

Birmingham

ISSUE 465 OCTOBER 2025

What's On

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

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BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Director Carlos Acosta

Sir Peter Wright's

The Nutcracker

21 November – 13 December

H BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME
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inside:

FINGERS ON BUZZERS

new musical Starter For Ten visits Birmingham Rep



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OUT OF THIS WORLD

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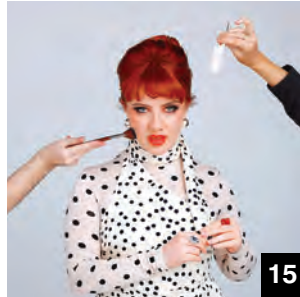
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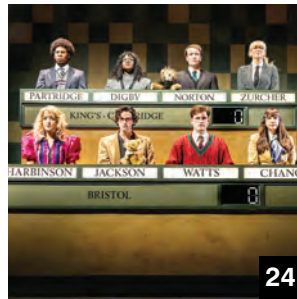
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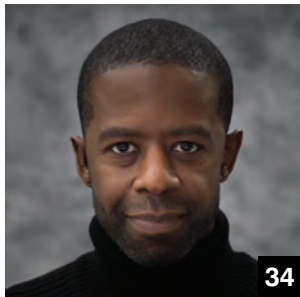
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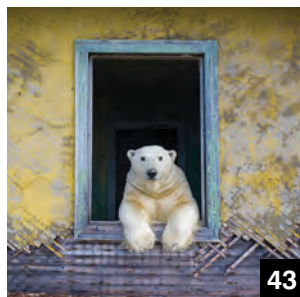
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What's On

MEDIA GROUP

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

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Birmingham What's On



Laura Mvula takes centre stage at Symphony Hall

Laura Mvula is teaming up with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra this month to present a concert of her songs. Taking place at the city's Symphony Hall on Friday 10 October, the event forms part of Black Lives In Music's Classically Black festival. The initiative celebrates Black composers and musicians, and reimagines classical music 'through the powerful lens of culture, experience, and creativity'. Tickets are available via the website at bmusic.co.uk

Lamp-lit tales of terror at the Old Joint Stock...

Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre is marking the Halloween season by inviting one lamp-lit storyteller to share two spine-tingling tales of terror. Darkness & Light is presented by 'master of the macabre' Adam Z Robinson and shows at the venue on Monday 10 & Tuesday 11 November. More information can be found at oldjointstock.co.uk, where you can also buy tickets to see the show.

Local company revive and revise acclaimed show

Long-established local theatre company Stan's Cafe is bringing a new version of its acclaimed show, Time Critical, to Birmingham Repertory Theatre on Tuesday 7 & Wednesday 8 October. Commenting on the production, James Yarker, the company's artistic director, said: "The show makes us think about how our lives are bound up with but also separate from global events. And how our big lives amount to nothing in the grand scheme of things." For more details about the show and to purchase tickets, visit stans.cafe



Heroes at Oldbury Rep

Oldbury Rep is next month presenting an amateur version of Gérald Sibleyras' Heroes (Saturday 1 - Saturday 8 November). Translated by Tom Stoppard, the 1950s-set play focuses on three World War One veterans who dream of making their escape from the soldiers' home in which they reside - even if they only manage to get as far as the poplar trees on the hill... To find out more and book tickets, visit oldburyrep.org

Follow the Birdland Trail at Midlands Arts Centre

Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) is launching a free family trail of ceramic birds in the middle of the month. Created by local artists Juneau Projects, the trail is available to enjoy from Saturday 18 October to Sunday 22 February.

The Longest Johns to star in Moseley Folk All-Dayer

Birmingham's Moseley Folk & Arts Festival has revealed that The Longest Johns will be the headline act for the first of its forthcoming 20th-anniversary All-Dayers.



Taking place at The Crossing, Birmingham, on Saturday 29 November, the event will see various acts associated with the end-of-summer festival take to the stage. To find out more and buy tickets, visit moseleyfolk.co.uk

Tickets on sale for ICC Women's T20 World Cup

Tickets for next year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup at Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium are now on sale. Taking place at the venue next summer, the tournament will see England playing their first match, against Sri Lanka, on Friday 12 June. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit edgbaston.com

Winter edition of popular food show at the NEC

James Martin, Si King, Lisa Faulkner and Michel Roux are among the celebrity chefs who will be cooking up 'festive feasts, seasonal treats and Christmas magic' at next

month's Good Food Show Winter.

Taking place at the NEC Birmingham from Thursday 27 to Sunday 30

November, the ever-popular event also offers visitors the chance to taste 'seasonal delights' and shop for unique gifts. For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at goodfoodshow.com



University aiming to help children spot fake news

The University of Birmingham is hosting a special half-term event aimed at helping primary-school-aged children spot fake news. News Detectives takes place at The Exchange on Wednesday 29 October. For further details, visit birmingham.ac.uk

Birmingham's winter cocktail weekend returns

Cocktail lovers, rejoice - Birmingham Cocktail Weekend returns this month with its winter edition (Thursday 23 - Sunday 26 October). The hugely popular event will see 40-plus participating venues each serving up a £6 signature cocktail for customers who are wearing the festival's official wristband. The wristband also provides access to 'a series of great events, a fab hotel discount, £5 mocktails, £9 cocktail & snack pairings, and exclusive food offers'. To find out more, visit the website at birminghamcocktailweekend.co.uk



Stars to join Rock Choir in Brum

Rock Choir, the world's largest contemporary choir, are to perform at Birmingham's bp pulse Live arena late next month - and they will be joined for the occasion by classical crossover star Russell Watson. Also contributing to the choir's Ultimate Christmas Party show on Saturday 29 November is multi-platinum-selling singer-songwriter Emeli Sandé (pictured), smash-hit singing sensation Sam Ryder and former Spandau Ballet star Martin Kemp, who will open the concert with his 80s DJ set. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit rockchoir.com



Rick Astley heads to Birmingham

Rick Astley will play Birmingham's bp pulse LIVE arena next spring as part of a major UK & Ireland tour. Rick stops off at the venue on Friday 24 April and will be joined for the show by special guest Gabrielle. For ticket information, visit bppulselive.co.uk

Anton to narrate Dickens' Carol

Birmingham-born actor Anton Lesser will be back in his home city the week before Christmas to present a candlelit one-man narration of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol (Town Hall, Monday 15 December). Anton will be joined for the occasion by the Warwick-based Orchestra of the Swan. Tickets for the show can be purchased by visiting the orchestra's website.



Sir Kenneth Branagh to make a spring return to Stratford

The Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) Spring 2026 season will see Sir Kenneth Branagh making a return to the Stratford-upon-Avon stage for the first time in more than 30 years. The season will also feature the RSC debuts of Academy Award-winning American actress Helen Hunt and double Olivier Award-winning actor Mark Gatiss. Sir Kenneth will be taking on the role of Prospero in a production of Shakespeare's final

play, The Tempest, and also playing Lopakhin - alongside Hunt as Madame Ranyevskaya - in a new version of Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. Gatiss, meanwhile, will star as the title character in Bertolt Brecht's biting political satire on Hitler's ascent to power, The Resistible Rise Of Arturo Ui.

To find out more about the company's forthcoming programme of shows, and to book tickets, visit the website at rsc.org.uk

Barber launches art challenge...

Birmingham's Barber Institute of Fine Arts has launched a new initiative to keep creativity flowing across the region while the venue is closed for a major building improvement project. The Barber Art Challenge invites artists of all ages to take inspiration from the venue's world-class collection and respond to themed prompts for a chance to win art prizes worth over £75. For further information about the initiative, visit the website barber.org.uk/join-the-barber-art-challenge

Brand-new tour of Annie heading for the Midlands in Summer 2026

A new touring production of smash-hit musical Annie will visit Birmingham theatre The Alexandra next summer. Showing at the venue from Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 June, the show tells the heart-warming rags-to-riches story of a little girl who finds herself transported from a New York orphanage to the luxurious world of a millionaire. Hit songs include It's The Hard Knock Life, I Don't Need Anything But You, Easy Street and the legendary Tomorrow. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit the website at atgtickets.com



Textiles exhibition still on show at Brum museum

Birmingham's Selly Manor Museum continues to display Common Threads this month (until Thursday 16 October), an exhibition exploring the history of the tapestry fragments owned by the venue and the National Trust's Packwood House. Commenting on the display, Louise Deakin, heritage engagement officer at Bournville Village Trust, which manages the museum, said: "The exhibition highlights the significance of textiles in storytelling and explores the connections between Selly Manor Museum, Packwood House and their collections. We are delighted to have partnered with Packwood House for this exhibition."

City venue set to stage Pulitzer Prize winner

Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre will present a production of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Next To Normal* in the spring. Showing at the city-centre venue from Wednesday 8 to Sunday 26 April, the hit musical explores how one suburban household copes with crisis and mental illness. For further information and to book your seat, visit designmynight.com

Birmingham date for Ben

Novelist, playwright, screenwriter, lyricist & comedian Ben Elton is 'in conversation' at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire this month, discussing his new autobiography, *What Have I Done?*. Ben visits the venue on Tuesday 14 October, just five days after the book's publication. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit bcu.ac.uk

Cold War Steve mural unveiled at new venue

A new Birmingham food & drink venue has commissioned one of the city's most celebrated contemporary artists to create a brand-new mural. Society, the highly anticipated 9,000 sq ft food hall which opened last month, is now displaying the major new artwork from Cold War Steve (real name Christopher Spencer). The mural is set against a black-and-white photograph of 1960s Birmingham and 'bursts with colour and energy, symbolising the multicultural spirit and creative force that define the city today'. For more information and updates, visit: [instagram.com/society.brum](https://www.instagram.com/society.brum)



Journey to wholeness at Mind Body Spirit Festival

The Mind Body Spirit Festival returns to Birmingham next month for its annual three-day celebration (NEC, Friday 14 - Sunday 16 November). This year's festival will feature more than 100 free sessions, including 'transformative talks, enlightening workshops, rejuvenating sound

baths, breathwork sessions, and soul-nourishing ceremonies'. Television personalities Paul McKenna and Michele Knight will also be contributing to the event. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit mindbodyspiritfestival.co.uk

May the Force be with you at Symphony Hall...

Now here's an event that no self-respecting Star Wars fan will want to miss...

Birmingham Symphony Hall is this month hosting screenings, on three consecutive nights, of the first three Star Wars films: *A New Hope* (released in 1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return Of The Jedi* (1983). And what's more, the legendary John Williams' score for each movie will be performed live by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The films will be screened, in order, on Friday 24, Saturday 25 & Sunday 26 October. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at bmusic.co.uk. And may the Force be with you!



A night of comedy-horror!

Birmingham Comedy Festival is embracing the Halloween spirit at city-centre venue The Victoria on Saturday 11 October, courtesy of a comedy-horror sketch show. Presented by Not Just Friends, Superhost tells the story of three old acquaintances whose time together in a remote dwelling

doesn't go entirely according to plan... To find out more about the show and book tickets, visit the website bhamcomfest.co.uk

It's party time at the NEC

Leading events organisation Vivid Experience is returning to Birmingham's NEC next month with a brand-new immersive theme: *Party On The Piste*. The company's Christmas Party World events (Friday 28 November - Sunday 21 December) will take guests on 'a fast-flowing journey through snow-capped hills to an Alpine village high up in the mountains, where the spectacular end-of-season *Après-ski* party is in full flow!'. To find out more and make a booking, visit birminghamchristmasparties.com

New drone light show set to illuminate the skies

A new drone light show will illuminate the skies above Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium next month (Saturday 8 November). Taking the title *Wild*, the display will bring the animal kingdom to life in 'a dazzling fusion of artistry, music and cutting-edge technology'. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit wilddroneshow.com

B:Music

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Casey Bailey: The Music
01 Oct | JBPS at Symphony Hall



**Rick Wakeman: Return of the
Caped Crusader Part 2**
21 Oct | Symphony Hall



**Tunde: 30 Years Of Ocean
Drive, Postcards From Heaven
& More** 23 Oct | Town Hall



**Mmm-Bop! Family Silent Disco:
Halloween Special**
26 Oct | JBPS at Symphony Hall



**Sir Simon Rattle & the Bavarian
Radio Symphony Orchestra**
11 Nov | Symphony Hall



The Overtones Christmas Party
08 Nov | Town Hall



A Fairytale for Christmas
10 Nov | Symphony Hall



**Rob Brydon & His Fabulous Band: A
Festive Night of Songs & Laughter**
26 Nov | Symphony Hall



**Jools Holland & His Rhythm &
Blues Orchestra**
29 & 30 Nov | Symphony Hall



**Cory Band presents Wallace
and Gromit: The Wrong
Trousers** 29 Nov | Town Hall

Whether you're feeling festive or enjoying the PSL Autumn vibes: there's a Great Night Out waiting at Town Hall & Symphony Hall!

Sutton Coldfield dates for Jesus Christ Superstar

Sutton Coldfield Musical Theatre Company will present their production of Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice's Jesus Christ Superstar next month. The show runs at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall from Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 November. More information is available via scmtc.co.uk

Extended festive run for Sherlock at The Rep

The Birmingham Repertory Theatre run of Sherlock Holmes And The Twelve Days Of Christmas has been extended to mid-January.

Featuring original songs by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, the show opens at The Rep on Friday 14 November and will now run until Sunday 18 January. For more information and tickets, visit birmingham-rep.co.uk



New sculpture unveiled on university campus

Red Stack, a large, bright and playful sculpture by Dubai artist Shaikha Al Mazrou, has arrived at its new home on the University of Birmingham campus.

Made from fibreglass and resin, Red Stack is a four-metre-high, bright red sculpture which resembles a large tower of pillows. The acclaimed artwork has been acquired in celebration of the university's 125th anniversary.

Gothic masterpiece does the rounds for Halloween

Midlands-based theatre company NeuNoir is marking the Halloween season by presenting a reading of Edgar Allan Poe's iconic tale of terror The Fall Of The House Of Usher.

The show will be stopping off at The Tree House Bookshop, Kenilworth (Saturday 25 October), Birmingham's Back-To-Backs (Sunday the 26th), Greyfriars House & Garden, Worcester (Friday the 31st) and Stourbridge Town Hall (Saturday 1 November). For further information and to book tickets, visit neunoir.wordpress.com



Spooky tours and laughter at Birmingham museums

Birmingham Museums' autumn/winter programme of entertainment continues this month with a night of comedy at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery on Thursday the 2nd (featuring Paul Sinha). Other October attractions include after-dark

LED candlelit tours of the Grade I listed Aston Hall (Thursday 30 October - Saturday 1 November) and spooky tours of Blakesley Hall (Wednesday 29 - Friday 31 October). To check out the complete programme of events, visit birminghammuseums.org.uk

Carlos recognised for his outstanding contribution

Birmingham Royal Ballet Director Carlos Acosta has been selected to receive the Outstanding Contribution to British Theatre Award. The prestigious UK Theatre Awards honour is being bestowed on the critically acclaimed dancer & choreographer in recognition of his career both on and off the stage, as well as his deep commitment to broadening access to dance across the UK and internationally. Congratulations, Carlos!

George Benson tribute act visits Sutton Coldfield

Acclaimed George Benson tribute act Nat Augustin will visit Sutton Coldfield Town Hall on Thursday 16 October. Nat's show, Give Me The Night, is packed to the rafters with George's greatest hits, including Never Give Up On A Good Thing, Love Times Love, In Your Eyes, Lady Love Me (One More Time) and Shiver. For more information and tickets, visit the website at suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com

December dates for new Dream Cabaret show

Much-loved local comedian Barbara Nice will host a brand-new show blending theatre, circus and cabaret at the beginning of December.

Taking the title Dream Cabaret, the production will be presented at All Saints Centre in Kings Heath, Birmingham, from Thursday the 4th to Sunday the 7th. All funds raised from the shows will be invested in the not-for-profit Mash Academy. The organisation builds bridges for young people and adult community members transitioning into circus careers. Tickets can be purchased via stagetubs.com



Stage & screen academy to host open-day event

Birmingham's BOA Stage & Screen Academy is holding an open day on Saturday 18 October.

Based in the city's Jewellery Quarter, the Academy equips young people with the skills needed to become film and theatre makers. The open day will provide attendees with the chance to check out the facilities, meet teaching staff and current students, and take part in taster sessions. To register, visit boa-stageandscreen.co.uk/open-event





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StageTalk Magazine

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Featuring
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– SAT 1 NOV**
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the
Rep



BIG, BOLD & DARING

Birmingham Rep's artistic director, Joe Murphy, looks ahead to the venue's 2026/27 season...



The new 2026/27 season of performances at Birmingham Rep is 'big, bold and daring', promises the theatre's artistic director, Joe Murphy.

With new takes on classics, adaptations of bestsellers and a host of new commissions, Joe says The Rep's programme is 'proudly Birmingham, distinctively Rep and world-class'.

Joe, who joined the theatre in the spring after a hugely successful period as artistic director of the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff, is keen for his first Birmingham season to represent and reflect the different communities in the city.

"This season is trying to offer a big, bold and daring programme that galvanises a diverse audience, that is unashamedly popular but is also put together with real integrity and real connection and commitment to our city and the concerns of our city."

One of the season's highlights will be a new staging of Andrea Levy's award-winning novel *Small Island*, which tells the story of the Windrush generation through the lens of two couples, one Jamaican and the other English. Using the Helen Edmundson script created for the 2019 National Theatre staging, director Matthew Xia is creating a new production.

"*Small Island* is first and foremost an amazing play adapted from an amazing novel that is of the highest quality," says Joe. "And it's a great opportunity to put on the main stage a story that might not be set here in Birmingham but is deeply resonant with a lot of people in this city. That's a statement of intent from us as well - to say, this main stage belongs to all the communities of our city, and that all of those stories deserve to be seen on that grand scale."

In April and May, Joe joins forces with The Rep's deputy artistic director, Madeleine Kludje, to direct a new production of Shakespeare's ever-popular *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"We felt there could be a distinctively Birmingham version of Shakespeare that would honour Shakespeare but also allow us to reflect the city back to itself, to talk about the city, to represent the city in a really dynamic, populist and artistic way.

"It's a play about love - love for yourself, love for each other, and love for the planet and the world. It felt like, right now, that's an incredibly important thing to say."

The team are hoping to attract both local talent and local audiences.

"We will be holding open access applications for audition for Birmingham-based actors, and it's a chance for us to show off The Rep and the artists of the city. And we're doing 5,000 tickets at £5 for under-25s, so that anybody can come and see the work."

Joe then takes on sole directorship of a new production of Stephen Sondheim's Gothic thriller *Sweeney Todd - The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street*, which he hopes will be the precursor of many more Rep-created musicals.

"I would love The Rep to become a home for world-class musical revivals. I think there's an appetite and a space in Birmingham which doesn't tread on any toes but allows us to define what our idea of a musical is.

"*Sweeney Todd* is the perfect title to start with because it's a fantastic musical. It's incredibly well written and very funny, but it's also deep and complex - an amazing exploration of a ruptured soul."

In January, The Rep will host concert performances of new musical *Sweet Henry V*, written by Seiriol Davies, whose previous works include *Betty! A Sort Of Musical*, a play about former West Bromwich MP and Speaker of the House of Commons Betty Boothroyd.

"*Sweet Henry V* tells the story of Henry V and how he went from playboy prince to the most famous warrior king in British history," says Joe. "It does that through a sort of epic, sword & sorcery queer romance saga between the young Prince Hal and Owain Glyndŵr, the rebel of Wales.

"It's done very irreverently, with a lot of fun. We sort of describe it as 'Shakespeare's history plays, taken out for a night on the tiles'! It's kind of *Braveheart* meets *Hamilton* meets *Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert*!

"The concert performance is an opportunity to get the show before audiences, to see what works and what doesn't work, and how people engage with it."

Moving into the summer, The Rep will be staging the first major production of Mark Haddon's bestseller *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time* since the National Theatre's award-winning version.

"It's co-produced with Melting Pot Theatre Company and will then do a national tour. We chose a really exciting title, and I hope it's definitive of what The Rep will be: a place to launch major contemporary classics and revivals which will then tour."

For Christmas 2026, the main theatre will

stage JM Barrie's *Peter Pan*, which will be adapted by writer - and former director of The Rep Youth Theatre - Phil Porter, with music by West Midlands composer Ruth Chan.

For younger children, The Rep's studio space, The Door, will host an adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen story *The Ugly Duckling*.

Looking into 2027, the theatre will re-mount its sell-out adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's novel *1,000 Splendid Suns*, as well as re-staging former Birmingham Poet Laureate Casey Bailey's show *GrimeBoy*, which premiered at The Rep in 2022.

The theatre has also commissioned a host of new works, including *Chains* - by Birmingham writer Rem Conway - which sees a father-and-son relationship examined when two men are chained together.

A stage version of Vikas Swarup's novel *Q & A*, which inspired the Oscar-winning film *Slumdog Millionaire*, is being written by East Is East author Ayub Khan Din, while writer Rachel Delahaye will be adapting Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

And Birmingham author Kit de Waal, together with her brother Dean O'Loughlin, is adapting her bestselling book *My Name Is Leon*, which is set in Birmingham and was made into a BBC television series starring Sir Lenny Henry.

"We've got a really broad sweep," says Joe. "There's neuro divergence at the heart of *Curious Incident*; we've got South Asian experience at the heart of *Q & A* and *1,000 Splendid Suns*; and we're working with the black communities of the city for *Chains*, *GrimeBoy*, *Jane Eyre* and *Small Island*.

"So what we are trying to do is signal some statement of intent: to represent our communities on our main stage, and to do it with world-class titles and projects that are really shooting for the stars.

"I'd say to people: come, come, come and be a part of it. What the season is trying to do is throw the doors open to everyone, and to say, as much as possible, that this theatre belongs to you; it's *for* you. Please come through our doors, please come and see the shows, and then please tell us what you think."

.....
Visit birmingham-rep.co.uk for further information on all upcoming shows

A SPARKLING SEASON AWAITS



Mon 13 – Sat 18 Oct



Tue 21 – Sat 25 Oct
CAP Thu 23 Oct 7.30pm



Sun 9 Nov



Tue 18 – Sat 29 Nov
CAP Sat 22 Nov 2.30pm AD Sat 29 Nov 2.30pm



Wed 12 – Sat 15 Nov



Tue 9 Dec – Sat 3 Jan 2026
CAP Thu 18 Dec 7.30pm AD Sat 20 Dec 2.30pm



Tue 17 – Sat 21 Mar 2026



Fri 20 & Sat 21 Feb 2026



Wed 4 – Sun 8 Mar 2026
AD Wed 4 Mar 1pm R Fri 6 Mar 1pm

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IT'S ABOUT TIME

First a Stephen King novella, then a 1994 film featuring Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman, now an acclaimed stage show, *The Shawshank Redemption* tells the story of an unlikely friendship that develops between two very different men in the claustrophobic and exploitative Shawshank State Prison. Actor Ben Onwukwe, who plays the Morgan Freeman role of inmate Ellis 'Red' Redding in the currently touring stage version, talks to What's On about the production...

Based on a novella written by Stephen King, the 1994 film *The Shawshank Redemption* starred Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman as two men sentenced to spend the rest of their lives in jail.

Andy Dufresne (Robbins), who has been found guilty of the double murder of his wife and her lover, strikes up an unlikely friendship with prison fixer Ellis 'Red' Redding (Freeman) at the Shawshank State Prison - but Andy is keeping back one crucial secret.

That secret is a twist like no other, and Ben Onwukwe, who plays 'Red' in Bill Kenwright Ltd's touring stage version of the story, is convinced most audience members are waiting for it.

"I sense that most people know what's coming," says Ben, whose co-stars in the show are Joe McFadden (as Andy) and Bill Ward (as the bullying Warden Stammers). "I would imagine that 85 to 90 percent of people sitting in the stalls have seen the movie; it's one of those films that everyone has seen."

"We know the history of the film; that it came out in 1994 and was a bit of a turkey in cinema parlance. It didn't really sell well and got some moderate reviews. It got nominated in various areas, but it wasn't a box-office smash."

"But because we were in the Blockbuster video renting era, where people traded video cassette film and you went down there to change your video every couple of days, the word on the street was that this was the one worth watching. So people wore it out, the sales went through the roof, and it got re-evaluated as a great iconic film."

"I think everyone who comes to the show in the older generation would have worn out their videos, and you can't forget that ending. It's like *Hamlet*. I've seen *Hamlet* about 30 times in my life, and you can't forget that it's going to end in his death. You think 'Is there hope for *Hamlet*? He's such a nice man, so let him survive!' But he doesn't. So we know there's a crazy twist at the end."

Ben says there are good reasons why the film became a classic: "What makes it so compelling is the fact that you are plunged into this nightmare world of prisoners who

are lifers, and probably the most deranged, appalling people that you could imagine walking the earth. But gradually, what you begin to realise is that, behind that veneer, there is humanity, and what emerges from that swamp is two individuals that you actually root for.

"It's very rare when you see a prison drama where you root for those guys - unless it's a comedy like *Ronnie Barker in Porridge!* But these two incredible characters are dripping with humanity and kindness and empathy and all the things that you want from a human being, so you want their story to end happily."

"It's a long, rocky road, but it's worth going through that journey for the ending. That's why I love it, and I think people who see the show come away with that feeling."

This tour is Ben's third time playing Red, a role he first took in 2019. He admits that there was initially some trepidation at the thought of stepping into a character so brilliantly defined in the film by Morgan Freeman.

"All of us actors navigate something like that when you are inhabiting a role that's associated with one individual. I'm not seeing myself as another James Bond, but there's that same thing with Bond; that you are inheriting the mantle of someone so iconic. You think 'Can I measure up?' But, as all actors do, you put that thought to one side and make the part your own."

"You try your best to forget that people are there to see Sean Connery or whoever - in this case, Morgan. Because actually the audience have come to see that character and the way you deliver that character, and hopefully they will bond with and identify with the way you play him. You realise there ain't only one person who can play James Bond, and there ain't only one person who can play Red."

The plot covers a lengthy time period, and Ben says the stage show cleverly uses a soundtrack to move the clock forwards.

"The story has a long time journey of 30 years, and what we use to reference that passing of time is the music. So people who are music lovers will enjoy the fact that the music ranges from tracks that were commonplace and popular in the 1950s right up to the late 70s, and there's something



about that which is quite heartwarming and metaphoric.

"So, for example, you hear Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* in a wintry yard scene, and that instantly transports you to that world. And then the second half opens with *The Beatles* singing *Twist And Shout*, which was 1964, when they were the biggest sensation on the planet, conquering America, and these inmates are dancing to these little white kids from Liverpool, England. The play is measured out with tracks like that - a bit like a DJ time-travelling with music."

Ben believes audience members, whether or not they are familiar with *The Shawshank Redemption* plot, will enjoy seeing the drama unfold on stage.

"It's a really enjoyable, engaging experience in the cinema, but even more so in the theatre, because it's live actors presenting you with a compelling story, and it has a happy ending. It's one of the most redemptive stories - the clue is in the title!"

And Ben is keen to share that story with audiences at Lichfield Garrick.

"I'm looking forward to it. I've never been there before. I'm a bit of a culture vulture, so I will definitely be visiting the cathedral and all the art enclaves and seeing the history."

The *Shawshank Redemption* shows at Lichfield Garrick Theatre from Monday 13 to Saturday 18 October.

The production returns to the Midlands next year, when it shows at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Tuesday 26 to Saturday 30 May



POWER PLAY

**The first ever British Black History musical makes its debut
in the Midlands this month...**

A new musical about a group of Black British activists who were targeted by the state comes to the region this month. Black Power Desk shines light on a little-known period of British history but also has ramifications for the present day, as the show's rapperturg, Gerel Falconer, explains to What's On...

Inspired by Black British activists who were tried for inciting a riot during a protest against police brutality, new musical Black Power Desk takes a fascinating look at a period of British history that has remained relatively, as well as surprisingly, unknown in the 50-plus years since the events took place.

Billed as the first ever British Black History musical, the show takes its title from the real-life undercover surveillance unit that operated out of New Scotland Yard in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The drama is also partly based on the Mangrove Nine, a group of Black British activists tried for inciting a riot while demonstrating against the police's targeting of a Caribbean restaurant and community hub in Notting Hill that was run by a civil rights activist.

Taking place in the year after the trial, the musical is a fictional drama revolving around two sisters and set against the backdrop of real-life events and figures from the Black British civil rights movement in early-1970s London. The show was originally envisaged as a factual recounting of the trial, but ethical concerns about having the right to tell someone else's story led playwright Urielle Klein-Mekongo and dramaturg Gail Babb to develop their own reimagining of what went on after.

Gerel Falconer, the show's rapperturg - a combination of rap lyricist and dramaturg - as well as one of its nine-strong cast, says putting the two sisters front and centre was a nod to two key female figures: Althea Jones-LeCointe, head of the Black British Power movement, and Barbara Beese, a high-profile member of British Black Panthers.

"Urielle's reasoning is that it was historically accurate," says Gerel. "She thought it was very important to make sure they are the centrepiece of our equivalent to their story. Ours is historical fiction - our play exists in the same world as the Mangrove Nine, but we are telling a separate fictional story that sits alongside what was going on at the time." Those real-life events and the story of the British Black Power movement remain a little-known part of British history, and something that even Klein-Mekongo was initially unaware of.

"An American asked her and she didn't know," says Gerel. "She did a lot of research

into Black British history and the British Black Panthers and all these movements that were coming through at the time that's not taught in schools. Sometimes you hear about American civil rights movements, but not really the British equivalent. I had to do a lot of research too, both as a lyricist and an actor, in order to work out what was going on at the time."

What was going on was pretty dark, he says. "It was pretty intense - Teddy Boys, racial tensions and police harassment were all very prevalent, so the community had a lot to deal with. There was also a second generation of the British black community coming up - people that were born here but whose family had travelled over from the Caribbean - who were working out who they were. They were born in England but weren't seen as English. They were told to go back home, but they only knew England, so there was a bit of an identity crisis going on."

With so many elements in the mix, how did the writers find an angle or focus for the piece, and was making it relevant to contemporary society an important part of their thinking?

"It's about activism and the idea of fighting for what you believe in - and the fight being systemic oppression, in this case that was the police force. And we wanted to see how that transcends generationally."

Is that why the play's title is primarily Power, since the other two words contain a strike-through on posters and other promotional materials?

"Yeah, it's about power and the empowerment of a community to understand the education needed to stand up for themselves. What's interesting is that, back then, there was a lot more education on the relevant rights and laws for people to fight their cause. For me, the idea of black and power is all about self-empowerment and how knowledge is power."

"It was mostly about equality, and that's a fair fight, right? Surely everyone wants an equal and just world."

Modern (populist) politics and the ongoing rise of the far right would suggest otherwise, making the play feel sadly prescient.

"Yeah, it feels like history is almost coming full circle in that sense. Back then it was the Teddy Boys. It's important for communities

to stand up against bigotry, racism and hatred - like people trying to attack immigrants. We have to make a stand against those things. I think that's why the play is relevant and powerful."

Any sort of production that has genuine heft and something important to say will always face the challenge of attracting wider audiences - so had the creators been concerned about the show coming across as 'right on' rather than entertaining?

"It's a musical for a reason - we want people to not just deal with the weight of the fight and the battle, but also understand that there's a joy in the community spirit aspect of it."

"The music at the time was phenomenal - despite being righteous and conscious, you could still dance to it. That's something we really wanted to bring across - so it's not about the weight."

The show's music is wide-ranging. It includes soulful lover's rock, RnB, reggae, dub, soca ('soul of calypso', which originated in Trinidad & Tobago in the 1970s) and even punk, plus the raps that Gerel has put together, alongside musical composer Renell Shaw, to give it all a modern twist.

"It's a fusion of period music and modern flows - rhythm of speech, however you want to describe it. The way rapperturgy works is that I'll have a scene, and I'll turn it into verse, rap the verse, and set it to music. My job is to translate the narrative beats, as well as the characters' thought processes and intentions, into lyrical storytelling and then set it to music."

And this is very much music with a message.

"Absolutely. It's a call to arms for people to empower themselves and understand that knowledge is beautiful, powerful, and can actually cause change. [The show] is not heavy; it's about how we come together and celebrate our similarities, rather than bear the weight of our differences."

.....

Black Power Desk shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Tuesday 14 October, and then at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 22 to Saturday 25 October.

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Brno Philharmonic With Freddy Kempf

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 15 October

Internationally acclaimed pianist Freddy Kempf will be injecting plenty of pizzazz into proceedings when he shares a concert programme with the Brno Philharmonic at Symphony Hall in the middle of the month. Freddy (pictured) brings his talent to bear on two works that blur the lines between jazz and classical - Dave Brubeck's Brandenburg Gate and George Gershwin's I

Got Rhythm Variations.

The pieces are neatly sandwiched between works by two composers with whom the Brno Philharmonic are closely associated: Leoš Janáček's Lachian Dances provides a stirring opening to what should be a memorable evening of musicmaking, while Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No7 brings the concert to a suitably compelling conclusion.

CBSO: Kazuki & The Jussen Brothers

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 23 October

"It is like driving a pair of BMWs," declared conductor Michael

Schönwandt after helming a concert featuring siblings Lucas and Arthur Jussen (pictured).



The Dutch brothers have been playing piano together since childhood, and their shared 'sound ideal' and familiarity with one another's style is greatly in evidence in their critically acclaimed performances. Here teaming up with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and its music director, Kazuki Yamada, they will play their part in a mouthwatering programme that features Poulenc's Concerto For Two Pianos, Prokofiev's First Symphony and Schubert's ninth. Turkish composer Fazıl Say's Night - a fast, funky and furious work especially written for the Jussen Brothers - also features.

Ex Cathedra: Duruflé Requiem

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 19 October

James Burton (pictured) is the guest conductor for this latest concert by Birmingham's long-established early music & choral ensemble Ex Cathedra.

Alongside a composition of his own - in which St Cuthbert encounters two others - James will also be guiding the choir through Britten's Rejoice In The Lamb and Vaughan Williams' A Vision Of Aeroplanes, Prayer To The Father Of Heaven. The concert is brought to a close with Duruflé's Requiem, a work which the composer himself described as "often dramatic, or filled with resignation, or hope or terror".



Birmingham Philharmonic

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Sun 12 October

One of the region's best known and most admired non-professional orchestras, the Birmingham Philharmonic here takes its audience on a musical tour around late 19th/early 20th century Italy, kickstarting proceedings with two works by Giacomo Puccini: Capriccio Sinfonico and Intermezzo from Manon Lescaut. The two-hour concert also features the famous Easter Sunday scene from Pietro Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana, Tchaikovsky's Francesca da Rimini, and two compositions by Ottorino Respighi: Fountains Of Rome and Pines Of Rome.

The Sekine Quartet: Vivaldi's Four Seasons

St Paul's Church, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, Sat 11 October

Four talented former Royal Birmingham Conservatoire students here get to grips with Antonio Vivaldi's most famous composition. As is the case with many of the all-female Sekine's performances, the concert will take place by the gentle glow of flickering candlelight.



Solem Quartet

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham, Fri 31 October

Hailed for their immaculate precision and cultured tone, the Solem Quartet take an innovative and adventurous approach to their music and focus great attention on showcasing the work of contemporary composers. The quartet's lunchtime Barber Concert sees them performing a programme that features compositions by Meredith Monk and Nick Martin, presented alongside the premiere of a new work by University of Birmingham composition lecturer Ryan Latimer.



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Dances



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Opera Scenes



20 – 22 Nov



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Live music from across the city...

CMAT

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Thurs 23 October

The stars are certainly aligning for Irish singer-songwriter CMAT (Ciara Mary-Alice Thompson), whose latest album, *Euro-Country*, looks set to make an even bigger splash than 2023's *Crazymad*, *For Me* - the record that made the music industry really sit up and take notice of the talented 29-year-old. "Euro-Country is, I think, the best thing I have ever made," says CMAT. "I felt, halfway through recording, that it was the most important record I've made for myself... mainly because it was making me go crazy."



Joel Sarakula

Dead Wax, Birmingham, Thurs 30 October

For anybody unfamiliar with Joel Sarakula, his official biography paints a vivid picture: visualise Doors legend Ray Manzarek, and then imagine him as the front man for the Bee Gees!

Gazing out at the world from behind vintage glasses, the London-based Australian writes, produces and performs soulful pop which finds its inspiration in the soft rock, funk and disco music of the 1970s.

Joel is playing Birmingham this month as part of his first UK tour in 15 years.



The Rabbitts

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Thurs 2 October

Delicate harmonies, alluringly combined with an intricately interwoven tapestry of mandolin, guitar, bass and drums, have seen The Rabbitts develop an enviable reputation as one of the country's most

innovative folk bands.

The genre-blending ensemble this summer released third album *Orbital Collection*, a record which brings together a recently completed series of EPs.

"We are incredibly proud of this album," say the band. "It has already taken us to some amazing places and opened some beautiful doors for us... We'll see what happens next!"

The Cat Empire

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Mon 20 October

The Cat Empire make a welcome return to the stage, this time in support of their 10th studio album, *Bird In Paradise* - a record which sees the Australian jazz/funk collective weave a kaleidoscope of cultures into their unmistakable sound.

The new release is their most multilingual offering yet, featuring lyrics penned in Seychellois Creole, Spanish and Yinjibarndi.

Rick Wakeman

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 21 October

Keyboard wizard Rick Wakeman has sold tens of millions of albums across more than five decades and continues to win new admirers wherever he performs.

Accompanied by his English Rock Ensemble band, he stops off in Birmingham this month to perform two of his 1970s albums in their entirety: *The Six Wives Of Henry VIII* and *The Myths And Legends Of King Arthur And The Knights Of The Round Table*.

Disturbed

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Mon 20 October

Chicago band Disturbed visit Birmingham with a show that celebrates the 25th anniversary of their seminal and five-times-platinum debut album, *The Sickness*.

The record is widely considered to be one of the most important and influential heavy metal albums of all time.

Their show will feature two sets of music: *The Sickness*, played in full, followed by a full set of greatest hits.



GOOD FOR A LAUGH

Babatunde Aléshé brings his new stand-up show to
Birmingham Comedy Festival



Comedian Babatunde Aléshé has become a fixture on Celebrity Gogglebox, provided hijinks in the jungle on I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!, and hosts a parenting podcast with his wife, Leonie. His latest stand-up show, High Expectations, is touring the country this autumn, including a stop-off at The Alexandra during Birmingham Comedy Festival. What's On spoke to Babatunde to find out more...

Comedian, actor & podcaster Babatunde Aléshé has embarked on his second major stand-up tour - titled High Expectations - and will be travelling across the nation until the end of November. His first date in the West Midlands - at The Alexandra early this month - coincides with the Birmingham Comedy Festival, which showcases some of the biggest names in stand-up, as well as the city's home-grown talent.

Well-established on the UK comedy circuit, Babatunde is a familiar face thanks to appearances on Celebrity Gogglebox, his season on Channel Four's Taskmaster, and his time in the jungle, during the 22nd series of I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!

"I am equally as nervous as I am excited about the tour; nervous because this is the second show. The first tour I did, Babahood, was off the back of I'm A Celebrity, and I don't have that now. Now it's just me, and I have to prove to people that I'm worthy of making them laugh and being a comedian they can rely on to deliver, to bring the jokes and the fun. That's why I called it High Expectations, because there's a pressure that I'm trying to live up to. But also there's the pressure of being a family man, as well as a husband; stretching myself to meet everybody's needs."

Babatunde trained as an actor, but he set his sights on a comedy career from a young age, realising that he had the necessary talent while he was still at secondary school.

"I was always distracting the other students, making them laugh, getting in trouble, obviously! That's when I realised that I was funny. It was that constant disrupting of the class... I was one of *those* children."

"Eddie Murphy is my comedy hero. When I was young, I saw Delirious. My aunty had the VHS, I watched it, and I was just like, 'That's exactly what I want to do.' I knew straight away."

Since then, he's appeared on numerous TV shows - and it's not unusual for fans to reach out: "People recognise me on the street, come up for pictures, or sometimes people just want to greet me. The town I live in, Stevenage, I'm always walking up and down the high street and going into shops, so people around there are kind of used to me. When it happens, it's always nice - I've always got time for people."

Previous tour Babahood cemented Babatunde as a significant player on the UK

stand-up scene: "I remember when we did the tour, I said to myself, 'If I sell 4,000 tickets, that's a dream come true. That would be the best thing ever.' At the beginning of the tour, it was just small, small rooms, like 90-capacity crowds and stuff like that. And then it just grew and grew and grew - and we went on to sell over 30,000 tickets. That, to me, is amazing. I don't care if there's five people in the audience or 2,000, or whatever the venue. I never, ever thought I'd do this, so I'm proud of every single venue that I play, no matter how big or small they are. For people to come out and see me, it's a blessing."

It might be a blessing, but he points out that creating a hit show comes with its fair share of hard work.

"Comedy isn't easy. It's not easy at all. Coming up with material - it's all about experience when it comes to stand-up, so you've got to experience life before you can talk about it... It takes a considerable amount of time to actually come up with a routine that hits hard, that people can relate to and laugh at."

"It takes one joke to kind of spark things off. I'll experience something major, and then it will just spark off all these different ideas, and then everything revolves around this one bit that I wrote. That's how it usually happens... I actually have to get up and speak it out. I think that comes from my acting background. I have to act out the jokes until I actually *find* the joke."

Babatunde admits that he would be tempted to return to the acting world.

"I want to go back to acting for a bit and just recite lines that somebody else wrote! Let somebody else do the writing - I'll just rehearse and act! I enjoy being a dad so much, so I want to spend some time with my kids. I did say after this tour is done, I'm going to spend some time just with the family and just really, really enjoy being a father and a husband."

When appearing on reality TV, there is no script or rehearsed routine to hide behind - as the comedian discovered on I'm A Celebrity.

"I mean, telling Matt Hancock that he was grabbing the booty... that's the moment that people remember the most. I will never, ever live that down - that always comes back to haunt me."

As well as his memorable stay in the jungle, Babatunde is frequently seen performing

with fellow comedian Mo Gilligan - they provide armchair TV commentary together for Channel Four's Celebrity Gogglebox.

"There are moments on Gogglebox that I just absolutely love, because me and Mo were friends before any fame came into the picture. We've been friends for probably 20 years now. All those moments I share on screen with him and other friends stand out. We're all coming from the British Black comedy circuit - myself, Mo Gilligan, Judy Love, just to name a few. Any moment that I get to share with them on TV is always a highlight because we've seen each other come up, and it's just beautiful to be in the spaces that we're in."

Although seeking fame can be a cutthroat business, he has a chilled-out approach to his career: "I'm not one of those competitive types of people. I shy away from that kind of stuff. What's yours is yours, what's meant for me is meant for me."

And when it comes down to what's meant for Babatunde, the sky's the limit.

"Things have just been building and building and building. I think the barrier for me personally is finding the balance between being a 'type', versus being a human... I didn't want to fall into that trap, where people know me for one type of thing. With Babahood, I think people were like, 'Okay, this guy's scared of everything.' And I can't keep delivering that in every single tour."

"I'm trying to have fun; I'm not trying to change the world. I'm not trying to be this super political comedian type. I'm not even trying to be the smartest. I'm trying to have fun - the same way I approached comedy when I was young. Come out, have a nice time, have a laugh and go home. Done! Go get some drinks afterwards, go party, do whatever you want to do. But when you're here and you're with me, we are going to have fun. That's it!"

.....

Babatunde Aléshé performs High Expectations at Birmingham Theatre The Alexandra on Saturday 4 October as part of Birmingham Comedy Festival. He then tours the show to the Royal Spa Centre in Leamington on Thursday 16 October and Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on Saturday 15 November

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Comedy previews from across the region...

Andy Parsons

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Fri 10 October; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 6 November; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 21 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 26 March

With complimentary reviews including such observations as 'what he lacks in hair, he more than makes up for in originality,' Andy Parsons is a sharp and topical

comedian who's well known from TV shows such as BBC's *Mock The Week* and *Live At The Apollo*.

Jokes include: "If you've been affected by any of the issues raised in tonight's episode of *EastEnders*, they must have been acting better than they usually do."

Andy's currently performing his new touring show, *Please #@\$ Off To Mars*.



Ria Lina

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 10 October; St. George's Hall, Bewdley, Mon 13 Oct; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 19 October; The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Sat 14 February

The state of the world, the eternal battle of the sexes - and the delight of throwing life up in the air after years of following the rules - are among the subjects that

comedian and forensic scientist Ria Lina puts under her microscope in brand-new touring show *Riabellion*. Her jokes include: "I wanted to do a show about feminism, but my husband wouldn't let me."



Marcel Lucont

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sat 11 October

French flaneur Marcel Lucont is the creation of British comedian Alexis Dubus, who has been performing as the wine-drinking, sexist philosopher for many a year now, very much wearing the character like a comfy old slipper. Marcel's *Glee Club* appearance this month sees him presenting 'a wild interactive game show, where kids get to be pests, politicians and pétomanes to be crowned the most awful child'.



Daniel O'Reilly

Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 18 October; Walsall Arena, Sat 21 March; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 2 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 26 September; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 2 October

Daniel O'Reilly reckons his life has resembled a rollercoaster ride - and he's stopping off in the Midlands this month to tell his legion of fans all about it.

The London-born comic originally made his name over a decade ago as the character *Dapper Laughs*, but an ill-advised joke about rape put the brakes on what had seemed to be a promising career.

The years which followed saw him battling a

drug and alcohol addiction, and fighting hard to reestablish himself on the UK comedy scene.

Now, having been sober for more than 1,000 days, Daniel is out on the road again. He's performing his latest stand-up show, *Let's Have It*, under his own name - and joking that he hopes he gets cancelled, as he could do with a bit of a break.

Ardal O'Hanlon

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 1 October; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sun 12 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 17 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 1 November

"I make lots of mistakes," admits Ardal O'Hanlon, "but I guess I'm not that interested in being shocking when I do stand-up. I think the best place to start is your own life, and sometimes that will touch on taboo subjects. I think it's kind of lazy and generic to shock just for the sake of it. You've got to have some sort of take on it, but I think things become fashionable in comedy, as with everything else. If there's a massive scandal in the press, then many comedians feel compelled to do something about it just because everyone else is, even though it's not particularly funny. To me, that's lazy and a bit too obvious."



Ed Byrne

Malvern Theatres, Fri 3 October; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 29 October; Evesham Town Hall, Sun 2 November; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 8 November; Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham, Thurs 13 November; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 14 November

A highly regarded master of observational comedy, Ed Byrne is bringing his latest stand-up offering to numerous Midlands venues this month and next.

So does he enjoy touring the country? "Apart from the travel involved, which no comic likes, I love it. You have people responding to something that you've written alone in your office, and the work comes alive in a roomful of people. I like the TV things I do, but nothing can beat a live comedy audience."



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Comedy previews from across the region...

Sara Pascoe

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 30 October;
Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Thurs 6 November;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 14 November

At a time of significant global upheaval and uncertainty, Sara Pascoe is clear about one thing - there are no off-limit subjects when it comes to comedy.

"People forgive the subject matter when they find something funny," she says, "but that doesn't mean the comedian has no responsibility to question their own material. If they're going to tell a joke about rape, they should first consider how you might feel if you've been a victim of it. If, after that, they still feel it's a joke worth telling, then they'll be doing so with complete faith in their own material, which is great."

Sarah visits the Midlands this month with her latest show, *I Am A Strange Gloop*.



Jason Manford

Wolverhampton Civic Hall, Sat 11 October;
Walsall Arena, Thurs 6 November; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 20 January & Fri 13 March;
Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 14 March

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

Jason is stopping off in the Midlands with his brand-new show, *A Manford All Seasons*.



Kae Kurd

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 18 October; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 19 October

British-Kurdish stand-up Kae Kurd didn't have the easiest start in life. Even before he was one year old, he had become a refugee, as his parents fled Saddam Hussein's brutal regime and headed for the UK. In Iraq, Kae observes, 'activism' means risking death. In the UK, all you have to do to

be an activist is tweet with the right hashtag! This wry comment and plenty more in the same vein formed the basis of Kae's first-ever full-length stand-up show back in 2018. He's now out on the road again, performing another 90 minutes of brand-new material presented under the title *What's O'Kurd*.

Georgie Carroll

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 3 October; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Wed 8 October;
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 23 October

Although it was only a couple of years back that nurse-turned-comic Georgie Carroll fully stepped into the comedy spotlight here in the UK - debuting at the Edinburgh Fringe and reaching the semi-finals of Britain's Got Talent - she's been making significant headway on the Australian circuit for quite some time now. Indeed, her previous stand-up offering, *Sista Flo 2.0*, won the Best Comedy Award at the Adelaide Fringe.

A versatile and dynamic performer, Georgie is visiting Birmingham this month with her latest show, *Infectious*.



Jenny Eclair

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Wed 8 October;
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 13 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 21 November

"I think women get dirtier as they get older," says long-in-the-tooth comedian Jenny Eclair. "The more your body lets you down, the more you have to find it funny. It produces more emissions, farts and little noises, and bibbly-bobbly bits that appear and disappear. And then there's giving birth. As soon as you do that, you have to lose all respect for your body. Maybe it's a cheap device, but it does make me laugh. I just think bumholes and fannies are hilarious. The first joke my father told me was a fart joke, and I still find it funny." Jenny's in the region this month and next with her new show, *Jokes Jokes Jokes Live!*



LOVED IN RETURN

**Take a peek behind the red curtain as
Moulin Rouge! The Musical comes to Birmingham**

Fresh from the West End and Broadway, Moulin Rouge! The Musical is this month stopping off in Birmingham. The production has earned standing ovations throughout its world tour - no doubt in part thanks to its glitz, grandeur and unapologetic jukebox soundtrack. For Kurt Kansley, who plays Parisian painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec in the show, the adoration flows both ways. Kurt caught up with What's On to explain why the musical holds a special place in his heart...

The Broadway and West End blockbuster Moulin Rouge! The Musical opens at Birmingham Hippodrome this month and promises to be a high-kicking song & dance extravaganza.

Based on the 2001 Baz Luhrmann film starring Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor, it tells the love story of dancer Satine and writer Christian, set against the heady parties of Paris' most famous nightclub.

Among the host of colourful characters who feature in the tale is Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, based on the real-life late 19th century artist and played in the show by actor Kurt Kansley.

Kurt hails from Australia and has lived in the UK for 22 years, along the way playing parts in a host of hit shows, including The Lion King, Guys And Dolls, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Miss Saigon and Hair. He says that Moulin Rouge! is a spectacle not to be missed.

"It's an incredible show. I've done some big shows before, and they often come with problems because they are big machines, but this has been a dream because it's run very well. The creative team are meticulous about keeping the show at a certain standard, and the dancers work so hard, as do all of the actors on stage.

"The show is a beautiful spectacle. The costumes are incredible; then there's the orchestrations and the band. In many ways, I loved it when I watched it, but doing the show is even more fun. As soon as I step over the threshold onto the stage, I come alive. And there's this beautiful love story and some wonderful songs. It's an amalgamation of everything."

Alongside acting, Kurt is also a musician, a teacher and a writer of musicals. In fact, he was seriously considering hanging up his acting shoes to move into other areas of the theatre world when the chance to play Toulouse-Lautrec came along.

"It has just refreshed everything; I love it. Toulouse-Lautrec is one of the few characters based on a true historic character: the artist who painted a lot of the famous images that you see when you go to Paris - and buy a fridge magnet! He painted for the Moulin Rouge and painted a lot of its characters.

"In the show, Toulouse-Lautrec represents the bohemians, the creatives. In the rehearsal process, I studied his background, and he was actually quite an aristocratic figure; he was a descendant of the king. It's set in 1899, which is when France was well into its Republic phase. He wanted to escape the world of money and aristocracy, so threw himself into the slums of Paris to live among the bohemians and experience the artist's life. So they kind of build on that narrative in his character in the show, and in a way he's the leader of the bohemian group.

"It's one of the best roles I've ever played. It's a lovely mixture. The show starts quite energetically, with these lovely comedy moments - but then, as we get into Act Two, there are so many heartfelt and touching scenes that he's involved in."

Alongside his research, Kurt also had to perfect his accent.

"I'm the only character that has a French accent, even though the show is set in Paris. I worked with our lovely linguistics coach, who looks after the West End as well, which was a really nice challenge for me.

"I was born in South Africa and moved to Australia as a young boy. I love accents and playing with accents; I think that's an actor's default. We like to listen and then play and mimic. I enjoy all those challenges."

The stage musical features excerpts from more than 70 songs, and Kurt gets to sing one of the show's most famous: Nature Boy. The song is particularly special for the actor.

"I'm a jazz pianist as well, so in between working in theatre jobs, I would play in jazz venues in Australia, and also in London. When I was working in different West End shows, afterwards I would go and play some jazz music in little jazz bars. My favourite song in the world is Nature Boy, and it always has been.

"There's a lot of lovely history about the song. It was written by a composer called Eden Ahbez, a hippy in the 1940s who lived under the Hollywood sign. He wrote one song, this beautiful song, and it's been covered by so many artists.

"The message and the last lyric in the song is 'The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return.' The lyrics and

the message in the song are so poignant and so important - it's such an important part of the message of Moulin Rouge!, and I guess of life as well."

And it's a message which Kurt has certainly taken to heart: "I got married in May, and one of the readings that me and my husband had at the wedding was Nature Boy, because the lyrics are so beautiful. Sometimes, when I'm singing the song, I have a little emotional moment. It's so lovely, because the show starts with this big band and these huge numbers, and then I have this one moment with just me and a guitar, and the guitarist plays so beautifully. It is very serendipitous that I get to sing that song."

The national tour of Moulin Rouge! began in April, and Kurt says audiences are enjoying the experience.

"I can guarantee that the Birmingham audiences are going to love this show. Every night we get a standing ovation. There's a moment at the end of the show where we are all standing still and singing to the audience. I look out into the audience and I see people wiping their eyes because they're crying - and then the roar of the crowd at the end of the show is insane. I've never worked in a show that has so much noise and so much elation at the end, with the audience on such a high.

"There are a lot of things that audiences can get out of Moulin Rouge!, and there's a bit of everything for everyone. There's a fantastic love story, beautiful dancers, wonderful storytelling and a lot of nostalgia.

"There are over 75 pop songs too, from Offenbach to Lady Gaga, and there's so much music that pulls at the heartstrings of any demographic of person who might have a memory of a particular song. There's a lot to be said about a jukebox musical, and what I like about Moulin Rouge! as a jukebox musical is that it doesn't apologise for being one. Instead, it celebrates it."

.....

Moulin Rouge! The Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 15 October until Saturday 15 November



Starter For Ten The Rep, Birmingham, Wed 22 October - Sat 1 November

Based on the bestselling novel by David Nicholls, which was turned into a successful 2006 film, *Starter For Ten* follows the adventures of Bristol University student Brian Jackson, who dreams of winning the TV quiz show *University Challenge*.

But how far will Brian go to take the prize?...

The show stars Mel Giedroyc, whose long-term partnership with Sue Perkins saw the two women co-presenting *Light Lunch*, *The Great*

British Bake Off, and *Mel And Sue*.

"*Starter For Ten* is a show about the joy and freedom of being young and a student," explains Mel. "It's a time when anything is possible, and your world is opening up on all sides. I think the young crowd love it because it's about them, and the older crowd do too, because it makes them feel so nostalgic. It's also set in the 1980s, so what's not to love?!"

Sunny Afternoon

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 21 - Sat 25 October; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 7 - Sat 11 April; Malvern Theatres, Tues 3 - Sat 7 March

This clever homage to Swinging '60s superstars The Kinks has been wowing audiences and critics in equal measure since opening in the West End in 2014 - so much so, that it won the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Musical.

Adapted from Joe Penhall's book, with an original story by Kinks guitarist, vocalist & songwriter Ray Davies, it features plenty of the band's best-known tunes, including the iconic *You Really Got Me*, *Waterloo Sunset*, *Dedicated Follower Of Fashion*, *All Day And All Of The Night* and *Lola*.

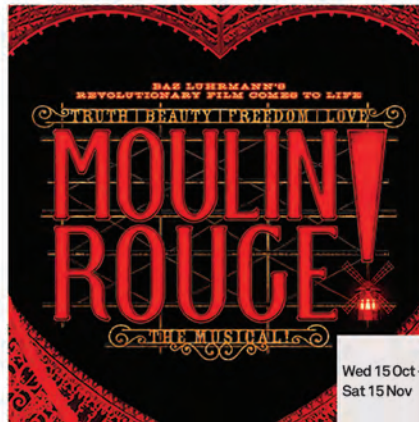


Friends! The Musical Parody

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 13 - Sat 18 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 28 October - Sat 1 November; Malvern Theatres, Tues 25 - Sat 29 November; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 16 - Sat 21 February

Friends may have finished 21 years ago, but the now-legendary TV show continues to draw an audience whenever and wherever it's repeated. So there's little wonder that somebody somewhere decided a stage version would be a good idea. Lovingly lampooning the hit sitcom, the production is a good-hearted romp through the series' most memorable moments - but with the addition of some high-energy song & dance routines just for good measure.







The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 7 - Sat 11 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 14 - Sat 18 October; Malvern Theatres, Wed 4 - Sat 7 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 24 Sat - 28 February

This year marks the 20th anniversary of 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, this musical adaptation of that first novel has set off on a UK tour.

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.

Black Is The Color Of My Voice

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 1 October; Lichfield Garrick, Mon 6 October; Macready Theatre, Rugby, Fri 10 October; The Rep, Birmingham, Wed 15 & Thurs 16 October

Inspired by the life of jazz icon Nina Simone, *Black Is The Color Of My Voice* follows a successful singer and civil rights activist seeking redemption after the death of her father. Her grief provides an opportunity to reflect on the journey that took her from a piano prodigy destined for a life in the service of the church, to a renowned jazz vocalist at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement.

The show features a selection of classic tunes, including *Feeling Good*, *I Put A Spell On You*, *Mississippi Goddamn*, *I Love You Porgy* and *See-Line Woman*.



Earth Angel

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tues 14 - Sat 25 October

Mention Alan Ayckbourn and a list of brilliant observational comedies springs readily to mind, the most famous among which were penned way back in the 1970s - think *Relatively Speaking*,



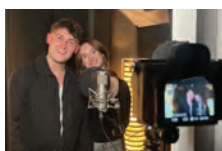
Absurd Person Singular, *The Norman Conquests*, *Bedroom Farce*. Now in his mid-80s, Alan continues to churn out high-quality plays like there's no tomorrow. *Earth Angel* is his latest (and 91st), a work in which he poses the question: what makes someone a good person?

The production stars familiar television face Liza Goddard. And, as is often the case with his plays, Alan takes the directorial reins.

Bonnie & Clyde - The Musical

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 1 October - Sun 2 November

Hit Broadway and West End musical *Bonnie & Clyde* here gets the Old Joint Stock Theatre treatment. Telling the Great Depression-era story of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, two small-town nobodies destined to become one of America's most notorious couples, the show features a non-traditional score combining blues, gospel and rockabilly music.



Born In The USA

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Tues 28 October; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 29 October

A contemplation of the seductive power of populist politics lies at the heart of this critically acclaimed play about a Vietnam War

veteran struggling to survive in the economic wasteland of America's rust belt.

Former Ford factory car worker Jimmy Vandenburg is disillusioned, so much so that Donald Trump's call to 'Make America Great Again' strikes a real chord with him. But when he's visited by the son of a fallen comrade, Jimmy suddenly finds himself questioning his political convictions...



After Sunday

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 10 - Sat 25 October

When a trio of patients in a secure hospital, Ty, Leroy and Daniel, sign up to a Caribbean cooking group led by occupational therapist Naomi, they find themselves embarking on a challenging journey of self-discovery - as indeed does Naomi...

The Belgrade's co-artistic director, Corey Campbell, takes the helm for this debut play by Sophia Griffin. A post-show discussion about the work will take place following the performance on Thursday the 23rd.



What will you see next?



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Theatre previews from around the region



The Woman In Black

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

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...

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.

Shock Horror: A Ghost Story

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Fri 17 - Sat 18 October; The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 31 October & Sat 1 November

Live performance and big-screen action are combined in this 'chilling' story about a man named Herbert who revisits the now-abandoned cinema of his youth.

The Metropal was a place which, via the screening of late-night horror films, had provided Herbert not only with respite from his disturbed parents but also a much-needed window on an otherwise inaccessible world.

However, now returned and searching for answers to long-buried questions, Herbert finds that the real horror is only just beginning...

The production is presented by the award-winning Thunder Road Theatre company.



Macbeth

The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 9 October - Sat 6 December

Having been spurred into action by the prophecies of three supernatural beings - and egged on by his conniving wife - Macbeth's desire to be king of Scotland sees him slaughtering the people who stand in his

way. As the pressure mounts and his grip on sanity weakens, he decides to commit even more atrocities - including the murder of women and children...

Sam Heughan (*Outlander*, *Love Again*) makes his RSC debut as Macbeth, with Lia Williams (*The Crown*, *Skylight*) taking the role of Lady Macbeth.



The Haunting Of Blaine Manor

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 11 October

When Doctor Roy Earle, a renowned American parapsychologist famous for discrediting hauntings and exposing fake mediums, accepts an invitation to attend a seance at 'the most haunted building in England' - the Blaine Manor of the title - he finds himself, along with his companions for the evening, temporarily cut off from the outside world by a raging storm...

And as every lover of the ghost story/horror genre very well knows, where there's a raging storm and a haunted house, there are also, inevitably, things that go bump in the night...

An award-winning love letter to both the Golden Age of Hollywood and the era of Hammer Horror movies here in the UK, *The Haunting Of Blaine Manor* is described by its publicity as the new *Woman In Black* - only scarier...

Inside No 9 Stage/Fright

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 7 - Sat 11 October; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 11 - Sat 15 November; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 2 - Sat 6 December

Although probably still best known for *The League Of Gentlemen*, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith have also enjoyed huge acclaim for their BBC television series *Inside No 9*, a show in which they present self-contained stories liberally sprinkled with black comedy and perverse humour, and which always come with a plot twist.

The popularity of the TV series across its nine seasons led to the development of this stage show, which is heading to Birmingham this month as part of a first UK tour.

The tour follows on from a hugely successful run in the West End earlier this year. As well as including a performance of the episode *Bernie Clifton's Dressing Room*, the production was notable for its use of a special guest star. Celebrities who turned up during the run included David Tennant, Bob Mortimer, Lenny Henry and Ian McKellen.



A man and a woman are smiling and posing in a recording studio. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket over a white shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a black top and light blue jeans, leaning against a professional microphone with a pop filter. The background is dark with some warm lighting and a striped lamp visible on the right.

RAISING A LITTLE HELL

**Outlaws Bonnie and Clyde are brought to life on
Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre stage**

This month, Birmingham's fringe theatre offers up an immersive production of Bonnie & Clyde: The Musical, in the studio space nestled above the Old Joint Stock pub. The show is directed by Emily Lloyd - one of the theatre's in-house team, who is well versed in making the most of the venue's intimate setting - and features talented break-out performers and a live band. What's On spoke to Emily, alongside Indialily Cooper and Samuel Murray, who play the title roles, to find out more...

This October, Birmingham's popular pub-theatre, The Old Joint Stock, presents an immersive and ambitious production of Bonnie & Clyde: The Musical, in its intimate theatre space.

The production is being directed by Emily Lloyd, with Samuel Murray and Indialily Cooper playing the title characters.

"This is my first theatre credit," says Indialily. "I auditioned for The Mad Ones last year, so I've been here before. It felt nice to come back - and it's gone quite well!"

Samuel recently graduated from London's Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

"I'm a big fan of the show," he says. "I did it in my second year at Mountview, in a different part, so it's really fun to come back to do Clyde. Clyde's been a dream role."

After sending in self-tapes and being recalled to the Old Joint Stock, both actors had an inkling that their auditions had gone well, and headed straight off to celebrate.

"I went to Las Iguanas down the road!" Samuel says. "They were doing two-for-one cocktails. I said, 'Right, get me two! Get me tapas, nachos, quesadillas - this is well deserved!'"

Indialily opted for a glass of wine downstairs in the Old Joint Stock pub. "I said, You know what? I'm going to treat myself, *in the building* - and hope it's a good omen!"

The story of Bonnie and Clyde might be infamous, but the musical retelling has not always had an easy journey.

"It started on Broadway, but it lasted for two weeks," explains director Emily. "It closed - it didn't hit. Then it went to the West End and absolutely smashed it - but sadly the UK tour failed halfway through."

The Old Joint Stock, under Theatre Manager James Edge's direction, has a track record for seeking out high-quality musicals to reimagine on the theatre's intimate stage.

"We're always looking for the musicals that just haven't had their moment," says Emily. "When you can look an audience in the eye, it changes the storytelling... The second Bonnie & Clyde reappeared and was ready for licensing - so James pounced on it."

"[The show] is gritty and honest. It's truthful. If you like a rock sound, with a bit of 'MT', that's what you're going to get. But also it's sexy, it's fun - it's not too political and too deep. You get the balance."

Productions staged in The Old Joint Stock's intimate space have traditionally been arranged in Thrust formation - with the audience seated on three sides of the stage. On this occasion, Emily has opted for a Traverse staging, with two banks of audience seats on opposite sides of the action - with projection all around adding to the show's immersive design.

"The designer, George, he did one of Mountview's productions last year - Into The Woods - which had incredible costumes," Samuel recalls. "What we've seen so far is very exciting."

And as well as innovative design, and an ambitious - and tightly under-wraps - plan for the staging of Bonnie and Clyde's car, the production also features a live band, who are positioned upstairs in the venue's attic.

"A weird coincidence - our MD is called Ben Barrow, just like Clyde Barrow, so he's part of the Barrow gang," says Emily. "And we've got three musicians, who are all from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire."

One of Indialily's favourite numbers is You Love Who You Love, a duet that Bonnie and her friend Blanche sing together.

"That's the time when the show gets a big breath, where it feels like time stops, and it's just them singing," she explains. "They've got the same feelings about these two men. Throughout the show, it doesn't seem like they get on, but they're actually really similar as women and as people."

Samuel is looking forward to singing Clyde's powerful anthem, Raise A Little Hell: "I can't wait. I feel very lucky to be able to be doing that in front of an audience. Up to that point, we've seen a lot of the charm and the charisma of Clyde, and the cheekiness. It's such a gift to be able to portray that, as well as hitting Raise A Little Hell - the lowest he's ever been, physically and mentally."

As for the infamous characters themselves, Emily points out that this production is unusually accurate in its casting: "I think the most exciting thing about Bonnie and Clyde in our version is that they're the right ages. In versions I've seen, they're in their 30s. I thought that was their age - but they died at 23 and 25."

Spookily enough for a production that bridges Halloween, when Bonnie first appears in the show aged 21, Indialily will match her exactly: "We open on the first of October. My 21st birthday is on the 1st of

October - opening night - which is fab. What a day! And Bonnie Parker was also born on the 1st of October!"

"As a young cast and as a young director, that's who these stories should be told by," adds Emily. "They were naive young people who made decisions because they had no choice - and that shouldn't be glamorised."

The legend of the outlaws was no doubt helped along by the 1967 film based on the couple, which starred Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway in the title roles. In the musical, Indialily and Samuel are hoping to explore the complexity of the characters.

"Bonnie pushed limits, but I think her sexiness comes from within; it's not just her exterior," says Indialily. "She's so many different things - she can put men in their place, which was a big thing at that time."

"I'm just so excited to explore all the emotions," says Samuel, "and also to channel the sinister sides. I know it's weird to say I'm excited, but when else do you get the opportunity to do something like that?"

"I think Clyde is a really hard role," adds Emily, "because he's a mixture of a womaniser and a terrifying young man."

In this production, the team will be welcoming, for the first time, child performers to play young Bonnie and Clyde.

"They open the show, which is a huge job for the young people," says Emily. "They're Midlands performers, and they're from local stage schools. I'm so excited to work with them. They are cute as anything!"

Bonnie & Clyde marks the Old Joint Stock's most ambitious production to date, and visitors to Birmingham's unique, intimate, inner-city pub-theatre are in for a treat.

"I think you're going to go on an absolute rollercoaster and more," says Emily. "You cannot be a passive audience member. You feel everything, every moment. Everyone is laughing at the same time, holding their breath at the same time, crying... That's something that's so beautiful about fringe theatre - and I think Bonnie & Clyde has all of that."

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Bonnie & Clyde shows at The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, from Wednesday 1 October to Sunday 2 November



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Theatre previews from around the region



2:22 A Ghost Story

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, until Sat 4 October; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 13 - Sat 18 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 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 celebrity couple Kevin Clifton and Stacey Dooley. The cast is completed by Grant Kilburn and Shvorne Marks.

Measure For Measure

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until 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...

Making A Killing

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 October; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 29 October

Ha Hum Ah Productions' dark comedy about justice and corruption is set in Nuremburg in the year 1590 and revolves around two characters: a hangman - Franz Schmidt - and his new apprentice - Claus Kohler. Thrown together in a world in which duty, morality and power collide, their fates become dangerously entwined as the dark truths of human nature are starkly revealed...



Florence Nightingale: The Lady With The Hammer

The Anstice, Telford, Wed 29 October; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 1 November; Conquest Theatre, Bromyard, Fri 7 November; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 8 November

Zany funsters Oddsocks return to the region 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'.



1884

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 14 & Wed 15 October

Theatre-maker Rhianna Ilube has teamed up with BAFTA-winning game-makers Coneyn to create this immersive game-theatre show. The production is inspired by the legacy of the 1884 Berlin Conference, an often-overlooked historical turning point for the African continent and the world...

1884's producers are keen to make clear that their show 'isn't a history lesson'. They advise audiences 'on a fun, fast-paced and thought-provoking journey, where play and protest meet'...

The Rape Of Lucretia

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 10 October; Malvern Theatres, Fri 31 October

Although written nearly 80 years ago in the aftermath of the Second World War, Benjamin Britten's The Rape Of Lucretia, with its chilling exploration of the abuse of power, remains as brutally relevant today as ever it was. Reflecting the suffering and uncertainty of the post-war era, it focuses on a group of bored soldiers who decide to test the loyalty of their wives - a cruel and reckless decision that leads to the most shattering of consequences...

Presented by English Touring Opera.

Shakeitup: The Improvised Shakespeare Show

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Fri 3 October

London-based improv troupe ShakeItUp make an early-month stop-off in Warwick 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!'



NEW VIC



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By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Adapted for the stage by
Steven Canny and John Nicholson

Sat 14 Feb -
Sat 14 Mar

Good Golly Miss Molly

Written by Bob Eaton

Sat 4 Apr -
Sat 2 May

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

By Jules Verne
Adapted by Laura Eason

Sat 23 May -
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Disney On Ice: Find Your Hero

bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham,
Wed 29 October - Sun 2 November

Disney On Ice makes a welcome return with a brand-new family-friendly adventure. Boasting 'cutting-edge figure-skating, eye-catching costumes, stunning set designs, innovative lighting, thrilling special effects and high-flying jumps', Find Your Hero features a cast of beloved Mouse House characters. Moana & Maui, The Little Mermaid, Rapunzel, Frozen's Anna, Elsa & Olaf, and of course Mickey himself, will all be taking to the ice.



Pirates Love Underpants

Dudley Town Hall, Wed 15 October; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), 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'.



Adventures In Science

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,
Sat 25 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Wed 18 February

The fundamental principles of scientific enquiry - exploring everything from supersonic speediness to malicious misinformation - come under the microscope in this hour-long mashup of 'skills and silliness'. The production is presented by The Magical Mr West - best known as one half of magic duo Morgan & West - who is here being helped (or possibly hindered) by a brand-new on-stage partner: a wisecracking cartoon crow named Crowbert!

The Three Little Pigs - The Musical

Stourbridge Town Hall, Tues 28 October

Sixty minutes awash with catchy songs, clever rhymes and heaps of humour is the promise being made by the producers of this 'very curly musical tail', a 'funny and heart-warming adventure' that puts a fresh spin on a classic story. The production features the incredible puppetry of Matthew Forbes, associate puppetry director for the National Theatre's War Horse.

Stick Man

The Albany Theatre, Coventry,
Tues 21 - Sun 26 October

"Freckle Productions send shivers down my spine," reveals Julia Donaldson, the co-creator (along with Alex Scheffler) of the hugely popular children's book on which this show is based. "They're so lively and innovative. I love their production of Stick Man, and so do the audiences." Julia's not wrong - audiences most definitely do love the show, as its frequent return to the region ably demonstrates. The production brings together puppetry, songs, live music and 'funky moves', to tell the story of Stick Man's desperate attempts to get back to the family tree in time for Christmas.



The Littlest Yak

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 18 October;
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 30 October;
Kidderminster Town Hall, Fri 27 February;
Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 4 April

Lu Fraser & Kate Hindley's delightful story about a little yak who's desperate to grow up is here given the theatrical treatment by LAStheatre. Their 45-minute production, which is aimed at children aged three-plus, was last year nominated for four OffWestEnd Awards.



The Dinosaur That Pooped

Malvern Theatres, Sat 25 October; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 29 October; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 19 February; Brierley Hill Civic, Sun 24 May; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 6 June

Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter's touring production features new songs, a lot of laughs and (not surprisingly given the show's title) a whole load of poo! Based on Tom and Dougie's bestselling children's books, The Dinosaur That Pooped follows Danny and Dino as they try to get hold of the last two tickets to their favourite rock band's final concert. But with a villainous band manager lurking, nothing goes according to plan... Will the band perform? Will Danny rock out? Or will Dino's rumbling tummy save the day?...

NOSE JOB

Local lad Adrian Lester talks about making his Royal Shakespeare Company debut as Cyrano de Bergerac



Award-winning actor Adrian Lester is finally making his Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) debut, playing the title role in a brand-new adaptation of Edmond Rostand's classic romantic comedy *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Working with the RSC has been a long time coming for the Birmingham-born star, who hopes the irony-free production will have as much of an impact on audiences as the size of his nose...

For an actor who has become almost synonymous with Shakespeare - he's played critically acclaimed lead roles in *Henry V*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, among others - it seems implausible that Adrian Lester has never performed at the RSC. Ironically, now that he finally is doing so, it's in *Cyrano de Bergerac* - not even one of the Bard's plays.

"I know, but it may as well be!" laughs the Birmingham-born actor, who twice visited the venue as a youngster while a member of Birmingham Youth Theatre. The trips fired his enthusiasm to make a career in the profession, and while he never considered it at the time, a subconscious seed was sown for his eventual return to Stratford.

"I've had my eye on the place for ages and wanting to do something there, so I'm so glad I get to do this," he says, admitting there have been numerous discussions during the 35 years (yes, really) he's been a professional actor.

"I've had conversations with many artistic directors at the RSC, but timings have just not been right. It's brilliant to be doing this now because the stars have aligned. And the RSC is the best place for this play, really - it's a classic, it's a new adaptation, and it's got a very strong, modern voice running through it."

The new version has been co-created by Simon Evans and Debris Stevenson, with long-term involvement from the lead actor. Adrian first discussed the idea with Evans, who is also directing the piece, after they met at a party eight years ago ("we decided there and then that we'd work together").

"My input into the writing of the piece was not to write a word but to come up with an understanding of what was missing and needed to be taken care of in terms of the big holes in the plot, and also where we go for romanticism's sake without the words being about anything.

"It all got put on the shelf due to Covid, but when the RSC asked Simon what he wanted to direct, and then separately asked me if there was anything I wanted to be in, we both said *Cyrano de Bergerac*. And that was it."

The pair knew a new adaptation was needed, and Evans decided on a collaborative

approach - getting Stevenson to tackle the poetics ("the poetry of the piece and the poetry of the characters", according to Adrian) while he handled the prose.

"It's been brilliant. Debris has just been fantastic - vibrant, modern, incredibly collaborative... the three of us have said we definitely want to repeat this and work together again."

The fruit of their labour is a production designed not only to celebrate the original, but to treat it with sincerity rather than irony, according to Adrian, whose *Cyrano* writes love letters to woo Susannah Fielding's Roxane in the guise of her handsome suitor, Christian de Neuville (played by Levi Brown).

"We're not going to talk about love and commitment and joy and poetry with a slight wink or nod or cynical idea on it. We're going to do it in a very romantic, big-hearted way, with swords, with language, with poetry and with rhymes - it's an open-hearted, big romantic comedy."

When I suggest a comedic role has been a long time coming for the actor, it's the cue for a howl of laughter and the recollection of a somewhat unnerving series of conversations.

"There's been a few instances when I've been chatting to people socially - at a party or a restaurant - and someone has leaned across the table and taken my arm and said gently 'You know what, you're actually quite funny... some of the things you say are really quite amusing. Maybe you should think about doing something funny, because you know what? I think you could be funny.'

"Oh thanks, thanks very much," he deadpans, laughing again. "I think my public persona isn't one that lends itself to comedy, farce, slapstick... but that's all going to be in this play."

Maybe this is the role to open new doors and get him out of being pigeonholed as a serious actor?

"I hope so. I've always loved the idea of doing something unexpected and something new, so this'll be great. No one will have seen me like this in two ways - in terms of the comedy and lightness of touch, and they also won't have seen me with such a big nose."

Ah yes, we've finally got to the elephant (man) in the room. *Cyrano's* colossal conk. At the time we spoke, Adrian was still getting used to a rehearsal prosthetic proboscis, but the performance version - made from latex, created using a 3D printer and shaped to fit over his own nose - is much bigger.

"It fits my own nose beautifully. We're aiming for it to look like it is my nose, and it's absolutely massive. It's about giving *Cyrano* the insecurity to believe he's not worth loving because he's so ugly."

As well as the physical comedy of the role, Adrian claims the script is a gift for any actor ("the fun, the repartee, the fighting, the love, the stakes, the poetry, the commitment, the big-hearted passion... it's a beast of a part!"), with the combination giving him the chance to entertain and move people - factors he claims are his constant driving force as an actor.

"I really like the idea that you can go and see something about a certain subject and come away from the cinema or the theatre with a completely different opinion because your understanding and empathy has been raised or changed.

"It's the kind of thing that theatre has the power to do; to make people think, to make them lift their hearts up. We were drawn towards *Cyrano* because he's such a big-hearted, romantic character.

"It's also great to be watching a play with a main character that feels like all of us. He feels like his dreams are too big for him to attain, feels small in front of the person he loves, and always feels like there's something wrong with him. I think most of us have that feeling, that insecurity - especially in front of the people that we love or the thing that we want.

"We all have our own [big] nose, only we carry it around inside, and it's that part of this play that people will respond to. They'll recognise it in him and his story, and they'll know it's about their own life."

***Cyrano de Bergerac* shows at The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Saturday 15 November**

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Cirque: The Greatest Show - Reimagined

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 10 October;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 31 October;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 1 November;
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 6 November

Musical theatre and 'jaw-dropping' circus combine in this intriguing touring show, reimagined for 2025 and described by its official publicity as 'a vibrant, kaleidoscopic journey, bursting with colour, energy and excitement'.

The production sees stars of the West End performing alongside 'amazing aerialists, incredible contortionists and fabulous fire jugglers' as they undertake 'thrilling feats of agility and flair'.

This latest extravaganza also features Britain's Got Talent Golden Buzzer winner Max Fox.

The Horne Section's Hit Show

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 5 October;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 13 November

Comprising five talented musicians and one non-musical stand-up, The Horne Section are unruly, ridiculous, and have been hailed Britain's funniest band. This latest show features the usual mix of comedy, songs, enthusiastic dancing, and no shortage of beautifully choreographed mucking about.



Uncanny: Fear Of The Dark

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 19 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 4 November; Birmingham Hippodrome, Sun 1 March

Danny Robins, the creative force behind spooky podcast The Battersea Poltergeist and spine-tingling stage production 2:22 - A Ghost Story, here makes a welcome return with a 'chilling' showcase of potentially paranormal mysteries. Danny is joined by experts Dr Ciarán O'Keeffe and Evelyn Hollow to examine ghostly apparitions, UFO sightings, a haunted nursery, strange creatures on lonely country lanes, and bizarre poltergeist activity in seemingly normal houses...



Listen Very Carefully: The 'Allo 'Allo Podcast - Live

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 13 October

Hit 1980s/90s television sitcom 'Allo 'Allo! has been enjoying a new lease of life in recent times, courtesy of a hugely popular podcast. Now, three of its stars - Kim Hartman (Helga), Guy Siner (Lieutenant Gruber) and Richard Gibson (Herr Flick) - are visiting the region with a live version of their show, presenting a production featuring classic clips, behind-the-scenes revelations and an audience Q&A.



Trigger Happy TV: Live

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 7 October

If you fondly remember hidden camera/practical joke comedy series Trigger Happy TV, you may want to make a beeline for Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday the 7th. The show's presenter, Dom Joly, will be bringing his most iconic characters and sketches to the stage to celebrate the series' 25th anniversary. Audience members are being advised to stay on the lookout for pranks and unexpected events... They may also find themselves starring in their very own Trigger Happy TV sketch!



Wonders Of Our Universe

Dudley Town Hall, Sun 5 October;
Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 14 October

Presented by astrophysicist Ian Hall and Exoplanet research scientist Charlotte Alexandra, Wonders Of Our Universe weaves together 'distinctive storytelling and breathtaking visuals' to take its audience on an emotionally charged journey into space, 'allowing imaginations to soar, and inspiring minds of all ages'.

The show's recommended age guidance is 11-plus, although its producers, The Average Scientist, reckon younger children will also find plenty to enjoy if they're particularly engaged with the topic.

Grayson Perry: Are You Good?

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 30 October

"Are you good?" asks Grayson Perry, in talking about his new touring show. "It's a question that I think is fundamental to our humanity. In this show, I will be helping you to find out if you really are thoroughly good, or maybe quite evil, but in a fun way. "With lots of audience participation - don't worry, no one leaves unscathed - and a few silly songs, we'll have an entertaining evening and come out with our core values completely in tatters!"





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Dance previews from across the region

Image credit: Dan Tucker



Shobana Jeyasingh Dance: We Caliban

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Tues 21 October

Innovative choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh is widely considered to be one of the country's most brilliant creators.

She returns to the Midlands with her dance company this month to present a new work in which the events of Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest*, are viewed through the eyes of one of its most famous characters: Caliban.



Jasmin Vardimon Company: NOW

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,
Fri 24 & Sat 25 October

Founded in 1998, Jasmin Vardimon's company combines physical theatre and quirky characterisation with innovative technologies, text and dance.

The choreographer's latest work revisits favourite moments from the company's repertoire, 'while reflecting the current moment, the continuous movement of time, and the act of performance within live art'. "A lot of the time, people stay behind after our performance for the post-show discussion," explains Jasmin. "You can see that they're emotionally attached or intellectually engaged and want to speak and talk about it more. And that's exactly what I always hope to do with my art. I want to



make people think and ask questions; I don't want to give answers. At the end of the day, I see myself as a storyteller and communicator about things that are important to me."

Sonia Sabri Company: Roshni

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,
Sun 12 October

"We've always tried to create something which is groundbreaking and pioneering," says Sonia Sabri. "We've been at the forefront of creating new ideas, and that's exactly what we intend to continue doing." Sonia's belief in the need to push the boundaries of dance is reflected in *Roshni*. Bringing together wordless storytelling, eclectic music, percussive dance and upbeat audience interaction, the show comprises three distinctive dance works that explore 'the highs and lows of life today'.

The Return Of The Legends

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 5 October;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Mon 6 October;
Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 4 October 2026;
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 1 November 2026

Following their sell-out *Legends Of The Dance Floor* show last year, *Strictly Come Dancing*'s Brendan Cole, James Jordan, Pasha Kovalev, Vincent Simone and Ian Waite have hit the road again with an even bigger tour.

"Return Of The Legends promises to be the most magical evening," says Vincent, "with brand-new stories and more incredible choreography. And, don't forget, out of all the 'legends', I'm the best!"

Motionhouse: Hidden

Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 10 & Sat 11 October;
Lichfield Garrick, Wed 25 February;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 March

An exploration of how, in an increasingly divided world, people can come together to help one another through the darkest moments they face, Motionhouse's critically acclaimed show, *Hidden*, uses innovative projection, set design, music and movement to create a beautiful and engaging experience for its audiences. "The show is an emotional response to the current state of the world," says the company's artistic director, Kevin Finnan. "You can feel the dancers' energy, and you want to feel the emotions that they are going through. We want everyone to share in the journey with us."

The Nutcracker

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 9 October;
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 15 October;
Malvern Theatres, Sun 16 November

Christmas comes early to the Midlands this month when Imperial Classical Ballet present the festive-season tale of *The Nutcracker*. In true Christmas spirit, the story follows the young Clara as she's swept up in a fantasy of soldiers, giant rats, snow fairies, magic and mystery, before finally being transformed into a beautiful ballerina.

The production features Tchaikovsky's music performed by a live orchestra.

Vincent Simone: Tango Passions

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 25 October;
Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 26 October;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 28 October;
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 10 November;
Walsall Arena, Tues 11 November;
Lichfield Garrick, Sun 15 February;
Palace Theatre, Redditch, Tues 17 February;
The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 21 February

Vincent Simone is certainly not a man to let the grass grow under his ever-dancing feet.

The Argentine tango king and *Strictly Come Dancing* legend is visiting the Midlands with this 'sexy, steamy, passionate' show less than two weeks after the end of the *Return Of The Legends* tour 2025, in which he appears with four fellow *Strictly* stars (see preview elsewhere on this page).

Telling a tale of love and lust at the turn of the 20th century, *Tango Passions* comes complete with classic and modern Argentine tango music from the likes of Astor Piazzolla and Gotan Project.



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Film highlights in October...



The Smashing Machine CERT tbc (123 mins)

Starring **Dwayne Johnson, Emily Blunt, Ryan Bader, Bas Rutten, Oleksandr Usyk, Marcus Aurelio**
Directed by **Benny Safdie**

"I've been scared to go deep and intense and raw until now," Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson recently told journalists, "until I had this opportunity [to make The Smashing Machine]."

Johnson's performance in the movie, in which he portrays Mark Kerr, a former wrestler and UFC star who struggled with substance abuse, is nuanced, thoughtful, and - given the explosive nature of the characters he usually plays - impressively subdued. So much so, in fact, that he's currently being touted for Oscar success.

"For so long, I had been a lucky guy to have had this really awesome career," Johnson continued. "I'm so grateful that I've been able to make some movies that people liked - and some not so much. But I had been waiting for something like this... and wanting to not only push myself, but really go for it and rip it open."

Released Fri 3 October



Plainclothes CERT 15 (95 mins)

Starring **Tom Blyth, Russell Yovey, Maria Dizzia, Christian Cooke, Sam Asa Brownstein, Joseph Emmi Sr** Directed by **Carmen Emmi**

A Sundance Film Festival award winner earlier this year, Plainclothes follows the story of a young police officer named Lucas, who, while working undercover in a mall bathroom arresting gay men by seducing them, makes an unexpected connection with one of his targets - a man named Andrew. What begins as another setup becomes something far more electric and intimate. As their secret connection deepens and police pressure to make arrests intensifies, Lucas finds himself torn between duty and desire... Months later, while attending his mother's New Year's Eve party, he loses a letter no one was ever supposed to read. With time running out and his secret life closing in around him, the evening builds towards an explosive reckoning that will see everything he's kept buried threatening to erupt...

Released Fri 3 October

Tron: Ares CERT tbc

Starring **Jared Leto, Evan Peters, Gillian Anderson, Jeff Bridges, Cameron Monaghan**
Directed by **Joachim Rønning**

The third film in the Tron franchise is hitting cinema screens some 43 years after the first and 15 years after the second.

While both previous movies became cult classics, neither scored much of a hit at the box office - a fact which left Disney somewhat less than certain about the merit of carrying the franchise forward. So, having now taken the plunge and done so, it's fair to say that the Mouse House will have high expectations of Tron: Ares.

The movie follows a highly sophisticated program, Ares, who is sent from the digital world into the real world on a dangerous mission, marking humankind's first encounter with A.I. beings. Academy Award winner Jared Leto takes the title role.

Released Fri 10 October



After The Hunt CERT tbc (139 mins)

Starring **Julia Roberts, Andrew Garfield, Ayo Edebiri, Chloë Sevigny, Michael Stuhlbarg, Thaddea Graham**
Directed by **Luca Guadagnino**

Visionary filmmaker Luca Guadagnino has assembled an impressive cast for his latest movie, a psychological drama that finds Julia Roberts in excellent form.

Roberts plays college professor Alma, who arrives at a personal and professional crossroads when friend and colleague Hank (former Spider-Man star Andrew Garfield) is accused of assault by a promising PhD student named Maggie (Ayo Edebiri). The allegation leaves Alma conflicted. And her position is made all the more precarious by the very real prospect of a dark secret from her own past coming into the light.

Released Fri 17 October

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What's On

Film highlights in October...

Bugonia CERT tbc (120 mins)

Starring **Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons, Alicia Silverstone, Stavros Halkias, Aidan Delbis, Parvinder Shergill**
Directed by **Yorgos Lanthimos**

Yorgos Lanthimos and Emma Stone have forged an impressive professional partnership. Having worked together on three critically acclaimed films - *The Favourite*, *Poor Things* and *Kinds Of Kindness* - they have once again reunited to make *Bugonia*, a sci-fi black comedy remake of the 2003 South Korean movie *Save The Green Planet!*.

Stone plays the character of Michelle Fuller - a high-powered CEO of a major company - who is kidnapped by two conspiracy-obsessed young men who are convinced that she's an extraterrestrial being intent on destroying planet Earth.

"There's so much that's happening [in the film] that's reflective of this time in our world," says Emma, "and it's told in a way that's really fascinating and moving, funny and fuc*ed up, and alive."

Released Fri 31 October



Roofman CERT tbc (126 mins)

Starring **Channing Tatum, Kirsten Dunst, Peter Dinklage, Juno Temple, Ben Mendelsohn, Uzo Aduba** Directed by **Derek Cianfrance**

Fact is sometimes stranger than fiction, and that's definitely the case when it comes to the fascinating story of Jeffrey Manchester.

The one-time Army Ranger became known as Roofman (hence the film's title) after he started robbing premises - most particularly McDonald's restaurants - by drilling, hacking or sawing holes through their roofs.

Eventually captured and convicted, he then escaped prison and secretly lived inside a Toys 'R' Us store. He also began dating single mom Leigh Wainscott, a relationship which would eventually prove to be his undoing...

Based on Manchester's story and premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival last month, this likeable though unremarkable comedy-drama finds Channing Tatum and Kirsten Dunst in good form and should certainly hold its own at the box office.

Released Fri 17 October



The Mastermind

CERT 12a (110 mins)

Starring **Josh O'Connor, Gaby Hoffman, Bill Camp, Hope Davis, John Magaro, Alana Haim**
Directed by **Kelly Reichardt**

Set in the early 1970s against a backdrop of protests about the Vietnam War, Kelly Reichardt's engagingly downbeat, character-driven movie focuses on out-of-work father-of-two JB Mooney, a hangdog non-hero who is busily planning his first-ever heist. With the museum cased and accomplices recruited, JB is confident that his plan to steal four abstract portraits by modernist painter Arthur Dove is absolutely air-tight. His only problem, though - and as he'll soon find out - is that it isn't...

Released Fri 24 October

Relay CERT 15 (112 mins)

Starring **Riz Ahmed, Lily James, Sam Worthington, Willa Fitzgerald, Jared Abrahamson, Pun Bandhu**
Directed by **David Mackenzie**

Paying homage to the paranoid-thriller genre most closely associated with the 1970s - think *The Conversation* (1974), *Three Days Of The Condor* (1975) and *Marathon Man* (1976) - Scottish director David Mackenzie's first feature film in six years zeroes-in on the character of Ash (Riz Ahmed), a world-class 'fixer' who specialises in brokering lucrative payoffs between corrupt corporations and the individuals who threaten to blow the whistle on them.

Ash keeps his identity a secret through meticulous planning and by always following an exacting set of rules. But when a message arrives one day from a potential client (Lily James), who needs his protection simply to stay alive, those rules quickly start to change... **Released Fri 31 October**





Takuro Kuwata, Tea Bowl Punk

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Fri 31 October - Sun 15 March

Traditional Japanese pottery techniques are fused with experimental sculptural processes in the work of Takuro Kuwata.

Inspired by the boldness of American Pop Art, the Hiroshima-born artist produces works which are not only playful and provocative but also unmistakably contemporary. Indeed, his signature use of vivid glazes, distorted silhouettes and explosive textures has effectively redefined the boundaries of contemporary ceramics... To complement what is Takuro's first solo exhibition in the UK, Warwick Arts Centre is hosting a series of workshops. The first, Patterned Plates, takes place next month, on Thursday the 20th. For details about this, and the other three workshops, check out the venue's website at warwickartscentre.co.uk

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Presented on large lightboxes within dimly lit galleries, each photograph is vividly brought to life, offering visitors a striking visual encounter with biodiversity from around the world. The immersive experience is further enhanced by an atmospheric soundscape, designed to evoke the environments captured in the images.



25 October - 25 January
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Tickets start from £4
(excluding booking fee)
wolverhamptonart.org.uk



Image credit: Dmitry Kokh

Wildlife Photographer Of The Year

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Sat 25 October - Sun 25 January

"We are facing urgent biodiversity and climate crises, and photography is a powerful catalyst for change."

So says Dr Doug Gurr, director of the Natural History Museum, which has developed and produced this prestigious competition.

"As we celebrate 60 years of Wildlife Photographer Of The Year," adds Dr Gurr, "we also celebrate the generations of

visitors who have been inspired by the beauty and majesty of its images, and the millions of connections made with nature."

Visiting Wolverhampton as part of an extensive international tour, the show features a host of awe-inspiring images capturing fascinating animal behaviour and breathtaking landscapes.

Designing Terry Pratchett's Discworld

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, until 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'.



Image credit: Paul Kidby



Nothing Gold Can Stay: Assembly 2025

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 9 November

A group exhibition, Nothing Gold Can Stay comprises newly commissioned work by three artists which was made during the second iteration of Assembly, a development programme for local creatives held in partnership with arts organisation Multistory.

The featured artists use sculpture, moving image and photography to consider the complex tensions between time, the production of images and the ethics of viewership. In so doing, they explore how practices of slowness and deep attention 'ask us to view the world differently'.

Donald Locke: Resistant Forms

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, Wed 1 October - Sun 22 February

The first major UK exhibition of work by the late artist Donald Locke brings together a selection of his creative output.

Born and raised in Guyana, Donald moved to the UK in the 1950s as part of the Windrush Generation. The exhibition includes early ceramics inspired by natural forms and the human body, and larger scale paintings and sculptures exploring issues around history and identity.



The Shelter Of Stories: Ways Of Telling, Ways Of Dwelling

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 25 October - Sun 22 February

This groundbreaking exhibition explores the art of storytelling and has been curated by the writer Marina Warner. Bringing together historic objects

with works by leading contemporary artists, the show asks: why do we tell stories, and what do they achieve?



GIANTS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 2 November

Entertainment and education are brought together in this popular 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.



BRUMTROI SOUNDS



A new wave of music has been born on Birmingham's streets...

Birmingham has always been a city of sounds and steel. Home to the car-making industry, it forged not only engines but also entire musical genres. From the thunderous riffs of Black Sabbath and Judas Priest - the pioneers of heavy metal - to the global reggae of UB40 and Steel Pulse, the city has always turned struggle into rhythm. Add the pop-rock of ELO and Duran Duran, the modern-day storytelling of The Streets and Lady Leshur, the energy of Bhangra, Grime and R&B - the 0121 has long been a powerhouse of reinvention.

And then there's Detroit. Another industrial giant, another city of reinvention. Known to the world as the birthplace of Motown, Techno, and early punk rock, Detroit's legacy is also steeped in jazz, gospel, blues and most recently the rawest forms of street Rap. Both Birmingham and Detroit share a deep connection - cities of engines, struggle and soul, where industry and rhythm intertwine.

Now, a new sound is emerging from Birmingham's inner-city communities, fusing these two heritages into something raw, heavy and unapologetic: BrumtroitSounds.

The first whispers came from Mayhem NODB, shouting about a new 0121-owned and manufactured sound called Brumtroit. At first, it was a mystery. But after digging into

playlists, underground sets, and local rappers, it became clear that this wasn't just hype. It was a movement carrying the urgency, tempo and grit of Detroit Rap - the relentless drum patterns, the offbeat cadences, the no-nonsense tone - but with a Brum town Caribbean refix. Sonically the sound sits between the energy of UK Drill and the storytelling of Grime and UK Rap: bass-heavy, riff-driven and real. Brumtroit Sounds shares authentic hood stories - gritty, but without glorifying gangs or drillers, instead focusing on hustle, survival, and hood economics.

At its core, Brumtroit is more than music; it's proof that creativity thrives in the toughest conditions. Out of poverty comes perspective, and out of deprivation comes innovation. With limited resources but unlimited imagination, young artists in Birmingham's most deprived areas are rewriting their futures. They're using beats, rhymes, and DIY production to tell their stories, sell their visions, and move up and out of the cycle of disadvantage. Music becomes not just expression, but enterprise. Every track is both testimony and product, a way to flip pain into progress. Like Detroit's Motown dreamers or Birmingham's heavy-metal pioneers, Brumtroit's artists are showing how

struggle can spark entire movements.

Rappers like Unruly, M1 Caspa, Dex and J Grands, along with visionary producers such as Masta Bluntz, Offkey, Sxundwve and Nino, are carving out the Brumtroit sonic identity. Collaborations like Brum To Manny - featuring Unruly, Screwface, Ra Ra and Froggy - are connecting the Midlands to the North, linking cities and communities through beats and rhymes. Honourable mention must go to the legendary Tunde and manny scenes favourite Kenzo, both playing massive roles around the movement, sound and sonics.

Regional platforms including P110 and Parlay Records are giving these artists the stage to push beyond Birmingham, introducing Brumtroit Sounds to national and international audiences.

This isn't just a sound. It's a cultural shift. A hybrid of Birmingham grit and Detroit rhythm, born from poverty but powered by creativity and ambition. BrumtroitSounds is the new voice of the streets - unpolished, unstoppable, and undeniably 0121.

Check out the playlist of Brumtroit bangers at Parlay Records UK's Spotify profile.





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Events previews from around the region



Five creative craft shows for the price of one... NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 30 October - Sun 2 November

The Creative Craft Show, Sewing For Pleasure, Simply Christmas, Cake International and Bake International make a welcome return to the NEC this month - with visitors gaining access to all five shows for the price of just one.

The Creative Craft Show is a haven for knitting, cross stitch, paper crafting, jewellery, dressmaking and stitching enthusiasts, offering all the latest supplies as well as festive ideas and inspiration...

Sewing For Pleasure, an ideal destination for sewing, knitting, patchwork and embroidery enthusiasts, features demonstrations, workshops and all-day masterclasses... Simply Christmas showcases bespoke and handmade gifts, unique Christmas decorations and festive food & drink... World-renowned cake decorating and sugar craft event, Cake International, will feature headline-grabbing cakes, a huge lineup of suppliers, top-class sugar craft artists and

inspiring displays...

Sister show Bake International provides visitors with the chance to explore a 'baking paradise', featuring everything from breads to sweet-treat pastries.

And, as an added bonus, competitors from across the globe will be showcasing their skills in the world's biggest cake decorating and baking competition.



Get 2 free tickets with code **WOL25**

Grand Designs Live NEC, Birmingham, Fri 3 - Sun 5 October

Self-builders and design enthusiasts will be making a beeline for the NEC early this month when Grand Designs Live makes its usual autumn visit to the venue. Presented by Kevin McCloud - the face of the long-running Channel Four series - the show offers a mix of expert-led talks, interactive features, hands-on demonstrations and the

very latest in design, build and sustainable innovation.

For the first time ever, the show features five specialised hubs, each tailored to a key area of modern home design. The new hubs will connect visitors with real experts, flag up emerging trends and provide invaluable insider insight.

Deadly Live!

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Thurs 30 October

Award-winning wildlife presenter Steve Backshall is bringing Deadly Live! to Birmingham this month - an action-packed experience based on the hugely popular BBC Deadly franchise.

Join Steve as he embarks on a selection of heart-pounding adventures, 'tackling daring stunts, mind-blowing experiments and cutting-edge science'.

From big cats and birds of prey to Dinomania dinosaurs, snakes and more, the show features some of the world's most formidable predators.





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An out-of-this-world autumn half term at Thinktank

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Sat 25 October - Sun 2 November

Thinktank is hosting a variety of out-of-this-world activities with a spooky twist this October half term.

Space-themed Lego coding workshops - running daily from Saturday 25 October to Sunday 2 November - provide families with the chance to create their own alien creatures, while a drop-in craft workshop, Alien Creation Station, and a jam-packed science show, Galactic Mission: Life Beyond Earth, both run from Monday the 27th to Friday the 31st.

On Halloween, alien family The Roswells will be returning to the museum to meet other families, and movie fans can enjoy a screening of E.T. The Extra Terrestrial in the planetarium. Another Steven Spielberg sci-fi classic, Close Encounters Of The Third Kind, shows the following day (Saturday 1 November). The Saturday also sees Birmingham junk-modelling artist Tat Vision visiting the venue to make some alien heads.



Severn Valley Railway Ghost & Scream Trains

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster, Thurs 30, Fri 31 October & Sat 1 November

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

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

Halloween at Hartlebury

Hartlebury Castle, Worcester, Sat 25 October - Sat 1 November

Hartlebury Castle is running some spooky family activities throughout half-term week. Visitors are encouraged to arrive dressed in their favourite Halloween costume and brave the Spooky Skeleton Trail (Saturday 25 October - Saturday 1 November). A special outdoor hunt will take place on Monday the 27th - with miniature pumpkins hidden in the castle grounds - while from Tuesday the 28th to Friday the 31st, families can busy themselves pumpkin carving.



BCLM Festival of Light

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 18 October

The Black Country Living Museum will come alive with the vibrant sights, sounds and spirit of Diwali this month, as the Festival of Light returns.

Attractions include live music and dance, a 'dazzling' lantern procession, and the chance for visitors to get creative in Rangoli workshops, sample authentic South Asian cuisine, and explore interactive lessons about Diwali in St James' School. There's also a Witch & Wizard School for little ones to enjoy, presented by the castle's very own magic teacher, Professor Bumbledum.

On The Home Front

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sat 4 & Sun 5 October

Sample a taste of life in Britain during the Second World War, as Avoncroft turns back the clock to the 1940s.

The event's attractions include a vintage village, live entertainment, dance classes, displays of motorcycles and other vehicles from the 1930s and 40s, VE and VJ Day commemorations, reenactors bringing the venue's prefabs to life, a 1940s fashion show and a vintage fairground. New for 2025, the Woman's Auxiliary War Service will be sharing the stories of the women who supported the Unforgotten Army as they fought the Burma campaign.

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Cake International and Bake International***

*Please note Cake & Bake Int. runs from 31st Oct only

Events previews from around the region



In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, until Monday 13 October

Travel back in time to the heyday of the British acid-house scene via the UK's biggest virtual-reality experience.

The award-winning In Pursuit Of Repetitive Beats uses cutting-edge VR technology to create a truly collective experience, with

groups of four people being able to share the same virtual space and interact together as rave-culture pioneers.

Following the VR experience, visitors can explore a related exhibition containing archive and other audio-visual materials.



Spooky snow and chilling ice at SnowDome

SnowDome, Tamworth, Sat 25 October - Sun 2 November

Tamworth's SnowDome is transforming into a world of spooky snow and chilling ice this autumn half term.

Attractions include a spellbinding, snow-filled Hocus Snowcus - where little ones can slide, scoot, and play in the snow - and the Witch's Winter World, where every child

leaves with a sweet treat!

Meanwhile, for adults and thrill-seeking older children, there's Fright On Ice, a 'chilling' multi-sensory experience that includes three spooky zones: Arachnid Asylum, The Shadow Shipwreck and Carnival Of Screams.

Halloweek at Sudeley

Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham, Sat 25 October - Sun 2 November

Families visiting Sudeley this half term can check out a special trail across the castle grounds, with pumpkins being hidden in the venue's secret nooks and crannies.

Participants who complete the trail will be rewarded with a Halloween treat.

On Halloween itself, visitors will come face-to-face with the darker side of history, courtesy of Tudor All Hallows' Eve, an event during which they will encounter the castle's Tudor ghosts, who will be sharing spine-tingling tales of hauntings and horrors.



The Supreme Cat Show

NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, Sat 18 October

The UK's most prestigious cat event returns to the region mid-month, providing the purrfect day out for moggy-loving Midlanders.

Forty pedigree cat breeds will be competing for the coveted Supreme titles, with breeders, experts and other cat lovers on hand to talk about all things feline. Visitors can also check out cat-themed stalls, shop for gifts and sample a selection of interactive experiences.

After-Dark Tours

The Commandery, Worcester, Tues 14, Thurs 16, Tues 21, Thurs 23, Tues 28, Thurs 30 & Fri 31 October

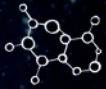
The Commandery is one of Worcester's oldest buildings and a place that harbours lots of ghostly secrets.

Suitable for visitors aged 14-plus, the venue's after-dark tours include tales of strange sightings and mysterious rumours, with your guide for the evening giving the history of the building a hair-raising Halloween twist.





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

thelist



Moulin Rouge! The Musical at Birmingham Hippodrome - Wed 15 October to Sat 15 November

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

What's On

Wed 1 - Sun 5 October



Diana Krall - Symphony Hall,
Centenary Square

Sat 4 October

Mon 6 - Sun 12 October



Marcel Lucont - Hockley Social
Club, Hampton Street

Thurs 9 October

Mon 13 - Sun 19 October



Josh Kumra - Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath

Wed 15 October

Mon 20 - Fri 31 October



Harriet Dyer - The Glee Club,
The Arcadian

Fri 31 October

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

OSZY 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

CHRISTOPHER SAMUEL: WATCH US

LEAD Through 9 newly recorded interviews, Watch Us Lead highlights the experiences of disabled people of colour in Birmingham, combining these stories with stained glass and drawings by the artist.

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

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

THE OFFBEAT SARI A major exhibition celebrating the contemporary sari, and exploring how designers, wearers and craftspeople are reshaping how the sari is understood, designed, made and worn in contemporary urban India, until Sun 2 Nov

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

HOSPITAL ROOMS: BALANCING ACTS A special project by arts & mental health charity Hospital Rooms, exploring how artists, young people and NHS staff have worked together to re-imagine what a mental-health hospital can look and feel like, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 26 April

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

ROYAL SOCIETY OF PAINTER-PRINTMAKERS: TOGETHER IN PRINT

Cross section of work by the Society's current membership, highlighting the enormous diversity of techniques and approaches used by RE Fellows & Associates, Tues 7 Oct - Sat 18 Oct

EGO: IDENTITY AND POWER Debbie Baird and Brian Wood are figurative oil painters who studied together. They share an interest in expressing the essence of the individual, and the nature of their relationship with the world, Sat 25 Oct - Sat 1 Nov

TRANSITORY LANDSCAPES: CRISTINA GARDINER ARBSA Exhibition of

paintings bordering abstraction and representation, borne from strong emotions in response to place, Sat 25 Oct - Sat 1 Nov

Elsewhere:

SHELTER An exhibition of works from the New Art Gallery & Outside In's collections, accompanying the national exhibition on the same theme, until Sun 19 Oct, New Art Gallery, Walsall

EXPERIMENTS IN BARGELLO: ODETTE CAMPBELL Dudley-based artist Odette Campbell unveils her latest body of work in an experimental exhibition that bridges the structural language of brutalist architecture with the intricate tradition of Bargello embroidery, until Sat 1 Nov, Stryx Digbeth, Birmingham

POP ART GALLERY The largest collection of Pop Art outside London, until Wed 31 Dec, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

COVENTRY'S LOST LIBRARY Explore Coventry's old school library, founded more than 450 years ago. Highlights include a medieval manuscript and the chance to discover what a Tudor schoolchild would have been reading, until Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

STAND AND STARE Kate Gallimore, Juliet May and Richard Coyle create artworks inspired by Winterbourne's garden and arts & crafts motifs, until Fri 13 Feb, Winterbourne House & Gardens, Birmingham

COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2025: OBSESSIONS, POSSESSIONS Programme of exhibitions, events and activities platforming the presentation of new artworks and reimaginings of collections, rooted in society's shared obsessions and possessions, Fri 3 Oct - Sun 25 Jan, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

THE HOLE IN THE WHOLE Exploration of incompleteness and the fluidity of existence, featuring works by Ashkan Sepahvand, Phoebe Collings-James & Valerie Asimwe Amani, Sat 4 Oct - Sat 6 Dec, Eastside Project, Birmingham

THE ARTIST, THE COMMUNITY, THE COUNCIL AND THE PHILANTHROPIST Verity-Jane Keefe's collaborative artwork is part soap-opera, part community radio play, set within a partly fictional Birmingham neighbourhood in the past, present and future as public services erode, Sat 4 Oct - Sat 6 Dec, Eastside Projects & The Friends Institute, Moseley Road, Birmingham



Diana Krall - Symphony Hall

Gigs

PICTURE PARLOUR Wed 1 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SHAKATAK Wed 1 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

NATHAN BELL Wed 1 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

FRICITION FARM + ADAM COONEY Wed 1 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

CASEY BAILEY Wed 1 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Centenary Square

WILL VARLEY + ELENI DRAKE Thurs 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE RABBITTS Thurs 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JOHNNY2BAD Thurs 2 Oct, The Jam House, The Jewellery Quarter

NATHAN BELL Thurs 2 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE BELLRAYS Thurs 2 Oct, The Night Owl, Digbeth

LIANG LAWRENCE Thurs 2 Oct, O2 Academy

FLO Thurs 2 Oct, O2 Academy

ROY HARPER Thurs 2 Oct, Symphony Hall

THE JAMES BROWN EXPERIENCE Thurs 2 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

DARIUS RUCKER Thurs 2 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE MYTH Thurs 2 Oct, The Rainbow, Digbeth

OLD TIME SAILORS Thurs 2 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

LEVEL 42 + ROACHFORD Thurs 2 Oct, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

EAT STATIC Fri 3 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

TRU GROOVE Fri 3 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

THESE SMITHS Fri 3 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

CHARLOTTE YOUNG Fri 3 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

BAYKA + JUMPSHIP + LUCÉITH + SIMULATION THEORY + ROCK DOVE Fri 3 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

JOHNNY KOWALSKI AND THE SEXY WEIRDOS Fri 3 Oct, The Night Owl, Digbeth

THE HOLLOWAYS + CAMENS + ANTIDOTES Fri 3 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

CORELLA + ALEX SPENCER Fri 3 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE AMY WINEHOUSE EXPERIENCE Fri 3 Oct, O2 Academy

ROOTED + BLDSUGR + LEFT TO REIGN + JAOTAR + FISTPUMP! Fri 3 Oct, O2 Academy

VEHICLE Fri 3 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

THE MIKE DAVIDS BAND Fri 3 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

RED KITE Fri 3 Oct, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Qtr

PLAID + ULTRAMARINE Fri 3 Oct, Castle &

Falcon, Balsall Heath

LEWIS POOLE Fri 3 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

DUNERAT Fri 3 Oct, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

LEVEL 42 Fri 3 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

MAXIMUM RHYTHM AND BLUES WITH THE MANFREDS Fri 3 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE NOW Fri 3 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS Fri 3 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE BLONDIE EXPERIENCE Fri 3 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE BOHEMIANS Fri 3 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

MONKEY BUSINESS Fri 3 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES Fri 3 Oct, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

COMMON CULTURE Fri 3 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

THE HEELS Sat 4 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

STICK IN THE WHEEL PLUS SUPPORT Sat 4 Oct, Centrala, Fazeley Street

THE SUPERSEEDERS + CHAMPAGNE CASUALS + UNPROVOKED SOCIETY + STUCK ON VIOLET + DANE-O Sat 4 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

RETRO BRUM FEST Sat 4 Oct, The Night Owl, Digbeth

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS + LITTLE JUKE Sat 4 Oct, O2 Academy

THE REAL PEOPLE Sat 4 Oct, O2 Academy

THE DOORS ALIVE + ECHOES OF THE BUNNYMEN Sat 4 Oct, O2 Academy

LOVE THE BEATLES Sat 4 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

ATLANTIC PLAYERS Sat 4 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

RICHARD NORRIS + LOCUST + MARK VAN HOEN + STONE ANTHEM Sat 4 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

UZAK Sat 4 Oct, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

JOANNA EDEN + KYLIE PRICE + TAYNEE LORD + CRAIG GOULD Sat 4 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

DIANA KRALL Sat 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

SIMPLY RED Sat 4 Oct, Utilita Arena B'ham

AND FINALLY... PHIL COLLINS Sat 4 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

BEE GEES GOLD Sat 4 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE VAN MORRISON ALUMNI BAND Sat 4 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BEN POOLE Sun 5 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JAMES MCVEY Sun 5 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

CHRIS WOOD Sun 5 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

DAVE ONIONS Sun 5 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

TV PINS + YOU ME AND THE TREES Sun 5 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

WHITE NOISE + JAMES ADRIAN BROWN Sun 5 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

ELLUR Sun 5 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

MAN WITH A MISSION + HANDS LIKE HOUSES Sun 5 Oct, XOYO, Digbeth

BRYAN CORBETT + CHRIS BOWDEN QUINTET Sun 5 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

PARKWAY DRIVE Sun 5 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE GEORGE HARRISON STORY Sun 5 Oct, Old Rep, Centenary Square

THE COUNTERFEIT SIXTIES SHOW Sun 5 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

GANAVYA Sun 5 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

LES EGARÉS Sun 5 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Classical Music

CBSO: SHOSTAKOVICH'S FIFTH SYMPHONY Featuring Gemma New (conductor) & Christian Tetzlaff (violin). Programme also includes works by Bacewicz & Sibelius, Wed 1 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MELA GUITAR QUARTET Featuring Matthew Robinson, George Tarlton, Zahrah Hutton & Michael Butten (guitars). Programme includes works Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Holst & more..., Thurs 2 Oct, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: AMERICAN PERCUSSION Featuring Toby Kearney, Adrian Spillelt, Andrew Herbert & Matthew Hardy (percussion). Programme includes works by R Lott, A Akiho, J Montgomery & S Reich, Fri 3 Oct, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

THE GESUALDO SIX: THE ENGLISH IN EUROPE Featuring Owain Park (director), Guy James & Alasdair Austin (countertenors), Joseph Wicks & Josh Cooter (tenors) & Simon Grant (baritone). Programme includes works by Binchois, Dunstaple, Byrd & more..., Fri 3 Oct, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

ECHO RISING STARS: MAAT SAXOPHONE QUARTET - BLACKBIRD Programme includes works by von Bingen, Boulanger, Gershwin & more..., Sun 5 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

ARDAL O'HANLON Wed 1 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

REGINALD D HUNTER & COMICS TBC Wed 1 Oct, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham



TOM STADE Thurs 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, PHIL ELLIS & IGNACIO LOPEZ Thurs 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PROJECT MAYHEM COMEDY Thurs 2 Oct, Scruffy Murphy's, Birmingham

REGINALD D HUNTER & COMICS TBC Thurs 2 Oct, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL BREAKING TALENT AWARD Fri 3 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANI JOHNS, PHIL ELLIS, IGNACIO LOPEZ & ROB ROUSE Fri 3 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GOOD KIDS' KLUB NITE Fri 3 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

STEVIE MARTIN Fri 3 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

GEOFF NORCOTT Sat 4 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

PETE OTWAY, BEN VAN DER VELDE, TOUSSAINT DOUGLASS & DAVE LONGLEY Sat 4 Oct, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

FACU DÍAZ Sat 4 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

IGNACIO LOPEZ, DANI JOHNS, PHIL ELLIS & ROB ROUSE Sat 4 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BABATUNDE ALÉSHÉ Sat 4 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SEAN MORLEY, MAT TAYLOR, NATE KITCH & JAZ MATTU (various performances throughout the day), Sat 4 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

RORY RAWSON + JAMIE DOUGLAS Sat 4 Oct, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

SACHIN KUMARENDRA, JON HIPKISS, HARRY JENKINS & CALEB JAMES (various performances throughout the day), Sat 4 Oct, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

CHARLIE BAKER, ANDY FOX, DAVID WARD & RYAN MOLD Sat 4 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

LOYISO GOLA, LIMAH L GERMAIN, RICHARD BLACKWOOD & DIESEL Sat 4 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KANE BROWN Sun 5 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

FAMILY COMEDY SHOW WITH JOE SUTHERLAND, EL BALDINIHO & JONNY AWSUM Sun 5 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

SIKISA, KAT BOYCE, LIMAH L GERMAIN, KYRAH GRAY, GBEMI OLADIPO & ANDREW MENSAH Sun 5 Oct, The Glee Club

JOHN ROBERTSON Sun 5 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CRASH TEST COMEDY Sun 5 Oct, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL FREE HALF-DAYER PT1 Sun 5 Oct, Cherry Reds and The Victoria, Birmingham

ANDY BUCKS Sun 5 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

FAT THEO & DANNY STRACHAN Sun 5 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

JACK DEE Sun 5 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

KAT B, LOYISO GOLA, KYRAH GRAY, SIKISA & LIMAH L GERMAIN Sun 5 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

Theatre

JACK ABSOLUTE FLIES AGAIN Amateur version of the Richard Bean/Oliver Chris comedy, reimagining Sheridan's The Rivals and relocating it to a country house during the Battle of Britain, until Sat 4 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

EMMA New version of Jane Austen's comedy of manners, presented in celebration of the 250th anniversary of her birth, until Sat 4 Oct, The Rep, B'ham

MEASURE FOR MEASURE Emily Burns

returns to the RSC to direct Shakespeare's razor-sharp thriller, until Sat 25 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

CYRANO DE BERGERAC Adrian Lester makes his RSC debut in a lyrical tale of love and lies, longing and disguise, until Sat 15 Nov, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE Inspired by the life of Nina Simone, Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play follows a successful singer & civil rights activist as she seeks redemption after the untimely death of her father, Wed 1 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BONNIE & CLYDE - THE MUSICAL A 'thrilling and sexy' musical with a non-traditional score, combining blues, gospel and rockabilly music, various dates between Wed 1 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

POSTING LETTERS TO THE MOON A 'romantic, funny and touching' portrait of life during the Second World War, featuring readings of letters between Oscar-nominated actress Celia Johnson (Brief Encounter) and her explorer & writer husband Peter Fleming (brother of James Bond creator Ian Fleming), Thurs 2 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

SHON DALE JONES: STORIES FROM AN INVISIBLE TOWN A collection of darkly comic stories from the award-winning writer, Thurs 2 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE LEGENDS OF THEM Music, humour and storytelling combine as British actress & reggae pioneer Sutara Gayle, AKA Lorna Lee, chronicles an extraordinary life - and the legends that have guided her, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

WHEN THE WORLD TURNS An immersive, sensory performance taking audiences into the heart of a living landscape. Surround-sound, singing, lights, shadows, scents, water, puppetry and over 300 plants feature in this collaboration between Oily Cart (UK) and Polyglot Theatre (AUS), Wed 1 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD Lyngo Theatre present a show for younger audiences, complete with catchy songs and funny puppets, Sat 4 Oct, The Rep, B'ham

Heroes by **Gérald Sibleyras**
Translated by **Tom Stoppard**



"Hilarious and moving...achingly funny and piercingly sad."
- The Daily Telegraph

It's the summer of 1959 and three retired veterans are plotting their escape from their home - how far will their imaginations take them?

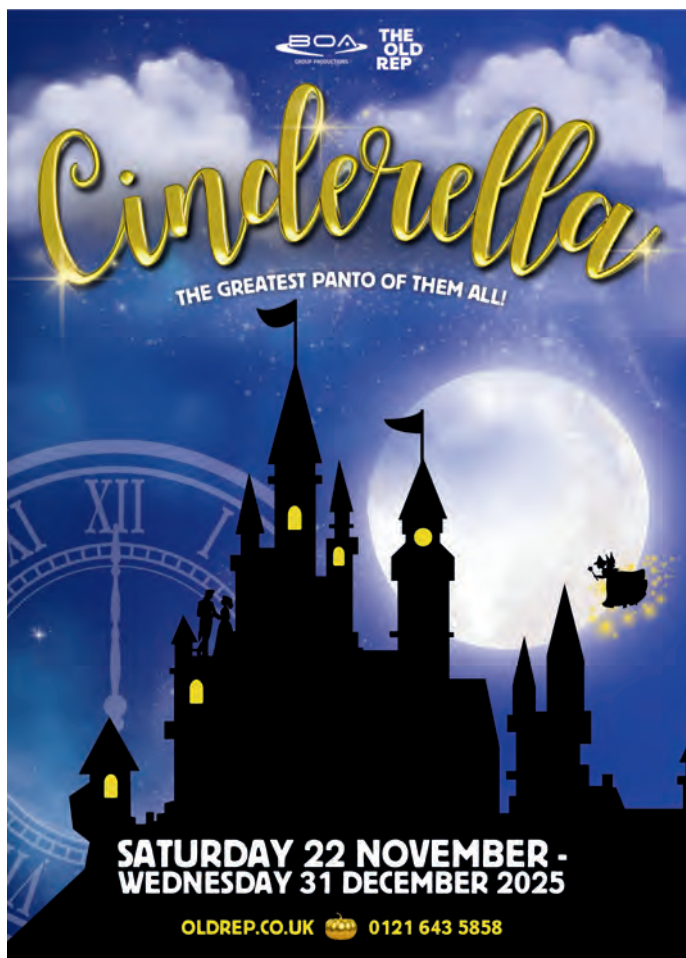
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Dance

THE RETURN OF THE LEGENDS Strictly favourites Brendan Cole, James Jordan, Pasha Kovalev, Vincent Simone and Ian Waite present an evening of dancing, camaraderie, music and laughter, Sun 5 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

DREAMCOAT STARS Evening of musical theatre favourites, 'slick' choreography and stories..., Wed 1 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

CHRIS DIFFORD: NOT ONLY... BUT ALSO A journey through Chris' 50 years in music, 'with warm, funny stories and outstanding pedal steel playing from Melvin Duffy', Wed 1 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

CIRQUE ÉLOIZE: ID RELOADED West End and international hit, fusing circus arts and urban dance music, and featuring b-boying/b-girling, breakdance, hip hop and more, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

NINA CONTI: WHOSE FACE IS IT ANYWAY? Brand new from the award-winning virtuoso ventriloquist, Sat 4 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE HORNE SECTION'S HIT SHOW Evening of unruly and ridiculous entertainment featuring comedy, songs, enthusiastic dancing, and a lot of mucking about, Sun 5 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

EVENT 101 An event described as the 'antidote to clown world madness' featuring researcher Gareth Icke and comedian Abi Roberts. Hosts include Ant Critchley, Kali Spell & John Cooper, Sun 5 Oct, The Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill, Birmingham

WONDERS OF OUR UNIVERSE Afternoon of cosmic exploration, bringing together storytelling, live demonstrations, visuals and music, Sun 5 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

Events

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', until Mon 13 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2025 GRAND

OPENING Be among the first people to see the four Coventry Biennial exhibitions, Thurs 2 Oct, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

65 YEARS OF CLASS 37 This year's Autumn Diesel Bash celebrates 65 years of the versatile and popular Class 37, with four intensively timetabled days, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

THE NATIONAL FRANCHISE EXHIBITION Find out how you could run your own business with the support of an established brand at the UK's flagship franchise exhibition, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

SCAREFEST Featuring 'frantically funny and seriously spooky attractions for all ages', Fri 3 - Sun 5 Oct, Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire

GRAND DESIGNS LIVE The UK's premier event for home & garden innovation, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

PUMPKIN PATCH Get your pick of the patch throughout October, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Oct, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

ARTISAN MARKET: AUTUMN EDITION Explore a handpicked collection of creations from some of the region's

most talented makers, Sat 4 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

CRAFTFEST UK 2025 A chance to network, share ideas and discover exciting new products and suppliers, Sat 4 Oct, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

ON THE HOME FRONT 1940S WEEKEND Experience UK life during the Second World War as Avoncroft turns back the clock, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Oct, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

PUMPKIN PICKING Get your wellies on and head down to pick your own perfect pumpkin, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Oct, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Featuring hundreds of wedding suppliers, live runway shows, and expert-led planning advice sessions, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

BRICK OR TREAT MONSTER PARTY Featuring plenty of spooktacular activities across October, Sat 4 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

MAC'S ARTS MARKET Bringing together the best independent makers from Brum, the West Midlands and beyond, Sun 5 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

A SPRINKLE OF PANTO MAGIC THIS DECEMBER

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4-8 November 2025

The Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

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Gigs

MASS OF THE FERMENTING DREGS

Mon 6 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THALA Mon 6 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

KATIE GREGSON-MACLEOD + LIZZIE REID Mon 6 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

GOLDLINK Mon 6 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

ODHRAN MURPHY Mon 6 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

LULU Mon 6 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

NXDIA Tues 7 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ETUK UBONG Tues 7 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

LORRAINE NASH & DAN SEALEY Tues 7 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

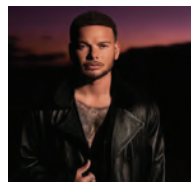
ACM SOUNDS Tues 7 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

BAD TOUCH + THE DUST CODA + WHEN WE'RE DEAD Tues 7 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

JASON MRAZ Tues 7 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

JOSE ZALBA-SMITH + JAVIER ZALBA Tues 7 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

KANE BROWN Tues 7 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham



TOM HICCOX Tues 7 Oct, The Glee Club, The Arcadian, Southside

THE ELVIS WORLD TOUR Tues 7 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CURTISY Wed 8 Oct,

Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JON ALLEN & THE LUNA KINGS + LUCA SIMIAN Wed 8 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BONNYLOU Wed 8 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

DEAD RUBBER DOLLS + SUE + BELOW THE STONES Wed 8 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

KATIE SPENCER Wed 8 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

ROSE GRAY Wed 8 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

JOJO SIWA Wed 8 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

TESTAMENT + OBITUARY + DESTRUCTION + NERVOSA Wed 8 Oct, O2 Academy

CANNED PINEAPPLE Wed 8 Oct, The Victoria, John Bright Street

SMALL CHANGES + ANDY SMYTHE Wed 8 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

RICHARD LEACH'S STREET BAND Wed 8 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Jazz Club

THE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN Wed 8 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ZO LIEF Thurs 9 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE THREE DEGREES Thurs 9 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

LUKE CONCANNON + SADIE GUSTAFSON-ZOOK Thurs 9 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE BEST OF GROHL Thurs 9 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

NEW MODEL ARMY + THE AUTUMN SAINTS Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

RED LEATHER Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

HUGO HAMLET Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Academy

LOLA YOUNG Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Academy

CAGES FOR PREACHERS Thurs 9 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

ECKOES Thurs 9 Oct, The Victoria, John Bright Street

RISHAB SHARMA Thurs 9 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

THE ELLINGTON PIANO PROJECT Thurs 9 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EARTHTONE9 Thurs 9 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

FAIRFIELD REVISITED Thurs 9 Oct, Catshill Club, Bromsgrove

MARTHA MCLORINAN AND LYNN ARNOLD Thurs 9 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 9 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE WAVE PICTURES Fri 10 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE ULTIMATE STONE ROSES Fri 10 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

WELLY + FLAT PARTY + HOLLY HEAD Fri 10 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

CARL SINCLAIR Fri 10 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

THE PIGEON DETECTIVES + GRAVY + MONDAY MADE Fri 10 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

COLD JOE + SECRET LOVE ORCHESTRA + EL HUMMO + MAC WOOD + RED WING Fri 10 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

NEW FOUND GLORY + REAL FRIENDS + KOYO Fri 10 Oct, O2 Academy

THE GARAGE BAND Fri 10 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

YETII Fri 10 Oct, 1000 Trades, Jewellery

Quarter

SICK AS THIEVES Fri 10 Oct, The Victoria, John Bright Street

ALEXA NAVA Fri 10 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

THE KOOKS Fri 10 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ROY G HEMMINGS Fri 10 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

OLIVIA RODRIGO TRIBUTE SHOW Fri 10 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

MR GRIFF & THE GRIFTERS Fri 10 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

DIRTY MONKEYS Fri 10 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

YE VAGABONDS Sat 11 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE REAL JOBS, WHINCE + FALLING AND LAUGHING Sat 11 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

GYASI Sat 11 Oct, The Night Owl, Digbeth

VISTAS Sat 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

49 WINCHESTER + WYATT FLORES Sat 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

FEEDER + EVERYONE SAYS HI Sat 11 Oct, O2 Academy

AC/DC UK + DIZZY LIZZY Sat 11 Oct, O2 Academy

RACHEL CROFT Sat 11 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

THE DEAD MARSHES + ROGUES ASYLUM Sat 11 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Rd

O.S.T.R Sat 11 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

DIRTY SOUND MAGNET Sat 11 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

INFLECTIONS Sat 11 Oct, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

BOOMTOWN RATS Sat 11 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

KATY PERRY Sat 11 Oct, Utilita Arena

Birmingham

ANDY FAIRWEATHER Low Sat 11 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

GUNS N YORKSHIRE Sat 11 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WAYNE DILKS - THE GEORGE MICHAEL LEGACY Sat 11 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ARRIVAL: THE HITS OF ABBA Sat 11 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

OGBERT THE NERD Sun 12 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE EMPTY THREATS Sun 12 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

REUBEN'S DAUGHTERS Sun 12 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND Sun 12 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

CHLOE SLATER Sun 12 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BURY TOMORROW + NEVERTEL + LIONHEART + SIAMESE Sun 12 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

LAUREN SPENCER SMITH + HENRY MOODIE + CONOR BURNS Sun 12 Oct, O2 Academy

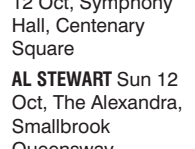
THE SUBTERRANEANS Sun 12 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

PYNCH Sun 12 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA Sun 12 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

AL STEWART Sun 12 Oct, The Alexandra, Smallbrook Queensway

THE BILLY JOEL SONGBOOK Sun 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



THE BILLY JOEL SONGBOOK Sun 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER: LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Handel, Alain, Wirén & Bonnal, Mon 6 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC Featuring Millie Royle (soprano) & Jonathan French (piano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Hahn, Chausson & more..., Mon 6 Oct, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

STRINGS OF FIRE: MUSIC FROM ITALY, SPAIN & LATIN AMERICA Featuring Lorenzo Micheli (guitar). Programme includes works by Paganini, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Chopin & more..., Mon 6 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

CBSO: NIELSEN'S FOURTH SYMPHONY Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) & Fenella Humphreys (violin - pictured). Programme also includes works by Adrian Sutton, Wed 8 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



PADDINGTON TRIO Featuring Tuulia Hero (violin), Patrick Moriarty (cello) & Stephanie Tang (piano), Wed 8 Oct, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CLASSICALLY BLACK WITH LAURA MVULA & THE CBSO Featuring Matthew Lynch (conductor). Programme includes an orchestral accompaniment of Mvula's songs, Fri 10 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

LUNCHTIME RECITAL: DOBROMIR TSENOV (PIANO) Programme includes a performance of 20th century Bulgarian piano music, Fri 10 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, B'ham

BARBER LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Santiago Sanchez (tenor - pictured) & Ian Tindale (piano). Programme includes the world premiere performance of Michael Zev Gordon's Tagore Songs, Fri 10 Oct, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham



CANDLELIGHT: VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS Featuring The Sekine Quartet, Sat 11 Oct, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: FROM ITALY WITH LOVE Featuring Jason Thornton (conductor). Programme includes works by Puccini, Tchaikovsky, Respighi & more... Sun 12 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Mon 6 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY Mon 6 - Tues 7 Oct, Comedy Junction, Sutton Coldfield

CHRIS KENT Wed 8 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BREW HAH! Wed 8 Oct, Attic Brew Co, Birmingham

JACK MCLEAN Wed 8 Oct, Stir Stores, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM FOOTNOTES: AWAITING APPROVAL Wed 8 Oct, The Rainbow, Birmingham

GRILLS & GIGGLES Wed 8 Oct, Soho Tavern, Birmingham

STAN BOARDMAN Wed 8 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

EMMANUEL SONUBI Thurs 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, PAUL THORNE & LILY PHILLIPS Thurs 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE LATE NIGHT SWEET SHOP Thurs 9 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

MARCEL LUCONT Thurs 9 Oct, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham



OMID DJALILI Thurs 9 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DANNY CLIVES & JON HIPKISS Thurs 9 Oct, Soho Tavern, Birmingham

KAMIKAZE CLUB SHOWCASE Thurs 9 Oct, Soho Tavern, Birmingham

JASON BYRNE Fri 10 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JOE SUTHERLAND, ALI WOODS, PAUL THORNE, LILY PHILLIPS & MONICA HSUEH Fri 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ELLIOT STEEL Fri 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KERRY JANES Fri 10 Oct, Greidly Street, Birmingham

ANDY PARSONS Fri 10 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

RIA LINA Fri 10 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

HENNING WEHN Sat 11 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

PETER RETHINASAMY, ABI CARTER-SIMPSON, PAUL PIRIE & DARIUS DAVIES Sat 11 Oct, Rosies Nightclub, B'ham

MARCEL LUCONT Sat 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE SUTHERLAND, ALI WOODS, PAUL THORNE & LILY PHILLIPS Sat 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROB KEMP, RICHARD DADD, RACHEL BAKER, EMMA DAVIES & CHARLES QUARTERMAN (various times throughout the day), Sat 11 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

SHAM ZAMAN, LIZZIE SIMPSON & HANNAH WEETMAN (various times throughout the day), Sat 11 Oct, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

CONLAN & FRIENDS Sat 11 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

LOZ DODD Sun 12 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

STEVE HARRIS, PIERRE HOLLINS, MARK ROW & SUSAN MURRAY Sun 12 Oct, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL FREE HALF-DAYER PT2 Sun 12 Oct, Cherry Reds & The Victoria, Birmingham

Theatre

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE Inspired by the life of Nina Simone, Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play follows a successful singer & civil rights activist as she seeks redemption after the untimely death of her father, Mon 6 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JANE AUSTEN, ABRIDGED Three actors tackle the entire canon of Jane Austen's work - in just 80 minutes! Mon 6 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE PARTY GIRLS Amy Rosenthal's compelling new play tells the sensational story of the infamous Mitford Sisters, Mon 6 - Sat 11 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham



SHITFACED SHAKESPEARE: MACBETH Expect a drunken stomp over 'the story of a privileged, whiny lad who goes a bit bonkers and does some stabbings', Tues 7 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

TIME CRITICAL Stan's Cafe's revised production centres on how we live

our lives in relation to the world around us, Tues 7 - Wed 8 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

INSIDE NO.9 STAGE/FRIGHT Expect the unexpected as the acclaimed BBC TV series comes to life on stage, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

WILD New theatre production exploring 'what wild means to us'. Created from conversations with over 70 people across rural, urban and seaside locations, Wed 8 Oct, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

THAT KNAVE, RALEIGH Dyad Productions take audiences on a journey through the highs and lows of one of Britain's most famous historical figures, Wed 8 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

SHOWSTOPPER! THE IMPROVISED MUSICAL Award-winning show in which a brand-new musical is created from scratch at each performance as audience suggestions are transformed on the spot into all-singing, all dancing productions, Thurs 9 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



THE ART OF SUCCESS Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Actors present Nick Dear's play, recounting the explosive rise of the artist William Hogarth, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CLYBOURNE PARK Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Actors present an amateur version of Bruce Norris' exploration of race and ownership, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

MACBETH Sam Heughan (Outlander, Love Again) makes his RSC debut in the title role. Lia Williams (The Crown, Skylight) stars as Lady Macbeth, Thurs 9 Oct - Sat 6 Dec, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

BRITTEN: THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA English Touring Opera present Benjamin Britten's chilling exploration of the abuse of power, Fri 10 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

DRACULA A chilling and seductive new stage show based on Bram Stoker's Gothic novel, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Oct, The Black Box, Birmingham

AFTER SUNDAY Sophia Griffin's debut play examines the intertwining lives of four characters as they embark on a journey of self-discovery, Fri 10 - Sat 25 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THE ELIXR OF LOVE English Touring Opera present a new production of Donizetti's romantic comedy, Sat 11 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

WHY DIDN'T I GET MARRIED Alan Charles' no-holds-barred courtroom drama takes a bold look at singleness, faith and the Black church, Sun 12 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

DIRTY DUSTING The story of Gladys, Olive and Elsie - three 'vintage style' cleaning ladies who, threatened with redundancy, chance on an unconventional way of earning some extra cash. Crissy Rock, Leah Bell & Vanessa Karon star, Sun 12 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

CABIN FEVER Fresh Ink Theatre Company present a 'hilarious' theatrical journey set 30,000 feet above the Atlantic, Sun 12 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE STORY FORGE: MAKE YOUR OWN MYTH An hour of 'high-octane family fun' during which two loopy professor doctors invent three brand-new myths live on stage, Sun 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Kids Theatre

ENSONGLOPEDIA: LIGHT FANTASTIC! Family show where science lesson meets musical comedy. Expect fascinating onstage experiments exploring the science of light, Sat 11 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Dance

THE RETURN OF THE LEGENDS Strictly favourites Brendan Cole, James Jordan, Pasha Kovalev, Vincent Simone and Ian Waite present an evening of dancing, camaraderie, music and laughter, Mon 6 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SWAN LAKE Presented by Imperial Classical Ballet, Wed 8 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

OKAN The fluidity of salsa and the precision of wing chun martial arts come together in Akeim Toussaint Buck & Ella Mesma's choreography, which is inspired by themes of identity, ancestry, and unity, Wed 8 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE NUTCRACKER Imperial Classical Ballet's version of the festive favourite, accompanied by a live orchestral score, Thurs 9 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

MOTIONHOUSE: HIDDEN Thought-provoking and poignant production from internationally renowned dance-circus company Motionhouse, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

SONIA SABRI COMPANY: ROSHNI An

intimate staging of dance and live music, inspired by the stories and experiences of everyday people. Roshni comprises three distinctive and engaging dance pieces: The Call, The Light and The Wave, Sun 12 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Light Entertainment

ROUND THE HORNE: 60TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Step back in time to the BBC's Paris Studios and experience this comedy classic, live..., Wed 8 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

ELIS & JOHN: THAT FEELS SIGNIFICANT; LIVE! An evening with Britain's youngest and most relevant podcast-first broadcasters. Expect Made Up Games, Cymru Connections, Mad Dads and more..., Wed 8 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA: SCREENING & MUSIC The original film version, accompanied by Minima, Wed 8 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

BOX OF FROGS The Birmingham-based ensemble present an evening of high-octane, improvised comedy nonsense, all of which will be based on audience suggestions, Wed 8 Oct, 1000 Trades, The Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

SEAN ALEXANDER'S MOMENTS IN TIME A 'magic show like no other' that's promising to leave you 'questioning the very essence of your existence', Wed 8 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THREE BEAN SALAD PODCAST Join comedy trio Henry Paker, Benjamin Partridge and Mike Wozniak for their first-ever full-blown tour, Thurs 9 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

RAT PACK LIVE Concert-style performance reviving all-time-favourites such as New York, New York; That's Amore; My Way; Mr Bojangles; and That's Life, Thurs 9 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

IRONING BOARD MAN Physical comedian Jody Kamali masterfully transforms everyday household items into the tools of a Hollywood-style, action-packed romance, Thurs 9 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

CIRQUE: THE GREATEST SHOW REIMAGINED Family-friendly extravaganza showcasing a fusion of musical theatre and jaw-dropping circus acts, Fri 10 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DRAGGED 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, Sat 11 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

NOT JUST FRIENDS: SUPERHOST Work-in-progress comedy-horror sketch show described as 'Heretic meets Joe Rogan', Sat 11 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

CANDLELIGHT: TRIBUTE TO LEONARD COHEN A live, multi-sensory experience, featuring The Sekine Quartet, Sat 11 Oct, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

LOW EFFORT SKETCHES: AS DESCRIBED Award-winning sketch duo Low Effort Sketches bring their sell-out Edinburgh show to Birmingham, Sun 12 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA Boundary breaking pioneers fusing the omnipotent power of the orchestra with innovative technology and the raucous rebellion of rock, Sun 12 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

SANDI TOKSVIG: FRIENDS OF DOROTHY Join the comedian, broadcaster & campaigner for an evening celebrating her love and passion for writers and books, Mon 6 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH DR LOUISE NEWSON Join the pioneer in menopause care as she prepares to debunk myths, educate audiences, and share expert advice on hormones, HRT and women's health, Sun 12 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE An evening with the much-loved performance-poet and comedian, in which he mixes 'classic verse with new material, hilarious ponderings on modern life, good honest gags, riffs and chat', Sun 12 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Events

HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW 2025 Five days of competition, family favourites and displays, Wed 8 - Sun 12 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL The Midlands' largest literature festival, showcasing 'the very best writers, speakers, thinkers, activists and artists', Thurs 9 - Sat 18 Oct, various venues across Birmingham

BULLS IN THE CITY - FAREWELL EVENT After the trail, all the bulls, large and small, will be brought together, Fri 10 Oct, Millennium Point, Birmingham

PUMPKIN PICKING Get your wellies on and head down to pick your own perfect pumpkin, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Oct, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

CHELTHENHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL 'Packed with inspiring voices, big



Diwali Craft Activities and Mehndi Art - Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

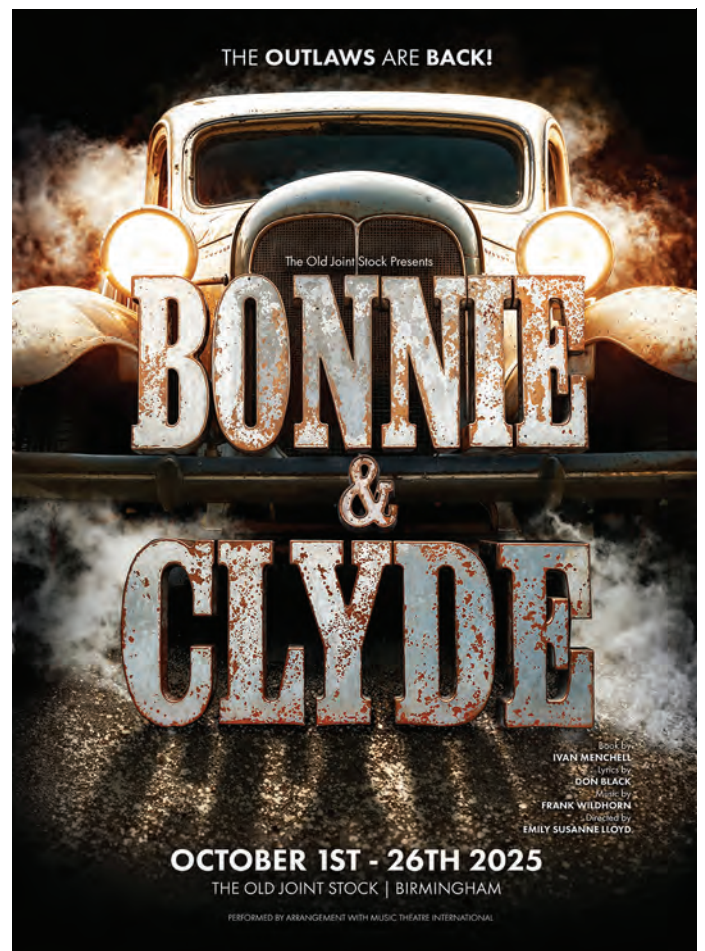
ideas and unmissable experiences', Fri 10 - Sun 19 Oct, venues across Cheltenham

OKTOBERFEST The Bavarian party is coming to Molineux for the very first time, Sat 11 Oct, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

THE MANUALS THAT SAVED APOLLO 13 - PLANETARIUM LATE Dr Michael Warner will be brought to life through state-of-the-art visuals and sound, Sat 11 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

ASCARIUM: TRICKS & TREATS Follow an immersive trail to help the witches and warlocks find their missing potion ingredients, and discover some of the spookiest creatures of the sea, Sat 11 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, National SEA LIFE Birmingham

DIWALI CRAFT ACTIVITIES AND MEHNDI ART Get creative as a local artist helps you design your own Diwali-themed decoration, then visit a Mehndi artist to transform your hand into a mini work of art, Sun 12 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham





Rumer - Birmingham Town Hall

Gigs

TRACY HAMLIN & HOWARD JOHNSON Mon 13 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

PROJECTOR + THE BUNNY SUIT + ROOD END Mon 13 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

CHLOE FOY Mon 13 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

RUMER Mon 13 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

GRAHAM NASH Mon 13 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

JOHN GRANT Mon 13 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JOHN MYRTLE + BLUEWALK Tues 14 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

GRANT-LEE PHILLIPS Tues 14 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE HAPPY FITS Tues 14 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

THE WYTTCHES + PYNCHER Wed 15 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BRYAN CORBETT Wed 15 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

JOSH KUMRA Wed 15 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath



MAIDVALE Wed 15 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

Centre, Coventry

SWALLOWTAIL + OUR WORLDS COLLIDE Fri 17 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

DINO BAPTISTE Fri 17 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

SOMEBODY'S CHILD Fri 17 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SOFIA CAMARA Fri 17 Oct, O2 Academy

LOL GOODMAN BAND Fri 17 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

HENRICK JENSON TRIO Fri 17 Oct, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter

PHWOAR Fri 17 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

COBER MOUTH Fri 17 Oct, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

HIBUSHIBIRE Fri 17 Oct, The Victoria, John Bright Street

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY Fri 17 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

WET WET WET Fri 17 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

SONIQUE Fri 17 Oct, XOYO, Digbeth

REGRETS + VINDICTIVE + SPECIAL GUESTS Fri 17 Oct, Centrala, Fazeley Street

ABBA GOLD Fri 17 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

ELO ENCOUNTER Fri 17 Oct, Old Rep, Birmingham

THE COLOUR SIX Fri 17 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

ELLE-J WALTERS BAND Fri 17 - Sat 18 Oct, The Jam Jewellery Quarter

THE SCHEMERS Sat 18 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE CAMDEN GRUNGE SCENE Sat 18 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

ULTIMATE MADNEZZ Sat 18 Oct, The Night Owl, Digbeth

THE ROYSTON CLUB Sat 18 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SL Sat 18 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

COHEED + CAMBRIA + HAKEN Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy

UK FOO FIGHTERS Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy

THE CLONE ROSES +

DEFINITELY MIGHTBE + THE JAMES EXPERIENCE Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy

THE LOST + THE FLANEURS + THE SPOILS + PEG LEG + MIKKI BULL Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy

MIGUEL MONTALBAN & THE SOUTHERN VULTURES Sat 18 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

SURELY DAN Sat 18 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

JUST RADIOHEAD Sat 18 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

CAT RYAN Sat 18 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

A.R. RAHMAN Sat 18 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sat 18 Oct, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

CLOSE TO TEARS - TEARS FOR FEARS TRIBUTE Sat 18 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

THE MUSIC OF OASIS BY CANDLELIGHT Sat 18 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

THE MIGHTY BOING Sat 18 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THRAX PUNKS Sun 19 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MADDOX JONES Sun 19 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

TARREN Sun 19 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE MIKE DAVIDS BAND Sun 19 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

JESSIE MURPH Sun 19 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

DAWSON SMITH & THE DISSENTERS Sun 19 Oct, The Brasshouse, Broad St

L1NKN P4RK Sun 19 Oct, The Asylum, Hampton St

ALYSSA BONAGURA Sun 19 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

VLURE Sun 19 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

DERVISH Sun 19 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BJORN AGAIN Sun 19 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MAN IN THE MIRROR Sun 19 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Classical Music

RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC: STRING QUINTET Featuring Oliver Heath & Shuwei Zuo (violins), Rose Redgrave & Jinhe Huang (violas) & Nicholas Trygstad (cello). Programme includes works by Vaughan Williams & Dvořák, Mon 13 Oct, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BRNO PHILHARMONIC WITH FREDDY KEMPF (PIANO) Featuring Dennis Russell Davies (conductor), Pavel Zlámal (saxophone), Marek Švestka (double bass) & Radek Tomášek (drums). Programme includes works by Janáček, Gershwin, Brubeck & Dvořák, Wed 15 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KARINE GEORGIAN (CELLO) & JOHN THWAITES (PIANO) Programme includes works by Shostakovich & Britten, Wed 15 Oct, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

HEROES AND VILLAINS: MUSIC CENTRE FREE CONCERT Heroic horns and sinister strings explore courageous and cunning music from the worlds of film, opera and pop, Wed 15 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CBSO: REFORMATION SYMPHONY Featuring Jörg Widmann (clarinet/director - pictured). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn & Widmann, Thurs 16 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



BARBER LECTURE-RECITAL: RARE ROMANTIC MASTERPIECES Featuring Kenneth Hamilton (piano). Programme includes works by Liszt, Stevenson & Reubke, Fri 17 Oct, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

BARBER EVENING CONCERT Featuring Mahan Esfahani (harpsichord). Programme includes works by Handel, M Berkeley, J.S. Bach & D Scarlatti, Sat 18 Oct, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD ORCHESTRA: 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT Featuring Bob Vivian (conductor), Steve Lee (trumpet) & Jeremy Blunt (leader). Programme includes works by Shostakovich, Saint-Saëns, Debussy & more..., Sat 18 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

CBSO FAMILY CONCERT: MUSIC FROM THE MOVIES Featuring Ellie Slorach (conductor), Amy Thomas & Toby Kearney (presenters), CBSO Children's & Youth Chorus.

Programme includes a 'sparkling selection of film scores', Sun 19 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA 2025/26: DURUFLÉ REQUIEM Featuring James Burton (conductor), Martha McLorinan (mezzo soprano), Lawrence White (baritone) & Rupert Jeffcoat (organ). Programme includes works by Vaughan Williams, Britten, Burton & Duruflé, Sun 19 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

EROICA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniel Browell (piano) & Peter Marks (conductor). Programme includes works by Brahms & Tchaikovsky, Sat 19 Oct, St Nicolas Church, Kings Norton, Birmingham

Comedy

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Tues 14 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOSH BAULF Wed 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT RICHARDSON (PICTURED) & MARK BITTLESTONE Wed 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham



RACHEL FAIRBURN & MATT BRAGG Wed 15 Oct, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Wed 15 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

MICHELLE DE SWARTE Thurs 16 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, BRENNAN REECE & FUNMBI OMOTAYO Thurs 16 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RACHEL FAIRBURN (PICTURED) & MATT BRAGG Thurs 16 Oct, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham



Theatre

NEW DAWN FADES Brian Gorman's play about Joy Division and Manchester, Mon 13 - Tues 14 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY Stage production based on the much-loved TV show, Mon 13 - Sat 18 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

2:22 A GHOST STORY Kevin Clifton & Stacey Dooley star in Danny Robbins' edge-of-the-seat supernatural thriller, Mon 13 - Sat 18 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION Joe McFadden, Ben Onwukwe & Bill Ward star in the acclaimed stage adaptation of Stephen King's 1982 novella, Mon 13 - Sat 18 Oct, Lichfield Garrick



BLACK POWER DESK The world premiere of an original musical, set in 1970s London, where the streets are awash with a fever of political unrest, Tues 14 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PINOCCHIO - A NEW MUSICAL A reimagining of Carlo Collodi's classic tale, Tues 14 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

1884 'Fun, fast-paced and thought-provoking journey', during which play and protest meet, Tues 14 - Wed 15 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE LIGHTNING THIEF: THE PERCY JACKSON MUSICAL A stage adaptation of Rick Riordan's bestselling novel - 'perfect for adventure gods, half-bloods and mortals', Tues 14 - Sat 18 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

WHEN VINCENT MET JOHN Play imagining what might have happened had Vincent Van Gogh and John Lennon met, Wed 15 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE Inspired by the life of Nina Simone, Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play follows a successful singer & civil rights activist as she seeks redemption after the untimely death of her father, Wed 15 - Sat 16 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

MOULIN ROUGE! THE MUSICAL Tony Award-winning musical in which Bohemians and aristocrats rub shoulders in a world of excess, glitz and glamour, Wed 15 Oct - Sat 15 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

TIME AND THE CONWAYS Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Actors present an amateur version of JB Priestley's classic drama, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

TALKING HEADS WITH ALAN BENNETT The Play's The Thing Theatre Company present two classic Alan Bennett monologues: A Lady Of Letters and Soldiering On, Fri 17 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

EDDIE IZZARD: HAMLET Akin to the

original performances of Hamlet, Eddie will perform on the blank canvas of a bare stage, letting Shakespeare's words and pure storytelling take the spotlight, Sat 18 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

HEDDA GABLER The Crescent Theatre Company present an amateur version of Henrik Ibsen's exploration of female rage, Sat 18 - Sat 25 Oct, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

PIRATES LOVE UNDERPANTS Theatre for younger audiences, featuring music, puppetry and glittering pants of gold, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Light Entertainment

W@NKERNOMICS Brand-new show from Australia's favourite workplace w@nkers - 'masters at skewering the buzzwords, bureaucracy and bulls*** of the modern workplace', Mon 13 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

YIPPEE KI YAY Richard Marsh's 'hysterical rhyming retelling' of classic action movie Die Hard, Mon 13 - Tues 14 Oct, The Rep, B'ham

FOOTBALL CLICHES LIVE Self-appointed world experts on the language of football - Adam Hurrey, Charlie Eccleshare and David Walker - invite audiences 'on a journey deep into the true meaning of the game', Thurs 16 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

DRAGGED 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 16 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

CANDLELIGHT: THE BEST OF HANS ZIMMER The Sekine Quartet perform music from Zimmer's films - including The Lion King, The Dark Knight, Interstellar & more..., Sat 18 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

CANDLELIGHT: ED SHEERAN MEETS COLDPLAY A live, multi-sensory musical experience, featuring the Sekine string quartet, Sat 18 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH FREDDIE FLINTOFF Join the cricket all-rounder & TV presenter as he talks about the defining moments that shaped his life and career, Tues 14 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Events

THE MOTORHOME AND CARAVAN SHOW The UK's biggest display of new motorhomes and caravans, Tues 14 - Sun 19 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

BULLS IN THE CITY AUCTION Watch as the bulls are auctioned off to raise money for Birmingham Hospice, Thurs 16 Oct, Millennium Point, Birmingham

AFTER-DARK TOURS Explore one of the oldest buildings in Worcester by torchlight, Thurs 16 Oct, The Commandery, Worcester

MIDLANDS MODEL ENGINEERING EXHIBITION Featuring over 30 clubs and societies displaying hundreds of exhibits covering a wide range of modelling skills, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 Oct, Warwickshire Event Centre, Coventry

DISCOS FOR GROWN UPS Boogie the night away to all your favourite 1970s, 80s & 90s hits, Fri 17 Oct, Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PUMPKIN PICKING Get your wellies on and head down to pick your own perfect pumpkin, Fri 17 - Sun 19 Oct, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

GANDEYS CIRCUS HALLOWEEN SPOOKTAKULAR Gandeys Circus returns with a brand-new, spine-chilling, and action-packed Halloween Spooktacular, Fri 17 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill

DIWALI FAMILY CRAFT: CREATE YOUR OWN LIGHT CATCHER Sat 18 Oct, Stourbridge Glass Museum

GCCF SUPREME CAT SHOW Meet 40 pedigree cat breeds competing for the coveted Supreme titles, Sat 18 Oct, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

O GAUGE GET TOGETHER Enjoy a heritage train ride to Highley Station to see some of the UK's award-winning O Gauge layouts and dioramas, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

HAGLEY'S HAUNTED HOUSE & PUMPKIN TRAIL Encounter the restless spirits of the area's dark past, Sat 18 - Fri 31 Oct, Webbs, West Hagley

BIRDLAND TRAIL A trail of ceramic birds inspired by those in Cannon Hill Park, Sat 18 Oct - Sun 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

AVONCROFT DOG SHOW Show classes, agility classes, demonstrations and more, Sun 19 Oct, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

FAMILY EXPLORERS: NATURE LOOM Weave colourful yarn between the branches and add touches of fallen autumn leaves and pine cones, Sun 19 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Gigs

JIM JONES ALL STARS Mon 20 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

EMILY MAE WINTERS Mon 20 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE CAT EMPIRE Mon 20 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD Mon 20 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

DISTURBED Mon 20 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

REUBEN JAMES Tues 21 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ERIC STECKEL Tues 21 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath



MARTHA TILSTON Tues 21 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

BATTLE BEAST + DOMINUM + MAJESTICA Tues 21 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

RICK WAKEMAN Tues 21 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

KID KAPICHI Wed 22 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MANOLA Wed 22 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

OVERTHINK? Wed 22 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

NICK HARPER Wed 22 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

SPANISH LOVE SONGS + THE DIRTY NIL + KALI MASI + SINCERE ENGINEER Wed 22 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

LARKIN POE + SON LITTLE Wed 22 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN + SUNJAY BRAIN Wed 22 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

CATS IN SPACE Wed 22 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WARREN JAMES-LONESOME TRAVELLERS Wed 22 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Jazz Club

THEON CROSS Wed 22 Oct,

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

WILLY MASON Thurs 23 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BRITISH COLLECTIVE Thurs 23 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

IAIN MATTHEWS AND ANDY ROBERTS Thurs 23 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

ROMEO'S DAUGHTER Thurs 23 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

THE WEDDING PRESENT Thurs 23 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

CMAT Thurs 23 Oct, O2 Academy

DETROITWICH FUNK MACHINE Thurs 23 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

ESDEEKID Thurs 23 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

MOUTH CULTURE + BEAUTY SCHOOL Thurs 23 Oct, The Asylum, Digbeth

DUNES Thurs 23 Oct, The Victoria, John Bright Street

TUNDE Thurs 23 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

TIM BERNE'S CAPATOSTA Thurs 23 Oct, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN Thurs 23 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BEN OTTEWELL Thurs 23 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

STONE FOUNDATION + CARMY LOVE Fri 24 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

GHOSTWOMAN Fri 24 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BRAS N' ROSES Fri 24 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LEVI WASHINGTON Fri 24 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Jewellery Quarter

BRANDY CLARK Fri 24 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

POP WILL EAT ITSELF Fri 24 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY EXPERIENCE Fri 24 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

SENDER Fri 24 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

THE VELVET HANDS Fri 24 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

RECALL THE REMAINS + NAMELESS + FOREVER IN THE MAKING + DREAD PERSOPHONE + GROVE WARDEN Fri 24 Oct, XOYO, Digbeth

MARCO CENTASSO UMWELT Fri 24 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

NEWDAD Fri 24 Oct, XOYO, Digbeth



EIGHTY EIGHT MILES Fri 24 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

SENSATION - ABBA TRIBUTE Fri 24 Oct, The Dovehouse, Solihull

PINK - BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA Fri 24 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

MARTIN STEPHENSON AND THE DAINTIES Fri 24 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

THE ROCK ANTHEMS SHOW Fri 24 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BILLY MITCHELL & BOB FOX Fri 24 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

INTO THE SHADOWS Fri 24 Oct, Sat 25 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BOOTLEG BLONDIE Sat 25 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CANNONBALL + WITS END + NO KNOWN WEAKNESS + COEXIST + POWERMOVE Sat 25 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LIARS AT THE WITCH TRIAL + DORSET CARAVAN + GILL + VERLOREN + KOSH Sat 25 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

BIG IMAGE Sat 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

KEO + SARAH BROOKI Sat 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM Sat 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

FELL OUT BOY + THE BLACK CHARADE + METEORA Sat 25 Oct, O2 Academy

KILLERSTREAM Sat 25 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton

Hackett

BLACK SABBITCH + CHERRY DEAD + SLUMP Sat 25 Oct, The Asylum, Hampton St

THE ELO SHOW Sat 25 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE COMMITMENTS - A CELEBRATION Sat 25 Oct, The Dovehouse, Solihull

MOTHERSHIP - LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE Sat 25 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ENJOY THE SILENCE UK - DEPECHE MODE TRIBUTE Sat 25 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

DOCTOR & THE MEDICS Sun 26 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MEGSON Sun 26 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

WALTER SMITTY AND THE UNVIABLES Sun 26 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

DAN WHITLAM Sun 26 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

OLIVER SAMUELS Sun 26 Oct, O2 Academy

XO Sun 26 Oct, O2 Academy

TOM MARTIN'S CROSSROADS Sun 26 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

RICH DICKINSON'S DRIVING FORCE Sun 26 Oct, The Brasshouse, Broad Street

INFIRM OF PURPOSE Sun 26 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

MARTI PELLOW Sun 26 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham



PAPA JUKE'S T.C. + SPLIT SECOND + VIOLET SQUARE + DAN NAPPER Sun 26 Oct, The Rainbow, Digbeth

THE SOUL OF BOLLYWOOD Sun 26 Oct, The Glee Club, The Arcadian, Southside

TAYLOR FEVER Sun 26 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

NATHAN CARTER Sun 26 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MILES DAVIS BY THE TOBY BRAZIER QUARTET Sun 26 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

Classical Music

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: FROM FRANCE TO AMERICA Featuring Lowri Porter & Amy Jones (violin), David BaMaung (viola), Arthur Boutillier (cello), Jeremy Watt (double bass) & Katherine Thomas (harp). Programme includes works by Debussy, Gershwin & Ravel, Mon 20 Oct, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

THOMAS TROTTER: LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Suppé, Mozart, Heiller & more..., Mon 20 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC Featuring Matthew Osborne (trumpet), Joanne Sealey (piano), Luke Cutler (oboe), Lucy Park (clarinet), Ben Baldwin (saxophone), Annabel Chadwick (bass clarinet) & Casper Shaw (bassoon), Mon 20 Oct, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

IAN TRACEY ORGAN RECITAL Tues 21 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

CBSO: KAZUKI & THE JUSSEN BROTHERS Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Lucas & Arthur Jussen (piano). Programme includes works by Prokofiev, Poulenc, F Say & Schubert, Thurs 23 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME RECITAL: ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE Fri 24 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Michael Seal (conductor). Programme includes works by Copland, J Tower & Rachmaninoff, Fri 24 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BARBER LECTURE-RECITAL: WOMEN AND THE PIANO Featuring Susan Tomes (piano). Programme includes works by Martinez, Szymanowska, C. Schumann & more..., Fri 24 Oct, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

SOUTH BIRMINGHAM SINFONIA PLAYDAY Featuring Sabrina Ko (conductor). Programme comprises Pines of Rome and the Fountains of Rome by Ottorino Respighi, Sat 25 Oct, Bournville Quaker Meeting House, Birmingham

THE CORY BAND PRESENTS JOHN WILLIAMS Sun 26 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Comedy

JAMES ACASTER Tues 21 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Wed 22 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LEWIS SPEARS Wed 22 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEORGIE CARROLL Thurs 23 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EMMA DORAN Thurs 23 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JARRED CHRISTMAS & COMIC TBC Thurs 23 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ALISON SPITTLE, MARK MAIER, JARRED CHRISTMAS, JOHN TOTHILL & COMIC TBC Fri 24 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

CARL DONNELLY Fri 24 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ALISON SPITTLE, MARK MAIER, JARRED CHRISTMAS & COMIC TBC Sat 25 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HARE OF THE DOG COMEDY Sun 26 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

Theatre

I AM THE GREATEST! A new solo play in which Rodriguez King-Dorset plays Jake 'Mental' Hughes, a psychiatric patient whose voice illuminates the anger, rage - and sometimes the indifference - of the modern mental-health system, Mon 20 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

LOST ATOMS Anna Jordan's timeless tale takes a wild ride through a life-changing relationship, exploring how love shapes our lives and how we remember it, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

SUNNY AFTERNOON Award-winning musical celebrating the timeless sound of one of Britain's most iconic bands, The Kinks, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT St Alphege Musical Productions Society (STAMPS) present an amateur version of the Tim Rice/Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

BLACK POWER DESK The world premiere of an original musical, set in 1970s London, where the streets are awash with a fever of political unrest, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

MY FAIR LADY Cloc Musical Theatre Company present an amateur version of George Bernard Shaw's romantic comedy, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT Bilston Operatic Society present an amateur version of the iconic musical, which tells a story of friendship, love and acceptance, Wed 22 - Sun 26 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

STARTER FOR TEN Mel Giedroyc stars in a new coming-of-age musical comedy about love and belonging. Featuring an original soundtrack inspired by the 1980s student scene, Wed 22 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

LAROCHE - THE ONLY BLACK PASSENGER

ABOARD THE RMS TITANIC The true story of Haitian-born aristocrat Joseph Philippe Lemerrier Laroche, who perished with over 1,500 other passengers when the Titanic sank on its maiden voyage, Fri 24 - Sat 25 Oct, The Black Box, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

CRAFTY FOOLS: ADVENTURES IN SCIENCE Join 'The Magical Mr West' for an adventure into the world of science, where he'll explore everything from supersonic speediness to malicious misinformation, Sat 25 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Light Entertainment

THE PHANTOMS Lee Mead stars alongside former West End Phantoms in a celebration of musical theatre's most iconic shows, Wed 22 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

CANDLELIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO LUDOVICO EINAUDI A live, multi-sensory experience, featuring Nicole Reynolds on the piano, Thurs 23 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

FIN VS HISTORY LIVE! Join Fin Taylor and Horatio Gould on their trademark disgusting sofa, as they present a live version of their smash-hit podcast, Fri 24 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

MARGARET THATCHER - QUEEN OF SOHO A 'big gay odyssey' about LGBT rights, the 1980s and disco, created by Olivier Award winner Jon Brittain and Matt Tedford, Fri 24 - Sat 25 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

STAR WARS: IN CONCERT WITH THE CBSO Across three days, enjoy a screening of Star Wars: A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi, all with live orchestra, conducted by Anthony Gabriele, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



DRAGGED 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, Sat 25 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

ENCHANTED: THE CANDLELIGHT CONCERT A magical musical experience that brings the beloved songs of fairytales to life in 'a truly enchanting candlelit setting', Sat 25

Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

THE RAT PACK: SWINGIN' AT THE SANDS Fully choreographed show celebrating the sounds of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jnr, Sun 26 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

WIFI WARS A 'very spooky version' of the live comedy game show, Sun 26 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

JANET STREET-PORTER IS OFF THE LEASH 'The nation's favourite pissed-off pensioner' hosts an evening of comedy, tragedy and gossip in equal measure, Tues 21 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

KADIATU KANNEH-MASON; TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK Kadiatu explores her family's journey and talks about what it's like to come of age in such turbulent times, when Black artistic self-expression is so often met with online abuse..., Tues 21 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ADVENTURES IN MODERN RECORDING: AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH TREVOR HORN Join the 'super producer' as he talks about his exploits as a bona fide legend of pop, Tues 21 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE A-Z OF MIRIAM MARGOLYES Expect candour, unpredictability and unvarnished truth as Miriam dives headfirst into an eclectic, alphabetised mix of life's standout moments, Wed 22 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PIXEL FLESH Author Ellen Atlanta and academic Jwana Aziz explore the impact of beauty culture, social media and digital pressures on young women's mental health, Wed 22 Oct, The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

KIT DE WAAL IN CONVERSATION Join the international bestselling author as she talks about her new book, The Best Of Everything, Fri 24 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

AN EVENING WITH JIMMY ANDERSON Join the England fast bowler for an evening of never-before-heard stories from inside the changing room, Fri 24 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CANDLELIGHT: CLASSIC ROCK ON STRINGS A live, multi-sensory musical experience. Sekine Quartet play hits by Metallica, David Bowie, Nirvana & more..., Sat 25 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

CANDLELIGHT: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN A live, multi-sensory musical experience, featuring the Sekine string quartet, Sat 25 Oct, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

Events

BIRMINGHAM COCKTAIL WEEKEND £6 signature cocktails across all participating venues, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 Oct, venues across Birmingham

HYROX BIRMINGHAM Four days of hybrid racing, Wed 22 - Sun 26 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN HALF TERM Follow the quest to solve creepy clues, and gather around to listen to spooky stories, Fri 24 - Fri 31 Oct, Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire

CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIR Featuring a wide array of unique gifts, handmade crafts, delicious treats and more, Sat 25 Oct, Edgbaston Stadium, B'ham

OKTOBERFEST Ringside at the Racecourse transforms into a vibrant beer hall featuring traditional music, German food, and of course, beer! Sat 25 Oct, Wolverhampton Racecourse

THE SHINING A special 45th anniversary screening of The Shining, Sat 25 Oct, Millennium Point, Birmingham

HAGLEY'S HAUNTED HOUSE & PUMPKIN TRAIL BY NIGHT Suitable for brave tweens, teens and their adults, Sat 25 Oct, Webbs, West Hagley

PUMPKINS ON THE POND A unique and atmospheric opportunity to see Sarehole Mill in the twilight, Sat 25 Oct, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

PUMPKIN PICKING Get your wellies on and pick your perfect pumpkin, Sat 25 - Fri 31 Oct, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

OCTOBER HALF-TERM TRAIL Solve the mystery of the missing pumpkins, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Packwood House, Lapworth, Warwickshire

LUNAR LEGO LAB: ALIEN EDITION Space-themed family Lego coding workshop in which to create your own Lego alien creature, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

THE SPIDER'S TANGLE TRAIL Uncover the secrets of a variety of the UK's web types through interactive facts, playful poetry and glowing discoveries, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

FRIGHTS ON ICE Dare to skate through a chilling multi-sensory experience, where the rink becomes a world of frights? Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, SnowDome, Tamworth

HALLOWEEN AT THE CASTLE Check out an epic pumpkin trail across the castle grounds, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

MMM-BOP! THE FAMILY SILENT DISCO: HALLOWEEN SPECIAL Interactive silent disco for kids, Sun 26 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



Todd Rundgren - The Alexandra

Gigs

SLOW CRUSH Mon 27 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CONSTANT FOLLOWER + ALI GILBERT Mon 27 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

WITHERED HAND Mon 27 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

ALLIE SHERLOCK Mon 27 Oct, O2 Academy

FREE THROW + PRINCE DADDY AND THE HYENA Mon 27 Oct, The Asylum, Hampton Street

BIG SKY ORCHESTRA Tues 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE TROOPS OF DOOM Tues 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE NECKS Tues 28 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

INVADERS + KIMBERLITE + THE INSTINCT Tues 28 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL + DANNY GRUFF + DAVE GILES Tues 28 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

EVER + ROOTED AND OVERDRAMATICS Tues 28 Oct, The Asylum, Hampton Street

STONE JETS Tues 28 Oct, The Victoria, John Bright Street

DAL SINGH Tues 28 Oct, B:Eats at Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

BUSTED VS MCFLY Tues 28 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

TODD RUNDGREN Tues 28 Oct, The Alexandra, Smallbrook Queensway

ROYA Tues 28 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

ALFONSO CONSPIRACY

+ THE TEALS + DENIED LEGACY + FAKE HASTE + OSIRIS Tues 28 Oct, The Rainbow, Digbeth

TALON Tues 28 - Wed 29 Oct, The Core Theatre, Solihull

DAVID FORD Wed 29 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath



THE MAGPIES Wed 29 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

MARC SCIBILIA Wed 29 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BEN ELLIS + MARTI PERRAMON + DOLDER Wed 29 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE LOVELY EGGS Wed 29 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

JON WILKS + GEOFF FROST + ROSEMARY STACEY Wed 29 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? A TRIBUTE TO TINA TURNER Wed 29 Oct, The Alexandra, Smallbrook Queensway

SCUMBAG SEASON + SIDETRACKED + RETROGRADE + KEANE BALDWIN Wed 29 Oct, The Rainbow, Digbeth

EMMA-JEAN THACKRAY Thurs 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE NEVERS Thurs 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DONALD WG LINDSAY & ALASDAIR ROBERTS Thurs 30 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

OCIE ELLIOTT Thurs 30 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THOSE DAMN CROWS + TAKIDA + JAMES BRUNER Thurs 30 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE ENTITLED SONS Thurs 30 Oct, O2 Academy

LES SAVY FAV Thurs 30 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

JOEL SARAKULA Thurs 30 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

THE VINTAGE CARAVAN Thurs 30 Oct, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

BRAINROT + INDISPOSED + 40 REASONS + ILLUSIVE + STRANGWAYS Thurs 30 Oct, The Rainbow, Digbeth

GABRIEL MORENO AND THE QUIVERING POETS Thurs 30 Oct, Catshill Club, Bromsgrove

TOYAH Thurs 30 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ARCH ENEMY + AMORPHIS + ELUVEITIE + GATECREEPER Thurs 30 Oct, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

THE MUSIC OF FLEETWOOD MAC BY CANDLELIGHT Thurs 30 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

TALON Thurs 30 - Fri 31 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BRIAN LIGHTNING + CHEMTRAILS + EFFIGY Fri 31 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

APOLLO SOUL Fri 31 Oct, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

LUXURY NAN SMELL + BITCHFINDER GENERAL + LEASHBOY + TRAWLR Fri 31 Oct, The Dark Horse, Moseley

THE AMAZONS Fri 31 Oct, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE BLUETONES Fri 31 Oct, O2 Academy

MENA AMERICAN Fri 31 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

L.A.M.F Fri 31 Oct, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

KRIS BARRAS' HOLLOW SOULS + TROY REDFERN Fri 31 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

LAKES Fri 31 Oct, Dead Wax, Digbeth

SOLARS Fri 31 Oct, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

SUZANNE VEGA Fri 31 Oct, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square



AN EVENING OF CLASSIC REGGAE Fri 31 Oct, The Alexandra, Smallbrook Queensway

BEATLES COMPLETE Fri 31 Oct, Artrix, Bromsgrove

UNDER THE COVERS Fri 31 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

INFIRM OF PURPOSE BRIANA CORRIGAN Fri 31 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

Classical Music

RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC Featuring Alex Wyatt (piano). Programme includes Ornstein's Piano Sonata No.4, Mon 27 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

COMPLETE SHOSTAKOVICH PRELUDES AND FUGUES Featuring Emanuel Ivanov (piano), Tues 28 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RBC CHAMBER CHOIR Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme includes works by Bach & A Roth, Thurs 30 Oct, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RBC CARAMILLO WIND TRIO: AT BMAG Featuring Mary Glasby (oboe), Lucy Park (clarinet) & Casper Shaw (bassoon), Fri 31 Oct, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

BARBER LUNCHTIME CONCERT: SOLEM QUARTET Featuring Amy Tress & William Newell (violins), Stephen Upshaw (viola) & Stephanie Tress (cello). Programme includes works by M Monk, R Latimer & N Martin, Fri 31 Oct, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

RUSSELL WATSON: THE EVOLUTION TOUR Performing some of his best-known tracks and favourite pieces both old and new, Fri 31 Oct, The Halls, Wolverhampton

Comedy

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Mon 27 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM HOUGHTON & TOM HENRY Wed 29 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARA PASCOE Thurs 30 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, THOR STENHAUG & BEN NORRIS Thurs 30 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROSIE JONES Thurs 30 Oct, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

LATE NIGHT SWEET SHOP WITH THE DEVIL Thurs 30 Oct, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

HARRIET DYER Fri 31 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham



The Amazons - O2 Institute

Theatre

GHASTLY GHOST STORIES FOR GRUESOME GREMLINS Old stories, new stories and true stories, all told by professional storyteller & comedy performer Gav Cross. Suitable for audiences aged eight-plus, Tues 28 Oct, Brasshouse Community Centre, Smethwick

AFTER SUPPER GHOST STORIES BY JERMONE K JEROME Comic horror stories told by an unreliable narrator (Gav Cross) and tied together with nonsense, noise and whiskey-punch, Tues 28 Oct, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE Smash-hit production based on C.S Lewis' classic adventure story, Tues 28 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY Stage production based on the much-loved TV show, Tues 28 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

MAKING A KILLING Dark and razor-sharp comedy about justice, corruption, and the cost of survival..., Wed 29 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BETLESPHOOF A ghoulishly spooktacular family parody which follows a gothic girl as she embarks on a 'deadly funny' adventure to rescue her haunted house, Thurs 30 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

SHOCK HORROR: A GHOST STORY A chilling journey into a haunted past, combining live performance with big-screen action, Fri 31 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

COME FROM AWAY Creators Theatre Company stage a production of the hit Broadway show, telling the real-life story of 7,000 air passengers who were grounded in Canada in the wake of 9/11, and the small Newfoundland community that invited them into their lives, Fri 31 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE DEVIL'S GAME Spinechilling theatrical experience from the creators of The Wicked Lady, The Orphanage and The Witching Hour, Fri 31 Oct - Sat 15 Nov, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

THE MCDUGALLS: HALLOWEEN PARTY SHOW A 'wickedly entertaining family show' packed with singalong songs and ghoulish games, Mon 27 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

KIDZ BOP LIVE: CERTIFIED BOP TOUR Music brand for kids, featuring today's biggest hits, 'sung by kids for kids', Tues 28 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FUN FOR LITTLE ONES - A TRIBUTE TO

MISS RACHEL Interactive live-on-stage performance with lots of audience participation, Tues 28 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

PIRATES LOVE UNDERPANTS Theatre for younger audiences, featuring music, puppetry and glittering pants of gold, Tues 28 - Wed 29 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS BALL Fast paced, high-energy musical adventure, filled with dazzling sets, sparkling costumes, toe-tapping songs and plenty of audience participation, Wed 29 Oct, The Old Rep, Birmingham

THE DINOSAUR THAT POOPED: A ROCK SHOW! Stage show for younger audiences, adapted from the best-selling books by Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter, Wed 29 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

DISNEY ON ICE: FIND YOUR HERO See the magical adventures of favourite Disney stars brought to life in a 'spectacular' production featuring world-class ice skating, iconic music, and stunning costumes, Wed 29 Oct - Sun 2 Nov & Fri 7 - Sun 9 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

YOU CHOOSE! An interactive musical show using a picture book as inspiration. Suitable for all the family, Thurs 30 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE LITTLEST YAK Uplifting tale of self-acceptance told via puppetry and music. Based on Lu Fraser's award-winning children's book, Thurs 30 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

GRANDAD ANASI An uplifting tale of love, courage and letting go. Suitable for audience members aged four to nine, Fri 31 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

Light Entertainment

EVEN MORE GHOST STORIES BY CANDLELIGHT A co-production by HighTide and Pentabus showcasing four brand-new scary stories from award-winning writers, Wed 29 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE RUGBY: LOCK-IN LIVE Live staging of the popular weekly podcast, featuring England legends James Haskell and Mike Tindall alongside broadcaster Alex Payne, Wed 29 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry & Thurs 30 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE BIG GAY POETRY NIGHT 'Halloween edition of queer joy, performance and filth', hosted by Bradley Taylor and M L Walsh. Guest headliner to be announced soon, Thurs 30 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

WOMEN IN ROCK - HALLOWEEN



The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SPOOKTACULAR A haunting celebration of strong female leaders of rock, including music icons Blondie, Suzi Q, Janis Joplin, Heart, Joan Jett, Pink, Kiki Dee, Bonnie Tyler and Cher..., Fri 31 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

CIRQUE: THE GREATEST SHOW REIMAGINED Family-friendly extravaganza showcasing a fusion of musical theatre and 'jaw-dropping' circus acts, Fri 31 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

PAUL MERTON AND SUKI WEBSTER'S IMPROV SHOW Featuring 'fast, fabulously funny improvised games, scenes, stories and laugh-out-loud surrealism', Fri 31 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SUPERQUEEROS! Four hapless superheroes with dodgy powers and even dodgier morals battle injustice in Pride & Joy's new show. The production contains strong language and adult themes, Fri 31 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

Dance

ANTON DU BEKE: AT THE MUSICALS Expect a fab-u-lous evening of song, dance and laughter with the much-loved Strictly judge, his live band, guest singer and dancers, Mon 27 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Talks & Spoken Word

ASTON VILLA LEGENDS Join Paul Merson, Lee Hendrie and Gabby Agbonlahor for an evening of stories, banter, and behind-the-scenes insights into their careers, Mon 27 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SANDI TOKSVIG: FRIENDS OF DOROTHY Join the comedian, broadcaster & campaigner for an evening celebrating her love and passion for writers and books, Mon 27 Oct, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

DR. RICHARD SHEPHERD: UNNATURAL CAUSES - TIME OF DEATH Step into the world of the forensic investigation as Dr Shepherd explores why an understanding of the passing of time is one of the most important factors in unravelling the secrets of a life cut short, Tues 28 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

GRAYSON PERRY: ARE YOU GOOD? A show in which Grayson attempts to help the audience find out if they really are thoroughly good, or maybe quite evil - but in a fun way, Thurs 30 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DR. RICHARD SHEPHERD: UNNATURAL CAUSES - TIME OF DEATH Step into the world of the forensic investigation as Dr Shepherd explores why an understanding of the passing of time is one of the most important factors in unravelling the secrets of a life cut short, Fri 31 Oct, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Events

SUPERSTAR WRESTLING Family-friendly event featuring top international talent, Mon 27 Oct, Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

SMART PLAY ZONE Meet local artists and creatives who are working with different types of technology to explore sound, movement and light, Mon 27 - Tues 28 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

ARACHNOBOT & THE GIANT WEB Help weave a giant collaborative web, Mon 27 - Thurs 30 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

THE GOTH'S PLAYGROUND POP-UP MARKET Four-day rotation of traders providing 'seasonal, macabre and alternative delights', Mon 27 - Thurs 30 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

ALIEN CREATION STATION Get hands-on designing your own alien life and the planet your creation lives on, Mon 27 - Fri 31 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

GALACTIC MISSION: LIFE BEYOND EARTH Family-friendly science show 'packed

with fiery experiments and astonishing discoveries', Mon 27 - Fri 31 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

WOODLAND WIZARDS Train as a wizard's apprentice, Tues 28 - Thurs 30 Oct, Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, Castle Bromwich

OCTOBER HALF TERM: NEWS

DETECTIVES FAMILY DAY Step into the NewsWise Detective Agency and help crack the case of fake news, Wed 29 Oct, The Exchange 3, Centenary Square, Birmingham

HAGLEY'S HAUNTED HOUSE & PUMPKIN TRAIL BY NIGHT Suitable for brave tweens, teens and their adults, Wed 29 Oct, Webbs, West Hagley

ART CLUB: SPOOKTACULAR HALLOWEEN CRAFTS Wed 29 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

SOUNDPLAY DOME Immersive, interactive space where music, light, and play are brought together, Wed 29 - Thurs 30 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

AMBIENT ARCADE Explore sound and play through audio visual sculptures modelled on retro-style video game units and old school computer terminals, Wed 29 - Thurs 30 Oct,

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

HALLOWEEN SPOOKY TOUR OF BLAKESLEY HALL Learn about Halloween traditions and listen to spine-tingling stories, Wed 29 - Fri 31 Oct, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

DEADLY LIVE! HOSTED BY STEVE BACKSHALL Featuring 'heart-pounding adventures, daring stunts, mind-blowing experiments and cutting-edge science', Thurs 30 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

MY FIRST MUSEUM TOUR: OCTOBER HALF TERM Enjoy a relaxed, child-friendly tour of the museum, Thurs 30 Oct, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

BIRDLAND CRAFT Join Juneau Projects to make your own Vibrobird to dance across the table, Thurs 30 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

SCREAM TRAINS Are you brave enough to climb aboard the Scream Train? Thurs 30 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

GHOST TRAINS Do you dare to take a ride in the dark through the haunted stations? Thurs 30 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

THE HAUNTED HALL: A CANDLELIT GHOST TOUR Tour the candlelit mansion and hear about the ghosts who live there, Thurs 30 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Aston Hall, Birmingham



HALLOWEEN BASH AND HAUNTED TOUR 'An immersive costume party like no other', Thurs 30 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, The Birmingham Black Box

STRATFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL A mixture of debate, ideas, celebrity-author events and workshops, Thurs 30 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, venues across Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW The UK's biggest mixed craft show, Thurs 30 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS Get into the Christmas spirit with some holiday shopping, Thurs 30 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

THE ROSWELLS HALLOWEEN VISIT The

alien family are returning to the museum for some Halloween fun, Fri 31 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

GARDENS CINEMA: THE SHINING & OVERLOOK HOTEL SOIRÉE Fri 31 Oct, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

FRIGHTFUL FUNGI Join Natural Science's curator, Lukas Large, on a two-hour guided walk, Fri 31 Oct, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

SPOOKY CINEMA: ALIEN Cinema under the stars in the 360° dome, Fri 31 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

PHANTOMS & FIREWORKS Brand-new nighttime celebration transforming the historic grounds into 'a spectacle of light, sound, and eerie delight', Fri 31 Oct, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

COFFINS AND COCKTAILS: A HALLOWEEN TREAT Atmospheric after-hours tour, Fri 31 Oct, Coffin Works, Birmingham

FAMILY FRIENDLY TRICK OR TREAT Fri 31 Oct, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

CAKE INTERNATIONAL AND BAKE INTERNATIONAL The biggest cake decorating and baking event in the world, Fri 31 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, NEC, Birmingham



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Autumn Festival

30th October - 2nd November 2025

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

Joanna Page
Andrew Lownie
Martin O'Neill
Dame Denise Lewis
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