrator on the tour of *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and three years later I made my West End debut with Stephen Gately as Joseph.

### **Can you pick a few career highlights?**

Doing Joseph was really special because it was my West End debut... I was a singer for Cirque du Soleil, which was another highlight, and I was Mother Gothel in Disney's *Tangled: The Musical*, where it was great fun playing a villain. And *Blood Brothers* is really dear to my heart, which is why I'm so happy to be back in the show. I'm just happy to keep working, and I hope the roles keep coming in.

.....

**Blood Brothers runs at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 September, and then at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 27 to Saturday 31 January**





## Christy CERT tbc (135 mins)

Starring **Sydney Sweeney, Merritt Wever, Katy O'Brian, Ethan Embry, Ben Foster, Tony Cavalero** Directed by **David Michôd**

Euphoria star Sydney Sweeney piled on the pounds - more than 30 of them in total - to take on the role of celebrated boxer Christy Martin. Along the way, she also traded her famous blonde locks for Martin's curly brown hair. "The film is about Christy as a young gay woman in small-town West Virginia in the 1990s," Australian auteur David Michôd, who helms the film, told Deadline. "She came from a relatively conservative family and wasn't allowed to be who she was, so she used boxing as a vehicle to express herself and her rage. She had to make some dangerous and fundamental compromises in her life, the most important of which was marrying an incredibly dangerous man."

**Released Fri 5 September**



## The Conjuring: Last Rites

CERT 15 (135 mins)

Starring **Vera Farmiga, Patrick Wilson, Ben Hardy, Beau Gadsdon, Elliot Cowan, Madison Lawlor** Directed by **Michael Chaves**

Franchise veteran Michael Chaves here takes the helm for his fourth Conjuring movie. Last Rites is the ninth entry in the series, with Conjuring-universe films having so far brought in a total box-office return in excess of a staggering \$2billion.

Based on real events, the new movie sees Vera Farmiga and Patrick Wilson reunite for one last case as real-life paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren. "It was one of the last cases that [the Warrens] actually did," Chaves explained to IGN, "so chronologically, we're staying true to that. And the other reason was that it was just a return to the haunted-house experience, which is something that I was really excited about. Obviously, in the series and the spin-offs, we've explored some other things, but the idea that we would be returning to that for the final chapter felt right and really exciting. Beyond that, it's one of [the Warrens'] most intense cases."

**Released Fri 5 September**

## Honey Don't! CERT 15 (88 mins)

Starring **Margaret Qualley, Chris Evans, Aubrey Plaza, Charlie Day, Kristen Connolly, Lena Hall** Directed by **Ethan Coen**

Having last year directed lesbian road movie Drive-Away Dolls - his first film without the collaboration of brother Joel (excluding a documentary) - Ethan Coen here returns with its sequel.

Black comedy Honey Don't! focuses on the character of tough-talking private-eye Honey O'Donahue as she delves into a series of strange deaths tied to a mysterious church... The film - the second in Coen's intended 'lesbian B-movie trilogy' - was selected to be shown out of competition in the Midnight Screenings section at Cannes earlier this year, receiving a standing ovation. The critics have been somewhat less effusive in their reviews, however, in some quarters damning it with faint praise. The general sense is that Honey Don't! is a movie which they desperately wanted to really, really like, but just couldn't quite manage to.

**Released Fri 5 September**



## On Swift Horses

CERT 15 (119 mins)

Starring **Daisy Edgar-Jones, Jacob Elordi, Will Poulter, Diego Calva, Sasha Calle, Don Swayze** Directed by **Daniel Minahan**

Young love, sexuality and identity are among the themes explored by director Daniel Minahan in this reasonably well-received film, set in the American West of the 1950s. Muriel and her husband, Lee, are beginning a bright new life in California after he returns from the Korean War. But their newfound stability is upended by the arrival of Lee's charismatic brother, Julius, a wayward gambler with a secret past.

A dangerous love triangle quickly emerges. When Julius takes off in search of the young card cheat he's fallen for, Muriel's longing for 'something more' propels her into a secret life of her own, gambling on racehorses and exploring a love she never dreamed possible.

**Released Fri 5 September**

## A Big Bold Beautiful Journey CERT tbc (139 mins)

Starring **Colin Farrell, Margot Robbie, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Hamish Linklater, Lily Rabe, Billy Magnussen** Directed by **Kogonada**

"It's kind of a love story, but it's not a very typical one," says Colin Farrell, in talking to Collider about his latest film, the romantic fantasy *A Big Bold Beautiful Journey*. "It's about two people who find themselves at an emotional crossroads, where they're not living terrible lives, but life hasn't really worked out for them... And they begin to find that, through each other, as a result of this one night where they go on this fantastical journey... [they] get to take accountability for times where they hurt people."

Co-starring Margot Robbie in her first film since the Oscar-winning *Barbie*, *A Big Bold Beautiful Journey* is helmed by South Korean director Kogonada, who came to the project with two critically acclaimed movies already on his CV: 2017's *Columbus* and 2021's *After Yang*.

"This film is really about reckoning with your past in order to find the possibility of love in the present," he explains to Vanity Fair. "What do you have to reckon with in order to truly connect with other people? And I think as you get older, you realise your past has everything to do with how you understand love in the present."

**Released Fri 19 September**



## Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale

**CERT tbc (123 mins)**

Starring **Joanne Froggatt, Paul Giamatti, Joely Richardson, Michelle Dockery, Dominic West, Hugh Bonneville** Directed by **Simon Curtis**

The well-drawn cast of characters inhabiting everybody's favourite English stately home make a welcome return in this latest cinematic offering.

The third and final film in the series follows the Crawley family and their staff into a new era. But the decade of the 1930s brings with it a fresh set of problems, as the family faces financial trouble, and the entire household grapples with the prospect of social disgrace. At the centre of it all is Mary, who finds herself caught up in a public scandal caused by her divorce...

By and large, the previous two *Downton* movies met with a favourable response from film critics and dedicated fans alike - and there's every reason to imagine that this final entry will receive a similarly positive reaction. **Released Fri 12 September**



## The Long Walk

**CERT 15 (108 mins)**

Starring **Cooper Hoffman, David Jonsson, Garrett Wareing, Tut Nyuot, Charlie Plummer, Ben Wang** Directed by **Francis Lawrence**

Fans of Netflix's South Korean survival drama, *Squid Game*, may well find plenty to enjoy about this film adaptation of Stephen King's dystopian horror novel.

With the United States ruled by a totalitarian regime, a group of 100 young men take part in an annual walking contest - and the stakes couldn't be higher: anybody who fails to maintain a speed of at least four miles per hour risks execution. The contest ends only when a single walker remains alive...

An interesting titbit connected to the original novel: although Stephen King published it (under the pseudonym Richard Bachman) in 1979, he had actually started writing it in the mid-1960s - a fact which makes it his first-written novel, though not his first-published. *Carrie*, hitting bookshelves in 1974, holds that particular honour. **Released Fri 12 September**

## One Battle After Another

**CERT tbc (170 mins)**

Starring **Leonardo DiCaprio, Benicio Del Toro, Sean Penn, Teyana Taylor, Wood Harris, Chase Ininiti**

Directed by **Paul Thomas Anderson**

Details about *One Battle After Another*'s storyline are thin on the ground at the time of writing.

Aiming simultaneously to be an action movie, black comedy and political satire, the film focuses on a group of ex-revolutionaries who reunite to confront the threat of an evil enemy resurfacing after 16 years.

The movie has been very loosely inspired by Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland*, a 1990 novel which *One Battle After Another*'s director, Paul Thomas Anderson, had at one point considered adapting. Instead - as he admits in *Esquire* - he "stole the parts that spoke to me and just started running like a thief" ... The film marks Anderson's first project since 2021's *Licorice Pizza*, for which he received three Oscar nominations. It's also the first time the director has worked with Leonardo DiCaprio, who recently admitted his biggest regret was turning down the chance to star in Anderson's hit 1997 movie, *Boogie Nights*.

**Released Fri 26 September**



# THE RETURN OF ACID BEATS

World-renowned VR experience comes to Warwick Arts Centre



**An event where groups of people share the same virtual space to interact as rave-culture pioneers is returning to the Midlands this month. Having debuted as part of Coventry's City of Culture year, a new version of In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats takes up residency at Warwick Arts Centre at the end of the month. And it's promising to be an adventure with a difference - as creator Darren Emerson explains...**

"It really has a life of its own now," says East City Films' writer/producer Darren Emerson, moved by how his immersive Acid House virtual reality (VR) experience, *In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats*, has won a generation-spanning global audience. "It's kind of exploded - people really connect to it!"

Since premiering during Coventry's City of Culture year in 2022, the VR hit has enjoyed successful residences in Australia, Taiwan, Scandinavia, the US and across Europe, with visitors both young and not so young emerging elated.

"They cry, they dance, they hug each other," enthuses Darren, fresh from a sell-out run at London's Barbican. "I guess they're looking for that nostalgia, and that connection to something really special."

Set in the early days of the Acid House movement, the one-hour experience transports would-be party-goers back to 1989, when illegal raves invaded remote fields and empty warehouses. Powered by a pulsating soundtrack of relentless electronic beats, they offered a thrilling and unfettered freedom away from the humdrum experience of daily life. But finding the exact location of the all-night (or all-weekend) party often required some serious detective work involving flyers, phone calls, pirate radio call-outs and mystery meet-ups.

"The piece itself obviously uses a lot of technology," explains Darren, discussing *Repetitive Beats*' widespread appeal. "But it talks about a time with very little technology. You've got a map and a torch. You don't have a mobile phone, GPS tracking, or the internet. People were using pagers and FM radio, and people are fascinated about all those things now."

Though Acid House was a uniquely British phenomena, Darren believes the collective euphoria that comes with a shared party experience is something we all recognise, transcending geographical borders, age groups and communities. "Whether that's a nightclub in Taiwan or a big house party in Texas with kegs, it's all about being young. It's about adventure."

Darren's own clubbing epiphany came while studying film at university in Canterbury. The retiring son of a professional dancer, he shied away from bopping at family gatherings. But

a trip to Club UK, in Wandsworth SW18, proved to be life changing. He may have missed the Second Summer Of Love, but the legacy of that explosion was still being felt throughout the 90s, redefining club culture.

"I had an amazing time, and that was a seminal moment for me, really... the experience of dancing and the feeling of connection and inhibition."

"That whole period, 1995/1996, was spent travelling around the South of England, going to raves in fields, disused railway tunnels, submarines! I lived with a guy who had decks, so we always got invited places. We were going off constantly, driving around the countryside in a Peugeot or VW Beetle, walking through fields ..."

Although the moral panic about Acid House had (largely) dissipated by that point, with legal raves having become big business, the excitement and connectivity remained intact.

"That sense of adventure is really grounded in the piece, which is really what people come for - that feeling of being young again, getting into a car with some people and you don't know where the night's going to take you. That's the essence of this piece."

Once graduated, Emerson (no relation to the Underworld honcho of the same name) worked for MTV, record labels (with Adele and Ed Sheeran on his CV) and issue-based documentaries (social housing, London 7/7), yet increasingly felt restricted by the typical talking-heads documentary format.

Outlining how countless documentaries feature seated figures recounting life-changing events, the producer says: "It's great, but I want to be there! I want to feel it! So *Repetitive Beats* was an attempt to update that sort of documentary; to say, okay, you're still hearing from people, but you can also experience it as well; you can travel through these different scenes; you're able to pick up flyers; you're in your mate's bedroom tuning into pirate radio; you're in the back of the car; you're *present* ..."

Consequently, *In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats* does feature first-hand accounts - from the likes of Nev Fivay (from Coventry's pioneering Amnesia), Tony McCook (Black Crusader soundsystem), Mick Wilson (Parks & Wilson), MC Man Parris, and pirate DJ Lee Fisher (Starlight FM). However, these

interviews illustrate a wider heroic quest, as the visitor attempts to navigate their way through an immersive and interactive CGI world.

Piecing it together has been a significant creative and technical challenge, one akin to a major film production.

"It utilises motion capture, volumetric capture, photogrammetry, 3D modelling, 360-degree video, 180-degree video, and standard video animation," lists Emerson, before detailing the VR headsets, the role of audio, and the wearable tech vests.

"The haptic vests give you the feeling of bass, and work at certain points in the experience. For instance, when you're walking around the warehouse, trying to find the entrance, as you get closer, you feel the bass coming through the vest - Boom! Boom! - which is there not only for the music, but also to give you a feeling of anticipation, of anxiety, a little bit of fear."

The latest appearance of *Repetitive Beats* in the Midlands is the third, but the first for the new version. There's still bangers from *Orbital*, *Joey Beltram* and *Rhythmatic*, and the same narrative arc, but *V2.0* boasts a multiplayer upgrade.

"Four people can now experience it together - you can see each other in VR, and you can pick stuff up and pass it to each other."

"We thought it would be great to walk into that [virtual] warehouse at the end with people who you've been on a journey with, and dance with your friends. Going to a rave is such a collective thing, and you'll see these other people coming out, and there is this moment of 'Ohhhh!'"

"People talk about VR as a hybrid between cinema, theatre and gaming, but it's very much its own thing. For me, if it's done really well, it's a unique medium that can offer so much."

.....

**In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats shows at Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre from Monday 29 September to Monday 13 October**



## British Ceramics Biennial: Fresh 2025

Spode Works, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Sat 6 September - Sun 19 October

British Ceramics Biennial returns for its ninth edition this month.

Taking place across six weeks, the festival features free exhibitions, screenings, talks and events, all of which are being presented across the site of the original Spode factory in the heart of Stoke-on-Trent.

"It's wonderful to be back at Spode," says Clare Wood, CEO & artistic director of British Ceramics Biennial. "We'll be animating this important post-industrial site with ambitious, imaginative and important works in clay and ceramic."

"The Biennial is a true celebration of clay's creative potential, both for making beautiful objects and for tackling some of the most pressing issues of our time."

"I'm looking forward to sharing the work of more than 60 outstanding artists with our thousands of visitors over the course of the Biennial."

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## Commodities: Sculpture & Ceramics By Renee So

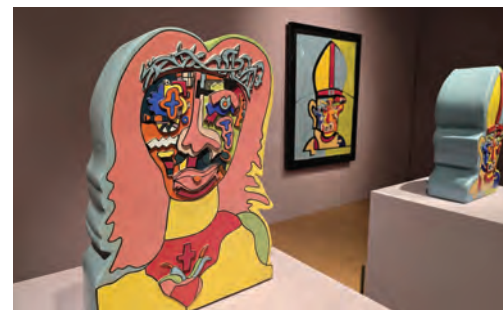
Compton Verney, Warwickshire,  
Sat 20 September - Sun 8 March

Hong Kong-born artist Renee So's latest exhibition may well be a game changer in terms of how Compton Verney's world-renowned collection of Chinese Bronzes is viewed... Specialising in darkly playful ceramic sculptures, Renee's work explores how perceptions of history can be distorted, re-fashioned and changed, asking the question: 'How do we create the new stories that we tell ourselves today?'

## Billy Dosanjh Endz Of The World - Coded Furnaces

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 21 September

Film, photography, sculpture, printmaking and painting all feature in the artistic output of Billy Dosanjh, much of whose practice is set in the de-industrialised factory towns of the Midlands. This latest exhibition of Billy's work considers the subject of technical evolution, examining the similarities between the Industrial Revolution and current technological developments, in particular the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI).



## Jesus & The Pope By Robbie Williams

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery,  
Stoke-on-Trent, until Sun 7 December

Burslem-born Robbie Williams has teamed up with local ceramic design brand 1882 Ltd to transform two of his 'inkling' drawings into abstract works of art depicting Jesus and The Pope.

The superstar singer's technicolour pieces sit alongside a collection of works donated by 60 of the UK's leading artists, architects, designers, musicians and creative polymaths.

The artworks have been transformed into plates by the Barlastan-based company and are being auctioned off to fund an apprenticeship scheme. Publicising the show, Robbie said: "I'm from the Potteries, Burslem born & bred. Clay built our city. We are of the earth - we are earthy people."



Image - Paul Kidby with Massive Massif

## Designing Terry Pratchett's Discworld

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Sat 13 September - Sun 4 January

This brand-new exhibition displays the artwork of Paul Kidby - Terry Pratchett's 'artist of choice' for his Discworld books. Explaining why he selected Paul, the late author once said: "He sees things my way about 75 per cent of the time, which suggests either mind reading is

happening or that my vision of my characters is really rather vague until I see his drawings."

The exhibition includes colourful paintings, 'exquisite' pencil drawings, 'and a rogue's gallery of favourite Discworld characters'.



## Sari Stories

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,  
until Sun 19 October

The companion presentation to The Offbeat Sari - a major exhibition, celebrating the contemporary sari, which is also currently showing at MAC - Sari Stories is a collaboration between the venue and the critically acclaimed local South Asian arts organisation Sampad. The show shares joyful and moving reflections on the sari, all of which were submitted - through an open call - by people from across the Midlands region. "The sari reflects a very rich tapestry of South Asian culture," explains Priya Khanchandani, The Offbeat Sari's curator. "It represents womanhood, it represents identity across regions, across classes, communities and history."

## GIANTS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery,  
until Sun 2 November

Entertainment and education are brought together in this new exhibition, a show which celebrates the 'awe-inspiring creatures' that roamed the Earth after the extinction of the dinosaurs.

Featuring life-sized 3D models and nearly complete skeletons, GIANTS includes interactive elements that allow visitors to step into the shoes of palaeontologists and biologists, providing a not-to-be-missed opportunity to engage with the scientific processes that lie behind fossil discovery and reconstruction.





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## Events previews from around the region



Image credit: Harry Bradley

## Autumn Steam Gala

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster, Thurs 18 - Sun 21 September

A highlight of Severn Valley Railway's 60th anniversary year is the hotly anticipated Autumn Steam Gala. Following repairs to the northern section of the line earlier in the year, guest and home locomotives will be undertaking their full journey once again.

There will be an overnight service running on the Friday and Saturday evenings, and locomotives BR Standard Class 5 73082 'Camelot' and Merchant Navy 35006 'Peninsular and Oriental S N & Co' will both make their inaugural visit to the railway.



## Coventry Brick Festival Coventry Building Society Arena, Sat 13 September

Coventry Brick Festival features a whole host of Lego activities for visitors to enjoy, with highlights including lightning-fast speed building competitions, inventive mosaic making, and a special minifigure hunt. The festival also features traders selling

bricks, minifigures and accessories, and new and retired Lego sets.

A unique selection of display builds and a dedicated building area - in which visitors can unleash their creativity - further add to the fun.

## Walsall MakerFest

Across Walsall Town Centre, Sat 13 September

MakerFest this month returns to the heart of Walsall for a second year.

A vibrant celebration of creativity and community spirit, the event features showcases, performances, storytelling, and a full day of hands-on, family-friendly, creative workshops. An artisanal Makers' Market and the chance for youngsters to check out a 'magical mythical garden' also feature.



## TrialGP Of Great Britain

Boughton House Estate, Northamptonshire, Fri 5 - Sun 7 September

The world's most prestigious trials motorcycle championship returns at a brand-new UK venue this month, promising a weekend of elite motorsport, the chance to see world-class riders, and an opportunity to enjoy a selection of immersive fan experiences. Highlights include demos, meet & greets and thrilling feats of balance, control, and nerve.

## Medieval Experience Weekend

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sat 13 &amp; Sun 14 September

Hear the clash of swords at Avoncroft Museum, as faction fights faction for the crown! Demonstration battles take place throughout the weekend - courtesy of The Beaufort Company re-enactment group - while living history camps around the site offer visitors a glimpse into life as it would have been lived during the medieval period.



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## Events previews from around the region



## The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival

Ironbridge, Shropshire, Fri 12 - Sun 14 September

Head to the West Midlands' very own UNESCO World Heritage Site mid-month for the 2025 edition of The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival. Celebrating the history and culture of the

town, the event features walks, art, music, poetry, walkabouts and activities for youngsters. The festival also features the return of the popular Coracle Regatta on Sunday the 14th.



## Malvern Autumn Show

Three Counties Showground, Fri 26 - Sat 28 September

Malvern Autumn Show returns this month, offering veteran gardeners and new growers alike the chance to immerse themselves in the UK's largest harvest-season celebration. The show boasts supersized veg at the Guinness World Record-busting CANNA UK National Giant Vegetables Championship,

floral displays from the RHS Flower Show, and guest speakers including Monty Don and Adam Frost, of Gardeners' World fame. New for 2025 is the inaugural Three Counties International Perry Competition, and Incredible Edibles, a vibrant and inventive installation to inspire home-grown living.

## A Place In The Sun Live

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 19 - Sun 21 September

If you've ever dreamed of relocating to sunnier climes, or maybe just owning a property overseas, that dream could well be turned into reality courtesy of A Place In The Sun Live. The UK's largest overseas property exhibition features inspirational seminars, expert advice, appearances by the stars of the long-running Channel Four television programme, and information about a wide range of international properties.



## Peaky Blinders Night

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 27 September and Sat 15 November

Peaky Blinders fans can travel back in time to the gritty industrial landscape of the 1920s at the Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) this month. Visitors are invited to don their finest threads and frocks for a night of revelry and entertainment on the popular venue's historic cobblestone streets.

The evening includes the chance to explore 'Charlie's Yard' and other BCLM locations which featured in the hit television series.





# TIME OF DEATH

Pathologist Dr Richard Shepherd talks about his new theatre show - and why *time* is so important in forensic medicine...

**You toured with the show *Unnatural Causes* in 2022/23 and are embarking on your second theatre tour this autumn. What do you like about touring?**

I've always enjoyed talking to people and explaining what I do and why. I've spent a lot of time giving lectures to medical students, policemen, paramedics and the public, and I've never found it difficult to speak to large groups. So going on tour is just another way of trying to give people a little bit of an understanding about what we really do, as so much of the work goes on in the background. Many people think that what I do is just

destructive, and some people may think it's an awful thing to do, but my focus is always on finding the truth and then trying to make sure that the relatives understand. The truth may be difficult to hear - but it is ultimately far less distressing than not knowing, or having unanswered questions, about the death of someone you're close to.

**What can we expect from your new show, *Time Of Death - More Unnatural Causes*?**

When I retired as a Home Office pathologist, I took up a long-held interest in learning how to mend clocks. As someone then pointed out, I'd spent my whole career taking things

apart and not being able to put them back together again - mending clocks meant I was taking complex things apart in the hope that I could put them back together and get them to work again.

It made me think again about how time is so important in terms of forensic medicine. When did the crime happen? How old is that injury? How long did someone survive? All crucial questions. So, we are going to be talking about the importance of time in forensic medicine, using examples of some interesting and different cases that I've dealt with.

**Have you ever had anybody in an audience become quite overcome or emotional during one of your shows?**

Only one, and they had to leave - I couldn't help but notice as they were in the middle of the front row! But they did come to see me afterwards, when I was signing books, and we were able to have a little chat... Also, a long time ago, when I was lecturing senior police officers at Hendon Police College, one of them collapsed, and it didn't look as if they were coming around, so I thought I'd better see what was going on. As I got near, they seemed okay, so I went back to my lectern muttering that "nobody wants to wake up from a faint to see a forensic pathologist leaning over them." Unfortunately, I'd forgotten that my microphone was still switched on, so the whole room heard what I had said to myself - and cheered! Years later, I met that man again, who described himself as "the one person who escaped Dick Shepherd's knife."

**You also appear on Channel Five's Cause Of Death, looking at cases at Preston Coroner's Court. The series illustrates just how compassionate all the staff involved in sudden deaths are...**

As a group of professionals, we all do what might be considered an awful job, but we must always remember that the people who are most important in the entire process are the relatives (and friends) of the person who has died. Obviously, I talk to my colleagues, the coroner and police officers about cases, and they're important too, but we've got to make sure the relatives understand, because if they don't, they worry - and that can significantly add to their distress.

**How do you explain the public's huge interest in true crime on TV, and do you think women are more interested than men?**

I think that people have always been both scared and fascinated by violent crimes - the victims, the perpetrators and those who must investigate them. Initially, it was the Penny Dreadful magazines from the 18th & 19th centuries, with dramatic hand-drawn pictures of the events and very descriptive stories. These were often sold at the time of the execution of a convicted perpetrator! Nowadays, we have more sophisticated

magazines, books and TV programmes to satisfy this interest, this continuing need to get into the nitty-gritty of how crime works! After the tours I've done and the books I've written, I'm fascinated that people are prepared to spend an evening listening to me! I'm not sure of the demographic of the various audiences - I'm just pleased to hopefully be able to show that there is empathy as well as investigation and punishment.

**What made you interested in pathology?**

When I was about 13, a school friend of mine bought a forensic textbook by the celebrated pathologist Keith Simpson into school. It suddenly opened my eyes to this whole intriguing world of murders, and I decided that that was what I wanted to do. I wasn't a stranger to death, as my mum had died of heart disease when I was nine, so it was my dad who encouraged my interest in medicine. I only ever wanted to be a pathologist. Surprisingly, I really enjoyed obstetrics and delivering babies, but settled into a life of crime! I do appreciate how lucky I've been to have found a career that I enjoy so much.

**Your wife is in the same business. How did you meet?**

Linda is a forensic doctor, too - although she looks after living victims - and we met at a forensic meeting in London where I was lecturing. We spent time afterwards chatting about bruises. Very romantic! She declined my offer of a drink, as she had to buy some shoes, which defined my true place in the world. The rest, as they say, is history - nearly 20 years and counting!

**Did you find it difficult to balance your job and family life?**

When the kids were younger, this was very much an issue. If I had had a heavy day, I would stop the car around the corner from the house and spend a minute or two mentally moving myself from work mode to family mode. The kids always knew what I did and weren't phased if the police came round to the house with bits and pieces to show me. In fact, one daughter has followed me into the profession. She and I chat quite frequently about cases, and it's nice having her as a close colleague - especially as she's a much better pathologist!

**Are there any stand-out cases that have never left you?**

Obviously, cases that have a high public profile, like that of Princess Diana or David Kelly or Gareth Williams ('the spy in the bag'). However, it's often the smaller, more personal cases that leave a bigger, permanent mark. In Unnatural Causes, I wrote about a teenager who had epilepsy and died suddenly overnight. That case changed the way I interacted with bereaved families. There was also a case of a family who went to France on holiday; the mother and her eight-year-old daughter were crossing the road to go shopping, and the daughter didn't look the correct way for French traffic, stepped out and was instantly killed. As a parent, I still shiver at that thought. Lives can be changed in a fraction of a second, and despite all my years as a forensic pathologist, I just cannot imagine how you ever move on from that.

**Why do you think we're obsessed with true crime, yet reluctant to discuss death?**

Some people are very reluctant to believe that their relatives will/could ever die, no matter how old or ill they are. And when the inevitable happens they believe that something must have gone wrong. We no longer openly talk about 'death'; we talk euphemistically about 'passing on', so people are no longer used to the experience of death and don't know how to behave in the face of sudden strong emotions. Not that long ago, the body would lie in the house before the funeral, with family, neighbours and friends coming in to pay respect. I am struck by the public response to a member of the royal family 'lying in state', which shows that there's still a need for that chance to say goodbye. The experience of death is now diminished, so that when it does happen, there haven't been any rehearsals for what it's going to be like, and they struggle to understand their emotions, which makes death much harder to cope with.

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**Dr Richard Shepherd's tour Time Of Death stops off at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre on Mon 29 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 6 October; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 28 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 31 October; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 1 November**

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

# the list



*In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats at Warwick Arts Centre - Mon 29 September - Mon 13 October*

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

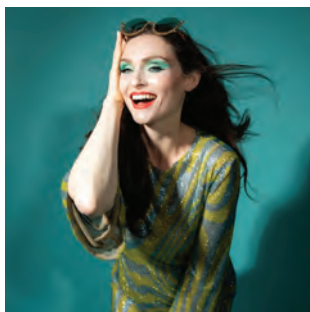
## What's On

Mon 1 - Sun 7 September



When Vincent Met John -  
Swan Theatre, Worcester  
**Fri 5 & Sat 6 September**

Mon 8 - Sun 14 September



Sophie Ellis-Bextor -  
hmv Empire, Coventry  
**Sun 14 September**

Mon 15 - Sun 21 September



Nik Kershaw -  
Palace Theatre, Redditch  
**Thurs 18 September**

Mon 22 - Tues 30 September



2Faced Dance: Fish Boy -  
Malvern Theatres  
**Wed 24 September**

## VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

### Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**OZZY OSBOURNE: WORKING CLASS HERO** A celebration of the solo achievements and global awards of rock icon Ozzy Osbourne, and the album art of the original Black Sabbath line-up to coincide with their historic homecoming concert, until Sun 18 Jan

### Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**EMMA TALBOT: HOW WE LEARN TO LOVE** A collection of new and recent work that explores the experience of life, from birth to death, until Sun 5 Oct

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

### 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 tribute to The Specials' Terry Hall and Roddy 'Radiation' Byers.

### Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

**BRICK DINOS** Step back in time and explore the prehistoric world with Brick Dinosaurs, brought to life with stunning LEGO creations by artist Warren Elsmore and his team, until Sun 7 Sept

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

**JASON AND THE ADVENTURE OF 254** An exhibition by artist Jason Wilsher-Mills, revisiting childhood memories of what was happening inside and outside his body, during the transformative experience of becoming disabled as a child and his creative awakening, until Sun 5 Oct

### 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 fifty painters, sculptors and photographers, until Sun 5 Oct

### Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

**US & THEM** Exhibition using the museum's collections to focus on how our lives are inextricably linked with animals, whether as pets, working colleagues or food, until Sat 20 Sept

**THE ART OF TRAVEL: NICKY THOMPSON** The graphic designer, illustrator, lecturer, fine artist and manager of boutique design studio Lemondrop Creative presents his contemporary travel art, until Sat 20 Sept

### Rugby Art Gallery

**RAW SKY: MARK TWEEDIE AND CLINT HAMILTON** An Exhibition of Mixed Media Astronomical Images, Sketches and Poetry, until Sat 6 Sept

**BLUEPRINTS** Exhibition exploring the literal and metaphorical blueprints that have shaped the cultural landscape of the gallery, until Sat 6 Sept

**GREAT & SMALL: CRAFTED CREATURES** Exhibition of objects from the Crafts Council Collection, encouraging children and families to explore how animals have been represented in craft, until Sat 6 Sept

### Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**I GREW UP 90S** Take a trip back in time with more than 200 iconic objects and artworks bringing the 90s to life, from the Spice Girls to Lara Croft, and Power Rangers to Pokémon, until Sun 7 Sept

**JILLY OXLADE-ARNOTT: A CELEBRATION OF WORCESTER** Now an established international artist, Jilly Oxlade-Arnott started her professional artistic career in Worcester. This show unveils new work depicting the city's historic architecture, until Sun 2 Nov

### Elsewhere:

**BEEP-BEEP, YEAH! THE SOUNDS AND SONGS OF THE MOTOR CAR** Exploring the sensory connection to the sound of a car. From the engine rumble to the rhythm of your favourite tune, discover the strong relationship between sounds and our driving experience, until April 2026, British Motor Museum

**FOUR SEASONS EXHIBITION** Croome has worked with artist Faye Claridge and local community groups to create new sculptures in response to the Four Seasons statues that once stood in the Evergreen Shrubbery, until Thurs 2 July, Croome, Worcester



Muireann Bradley - Temperance, Leamington Spa

## Gigs

**THE NORTHERN POP GIRLIES** Mon 1 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**ELIZA MARSHALL** Mon 1 Sept, West Malvern Social Club

**INOHA** Tues 2 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**HILLTOP HOODS** Tues 2 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**CLAUDE BOURBON** Tues 2 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**MUIREANN BRADLEY** Tues 2 - Wed 3 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**DADDY LONG LEGS + BOB LOG III** Wed 3 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**JOHNSON & FINNEMORE** Thurs 4 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**AN EVENING OF EDWIN STARR** Thurs 4 Sept, The Jam House, B'ham

**ONLY THE POETS** Thurs 4 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**JAMES WALSH & BEN OTTEWELL** Thurs 4 Sept, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**TOM GRENNAN** Thurs 4 Sept, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

**THE COAL PORTERS** Thurs 4 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE SEARCHERS & HOLLIES EXPERIENCE** Thurs 4 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE MERSEY BEATLES** Thurs 4 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**LOST IN MUSIC - ONE NIGHT AT THE DISCO** Thurs 4 Sept, Royal

Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**BEN THOMPSON LIVE AS ELVIS** Thurs 4 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**KING KRAB + MISTRUSTED + SHOTGUN MARMALADE** Fri 5 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**GATHERING OF STRANGERS** Fri 5 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**CHARLOTTE YOUNG** Fri 5 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**ERADIKATOR + CARTOONS CAN'T DIE + BURNT CHAPTER** Fri 5 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**MAN IN THE MIRROR** Fri 5 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DOWNFALL 77 + LOVE NOR MONEY + THE PASTLES + BERETTA + ILLUMINAL** Fri 5 Sept, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**PHIL BEER** Fri 5 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE NASHVILLE SOUNDS EXPERIENCE** Fri 5 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**JIMMY REGAL AND THE ROYALS** Fri 5 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**GUNTHER PRAGUE + TENEBROUS LIAR** Fri 5 Sept, The Tin at The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**ELO ENCOUNTER** Fri 5 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DR SPORK** Fri 5 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**DIVA OF THE DECADES** Fri 5 Sept, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**JAMES WALSH & BEN OTTEWELL** Fri 5 Sept, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**THE LEYLINES** Fri 5 Sept, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**REAL MAGIC QUEEN** Fri 5 Sept, Drummonds, Worcester

**CLOUDBUSTING - THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH** Fri 5 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE DRIFTERS** Fri 5 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ULTIMATE COLDPLAY** Fri 5 Sept, Malvern Cube

**LUKA STATE + RATS + TBC + DIRTY BLONDE + HEAVY NORTH** Sat 6 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SKASTUDS** Sat 6 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**KASHMIR** Sat 6 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham



**RICH DICKINSON'S DRIVING FORCE FT BROKEN SOUND PARKWAY** Sat 6 Sept, Tower of Song, Birmingham

**THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE** Sat 6 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**CON JOVI** Sat 6 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE CARPENTERS SONGBOOK** Sat 6 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**STEP RIGHT UP - THE SONGS OF TOM WAITS** Sat 6 Sept,

Temperance,  
Leamington Spa

**UK PINK FLOYD  
EXPERIENCE** Sat 6 Sept,  
hmv Empire, Coventry

**CHOCOLATE STARFISH -  
LIMP BIZKIT TRIBUTE +  
BELOW THE STONES** Sat 6  
Sept, Arches Venue,  
Coventry

**THE MERSEY BEATLES** Sat  
6 Sept, The Albany  
Theatre, Coventry

**THE MUDSHARKS - LED  
ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE** Sat 6  
Sept, Queens Hall,  
Nuneaton

**DESPERADOS** Sat 6 Sept,  
The Benn Hall, Rugby

**ANGEL OF RAGE + BLAZE  
BAYLEY + UNTO THE  
AGES + LAST AGONY** Sat  
6 Sept, Marrs Bar,  
Worcester

**21ST CENTURY  
TENNESSEE** Sat 6 Sept,  
Palace Theatre,  
Redditch

**D'YANI** Sun 7 Sept, Hare  
& Hounds, Birmingham

**COURDS** Sun 7 Sept, The  
Sunflower Lounge,  
Birmingham

**THE SHAKEDOWN  
BROTHERS** Sun 7 Sept,  
Actress & Bishop,  
Birmingham

**AMIT DATTANI** Sun 7  
Sept, Kitchen Garden,  
Birmingham

**SKA TRAIN** Sun 7 Sept,  
Temperance,  
Leamington Spa

**IZZIE YARDLEY** Sun 7  
Sept, Temperance,  
Leamington Spa

**PENDULUM DJ SET** Sun 7  
Sept, hmv Empire,  
Coventry

**THE BURNING HELL  
(PICTURED) + JON  
MCKIEL** Sun 7 Sept, Just  
Dropped In, Coventry



**GBH + THE SAMPLES +  
BORROWED TIME** Sun 7  
Sept, Marrs Bar,  
Worcester

**A TRIBUTE TO THE  
CARPENTERS** Sun 7 Sept,  
Malvern Theatres

## Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT: STEPHEN KING**  
Tues 2 Sept, Tewkesbury Abbey

**OLIVER HANCOCK ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 5  
Sept, St Mary's Church, Warwick

## Comedy

**DIANE SPENCER & COMICS TBC** Mon 1 Sept,  
The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**RHYS JAMES** Wed 3 Sept, The Glee Club,  
Birmingham

**STEPHEN BAILEY, ESTHER MANITO &  
MICHAEL AKADIRI** Wed 3 Sept, Herbert's  
Yard, Birmingham

**ED BYRNE, KEITH FARNAN, SARAH JOHNSON  
& JUSTIN PANKS** Thurs 4 Sept, Benn Hall,  
Rugby

**RAHUL DUA** Fri 5 Sept, The Glee Club,  
Birmingham

**DEAGE PAXTON, OMAR BADAWY, WILL HITT &  
COMIC TBC** Fri 5 Sept, The Glee Club,  
Birmingham

**GARY DELANEY (PICTURED), PAUL F TAYLOR,  
JO ENRIGHT & JON PEARSON** Fri 5 Sept,  
The Assembly, Leamington Spa



**SEAN PERCIVAL, ANT DEWSON, JOSH JAMES  
& COMIC TBC** Sat 6 Sept, Rosies  
Nightclub, Birmingham

**DEAGE PAXTON, OMAR BADAWY & COMICS  
TBC** Sat 6 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

**MATT STEWART** Sat 6 Sept, The Glee Club,  
Birmingham

**LINDSEY SANTORO, DINESH NATHAN, HARRY  
JENKINS & CERYS HELMES** Sat 6 Sept, The  
Core Theatre, Solihull

**AURIE STYLA** Sun 7 Sept, The Glee Club,  
Birmingham

## Theatre

**FAT HAM** James Ijames' compelling and  
Hamlet-inspired examination of love and  
loss, pain and joy, until Sat 13 Sept,  
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**INSPECTOR MORSE: HOUSE OF GHOSTS**  
Colin Dexter's beer-drinking crossword-  
solving Oxford detective makes a return,  
this time on stage. Tom Chambers plays  
Morse, until Sun 14 Sept, The Rep,  
Birmingham

**CONSUMED** A 'pitch-black and twisted  
comedy' about dysfunctional family  
dynamics, generational trauma and  
national boundaries, Wed 3 - Sat 6 Sept,  
The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**IOLANTHE** The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera  
Company present the much-loved



When Vincent Met John - Swan Theatre, Worcester

operetta, a work filled with fairies, peers  
and enduring charm. The performance is  
accompanied by the National Festival  
Orchestra, Thurs 4 Sept, Malvern  
Theatres

**JEKYLL & HYDE** One-man show in which  
Jonathan Goodwin plays both characters  
from Robert Louis Stevenson's chilling  
Gothic tale, Fri 5 Sept, The Core Theatre,  
Solihull

**PRINCESS IDA** The Gilbert & Sullivan  
Opera Company present Jeff Clarke's  
production - complete with wit, satire and  
enchanting melodies. The performance is  
accompanied by the National Festival  
Orchestra, Fri 5 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**WHEN VINCENT MET JOHN** Play imagining  
what might have happened had Vincent  
Van Gogh and John Lennon met, Fri 5 -  
Sat 6 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

**OUR DAY OUT** Amateur version of Willy  
Russell's play, which contemplates the  
complexities of class and education and  
the transformative power of a simple day  
out, Fri 5 - Sat 13 Sept, Priory Theatre,  
Kenilworth

**THE PINK LIST** A 'haunting' one-person  
musical inspired by untold stories of  
queer men in post-war Germany, Sat 6  
Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre,  
Birmingham

**THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE** The Gilbert &  
Sullivan Opera Company present the  
much-loved story of a young apprentice  
pirate and the adventures he  
experiences. The performance is  
accompanied by the National Festival  
Orchestra, Sat 6 Sept, Malvern Theatres

## Kids Theatre

**A SQUASH AND A SQUEEZE** Musical  
adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel  
Scheffler's bestselling book, Sun 31 Aug  
- Mon 1 Sept, Malvern Theatres

## Dance

**RIVERDANCE 30: THE NEW GENERATION**  
Award-winning music and mesmerising  
choreography comes together in this  
special anniversary show, Thurs 4 - Tues  
9 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

## Light Entertainment

**NORTHERN LIVE - DO I LOVE YOU** Featuring  
an 11-piece band, with four lead vocalists  
performing over 30 original hits, Tues 2  
Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**ROBBIE CUMMING: CANAL BOAT STORIES... A**  
'fun and interactive' evening of canal-  
themed escapism, during which visitors  
can discover a secret world of winding  
waterways, leaky locks and canal  
characters, Thurs 4 Sept, The Core  
Theatre, Solihull

**ELVIS LESLEY: BURNIN' LOVE BINGO** Join  
award-winning comedian Tracey Collins  
(Shell Suit Cher and Audrey Heartburn)  
for an evening of musical comedy, bingo  
chaos and reworked hits..., Fri 5 Sept,  
Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE MAGIC OF TERRY PRATCHETT** Join  
author & comedian Marc Burrows as he  
explores the life and work of one of the  
greatest storytellers of all time, Fri 5 Sept,  
The Civic, Stourport

**DIVA OF THE DECADES** Featuring tributes to  
Tina Turner, Aretha Franklin, Whitney  
Houston, Celine Dion, Chaka Khan,  
Donna Summer and many more..., Fri 5  
Sept, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**WEST END TENORS** Featuring leading  
performers from the West End. Expect  
well-known hits from Les Miserables, The  
Phantom Of The Opera, Mamma Mia!,  
Miss Saigon and more..., Fri 5 Sept, The  
Core Theatre, Solihull

# COVENTRY BRICK FESTIVAL

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**2<sup>ND</sup> NOV 2025**  
**NEW BINGLEY HALL**

**AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE** Variety show blending cabaret, comedy, music and burlesque, Sat 6 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

## Talks & Spoken Word

**STRANGE BUT TRUE CRIME WITH JENNIFER REES** Join the ex-forensics lecturer as she explores some of the world's 'most shocking and unbelievable cases', Mon 1 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH IAN BOTHAM** Join the cricketing legend as he discusses his headline-making career, Wed 3 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Events

**SUMMER OF SENSES** Immerse yourself in different themes each day of the week and explore the collection from new and interesting perspectives, until Mon 1 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**THE GREAT SUMMER ADVENTURE** Featuring magic shows, sheep racing and a tractor safari, until Mon 1 Sept, Hatton Adventure World

**SUMMER AT THE BUTTERFLY FARM** Featuring 'competitions, butterfly life cycle, mini-beast, beetle mania and pupae demonstrations', until Mon 1 Sept, Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm

**A SUMMER OF PLAY AT CHARLECOTE PARK** Enjoy a vibrant and colourful month of play with Tudor-inspired games, until Tues 2 Sept, Charlecote Park, Warwick

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

**FAMILY TRAIL - WHAT DID THEY WATCH IN THE 90S?** Find out about popular 1990s TV shows and films on a special trail around the venue, until Sun 7 Sept, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**POLLINATOR TRAIL** Learn all about the Gardens' insects and the flowers they love, until Sun 7 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

**WYCHBOLD: FLORA FIELDS 2025** A pick-your-own dahlia field, showcasing a collection of 60-plus varieties and thousands of dahlias in full bloom, until Mon 29 Sept, Webbs at Wychbold, Droitwich Spa

**KATHERINE PARR CELEBRATION** Clues to the life, loves and legacy of Katherine can be found in the castle gardens, within the exhibition spaces, and in the chapel where she is laid to rest, Mon 1 - Sun 7 Sept, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

**ART IN THE PARK** Join a local artist for a morning of sketching or painting, Tues 2 Sept, Croome Park, Worcester

**AN INTRODUCTION TO POTTERY WITH THE FLYING POTTER** Discover a range of hand building and potter's wheel techniques, Wed 3 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**HIDDEN SPACES TOUR** Rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Thurs 4 Sept, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOUR & FINDS HANDLING** Join archaeologist & Compton Verney volunteer Hilary Calow as she brings the site's past to life, Fri 5 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**RACE BACK TO THE 80S** Where retro meets racing, Fri 5 Sept, Worcester Racecourse

**VEXPO** Non-profit convention centred on streaming culture, Fri 5 - Sun 7 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

**COVENTRY COCKTAIL WEEK** Event transforming the city into a vibrant hub of mixology, Fri 5 - Sun 14 Sept, various venues across Coventry

**HIDDEN SPACES TOUR** A rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Sat 6 Sept, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**THE STRONGMAN OPEN & MUTANT WORLD DEADLIFT CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025** The greatest names in Strongman go head-to-head in five tests of strength, speed and raw power, Sat 6 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**END OF SUMMER SILENT DISCO** Dance the night away in the unique surroundings of the cloisters area and grounds, Sat 6 Sept, Forge Mill Needle Museum, Redditch

**FIREWORK CHAMPIONS** Four of the UK's top firework companies present 10-minute displays set to music, Sat 6 Sept, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

**SARI DRAPING WORKSHOP** Discover the art of sari draping in this women-only workshop, Sat 6 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham

**RETRO TRUCK SHOW** Bringing together over 300 trucks, from 1971 to 2001, Sat 6 - Sun 7 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

**POTATO & SWEETCORN SHINDIG** Harvest fresh, delicious produce straight from the fields, Sat 6 - Sun 7 Sept, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**SVR AND GB RAILFREIGHT WEEKEND** A weekend of modern and heritage traction, Sat 6 - Sun 7 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

**LEAMINGTON FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL** Celebrating the best in local and regional food & drink, Sat 6 - Sun 7 Sept, Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa



Brick Dinos - Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**GUIDED COTSWOLD DOG WALK** Enjoy a one-hour guided walk with your furry friend in the Cotswold countryside, Sun 7 Sept, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

**GLADIATORS OF WRESTLING** Live over-

the-top body-slammng action, Sun 7 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**BIRDS OF PREY DISPLAYS** Static and flying birds-of-prey displays on the valley lawn, Sun 7 Sept, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

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**3RD OCTOBER 7.30PM**

17<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 7.30PM

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EXPOSE

**SHOCK  
HORROR**

A GHOST STORY

**BRIDGE  
HOUSE  
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Sophie Ellis-Bextor - hmv Empire, Coventry

### Gigs

**DOM MALIN AND LUNA KELLER** Mon 8 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**MICA PARIS** Wed 10 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

**OSAMASON** Wed 10 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**49TH & MAIN** Wed 10 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**HARRIET ROSE** Wed 10 Sept, Dead Wax, Digbeth, B'ham

**NIGHT VERSES + DVNE** Wed 10 Sept, The Asylum, B'ham

**MIDNIGHT RODEO** Wed 10 Sept, The Victoria, Birmingham

**GO YOUR OWN WAY - THE FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY** Wed 10 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**LUKE MORLEY** Wed 10 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**HOW SWEET IT IS - CELEBRATING JAMES TAYLOR** Wed 10 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**UPTON BLUES FESTIVAL TAKEOVER** Wed 10 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**BLUES CLUB** Wed 10 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**KAST OFF KINKS** Wed 10 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**ANNURAL KHALID**

Thurs 11 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**GREG FREEMAN** Thurs 11 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**ANIKA NILLES & NEVELL** Thurs 11 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**TEN56. + VCTMS + THE DALI THUNDER CONCEPT** Thurs 11 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DANCE MYTH + DEREK ZANETTI** Thurs 11 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**SWEETPOOL + THE BRACKISH** Thurs 11 Sept, Tower of Song, Birmingham

**TRASH BOAT** Thurs 11 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

**ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK** Thurs 11 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**WE MAVERICKS** Thurs 11 Sept, Bromsgrove Folk Club

**THE CARPENTERS SONGBOOK** Thurs 11 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**DAISY CHUTE + JENNY COLQUITT** Thurs 11 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**JAKE BUGG** Thurs 11 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**ZEÑEL** Thurs 11 Sept, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**REG MEUROSS TRIO WITH WILL KAUFMAN**

Thurs 11 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**THE SMOOTH ROCK SHOW** Thurs 11 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE ELO EXPERIENCE** Thurs 11 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE BBC BIG BAND - THE MUSIC OF GEORGE GERSHWIN** Thurs 11 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**GEMMA BALLAM + BLUEWALK + IZUZVO** Fri 12 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**LEVI WASHINGTON** Fri 12 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**BAYAAN** Fri 12 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

**BIG WOLF BAND** Fri 12 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE - LANDSLIDE** Fri 12 Sept, Actress & Bishop, B'ham

**DAVID BLACK** Fri 12 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE VIZ** Fri 12 Sept, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**BOLU2 DEATH + NYMPHIC + FALSE THOUGHTS** Fri 12 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**ROB LAMBERTI PRESENTS PERFECTLY GEORGE** Fri 12 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE ELO EXPERIENCE** Fri 12 Sept, The Alexandra, B'ham

**U2 UK** Fri 12 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CARRIE MARTIN** Fri 12 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**ROSIE & THE BUDS** Fri 12 Sept, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**SMOLASTY** Fri 12 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**DIRT ROAD BAND + JAMES OLIVER BAND** Fri 12 Sept, Arches Venue, Coventry

**WARRINGTON RUNCORN NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN + THE MISTYS + PARADISE OF THE TITANS** Fri 12 Sept, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**TICK TICK BOOM** Fri 12 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**A NIGHT IN THE CANYON** Fri 12 Sept, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**AMY'S WINE-HOUSE & THE EMPTY CELLARS** Fri 12 Sept, Drummonds, Worcester

**THE 80S SHOW** Fri 12 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**HARVEST - A CELEBRATION OF NEIL YOUNG** Fri 12 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**THE CARPENTERS EXPERIENCE** Fri 12 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE HEELS** Sat 13 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**BIG BOSS MAN** Sat 13 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**CODY PENNINGTON COUNTRY SHOW** Sat 13 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**RILEY GREEN** Sat 13 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SMALL FAKERS** Sat 13 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**SCREAMING DEAD + STEP FORWARD** Sat 13 Sept, Tower of Song, Birmingham

**BLITZED IN BIRMINGHAM** Sat 13 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA - PINK TRIBUTE** Sat 13 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**GUNS 2 ROSES + NIRVANAH** Sat 13 Sept, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**THE BIG INDIE FESTIVAL** Sat 13 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**HARVEST - NEIL YOUNG TRIBUTE** Sat 13 Sept, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**THE ROY ORBISON STORY** Sat 13 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**DIRE STREETS** Sat 13 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**DADI FREYR** Sun 14 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SHOOTING DAGGERS + ROMAN CANDLE + UPTIGHT** Sun 14 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**THE BUSH PILOTS** Sun 14 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**REGGAE FEST BIRMINGHAM** Sun 14 Sept, Tower of Song, Birmingham

**CHAS LEMAN AND BAND** Sun 14 Sept, The Rainbow, Digbeth, B'ham

**HEATHER FERRIER TRIO** Sun 14 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**NEIL COLEY BIG BAND** Sun 14 Sept, The Dovehouse, Solihull

**EASY 3 JAZZ QUARTET FT MARY SAVVA** Sun 14 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR** Sun 14 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**4 SHADES OF GREY** Sun 14 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL** Sun 14 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

### Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT FEATURING DAVID SAINT** Tues 9 Sept, Tewkesbury Abbey

**PETER DYKE ORGAN CONCERT** Programme includes works by Sibelius, Bach, Coleridge-Taylor & more..., Tues 9 Sept, Hereford Cathedral

**ARMONICO: JAMES MAY & OZ CLARKE'S CHARITY CONCERTS** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Vivaldi, Monteverdi & more..., Wed 10 Sept, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

**ARMONICO: JAMES MAY & OZ CLARKE'S CHARITY CONCERTS** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Vivaldi, Monteverdi & more..., Thurs 11 Sept, Church of the Holy Cross, Moreton Morell, Warwickshire

**ARMONICO: JAMES MAY & OZ CLARKE'S CHARITY CONCERTS** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Vivaldi, Monteverdi & more..., Fri 12 Sept, Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick

**THE SIXTEEN: THE CHORAL PILGRIMAGE 2025** Featuring Harry Christophers (conductor) & Sarah Sexton (violin). Programme includes works by Pärt, Todd, Clyne & more..., Sat 13 Sept, Tewkesbury Abbey



CHANDOS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Sat 13 Sept, Pershore Abbey

### Comedy

**LUKE MORLEY** Wed 10 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ED BYRNE, IVO GRAHAM, RUSSELL HICKS & PRAKASH JIRJADHUN** Wed 10 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ROB MULHOLLAND** Thurs 11 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PROJECT MAYHEM** Thurs 11 Sept, The Arches, Coventry

**TOM STADE** Thurs 11 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**JOSH JONES** Fri 12 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOSH BERRY** Fri 12 Sept, Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**ADAM ROWE, JEFF INNOCENT & LARRY DEAN** Fri 12 Sept, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham



Box Of Frogs - The Core Theatre, Solihull

**ADAM BEARDSMORE & ANDY GLEEKs** Fri 12 Sept, Ecgwins Club, Evesham

**MARK SIMMONS, LOUISE ATKINSON, GARETH WAUGH & JASON PATTERSON** Fri 12 - Sat 13 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MIKE COX, SEAN MORAN, KEVIN DANIEL & DAVE LONGLEY** Sat 13 Sept, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**THE COMEDY STORE ON THE ROAD** Sat 13 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**GARY MEIKLE** Sun 14 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**THE UNFRIEND** The Nonentities Society present an amateur version of Steve Moffat's satirical look at middle-class England, Mon 8 - Sat 13 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**CALAMITY JANE** Carrie Hope Fletcher takes the lead in a touring production of the whip-crackin' musical comedy, Tues 9 - Sat 13 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY**

Award-winning West End show celebrating one of rock & roll's earliest stars. Featured hits include That'll Be The Day, Oh Boy, Rave On, La Bamba, Chantilly Lace, Peggy Sue and many more..., Tues 9 - Sat 13 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**THE PARTY GIRLS** Amy Rosenthal's 'compelling, touching and witty' new play, exploring the story of the Mitford sisters, Tues 9 - Sat 13 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**TROUBLED** Storytelling, projection and audience interaction combine in 'an explosive tale of love, loss and human connection', Wed 10 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**HAIRSPRAY** Coleshill On Stage present an amateur version of the Broadway musical, Wed 10 - Sat 13 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**TREASURE ISLAND** Jenny Wren Productions present an outdoor version of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous adventure story, Fri 12 Sept, The Elms School, Colwall, Nr Malvern

**MEASURE FOR MEASURE** Emily Burns returns to the RSC to direct Shakespeare's razor-sharp thriller, Sat 13 Sept - Sat 25 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**MACBETH** The Dukes Theatre Company promise 'a dynamic reimagining' of Shakespeare's classic tragedy, Sun 14 Sept, Crumplebury, Worcester

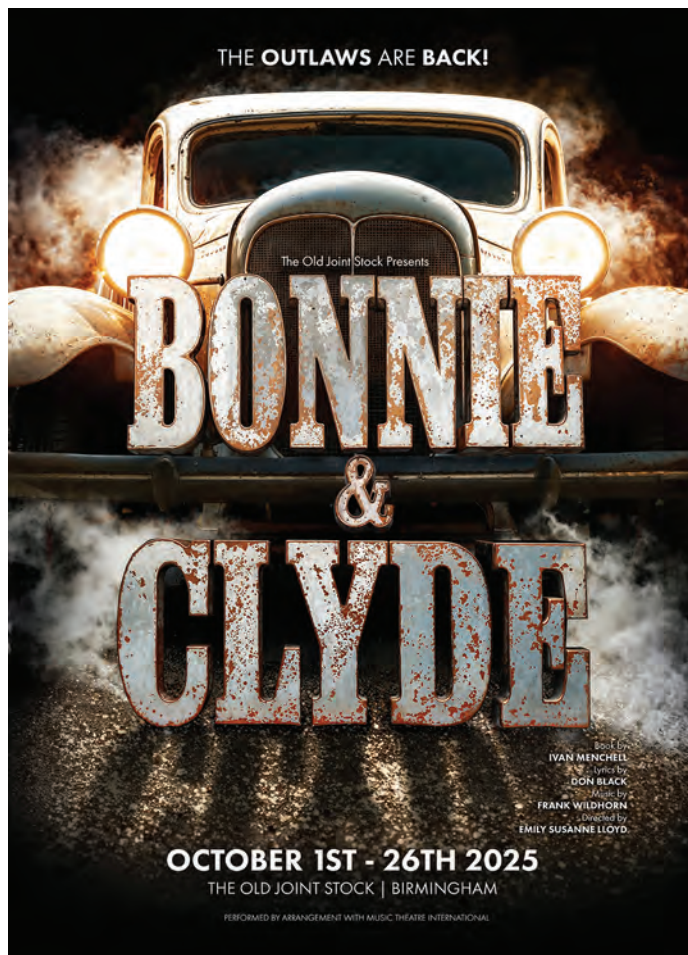
## Light Entertainment

**ART OF ANDALUCIA - FLAMENCO DANCE** Music and dance combine in a celebration of flamenco dancer Daniel Martinez's exceptional artistry, Tues 9 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

**SEND IN THE CLOWNS: LITTLE FLOP OF HORRORS** A 'raucous, wild and tantalising' drag revue show, celebrating the magic and madness of musical theatre, Wed 10 - Sat 13 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE BBC BIG BAND: RHAPSODY IN BLUE - A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF GEORGE GERSHWIN** Featuring Barry Forgie (conductor & musical director) & Emer McParland (guest vocalist), Thurs 11 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR** Evening of back-to-back hits from the 1950s and 60s, Fri 12 Sept, The Roses Theatre,



Tewkesbury

**BOX OF FROGS** 'High-octane comedy' from Birmingham's award-winning improv group, Sat 13 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THAT'LL BE THE DAY** A unique blend of rock & roll, pop, and comedy, featuring timeless hits from the 1950s through to the 1980s, Sat 13 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**MAGIC & SEX** Kathryn Haywood's character-led comedy sees her delve into the art of illusion to become a fully fledged magician, Sat 13 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

**TEENAGER IN LOVE SHOW** A celebration of dreamy 1950s & 60s singalong hits. Stephen James & Kelly Brazil star, Sun 14 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

## Talks & Spoken Word

**CAT ON THE ROAD TO FINDOUT BOOK TOUR** Join Yusuf/Cat Stevens for an evening of tales, tunes and other mysteries, in a show that accompanies the release of his long-awaited memoir, Thurs 11 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH MARK KERMODE & JENNY NELSON** An evening of 'cinematic insight, sharp wit and passionate debate', Fri 12 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

**NATALIE HAYNES: NO FRIEND TO THIS HOUSE** Join the bestselling author as she previews her latest literary offering - a dive into the enduring tale of the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece, Fri 12 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**SAVING GRACE** Expect an evening of unfiltered opinions and outrageous confessions as Grace Barry plays agony aunt in a bid to solve audience dilemmas, Sat 13 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**THE TRIAL OF LORD LUCAN** Crime historian Adam Wood hosts an illustrated talk in which he tells the full story of Lord and Lady Lucan, Sat 13 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

## Events

**THE ART OF SILK PAINTING** Discover the art of silk painting in this hands-on workshop, Thurs 11 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**HIDDEN SPACES TOUR** A rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Thurs 11 & Sat 13 Sept, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**EXPLORE BLAKESLEY: HERITAGE OPEN DAY AND BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK** Open Day opportunity to visit the Tudor house and beautiful gardens of Blakesley Hall, built in 1590 by

Richard Smalbroke, Fri 12 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

**CURATOR'S TOUR AND TEA: EMMA TALBOT: HOW WE LEARN TO LOVE** Enjoy exclusive access to the exhibition. Curator Oli McCall is the guide, Fri 12 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**ADULT NIGHT** Experience the ultimate indoor Lego playground completely kid-free, Fri 12 Sept, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

**MONSTER JAM RAMPED UP** Featuring big air jumps, sky wheelies, cyclone donuts, two-wheel skills and backflips, Fri 12 - Sun 14 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**BLACK COUNTRY BOATING FESTIVAL** Event celebrating the rich history, culture, and community spirit of the Black Country, Fri 12 - Sun 14 Sept, Dudley No. 2 Canal at the BumbleHole, Netherton

**MUSEUM COLLECTION CENTRE: BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK OPEN DAY** Full day of family-friendly activities exploring the artefact-packed warehouse, Sat 13 Sept, Museum Collection Centre, Birmingham

**HEIRESSSES BY MIRANDA KAUFMANN: TALK AND BOOK LAUNCH** Join Black Tudors author Miranda as she explores the hidden ways slave-produced wealth poured into Britain through inheritance and matrimony, Sat 13 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

**THE MANUALS THAT SAVED APOLLO 13 - PLANETARIUM LATE** Special talk at the Space Vault Exhibition, Sat 13 Sept, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**THE CAT SHOW LIVE** The popular annual event returns, with more than 5,000 cat lovers expected to be in attendance, Sat 13 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK: THE EXCHANGE HERITAGE OPEN DAY** Enjoy hands-on art & craft activities, follow a heritage trail, and go on a mini tour of the building, Sat 13 Sept, The Exchange, 3 Centenary Square, Birmingham

**WALSALL MAKERFEST 2025** Celebration of Walsall & the Black Country's rich and diverse creative community, Sat 13 Sept, The New Art Gallery Walsall

**VINTAGE VERA** Vintage market featuring clothes direct from the USA, Sat 13 Sept, FarGo Village, Coventry

**THE MURDER OF NINA KEANE** A wedding-inspired murder-mystery night, Sat 13 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

**BRICK FESTIVAL** A celebration of all things Lego, Sat 13 Sept, Coventry Building Society Arena

**OPEN DAY AT THE ROSE THEATRE** Snoop around backstage, marvel at the wardrobe department and explore the props room, Sat 13 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster



Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story - Malvern Theatres

**MINIATURA AUTUMN SHOW** Featuring workshops, demonstrations and over 120 exhibitors, Sat 13 - Sun 14 Sept, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

**ALL ABOARD FOR ROAD, RAIL & ALE** From vintage trucks, tractors and cars to steam traction engines, Sat 13 - Sun 14 Sept, Statfold Country Park, Tamworth

**INTERNATIONAL N GAUGE SHOW** Featuring a full range of modern image, steam, continental and American layouts, Sat 13 - Sun 14 Sept, Warwickshire Event Centre, Leamington Spa

**HERITAGE OPEN DAY** Join local historian Adam Wood for a talk in which he explores the past of the art deco theatre, its architecture, and the Coventry area, Sat 13 - Sun 14 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**POTATO & SWEETCORN SHINDIG** Harvest fresh, delicious produce straight from the fields, Sat 13 - Sun 14 Sept, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**MEDIEVAL EXPERIENCE** Learn all about medieval times with The Beaufort Company, Sat 13 - Sun 14 Sept, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**DR1VR SHOW** Event bringing together modern and classic stance, track builds, and timeless classics, Sun 14 Sept, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

**MIDLANDS JAGUAR DAY INCL. CLASSIC CAR & MOTORCYCLE SHOW** Featuring up to 1,000 vintage, classic and modern classic cars and motorcycles, Sun 14 Sept, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

**WARWICKSHIRE OPEN STUDIOS PLEIN AIR** Meet artists from across the region as they make and create new work in response to Compton Verney's landscape, Sun 14 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**SUPERCARS AT THE CASTLE** Featuring a selection of Supercars, lined up in the castle courtyard, Sun 14 Sept, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

**ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS FAIR** Browse a variety of stalls 'in the historic atmosphere of Hartlebury Castle and its carriage circle', Sun 14 Sept, Hartlebury Castle, Worcester

## Festivals

**BROMYARD FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Breabach (pictured), Dervish, Paul Downes and Phil Beer, Thurs 11 - Sun 14 Sept, Bromyard, Herefordshire

**SONIC BOOM FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Everything Everything, K.O.G., Prima Queen, Sat 13 Sept, Burton Market Square, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire



Breabach at Bromyard Folk Festival



OneRepublic - Utilita Arena Birmingham

## Gigs

**THE NEW EVES** Mon 15 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**MEREBE** Mon 15 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SELF ESTEEM** Mon 15 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**HELMS ALEE** Mon 15 Sept, Dead Wax, Digbeth, B'ham

**CLASSIC ALBUMS LIVE PERFORMS THE BEATLES WHITE ALBUM** Mon 15 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**JESSIE REID** Mon 15 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**JONATHAN OGDEN & TAYLOR ARMSTRONG** Tues 16 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**JESSIE REYEZ** Tues 16 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**VIOLENCIA** Tues 16 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**COURTNEY HADWIN** Tues 16 Sept, The Victoria, B'ham

**LUMI HD** Tues 16 Sept, B:Eats, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE RHEINGANS SISTERS** Tues 16 Sept, Malvern Cube

**BUSTED VS MCFLY** Tues 16 - Wed 17 Sept, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**JOLIE HOLLAND** Wed 17 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**OLIVER ANTHONY** Wed 17 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

**TIGRESS + HYPE THEORY + CHASING AUGUST** Wed 17 Sept, The Asylum, B'ham

**JEZ LOWE + JULIA DISNEY** Wed 17 Sept, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**MERYL STREEK** Wed 17 Sept, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**SARAH MCQUAID** Wed 17 Sept, West Malvern Social

### Club

**ELKIE BROOKS** Wed 17 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**FIRST TIME FLYERS** Thurs 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LED BIB + DIDDY SWEG** Thurs 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE NEW ROSES** Thurs 18 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

**GRENTPEREZ** Thurs 18 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ASLAN** Thurs 18 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**WINTER GARDENS** Thurs 18 Sept, The Victoria, B'ham

**JON BODEN & THE REMNANT KINGS** Thurs 18 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**STEP OUT + VIOLET SQUARE + KIERAN VICKERY + JOSEPH DAVIS** Thurs 18 Sept, The Rainbow, Digbeth, B'ham

**CHRISTINE COLLISTER** Thurs 18 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**TONY CHRISTIE** Thurs 18 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**KEVIN DEMPSEY** Thurs 18 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE CARPENTERS EXPERIENCE** Thurs 18 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**WHITNEY K** Thurs 18 Sept, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE** Thurs 18 Sept, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**TEENAGE LOBOTOMY - RAMONES TRIBUTE** Thurs 18 Sept, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**LEGENDS OF MOTOWN** Thurs 18 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE GREATEST LOVE SONGS** Thurs 18 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**NIK KERSHAW** Thurs 18 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch



**WOLFGANG FLÜR** Fri 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**GRATEFUL DUDES** Fri 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CASEY MCQUILLEN** Fri 19 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**FAYE** Fri 19 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**VINCENT FLATTS FINAL DRIVE + THE FABULOUS MURRAY BROTHERS** Fri 19 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND** Fri 19 Sept, Tower of Song, Birmingham

**BRIGITTE BERAHA** Fri 19 Sept, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

**THE EXPLOITED** Fri 19 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**ARMOR FOR SLEEP + HELLOGOODBYE + VINNIE CARUANA** Fri 19 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

**DARIUS ZALTASH** Fri 19 Sept, The Victoria, Birmingham

**VYBZ KARTEL** Fri 19 Sept, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**SKABUCK** Fri 19 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**HARVEST - A CELEBRATION OF**

**NEIL YOUNG** Fri 19 Sept, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**JOHN FIDDLER** Fri 19 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**ALEX HARRY** Fri 19 Sept, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**THE GERRY CINNA-MAN EXPERIENCE** Fri 19 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**BLACK STAR BULLET** Fri 19 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**GREY WOLF** Fri 19 Sept, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**STEREOHOLICS + RETSECROWS** Fri 19 Sept, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**A VISION OF ELVIS** Fri 19 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**50 YEARS OF JAMES TAYLOR - VERNON JAMES** Fri 19 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**JIMI - THE LEGEND LIVES ON** Fri 19 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**A CELEBRATION OF SIMON AND GARFUNKEL** Fri 19 Sept, Civic, Stourport

**COVTEMBER** Fri 19 - Sun 21 Sept, The Tin at The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**EASY CURE** Sat 20 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**FLINT MOORE** Sat 20 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**UNDER THE COVERS** Sat 20 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS** Sat 20 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

**FLORENCE BLACK** Sat 20 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**UBMAD4SKA** Sat 20 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**SYNTH** Sat 20 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**ANDREW CASSARA** Sat 20

Sept, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**JETSKI + THE LOSING SCORE + PALE SAILOR** Sat 20 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**A NIGHT OF SKA FT. BAD MANNERS + THE BEAT FT RANKIN JNR + MORE** Sat 20 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

**ONEREPUBLIC** Sat 20 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**STEP INSIDE THE 60S** Sat 20 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**10CCLO - 10CC AND ELO TRIBUTE** Sat 20 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**MAN THE LIFEBOATS** Sat 20 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**REWIND** Sat 20 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**THE MARLEY EXPERIENCE** Sat 20 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**THE SHERBERTS** Sat 20 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**SWIFT & STYLES** Sat 20 Sept, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**INDIE VS BRITPOP** Sat 20 Sept, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**THE GERRY RAFFERTY SONGBOOK** Sat 20 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**PHIL BATES** Sat 20 Sept, West Malvern Social Club

**WSTR + DREAM STATE + HAPPY DAZE** Sun 21 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**LOZ RABON** Sun 21 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**AMIT DATTANI** Sun 21 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**HAMBURG NIGHTS** Sun 21 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**VERY SANTANA** Sun 21 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester



Jessie Reid - Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

## Classical Music

**PETER DONOHOE CELEBRITY PIANO RECITAL** Programme includes works by Mozart, Messiaen & Beethoven, Tues 16 Sept, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**ANGELA SONES ORGAN RECITAL** Tues 16 Sept, Tewkesbury Abbey

**CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS ELGAR'S DREAM OF GERONTIUS** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Jess Dandy (contralto), David Butt Philip (tenor), Roderick Williams (baritone) & CBSO Chorus, Wed 17 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO SYMPHONIC SESSIONS: OKTOBERFEST** An evening of Bavarian traditional folk and polka music, alongside contemporary classics, Thurs 18 Sept, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

**THE MASSES BANDS OF HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL MARINES: LIVE IN CONCERT** Programme includes a mix of military classics, rousing film scores, and solo performances, Thurs 18 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE SIXTEEN: THE CHORAL PILGRIMAGE 2025** Featuring Harry Christophers (conductor) & Sarah Sexton (violin). Programme includes works by Pärt, Todd, Clyne & more..., Thurs 18 Sept, Hereford Cathedral

**DANIEL CARDIEL ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 19 Sept, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**SYMPHONIC QUEEN** Featuring Alfonso Casado Trigo (conductor), Nicole Raquel Dennis, Rob Houchen, Ross Hunter & Jodie Steele (vocalists). A symphonic spectacular paying tribute to one of the UK's greatest-ever rock bands, Sat 20 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SPIRES PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA & CHORUS: ORCHESTRA PLAYDAY** Programme includes Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, featuring sectional rehearsals before an informal concert for friends and family, Sat 20 Sept, West Orchard Church, Coventry

**A NIGHT AT THE OPERA BY CANDLELIGHT: LONDON CONCERTANTE** Programme includes works by Puccini, Verdi, Rossini, & Mozart, Sat 20 Sept, Worcester Cathedral

**BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: LIFE CYCLE** Featuring Anna Dennis (soprano) & Stephan Meier (conductor). Programme includes works by J Anderson, M Rock & C Bray, Sun 21 Sept, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**MALVERN CONCERT CLUB** Featuring Ben Goldscheider (horn), Callum Smart (violin) & Richard Uttley (piano). Programme includes works by Mozart, Ligeti, C Schumann & Brahms, Sun 21 Sept, Malvern Theatres

## Comedy

**ISMO** Tues 16 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

**MARCUS BRIGSTOCKE** Tues 16 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JONNY COLE** Thurs 18 Sept, Civic, Stourport

**HELEN BAUER** Fri 19 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**LIAM FARRELLY, ALISTAIR BARRIE, MATT RICHARDSON, MEL OWEN & MARCUS BEEBY** Fri 19 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DAMAN BAMRAH & KATIE NORRIS** Fri 19 Sept, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**LINDSEY SANTORO, TEZ ILYAS, NABIL ABDULRASHID, JOSH PUGH & OLLIE REYHART** Fri 19 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**GARY DELANEY, JOSH PUGH, NABIL ABDULRASHID, TEZ ILYAS & LINDSEY SANTORO** Fri 19 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**DARIUS DAVIES, MARK BITTLESTONE, OMAR BADAWY & ERIC LAMPAERT** Sat 20 Sept, Rosies Nightclub, B'ham

**LIAM FARRELLY, ALISTAIR BARRIE, MATT RICHARDSON & COMIC TBC** Sat 20 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RICHARD BLACKWOOD, JOSH PUGH, FARHAN SOLO & MICHAEL LEGGE** Sat 20 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**REG D. HUNTER (PICTURED), DARREN WALSH, SAMANTHA DAY & RYAN MOLD** Sat 20 Sept, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick



**PAUL TONKINSON, LOUISE YOUNG, AARON TWITCHEN & COMIC TBC** Sat 20 Sept, Macready Theatre, Rugby

**TEZ ILYAS, DINESH NATHAN, PREET SINGH, RICHARD BLACKWOOD & ADAM COUMAS** Sun 21 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROB NEWMAN** Sun 21 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

## Theatre

**JUST MACBETH!** Our Star Theatre Company present 'the stupidest version of Shakespeare's great big gory tragedy you might ever see', Mon 15 - Wed 17 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**PLAY/TEST** Scratch night to showcase work-in-progress theatre pieces. Audience members will be invited to offer their feedback, Tues 16 Sept,



Tez Ilyas - The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

**MURDER AT MIDNIGHT** Torben Betts' 'twisted crime caper' stars Jason Durr (Heartbeat, Casualty), Susie Blake (Dinner Ladies, Coronation Street) and Max Bowden (Ben Mitchell in EastEnders), Tues 16 - Sat 20 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

**THE PARTY GIRLS** Amy Rosenthal's 'compelling, touching and witty' new play, exploring the story of the Mitford sisters, Tues 16 - Sat 20 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**CURTAIN UP ON MURDER** Kidderminster Operatic & Dramatic Society present an amateur version of Bettine Manktelow's darkly comic whodunnit, Wed 17 - Sat 20 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**FULL HOUSE** A 50-minute rollercoaster of bingo, betrayal and borderline psychosis, Thurs 18 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**BATTLE CRY** One-act, one-man play, based on the true stories of former soldiers battling PTSD, Fri 19 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**THE WELKIN** Amateur version of Lucy Kirkwood's thought-provoking drama, which centres on the trial of Sally Poppy - a young girl accused of a gruesome murder in 1759, Fri 19 - Sat 27 Sept, The Bear Pitt Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**SEUSSICAL JR THE MUSICAL** Amateur version of the family-friendly musical, which brings together characters from Dr Seuss's iconic books, Sat 20 Sept, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**CYRANO DE BERGERAC** Tewkesbury Arts & Dramatic Society (TADS) present an amateur version of the classic comedy, Sat 20 - Sun 21 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**THE BODYGUARD** Award-winning and smash-hit musical starring Sidonie Smith as Rachel Marron and Adam Garcia as Frank Farmer, Sat 20 - Sat 27 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

## Kids Theatre

**THE WITCH WHO COULDN'T SLEEP** Sing-along family musical featuring live action, music and animation, Sun 21 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

## Dance

**BRB: BLACK SABBATH THE BALLET** Production showcasing 'thrilling' dance presented alongside full orchestrations of legendary Black Sabbath tracks, including Paranoid and Iron Man. New orchestral works inspired by the band's music also feature, Thurs 18 - Sat 27 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Light Entertainment

**JIMMY CRICKET'S BIG SHOW** Jimmy celebrates his 80th birthday by performing in this afternoon show hosted by Andy Eastwood. Magician Mark Shortland, tap dancer Katie Lewis and pop duo Abba Vinyl also star, Tues 16 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**BAGA CHIPZ - CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK** Evening of live vocals, featuring big band ballads, disco classics and songs you'd sing down the pub..., Tues 16 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre



**PSYCHIC SALLY** Evening of mediumship, Wed 17 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

### AN EVENING WITHOUT KATE BUSH

Award-winning show which pays homage to the music, fans, and mythology of one of the most influential voices in British music, Thurs 18 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

### SONGS FROM THE MOVIES SINGALONG

Hosted by Pershore Operatic & Dramatic Society, Sat 20 Sept, Number 8, Pershore

### CROONERS UNCAGED

A 'rip-roaring' comedy music show featuring the songs of Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis Jr, Dean Martin, Bobby Darin, Tony Bennett & Matt Monro, Sat 20 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

### CIRQUE DE CELINE

Circus meets melody in what's being described as 'the ultimate tribute to Celine Dion', Sat 20 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

### FAULTY TOWERS THE DINING

EXPERIENCE Featuring a three-course meal and 'five-star comedy', Sat 20 Sept, The Civic, Stourport

## Talks & Spoken Word

### AN EVENING WITH SIR GEOFF HURST

Join the footballing legend as he shares stories from his illustrious career, Tues 16 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

### ERIC KNOWLES - WHAT'S IT WORTH?

'A witty and entertaining look at the world of antiques with one of its best raconteurs'. Take along your treasures for a free valuation, Wed 17 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**KILLER COUPLES** Emma Kenny unravels the complex psychology of couples who commit the unthinkable, Wed 17 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

## Events

**PANORAMA TOWER OPEN DAY** Enjoy panoramic views of the countryside from the balcony, Mon 15 Sept, Croome Park, Worcester

**BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK TOUR** Learn about the stained-glass



Heritage Open Days: Wyley Chapel - Coventry Cathedral

windows designed by Edward Burne-Jones and crafted by the workshop of William Morris, Mon 15 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral

**HERITAGE OPEN DAYS: WYLEY CHAPEL OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** Featuring a short talk and audio visual presentation by local historians Adam Neale and Adam Wood, Mon 15 - Fri 19 Sept, Coventry Cathedral

**A TASTE OF LEAMINGTON** A 'moveable feast' across Leamington Spa, Tues 16 Sept, Leamington Town Centre  
**'REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN BLITZ'** - **EVENING TALK** A talk from Dr David Lees from the University of Warwick's School of Modern Languages & Cultures, Wed 17 Sept, Coventry Cathedral

**HIDDEN SPACES TOUR** A rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Thurs 18 & Sat 20 Sept, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**CENTERING ON CIVIC WALKING TOUR** Join Ben Waddington, author and founder of Still Walking, for a walk around the block, Thurs 18 Sept, The Exchange, 3 Centenary Square, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM'S VICTORIAN TRUE CRIME TALES** A walking tour & talk, during which crime & policing historian Adam Wood tells gruesome tales of Birmingham's Victorian past, Thurs 18 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

**HERITAGE OPEN DAY - COLLECTIONS STORE TOUR** Delve into the archives and check out some of the museum's oldest and most precious objects, Thurs 18 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK TOUR** Learn about the stained-glass windows designed by Edward Burne-Jones and crafted by the workshop of William Morris, Thurs 18 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral

**AUTUMN STEAM GALA** A festival of steam, featuring both guest and home locomotives operating a busy timetable, Thurs 18 - Sun 21 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

### BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

**WORLD TOUR** A brand-new line-up of captivating short films, Fri 19 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

### A WALK IN THE PARK: LATE SUMMER

**LANDSCAPE TOUR** Join Landscape Manager Fiona Tansey to explore and connect with the natural world in Compton Verney's grounds, Fri 19 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**A PLACE IN THE SUN LIVE** Explore the possibility of buying a holiday home or moving abroad, Fri 19 - Sun 21 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

**GIANTS LATE** Step into the museum after dark for an event in which science, stories, and supersized creatures come to life, Sat 20 Sept, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

### HERITAGE OPEN DAY - COLLECTIONS

**STORE TOUR** Delve into the archives and check out some of the museum's oldest and most precious objects, Sat 20 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

**ARTISAN MARKET** Featuring homemade food, drinks and traditional handcrafted products, Sat 20 Sept, Worcester Cathedral

**FIREWORK CHAMPIONS** Three finalists light up the sky in a 'thrilling competition', Sat 20 Sept, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

**BLUEY & BINGO** Join the Heeler sisters for a day filled with 'fun, laughter and excitement', Sat 20 Sept, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**FREE HERITAGE OPEN WEEKEND** Explore the 19-acre Avoncroft Museum, featuring more than 30 buildings and structures, Sat 20 - Sun 21 Sept, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**RIVER FESTIVAL COVENTRY** Featuring live music, theatre, DJs, crafts and more, Sat 20 - Sun 21 Sept, FarGo Village, Coventry

## Festivals

**HEAL FESTIVAL** Line-up includes The Fratellis, The Sherlocks, Dub Pistols, Fri 19 - Sun 21 Sept, DMOS People West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

'PURE PLEASURE' THE GUARDIAN  
★★★★★ THE INDEPENDENT  
★★★★★ BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

★★★★★ THE TIMES  
★★★★★ THE TELEGRAPH

**ARMONICO CONSORT**

## JAMES MAY & OZ CLARKE'S Charity Bike Challenge!

*Singing to improve lives!*

**WANT TO MEET JAMES MAY?**

TV legend James May is cycling across the country on a musical adventure, for a charity bike challenge to raise funds for Armonico Consort, a music charity supporting community outreach.

Grab a great opportunity to meet James and some special guests who will be at **THESE VENUES** this September!

**PLEASE NOTE:** Timings are approximate and may vary due to the unpredictable nature of the cycling challenge.

If you would like to know more about the charity bike tour or would like to donate to Armonico Consort's community work please scan the QR code or visit [www.armonico.org.uk/bike2025](http://www.armonico.org.uk/bike2025)

www.armonico.org.uk  
Registered charity no. 1103150

**THE BLACK PUG, WARWICK**  
WED 10 SEPT, 12.30PM

**COBBS FARM SHOP, STRATFORD**  
WED 10 SEPT, 3.15PM

**TOUCHDOWN CAFE, WELLESBOURNE**  
THU 11 SEPT, 9.45AM

**MASON'S ARMS, LONG MARSTON**  
THU 11 SEPT, 12.30NOON

**THE BELL, ALDERMINSTER**  
THU 11 SEPT, 2.50PM

**BOSTON TEA PARTY, LEAMINGTON SPA**  
FRI 12 SEPT, 10.15AM

**CUSTARD CORNER/STATION HOUSE, KENILWORTH**  
FRI 12 SEPT, 4.00PM

# Monday 22 - Tuesday 30 September



Francis Rossi - Palace Theatre, Redditch

## Gigs

**JEHST** Mon 22 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**DEACON BLUE** Mon 22 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**CHLOE MORIONDO** Tues 23 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**UNIVERSITY** Tues 23 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**JAMES MORRISON** Tues 23 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**JIM LEGXACY** Tues 23 Sept, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

**CHANSON SWING FT BEN HOLDER & SOPHIE-JAYNE HOLDER** Tues 23 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**LEWIS CAPALDI** Tues 23 - Wed 24 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**THE ZAC SCHULZE GANG** Wed 24 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**WEIRD ON PURPOSE** Wed 24 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE WHISKEY BROTHERS** Wed 24 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**AS IT IS** Wed 24 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

**CHRIS & LOUISE ROGAN + JOHN & CAROL HOARE** Wed 24 Sept, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**PENFRIEND** Thurs 25 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NIKO B** Thurs 25 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

**BACH AND ARTHUR** Thurs 25 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE CRANE WIVES** Thurs 25 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

**SCOTT LAVENE** Thurs 25 Sept, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**BARRY STEELE PRESENTS THE ROY ORBISON STORY** Thurs 25 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE CHURCHFITTERS** Thurs 25 Sept, Bromsgrove Folk Club

**QUILL** Thurs 25 Sept, Bromsgrove

**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC** Thurs 25 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**NEVER THE BRIDE** Thurs 25 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**TOM FORD** Thurs 25 Sept, Marris Bar, Worcester

**FRANCIS ROSSI** Thurs 25 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**M(H)AOL** Fri 26 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SEAN REEVES** Fri 26 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**THE LET'S GO'S** Fri 26

Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**REND COLLECTIVE** Fri 26 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**EDDIE GRIPPER** Fri 26 Sept, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

**ALAN FLETCHER** Fri 26 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**FRANCIS ROSSI** Fri 26 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

**KEYSHIA COLE** Fri 26 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**DIRE STREETS** Fri 26 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**ADELE PERFORMED BY CHLOE BARRY** Fri 26 Sept, The Dovehouse, Solihull

**VINCENT FLATTS FINAL DRIVE** Fri 26 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**SOUND OF THE LIONESS - AMY A TRIBUTE** Fri 26 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**STRAIGHTEN OUT - STRANGLERS TRIBUTE** Fri 26 Sept, Arches Venue, Coventry

**CALLING PLANET EARTH** Fri 26 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**LOW RIDERS** Fri 26 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**HAWKSURRY TRAWLMER** Fri 26

Sept, Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton

**MEDICINE HEAD** Fri 26 Sept, Marris Bar, Worcester

**THE MUSIC OF ADELE LIVE IN CONCERT** Fri 26 Sept, Worcester Cathedral

**THE HISTORY OF ROCK** Fri 26 Sept, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**WOMEN IN ROCK** Fri 26 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE BOHEMIANS** Fri 26 Sept, Civic, Stourport

**REBEL REBEL - BOWIE TRIBUTE** Fri 26 Sept, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**SLADE FANS CONVENTION** Fri 26 - Sat 27 Sept, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**SPEAKING IN TONGUES** Sat 27 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE LOVELESS** Sat 27 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**THE AC30S** Sat 27 Sept, The Night Owl, B'ham

**BROOKE ALEX** Sat 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THEATRE OF HATE** Sat 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE ROOTERS** Sat 27 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**THE OGRETONES** Sat 27 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE GRUNGE ADDICTION** Sat 27 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**LINDISFARNE** Sat 27 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

**BJÖRN AGAIN** Sat 27 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DINO BAPTISTE FEAT DANA GILLESPIE** Sat 27 Sept, Grand Hotel, Birmingham

**PIERCE THE VEIL** Sat 27 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**SNAYX** Sat 27 Sept, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**CARA DILLON** Sat 27 Sept, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**ELVIS, UP CLOSE & PERSONAL** Sat 27 Sept, The Dovehouse, Solihull

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE** Sat 27 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**JUDGE JULES LIVE** Sat 27 Sept, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**MAN MADE MOON** Sat 27 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**VERY SANTANA** Sat 27 Sept, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**ROBERT VINCENT** Sat 27 Sept, The Henrician, Evesham

**DEVOTED TO ROCK** Sat 27 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**RED HOT TRIBUTE PEPPERS** Sat 27 Sept, Marris Bar, Worcester

**THE CARPENTERS MASQUERADE** Sat 27 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Worcester

**CHRIS STAPLETON UK** Sat 27 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**JOHN BRAMWELL** Sat 27 Sept, West Malvern

Social Club

**THE CARPENTERS MASQUERADE** Sat 27 Sept, Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**QUILL** Sat 27 Sept, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**TAXI FOR JESUS** Sun 28 Sept, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**ATREYU** Sun 28 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**STEVE GIBBONS BAND** Sun 28 Sept, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**MENACE + DRONGOS FOR EUROPE** Sun 28 Sept, Tower of Song, Birmingham

**THE BILLY JOEL SONGBOOK** Sun 28 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**LITTLE SPARROW** Sun 28 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE BONESHAKERS** Sun 28 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**GOBLIN BAND** Sun 28 Sept, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**BRING BACK SUMMER** Sun 28 Sept, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**ELLE-J WALTERS BAND** Sun 28 Sept, Marris Bar, Worcester

**THE DUKE SPIRIT + SCROUNGE** Tues 30 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LOWKEY** Tues 30 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

**ESOTERICA** Tues 30 Sept, The Flapper, Birmingham

**EABHAL** Tues 30 Sept, Temperance, Leamington Spa



The Crane Wives - Birmingham Town Hall

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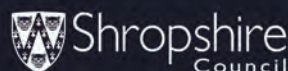
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### Classical Music

#### LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT: PRESENTING PIPES AND PEDALS

Featuring Thomas Trotter (organ) & David Gallichan (organ builder). A musical sights and sounds tour around the Birmingham Town Hall organ, Mon 22 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

#### PIERS MAXIM ORGAN CONCERT

Tues 23 Sept, Tewkesbury Abbey

**CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA** Featuring Roderick Cox (conductor), Tai Murray (violin), Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello) & Isata Kanneh-Mason (piano). Programme includes works by Coleridge-Taylor, Beethoven & W Dawson, Wed 24 Sept, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CBSO: BRITTEN & ELGAR** Featuring Nicholas Collon (conductor), Vilde Frang (violin) & Lawrence Power (viola). Programme also includes Thomas Adès Hotel Suite, Thurs 25 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' PIANO QUINTET** Featuring Nate Bomans (violin), Chris Yates (viola), Helen Edgar (cello), Julian Atkinson (double bass) & John Thwaites (piano). Programme also includes Fauré's Piano Quartet No.1 in C minor, Fri 26 Sept, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**LUNCHTIME RECITAL: ASHLEY WAGNER (ORGAN)** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Mulet & Reubke, Fri 26 Sept, St Philip's Cathedral, B'ham

**SENSE & MUSICALITY** Featuring Penelope Appleyard (soprano) & Jonathan Delbridge (square piano). Explore Jane Austen's relationship with music, emotion, and romance, in celebration of the author's 250th anniversary, Fri 26 Sept, Unitarian Chapel, Warwick

**CBSO: BRITTEN & ELGAR** Featuring Nicholas Collon (conductor), Vilde Frang (violin) & Lawrence Power (viola), Fri 26 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**MYSTERY ENSEMBLE: MIYAZAKI'S DREAMS** Programme includes works by Hisaishi, Asazaki & Cage, Sat 27 Sept, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**ARMONICO CONSORT: J.S. BACH'S B MINOR MASS** Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Sat 27 Sept, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**ARMONICO CONSORT: J.S. BACH'S B MINOR MASS** Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Sun 28 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT: CARLETON ETHERINGTON** Tues 30 Sept, Tewkesbury Abbey

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT FEATURING PETER DYKE** Tues 30 Sept, Hereford Cathedral

### Comedy

**SCOTT BENNETT** Thurs 25 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, LAUREN PATTISON & THE RAYMOND AND MR TIMPINS REVUE** Thurs 25 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

**SIMON BRODKIN, SINDHU VEE, JOHN MEAGHER & SARAH JOHNSON** Thurs 25 Sept, hmv Empire, Coventry

**EDDIE KADI** Thurs 25 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**ESTHER MANITO** Fri 26 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**EMMANUEL SONUBI** Fri 26 Sept, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ANGELA BARNES** Fri 26 Sept, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**JAMIE D'SOUZA, HARRY STACHINI, LAUREN PATTISON & THE RAYMOND AND MR TIMPINS REVUE** Fri 26 - Sat 27 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**THOMAS GREEN** Sun 28 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JOANNE MCNALLY** Sun 28 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ALAN DAVIES** Sun 28 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**MATT GREEN & COMICS TBC** Mon 29 Sept, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**GREG JAMES** Tues 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RORY O'HANLON** Tues 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JASON MANFORD** Tues 30 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**SHAPARAK KHORSANDI** Tues 30 Sept, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**JOSH WIDDICOMBE** Tues 30 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**JONNY COLE** Tues 30 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch



### Theatre

**THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY** New stage adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's famous novel. Ed McVey (The Crown), Maisie Smith (EastEnders) and Bruce Herbelin-Earle (Netflix's Free Rein) star, Mon 22 - Sat 27 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

**THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW** Richard O'Brien's legendary rock & roll musical, featuring timeless classics Sweet Transvestite, Dammit Janet, and the pelvic-thrusting Time Warp,



2Faced Dance: Fish Boy - Malvern Theatres

Mon 22 - Sat 27 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**2:22 A GHOST STORY** Kevin Clifton & Stacey Dooley star in Danny Robbins' edge-of-your-seat supernatural thriller, Tues 23 - Sat 27 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**SURINDERELLA** Panto with a difference. Expect laughter, romance, masala moves and a dazzling Bollywood ball, Tues 23 - Sat 27 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**HAMLET** The Pantoons Theatre Company tackle Shakespeare's greatest tragedy in their own anarchic style, Wed 24 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

**THE VOID** Ryan Simons' 'chilling sci-fi horror' tells of a decaying future of desperate humans..., Wed 24 - Thurs 25 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**BEGINNING** Amateur version of David Eldridge's play - the first in a trilogy looking at love and relationships, Wed 24 Sept - Sat 4 Oct, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

**WE WILL ROCK YOU** Amateur version of the much-loved musical, featuring iconic Queen hits including Bohemian Rhapsody, We Are The Champions and Don't Stop Me Now..., Thurs 25 - Sat 27 Sept, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**GOODNIGHT MISTER TOM** Amateur version of Michelle Magorian's heartwarming and moving tale of friendship, healing and resilience, Thurs 25 - Sun 28 Sept, Playbox Theatre, The Dream Factory, Warwick

**EMMA** Amateur version of Jane Austen's comedy of manners, Sat 27 Sept - Sat 4 Oct, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

**CYRANO DE BERGERAC** Adrian Lester makes his RSC debut in a lyrical tale of love and lies, longing and disguise, Sat 27 Sept - Sat 15 Nov,

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE WIZARD OF OZ** Amateur version presented by Theatretrain Solihull, Sun 28 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**EMMA** New version of Jane Austen's comedy of manners, presented in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the author's birth, Mon 29 Sept - Sat 4 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

### Kids Theatre

**HORRIBLE HISTORIES LIVE ON STAGE!** Entertainment and education combine as the Gorgeous Georgians and Vile Victorians are brought to life in a show suitable for audiences aged five-plus, Tues 23 - Wed 24 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**2FACED DANCE: FISH BOY** Dance, circus and theatre combine in a 'poignant and joyful' adventure, Wed 24 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**DINOSAURS LIVE** Family show fusing fun and facts, as life-like dinosaurs once again roam the region! Sat 27 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**PIRATES LOVE UNDERPANTS** Theatre for younger audiences, featuring music, puppetry and glittering pants of gold, Sat 27 - Sun 28 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

### Dance

**BRB: BLACK SABBATH THE BALLET** Production showcasing 'thrilling' dance presented alongside full orchestrations of legendary Black Sabbath tracks, including Paranoid and Iron Man. New orchestral works inspired by the band's music also feature, until Sat 27 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ACE DANCE: THE WORLD AS WE SEE IT** New double bill 'featuring two

contrasting visions of our world today', Thurs 25 - Fri 26 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

### Light Entertainment

**IRELAND THE SHOW** Celebration of Irish culture featuring music, laughter, impressions and dance, Tues 23 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE PHANTOMS** Lee Mead stars alongside former West End Phantoms in a celebration of musical theatre's most iconic shows, Wed 24 Sept, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**IRONING BOARD MAN** Physical comedian Jody Kamali masterfully transforms everyday household items into the tools of a Hollywood-style, action-packed romance, Thurs 25 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DROGGED TO THE MUSICALS WITH DIVINA DE CAMPO** Divina top-bills an evening of sassy showstoppers. Also featuring Veronica Green, Le Fil, Mimi Chanel and Viola, Thurs 25 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

**THE PHANTOMS** Lee Mead stars alongside former West End Phantoms in a celebration of musical theatre's most iconic shows, Thurs 25 Sept, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE REAL QUEENS OF BOLLYWOOD** Take a nostalgic journey through Bollywood's most iconic songs - from golden-era classics to modern-day anthems, Fri 26 Sept, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**BINGO & THE CITY WITH SAMANTHA GROANS** Tracey Collins (Shell Suit Cher, Elvis Lesley) returns with her brand-new musical comedy bingo extravaganza. Expect 'outrageous songs, hilarious stories and luxury bingo prizes', Sat 27 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**ROUND THE HORNE: 60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**TOUR** Radio comedy classic, live on stage, Sat 27 Sept, The Regal, Tenbury

**HASBIAN** Beth Watson's story of growing up in queer Brighton under Section 28, told with the help of animated magazine cut-outs and an all-star fantasy cast of teen movie stars, Sat 27 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

**THE JAMES BOND CONCERT SPECTACULAR** Tribute to the music of James Bond. Compered by former Miss Money Penny, Caroline Bliss, Sun 28 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**FROM BOND WITH LOVE** Evening of James Bond themes, performed live, Sun 28 Sept, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**SAM RABONE'S BIG BOSTIN' VARIETY SHOW** The Garrick's favourite pantomime Dame makes an autumn return, Sun 28 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

**WOLF & OWL** Romesh Ranganathan and Tom Davis' hotly anticipated live show. Get ready for an evening of laughs, surprises and shooting the breeze, live and unedited, Mon 29 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

**NINA CONTI: WHOSE FACE IS IT ANYWAY?** Ventriloquist Nina presents her brand-new show, Tues 30 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**WEST END TENORS** Leading men from London's West End combine 'in a powerhouse of vocal talent', Tues 30 Sept, Worcester Swan Theatre

### Talks & Spoken Word

**CHAI AND CHAT: MY MARATHON SARI** Sari-wearing marathon runner and mental-health champion Poppy Jaman shares sari stories from communities across the UK, Thurs 25 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham



*Railway 200: The Show - Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster*

**BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET - PRE PERFORMANCE TALK** Take a peek behind the curtain to find out more about Birmingham Royal Ballet's shows. Pre-performance talks last approximately 30 minutes, Fri 26 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

**AN EVENING WITH KATIE PRICE AND KERRY KATONA** A tell-all evening in which the celebrity duo share stories of marriage, divorce, bankruptcy, being part of I'm A Celebrity, family, the media and more..., Fri 26 Sept, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**TIM PEAKE: ASTRONAUTS - THE QUEST TO EXPLORE SPACE** Join Tim for a celebration of space exploration, Mon 29 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**NATALIE HAYNES: NO FRIEND TO THIS HOUSE** Join the bestselling author as she previews her latest literary offering - a dive into the enduring tale of the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece, Tues 30 Sept, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

### Events

**HIDDEN SPACES TOUR** A rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Thurs 25 & Sat 27 Sept, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**THE BIG WORCESTER QUIZ** How good is your memory of 1970s petrol stations, historic pubs or local shops? Fri 26 Sept, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**FUSION ART FAIR** Featuring over 90 artists and galleries from around the UK, Fri 26 - Sun 28 Sept, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

**MALVERN AUTUMN SHOW** Featuring the CANNA UK Giant Vegetables Championship, Great Malvern Cake Off competitions, talks from celebrity experts, and the chance to sample delicious local food, Fri 26 - Sun 28 Sept, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

**COVENTRY CATHEDRAL ABSEIL 2025** Raising funds for Myton Hospice, Sat

27 Sept, Coventry Cathedral

**BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: CLASS ON STAGE** Take a peek behind the scenes as Birmingham Royal Ballet's dancers prepare for one of their performances, Sat 27 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

**THE ULTIMATE HOUSE PARTY** Featuring beer pong, karaoke, glow paint, giant games - and maybe even a few surprises, Sat 27 Sept, The House, Leamington Spa

**POTATO & SWEETCORN SHINDIG** Harvest fresh, delicious produce straight from the fields, Sat 27 - Sun 28 Sept, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**END OF SEASON TRAIL** Look for clues around the grounds on the last Sunday open day of the season, Sun 28 Sept, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

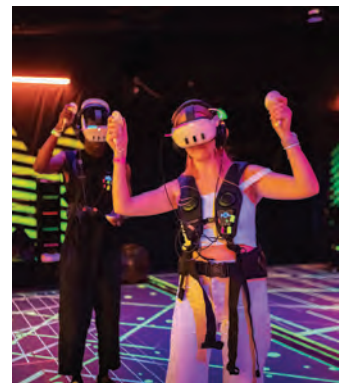
**RAILWAY 200: THE SHOW** Travel by train to the Engine House at Highley and enjoy an educational and entertaining look back at the history of the railways, Sun 28 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

**OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR** Featuring 'a new collection of the world's most incredible ocean films', Mon 29 Sept, Malvern Theatres

**IN PURSUIT OF REPETITIVE BEATS** Travel back in time to the heart of the Acid House scene, courtesy of 'the UK's biggest VR experience', Mon 29 Sept - Mon 13 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



*Ironing Board Man- The Albany Theatre, Coventry*





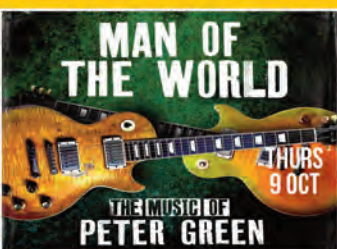
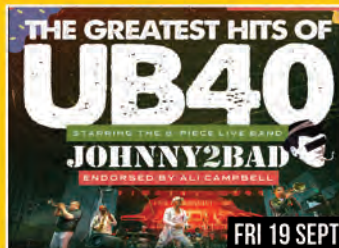
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# IN PURSUIT OF REPETITIVE BEATS

A VIRTUAL REALITY ADVENTURE

**Mon 29 Sep - Mon 13 Oct**

It's 1989 and finding the party is the only thing that matters.

Travel back in time to the heart of the Acid House scene with the UK's biggest VR experience. This ground-breaking experience was created for, and about, Coventry and is coming home bigger and better than ever!

Using technology to create a truly collective experience, groups of four people can share the same virtual space and interact together as rave culture pioneers.

*In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats* is an experience designed for groups of 1-4 people

**BOOK ONLINE:** [warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://warwickartscentre.co.uk)

**BY PHONE:** 024 7649 6000

Warwick Arts Centre, The University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL

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