

Shropshire

ISSUE 465 OCTOBER 2025

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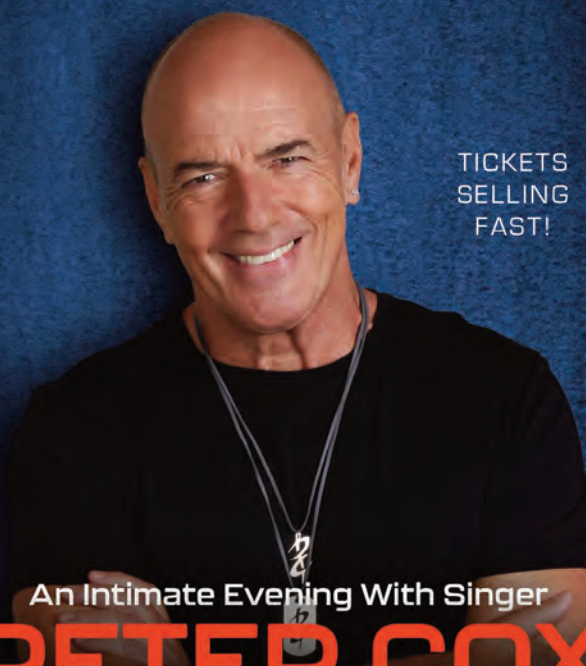
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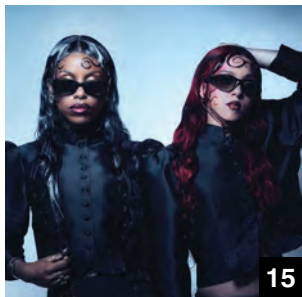
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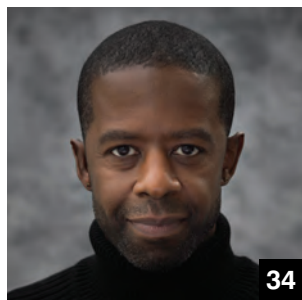
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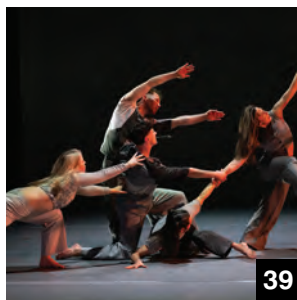
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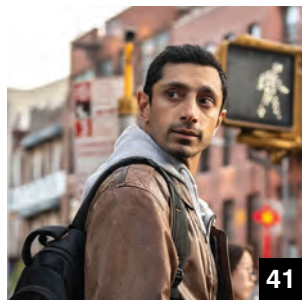
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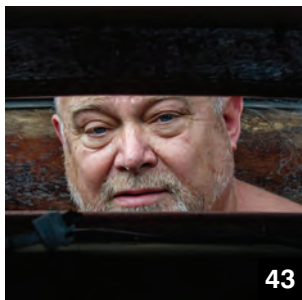
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What's On

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Telford Theatre on tour

Telford Theatre may be closed until late next year, but that isn't stopping the venue from providing Shropshire audiences with a programme of varied entertainment this autumn.

The theatre is mounting its shows in other venues and is presenting an eclectic line-up of productions across the next few weeks. Highlights include tribute shows Tina Live: The Tina Turner Experience and Forever Elton - both showing at the Little Theatre, Donnington (on Friday 10 and Friday 17

October respectively). There's also children's show The Witch Who Couldn't Sleep (The Anstice, Madeley, Sunday 26 October), Oddsocks Productions' Florence Nightingale: The Lady With The Hammer (also at The Anstice, Wednesday the 29th) and Grandad Anansi (pictured, Belmont Hall, Wellington, Sunday 2 November). The venue's Christmas show, a pantomime production of Cinderella, shows at Telford International Centre from Tuesday 16 December to Friday 2 January. For further information and to book tickets, visit telfordtheatre.com

Arts Alive launches new season of productions

Shropshire and Herefordshire rural touring scheme Arts Alive has announced its programme of shows for the autumn season.



Highlights include a new take on Robert Louis Stevenson's gothic classic Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde, a 'comic romp' through detective-fiction clichés titled Done To Death, By Jove!, and performances by folk singer Heidi Talbot (pictured).

The productions will take place in village halls, community centres and intimate rural venues across the two counties. To check out the complete programme and book tickets, visit artsalive.co.uk

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 goodfoodshow.com/winter



Question Of Sport trio back in the region in May

Following a sold-out tour earlier in the year, A Question Of Sport favourites Sue Barker, Matt Dawson and Phil Tufnell will



be hitting the road again next spring, stopping off at Victoria Hall in Hanley on Wednesday 6 May. Tickets for the show are available by visiting the Victoria Hall website at atgtickets.com

Folk-horror tale comes to Wolverhampton venue

Wolverhampton Arts Centre is marking Halloween season with a folk-horror tale of isolation and dark secrets.

Showing at the venue on Tuesday 14 October, Way Marker has been described as 'a masterclass in the art of the modern ghost story'. To find out more and book your seat, visit wolverhamptonartscentre.co.uk

Shrewsbury Folk Festival 2026 tickets now on sale

Tickets are now on sale for the 2026 edition of the Shrewsbury Folk Festival.



As well as showcasing some of the best music in the world of folk, the hugely popular event also features an eclectic range of attractions, including workshops, ceilidhs, yoga sessions and silent discos. Tickets for next summer's get-together, which takes place at the town's DMOS People West Mid Showground from Friday 28 to Monday 31 August, are available by visiting the website gigantic.com

Big bonfire fun at Weston

One of the region's biggest bonfire nights returns on Sunday 2 November.



Weston Park's Bonfire & Fireworks

Night event features two firework displays across the evening, a 'giant, roaring bonfire', a traditional funfair and a selection of street-food vendors. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at weston-park.com

Stars to join Rock Choir for Christmas concert

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, 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 the website at rockchoir.com

Oktoberfest to make its debut at Molineaux

Wolverhampton's Molineaux Stadium is to host its first ever adults-only Bavarian party on Saturday 11 October. Promising a full German beer-hall experience, Oktoberfest will feature a live Oompah band, DJ and party games. Tickets cost £35 per person and include a two-pint stein on arrival and bratwurst. A 10% discount is available when purchasing 10 or more tickets at eticketing.co.uk/wolves/events

Off to see the Wizard in Walsall

Walsall Arena is inviting theatre-goers to take a trip along the Yellow Brick Road this festive season.

The venue's production of *The Wizard Of Oz: A Wicked* Pantomime runs from Saturday 6 to Sunday 21 December. For further information and tickets, visit walsallarena.com

December date for Fat Boy Slim

Fatboy Slim is bringing his Acid Ballroom tour to the Midlands in December.

The Brighton DJ & producer, aka Norman Cook, will take over Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on Saturday 6 December. Tickets can be purchased at thehallswolverhampton.co.uk



Potteries stop-off for BRIT winners

Two-time BRIT Award winners Blue are heading to the Potteries as part of a world tour. Simon Webbe, Duncan James, Antony Costa and Lee Ryan will be stopping off at the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent next spring, on Monday 13 April. Tickets for their concert are available by visiting the website at atgtickets.com/stoke



Hit musical Annie to return to the Midlands in 2026

A new touring production of smash-hit musical *Annie* will visit the Potteries in 2026.

Showing at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 13 to Sunday 18 October, 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 more information and to purchase tickets, visit the website at atgtickets.com. The show will return to the Midlands in early 2027, spending a week at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.



Rick Astley tours to the region

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

Branagh at the RSC in Spring 2026

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



Winter talks at Soldiers of Shropshire Museum

Soldiers of Shropshire Museum, a charity operating in Shrewsbury Castle, has announced its line-up of talks for the autumn/winter season. The talks generate income for the charity to fund museum staff, exhibitions and the maintenance of the museum's collection. To check out the programme, and to book tickets, visit ticketsource.co.uk and search for Soldiers of Shropshire Museum.

Sabrina Ghost Cruises return for Halloween

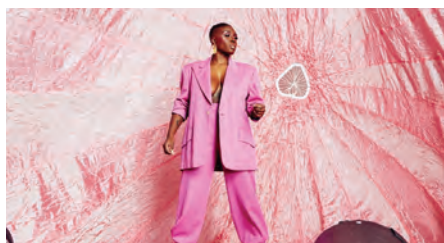
One of Shrewsbury's 'most unique and chilling' Halloween attractions is making a return this month. The Sabrina Ghost Cruises take place along the River Severn and include 'spine-tingling tales, ghostly legends and eerie encounters'. The 45-minute cruise runs on various evenings throughout October. More information is available by visiting the website at sabrinoat.co.uk

Sutton Coldfield date 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

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



Dig out your lederhosen... it's Shropshire Oktoberfest!

The county's biggest beer festival is back in Shrewsbury's Quarry Park this month. Taking place on Friday 3 & Saturday 4 October, Shropshire Oktoberfest will feature local brewers, cidemakers, producers, street food, comedy and live music. Commenting on the event, Beth Heath, Director of Fun at organisers Shropshire Festivals, said: "Everyone is welcome, as long as you let your hair down and have fun!"

The event is nearly all under the cover of our huge beer tents and tipis, with a huge live music stage, silent disco tent, Lanyon Bowdler Live Lounge, Volvo Cars Shrewsbury's Carpool Karaoke, and lots of brilliant brewers and producers serving up tasty tipples and treats." For further information and to purchase tickets, visit shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk

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 book tickets, visit mindbodyspiritfestival.co.uk



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



Lichfield Cathedral light show returns for 2025

Acclaimed animation team Illuminos are once again bringing a spectacular light show to Lichfield Cathedral this Christmas. The 2025 show revolves around 'the story of one little robin' and is available to view from Monday 15 to Sunday 21 December. For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at lichfield-cathedral.org



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Casey Bailey: The Music
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**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!

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

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

New Picture House film programme for autumn

The Little Mermaid, The Exorcist, and a National Theatre Live presentation of Mrs Warren's Profession are among the films being screened at Stone cinema The Picture House this autumn.

The venue will also be presenting a selection of Christmas films during December, including *Miracle On 34th Street* and *It's A Wonderful Life*.

For full programme details and to book tickets, visit crownwharftheatre.org.uk

New musical tells the story of Amazing Grace

Wolverhampton Arts Centre is this month hosting a musical which explores the inextricable link



between the John Newton hymn *Amazing Grace* and the slave trade. Prominent Midlands black folk artistes Angeline Morrison and Cohen Braithwaite-Kilcoyne will be joined by Jon Bickley and John Palmer when *Grace Will Lead Me Home* shows at the venue on Saturday 18 October. More information and tickets are available by visiting wolverhamptonartscentre.co.uk



Danny Beard to get wicked in Wolverhampton panto

RuPaul's Drag Race UK winner Danny Beard is set to show his wicked side when he stars as the villainous Carabosse in this year's Wolverhampton Grand Theatre pantomime production of *Sleeping Beauty*. Danny will be joined in the show - which runs at the venue from Saturday 29 November to Sunday 4 January - by impressionist Debra Stephenson and

longstanding panto favourites Tam Ryan and Ian Adams.

Bat Out Of Hell and *Heathers* star Georgia Iudica-Davies will play the eponymous heroine, with Wolverhampton-born Zak Douglas and Solomon Davy bringing homegrown talent to the production. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the website: grandtheatre.co.uk

Wolverhampton charity awarded £89,000 grant

The Good Shepherd, the Wolverhampton-based charity aiming to end homelessness, has received a grant of £89,000 from Arts Council England to fund a series of creative projects working with people in recovery from addiction. The grant will finance three years of work across Wolverhampton to support people on their recovery journey, with some projects across the city having already begun.

To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at bmusic.co.uk. And may the Force be with you!

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.

Halloween at the zoo

Telford's Exotic Zoo is making the most of the Halloween season in the second half of this month (from the 18th onwards) by providing visitors with the chance to carve pumpkins, visit a creepy crawly cave, and experience its brand-new after-dark Nighttime Spooktacular event, during which witches, vampires and zombie characters will be lurking in the haunted woods. To find out more about the venue's Halloween attractions, visit exoticzoo.co.uk

Locally shot horror film to be screened in Ludlow

Ludlow Assembly Rooms is getting into the Halloween spirit by screening a locally made horror film.

I Saw Black Clouds - showing at the venue on Friday 31 October - was shot in the Shropshire countryside and is described as 'an atmospheric horror thriller with elements of Scandi-noir'.

To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at ludlowassemblyrooms.co.uk

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Tue 7 – Sat 11 Oct



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Suzanne Vega

Sat 1 Nov



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Inside Number 9: Stage/Fright

Tue 11 – Sat 15 Nov

Victoria Hall



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Sat 4 Oct



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Sat 11 Oct



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A DIFFERENT TUNE

Wolverhampton based Jaivant Patel Company presents its latest dance production at two Midlands venues next month. ASTITVA reflects the experiences of British Indian gay men through contemporary dance storytelling, diving into the themes of seeking, desire, acceptance and love.

What's On spoke to Jaivant Patel, the company's artistic & creative director, to find out more...

West Midlands based Jaivant Patel Company is presenting a brand-new dance production this month. The company's latest offering explores the lived experiences of British Indian gay men, and is choreographed by Jaivant himself.

"I'm Wolverhampton born and bred," says Jaivant. "I then went and trained at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, an institution which, at that time, was particularly known for its development of dancers from the diverse community - and in particular male dancers. I then came back into the city, and I established my company here. That's what I've been doing for nearly 20 years now!"

ASTITVA, the company's new production, is structured into four parts: seeking, desire, acceptance and love.

"Those different sections talk about different things. 'Seeking' identity, and what 'desire' looks like once you realise who you are. 'Acceptance' is about finding family when you might not necessarily have traditional family, and 'love' is an unapologetic love duet between two men. The work is broken up with solos that break the fourth wall, talking about life experiences. And from a dance perspective, we're innovative and we're kind of groundbreaking - this work has not been done before within South Asian contexts."

Even the format and structure of the piece is designed to reflect "the non-linear life timeline for gay men", as Jaivant describes it.

"I realise I might be generalising here - heterosexual people go to school, possibly find a girlfriend or boyfriend, live together, have an education, get married, 2.4 children, grandchildren, retirement.... I would say for the gay man's timeline or the queer timeline, coming out and finding love can be at different stages, coming to terms with who you are as a person is very different... Family isn't always a traditional family."

As the project has come to fruition, the piece has developed into an hour-long work, inspired by the experiences of Jaivant and his collaborators.

"The choreography and the direction by me has been influenced by conversations, stories, lived experiences as a British Indian gay man - which includes the cast as well. So it's all been built through conversations we've had. It's all been built through the similarities

within lived experiences, the differences, or the different perspectives. That all comes together to build a piece of work that is open enough for translation, but specific enough for subject matter."

And Jaivant explains that one section of the piece is particularly important to him.

"The one thing that I knew that I definitely wanted out of this piece was a love duet. I knew that I wanted that, because I'd never seen a love duet between two brown Indian men at that time. I wanted it to reflect representation, but I also wanted it to reflect a sense of hope. One thing that I've disbanded from in the work is this sense of victimisation from the queer community - this work is about positivity, about bold human stories, celebrating them joyfully. Most queer stories represented are focused around victimisation - or that's what I'm seeing - and I wanted to stay away from that, because we are not victims."

The production also draws on the diverse dance styles that have informed Jaivant's practice over the years.

"Many people would assume, having looked at the name of our company and from our history of working within the classical kathak genre, that this is a classical piece. It's not. It's a piece going back to my contemporary dance roots."

"I've had the pleasure and a great fortune of training under many different styles of dance, all of which have influenced how I work within performance spaces and creative spaces today. I've had training or experience of work within contemporary dance forms, within ballet, within a particular form of kathak. And I've married all of that together to create a piece which is not about fusing dance languages, its about going down to the bare bones of storytelling."

In recent years, Jaivant Patel Company has received plenty of critical acclaim, and ASTITVA has already been making waves as a piece of dance which spans genre expectations.

"In 2024, Jaivant Patel Company won the Eastern Eye Award for Dance. That was for a piece of work called Waltzing The Blue Gods, which was around my queer experience as a man of faith, and what that meant within my relationship to the Hindu deities, Shiva and Krishna.



"That raised a lot more awareness around the work we do within the sector, because I think that's the first time a queer piece of dance has won the award... That then led on to other things and other collaborations, which have meant Jaivant Patel Company has gone to Parliament - we recently opened the launch of South Asian Heritage Month at Parliament, by invitation of the Speaker. The exposure for the company has been getting bigger and bigger."

In ASTITVA, Jaivant has stepped away from dancing in the spotlight - but feels that the piece is certainly still a representation of his creative practice.

"I don't think that I will forever be off the stage, but it's just an understanding of my growth as a maker and a choreographer."

And when it comes to dancing, Jaivant can definitely be tempted back onto his feet if the mood is right...

"My music sensibilities have changed so much over the past couple of years. It's strange... I very rarely now dance on the dancefloor. I kind of sit down at my table, enjoying my glass of wine, bobbing along to the beats and having a conversation. I think I've entered my 'chill' era! But give me an old-school R&B tune, or an old-school blues tune, and I'm like, yeah, perfect! And if Kylie Minogue or Queen is playing, then I'll definitely be on the dancefloor."

.....

ASTITVA shows at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre on Thursday 6 November, and at Birmingham Repertory Theatre on Friday 21 & Saturday 22 November



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WHAT'S ON AT

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Thrilling young all-female jazz octet, following Nubya Garcia's footsteps.
THU 16 OCT 8PM - £19.50 ADV



GRACE WILL LEAD ME HOME

Angeline Morrison & co explores Amazing Grace for John Newton's 300th birthday. SAT 18 OCT 8PM - £18 ADV



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TUE 28 OCT 11AM & 2PM - £7 ADV



CUD

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17 October, 7.30pm
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3 October, 8pm
**Brew-ha-ha
House Comedy**
Tickets: £14



22 October, 7.30pm
**Absinthe:
Brewhouse
Cabaret**
Tickets: £12,
Concessions £8



16 October, 7.30pm
**Crime Viral:
Murder Staged**
Tickets: £21



28 October, 2pm
**Lyngo Theatre
Company: Puss
in Boots**
Tickets: £8.50,
Group of 4 £30



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Classical music from across the city...

Image credit: Benjamin Falovega



BBC Philharmonic: Bruch's Violin Concerto

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 10 October

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City, the BBC Philharmonic visits the Potteries this month in the company of Noa Wildschut, who will be performing Max Bruch's violin concerto. The programme also features Grieg's Peer

Gynt Suite and Sibelius' second symphony, a work which has been described as a sweeping portrait of nature awakening to freedom. Gemma New (pictured) is the conductor.

CBSO: Kazuki & The Jussen Brothers

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 23 October

"It is like driving a pair of BMWs," declared conductor Michael Schønwandt after helming a concert featuring siblings Lucas and Arthur Jussen.



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 Fazil Say's Night - a fast, funky and furious work especially written for the Jussen Brothers - also features.

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. Jason Thornton conducts.



Ex Cathedra: Duruflé Requiem

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 19 October

James Burton 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 otters - 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".

Carducci String Quartet With Roderick Williams

St Alkmunds Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 10 October

Performing more than 90 international concerts each year, Carducci are one of the most successful string quartets in the business, garnering lavish praise wherever they play... This latest Shropshire Music Trust concert sees them teaming up with baritone Roderick Williams to present an evening of music dedicated to Schubert.

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 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.



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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Spoken word show from A-List rock star and one of the all-time best drummers
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Sunday 12 October



JOHN LYDON

Punk icon returns with his spoken word show *I Could Be Wrong, I Could Be Right*
Saturday 18 October



NIK KERSHAW

An evening of songs, stories, and silliness from one of the UK's best-loved artists
Sunday 19 October



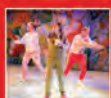
STRANGE, BUT TRUE CRIME

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November

Seriously Collins

Sat 1 Nov 7.30pm
£29.00



James B Partridge - The Big Christmas Assembly

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£27.50 & £30.50



Thank ABBA For The Music

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£29.00



Supreme Queen

Thurs 20 Nov 7.30pm
£31.00



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Walsall Council

Live music from across the region...

John Smith

Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Tues 21 October

John Smith's early career saw him opening for the legendary John Martyn, since which time he's played with plenty of other major industry names, including Joan Baez, Sarah Jarosz, the Milk Carton Kids, Patty Griffin, Jackson Browne and Richard Hawley. With 20 years at the forefront of British folk guitar music now under his belt, he's visiting Wolverhampton in support of brand-new album *Gatherings*, released just four days prior to the gig.



Nova Twins

Wulfrun Hall at The Halls Wolverhampton, Fri 17 October

Nova Twins Amy Love and Georgia South create a remarkable depth of sound via a myriad of bass and guitar pedals. Hailed as one of the most transformative forces in contemporary music, the Mercury Music Prize and two-time BRIT Award nominees visit Wolverhampton as part of their *Parasites & Butterflies* tour. They are joined by HotWax and Ashaine White.



Lightning Seeds

KeeleSU, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Sat 18 October

Formed in 1989, Lightning Seeds was originally a studio-based solo project for Ian Broudie, formerly of Big In Japan. The alternative rock and pop band started touring in 1994, arriving on the scene just in time to make their mark on the Brit Pop era. They became best known for their Three Lions single, a chart-topping collaboration

with comedians David Baddiel and Frank Skinner, produced in recognition of football's European Championship tournament coming to England. The band took an 'elongated break' at the end of the decade, but returned in 2006. They visit Keele University Students' Union with their Greatest Hits touring show.

Moira Smiley

Shrewsbury Unitarian Church, Sat 11 October

Now here's an opportunity that no self-respecting singer would want to miss: the chance to join Moira Smiley in concert!

The American singer-songwriter is visiting Shrewsbury with her Rhizome Project. Interested parties can join her for an afternoon workshop, during which she will teach a selection of folk songs in preparation for the later concert.



acoustic shows," says Simon. "The fantastic venues help to create an intimacy that's not dissimilar to an after-hours singalong in a room full of friends. We love having the time and space to chat with everyone, setting the scene before each song. We really can't wait, and look forward to seeing everyone there."

Breabach

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 11 October

With their talent for playing folk music matched only by their talent for winning awards for playing folk music, exuberant Scottish Highlands and Islands five-piece Breabach seamlessly fuse the contemporary with the traditional.

Alongside the music, there's also the occasional sight of fiddle player Megan Henderson showing off some nifty footwork as she step-dances at a mesmerising pace.

Simon & Oscar

Walsall Arena, Fri 17 October

Ocean Colour Scene's lead singer, Simon Fowler, and drummer, Oscar Harrison, here come together for an intimate acoustic performance, during which they will play some of the biggest hits and anthems from the Birmingham band's impressive songbook, including, of course, the Britpop-era Riverboat Song and The Day We Caught The Train.

"Oscar and I absolutely love playing our



IT'S ABOUT TIME

**The Shawshank Redemption comes to
Lichfield Garrick this month**



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."

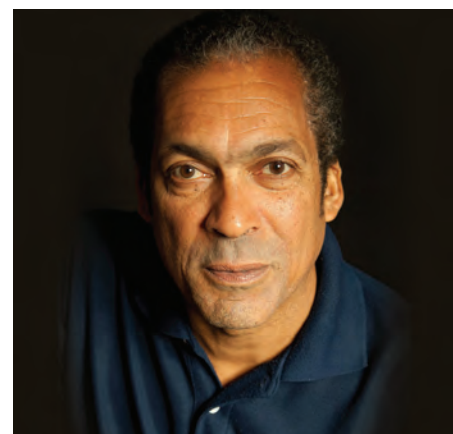
This tour is Ben's third time playing Red, a role he first took in 2019. He admits that there was initially some trepidation at the thought of stepping into a character so brilliantly defined in the film by Morgan Freeman.

"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

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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.





Fri 10 &
Sat 11 Oct



Wed 15 Oct -
Sat 15 Nov



Wed 22 -
Sat 25 Oct



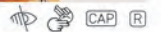
Sat 8 Nov



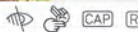
Fri 21 Nov -
Sat 13 Dec



Sat 6 Dec -
Sun 4 Jan



Sat 20 Dec -
Sun 1 Feb



Thu 12 -
Sat 21 Feb



Wed 18 Feb



Tue 24 -
Sat 28 Feb



Tue 3 -
Sat 7 Mar



Tue 10 -
Sat 14 Mar





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*,

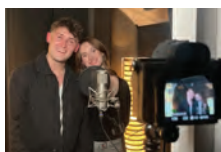


Absurd Person Singular, *The Norman Conquests*, *Bedroom Farce*. Now in his mid-80s, Alan continues to churn out high-quality plays like there's no tomorrow. *Earth Angel* is his latest (and 91st), a work in which he poses the question: what makes someone a good person? The production stars familiar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



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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 Mallatrat 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 prophesies 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 into the man. A professional microphone with a pop filter is positioned in front of them. In the background, there are soundproofing panels and a cylindrical light fixture with horizontal stripes.

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 Nuremberg 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 instead that the production will take 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



THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

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

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By Jules Verne
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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 Neuvillette (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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Light entertainment from around the region



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.



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.



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.

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 spintangling 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...



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!



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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WARWICK

ARTS

CENTRE

Dance previews from across the region

Image credit: Dan Tucker

**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."

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!"

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

**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**

**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



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.





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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.



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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£3.95 transaction fee per e-ticket per order, not all celebrities appear on all days and the line-up in subject to change. Details correct at time of print.



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Events previews from around the region



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.

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.



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.

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Your ticket also allows entry to our sister shows
The Creative Craft Show, Sewing for Pleasure,
Cake International and Bake International*

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



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.

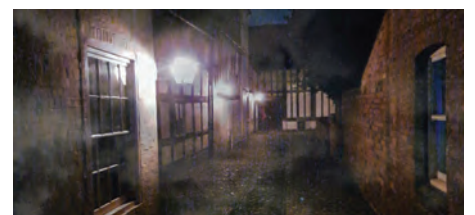
Forty pedigree cat breeds will be competing for the coveted Supreme titles, with breeders, experts and other cat lovers on hand to talk about all things feline. Visitors can also check out cat-themed stalls, shop for gifts and sample a selection of interactive experiences.

After-Dark Tours

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

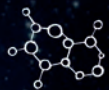
The Commandery is one of Worcester's oldest buildings and a place that harbours lots of ghostly secrets.

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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An Out Of This World Halloween at Thinktank

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

thelist



The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre - Tues 28 October - Sat 1 November

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

What's On

Wed 1 - Sun 5 October



Fatherhood - Thimblemill
Library, Smethwick
Sun 5 October

Mon 6 - Sun 12 October



Chris McCausland -
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre
Mon 6 & Tues 7 October

Mon 13 - Sun 19 October



Alan Davies - Victoria Hall,
Stoke-on-Trent
Fri 17 October

Mon 20 - Fri 31 October



Baskery - St Mary's Church,
Shrewsbury
Fri 31 October

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

OZZY OSBOURNE: WORKING CLASS

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

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

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

New Art Gallery, Walsall

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

CREATIVE UPSTARTS As part of this year's MakerFest Fringe Festival, the gallery presents a 'bold and dynamic' showcase of emerging local creatives from the Creative Upstart (CUSP) programme, until Sun 16 Nov

HANNAH MAYBANK: UN-STILL Maybank, whose practice was heavily influenced by access to the Garman Ryan Collection, has created of a brand new painting featuring chrysanthemum flowers, as a gift for the Gallery's 25th birthday, showing until Sun 17 May 2026

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

FRAGMENTED TRUTHS Kwanzaa Collective UK present a new display by celebrated Staffordshire ceramicist & glass artist Chris Day, until Sun 19 Oct

JESUS & THE POPE BY ROBBIE WILLIAMS The Stoke native has worked with ceramic design brand 1882. Ltd at its factory in Barlaston to transform two of his 'inkling' drawings into four vibrant, abstract ceramic works of art, until Sun 7 Dec

THE NATIONAL GALLERY: ART ON YOUR DOORSTEP Stoke-on-Trent City Council is the first partner in the National Gallery's new national touring project. Fifteen life-size, printed masterpieces are installed in an outdoor exhibition in Bethesda Gardens, opposite the Gallery, until Wed 7 Jan

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

COME AS YOU REALLY ARE A joyous

celebration of local hobbies, creativity and passion, conceived by award-winning artist Hetain Patel, showcasing objects crafted, modified or collected by hobbyists based in the Midlands and beyond, until Sun 5 Oct

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

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

ANTONY DRACUP: AN ARTIST'S VIEW OF HIS ADOPTED HOME Exhibition of oil paintings that highlight the artist's skill at capturing the intricate detail of Shropshire's architecture, natural beauty and industrial heritage, until Sat 29 Nov

Elsewhere:

WHIMSY & WONDER: GISELA ROBINSON 'Evocative' collection bringing together portraits of literary icons, playful creatures in bottles, and people entwined with animals - woven with Gisela's signature tenderness and storytelling flair, until Sat 1 Nov, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ARTHUR BERRY ON THE STREETS Pop-up, open-air exhibition exploring Arthur's life and work. The exhibition also features some of the Three Counties Open Art Exhibition Arthur Berry Prize winners, shining a light on his lasting legacy, until Sun 2 Nov, Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre

STRIKE A MATCH: ELLIOT WALKER & BETHANY WOOD A tribute to the pair's shared practice and an exploration of their distinctive artistic voices, showcasing a broad spectrum of glassmaking techniques, until Sat 8 Nov, Stourbridge Glass Museum

WIGHTWICK: A HOUSE OF BOOKS Discover the Mander family's rich literary legacy at Wightwick Manor, where books, art, and personal stories come to life in a new exhibition, until Fri 21 Nov, Wightwick Manor and Gardens, Wolverhampton

WOLVERHAMPTON SOCIETY OF ARTISTS Showcase of work by the professional and amateur artists who make up the society, Wed 1 - Thurs 30 Oct, The Rose Paterson Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shropshire

BEAR STEPS ART GALLERY SOLO EXHIBITIONS Featuring works by Jon Young & Gaynor Gregory, Sun 12 - Sat 25 Oct, Bear Steps Art Gallery, Shrewsbury

WILDLIFE ART SOCIETY International exhibition of wildlife art, Tues 14 - Sun 19 Oct, Footprint Gallery, Telford, Shropshire

Gigs

PICTURE PARLOUR Wed 1 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NATHAN BELL Wed 1 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

STORYVILLE JAZZ BAND Wed 1 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Jazz Club

DEBBIE BOND + ROWLAND JONES Wed 1 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

CHRIS DIFFORD Wed 1 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

WILL VARLEY + ELENI DRAKE Thurs 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE RABBITS Thurs 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NATHAN BELL Thurs 2 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

THE BELLRAIS Thurs 2 Oct, The Night Owl, Birmingham

LIANG LAWRENCE Thurs 2 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FLO Thurs 2 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ROY HARPER Thurs 2 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

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, Birmingham

THE COUNTRY CHICKS Thurs 2 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THE 69 EYES + SOUTH OF SALEM Thurs 2 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

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

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS Thurs 2 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

NERINA PALLOT Thurs 2 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

EAT STATIC Fri 3 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

CHARLOTTE YOUNG Fri 3 Oct, Actress & Bishop,

Birmingham

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

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

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

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

THE AMY WINEHOUSE EXPERIENCE Fri 3 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

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

RED KITE Fri 3 Oct, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

PLAID + ULTRAMARINE Fri 3 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

LEWIS POOLE Fri 3 Oct, Dead Wax, Birmingham

DUNERAT Fri 3 Oct, The Flapper, Birmingham

LEVEL 42 Fri 3 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

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

THE BOHEMIANS Fri 3 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

MONKEY BUSINESS Fri 3 Oct, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

T.REXTASY Fri 3 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

ULTIMATE COLDPLAY Fri 3 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 3 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

KIRA MAC + EUROPA REIGN + STRAIGHT FOR THE SUN Fri 3 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, W'hampton

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

FEROCIOUS DOG Fri 3 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

U2UK Fri 3 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LEGS ON WHEELS + GECKOHEAD + DANIAL LEE Fri 3 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-

Trent

DAN WALSH Fri 3 Oct, The Albion, Burton upon Trent

EMILIA QUINN + THE JUKEHOUSE JUNKIES + A.D. SCRUFFS + FARGO RAILROAD CO Fri 3 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

THE DIRTY ROCKING SCOUNDRELS Fri 3 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS Fri 3 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

LEVERET Fri 3 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

DREADNOUGHT AND DETH ATLAS Fri 3 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE HEELS Sat 4 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS + LITTLE JUKE Sat 4 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE REAL PEOPLE Sat 4 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

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

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

DIANA KRALL Sat 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

SIMPLY RED Sat 4 Oct, Utilita Arena B'ham

80S MANIA Sat 4 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

ABSOLUTE BENSON THE MUSIC OF GEORGE BENSON Sat 4 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

PINK BY VICKY JACKSON Sat 4 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

REG NEUROSS Sat 4 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

KING KING + LAURA EVANS Sat 4 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, W'hampton

STILLMARILLION Sat 4 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

WENDY JAMES Sat 4 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

WHITESNAKE UK Sat 4 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC Sat 4 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

KOPYCAT KILLERS + SCAM FENDER + SUBARCTIC MONKEYS + OASIS96 Sat 4 Oct, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

STINGRAY Sat 4 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

MERRY HELL + FAREFELD Sat 4 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS BY CANDLELIGHT Sat 4 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

THE FLEETWOOD MACK EXPERIENCE Sat 4 Oct, Rugeley Rose Theatre

EVE GOODMAN + BASSET Sat 4 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

SALT HOUSE Sat 4 Oct, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, Shropshire

BIRTHRITE & BAT FLATTERY Sat 4 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

BEN POOLE Sun 5 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

JAMES MCVEY Sun 5 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

CHRIS WOOD Sun 5 Oct, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

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

PARKWAY DRIVE Sun 5 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE ULTIMATE SWIFT & STYLES TRIBUTE Sun 5 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

WISHBONE ASH Sun 5 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

PETER PERRETT Sun 5 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

LESBIAN BED DEATH Sun 5 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

WHO'S NEXT Sun 5 Oct, The Station, Cannock

ROD STEWART SONGBOOK Sun 5 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: AMERICAN PERCUSSION Featuring Toby Kearney, Adrian Spillet, 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

CONCERTS IN THE ROUND Featuring students from Chethan's School of Music, Fri 3 Oct, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Handel, Whitlock, Bonnal & more..., Sat 4 Oct, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire



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

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

SILKY, ROB ROUSE, PETE PHILLIPSON, JACK WOOD & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 2 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

KUM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY - LINE UP TBC Thurs 2 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

GARY MEIKLE Thurs 2 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JONNY COLE Thurs 2 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

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

SAMANTHA DAY, MATT PRICE & CERY'S NELMES Fri 3 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

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

DAN NIGHTINGALE, ESHAAN AKBAR & MARK NELSON Sat 4 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KANE BROWN Sun 5 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

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

JOHN ROBERTSON Sun 5 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAN NIGHTINGALE Sun 5 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

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

THE GRAND BABYLON HOTEL Stage adaptation of Arnold Bennett's 'rollicking' comedy thriller, until Sat 4 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE WOMAN IN BLACK Susan Hill's spine-tingling ghost story, Tues 30 Sept - Sat 4 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

2:22 A GHOST STORY Kevin Clifton & Stacey Dooley star in Danny Robbins' edge-of-the-seat supernatural thriller, until Sat 4 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

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, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE LION IN WINTER The Lichfield Players present an amateur version of James Goldman's biting comedy about power, politics and family dysfunction, Wed 1 - Sat 4 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

HAIRSPRAY Walsall Operatic Society present an amateur version of the smash-hit musical, Wed 1 - Sun 5 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

MANIC Raina Greifer's one-hander combines spoken word, DIY puppetry and TedTalk comedy to ask whether it's possible to say you were violated without implicating a partner, Thurs 2 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

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

SHERLOCK HOLMES THE LAST ACT One-man show in which Nigel Miles-Thomas plays 14 of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous characters, Thurs 2 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

ALL SHOOK UP Amateur version of the hit musical, inspired by and featuring the songs of Elvis Presley, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 Oct, The Little Theatre, Donnington

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JANE AUSTEN, ABRIDGED Three actors tackle the entire canon of Jane Austen's work - in just 80 minutes! Fri 3 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

DIRTY DUSTING The story of Gladys, Olive and Elsie - three 'vintage style' cleaning

Santa's Steam Specials

SELECTED DATES FROM 29 NOVEMBER



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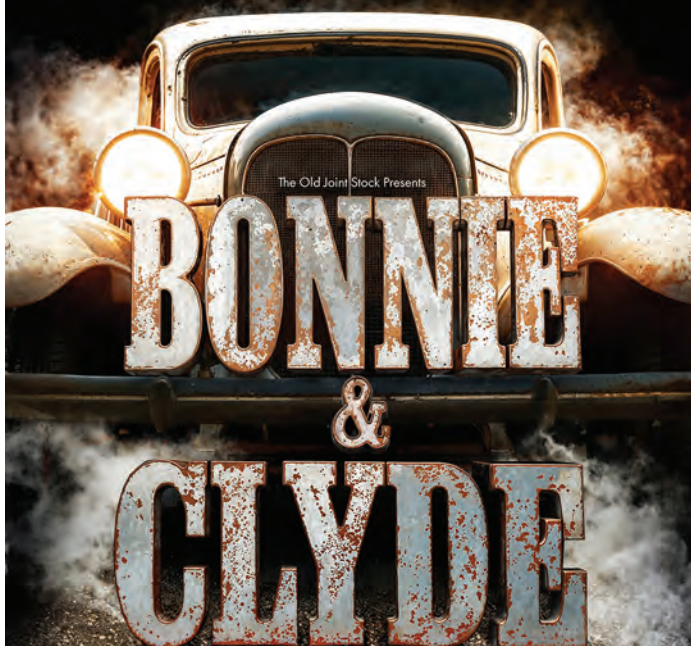
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ladies who, threatened with redundancy, chance on an unconventional way of earning some extra cash. Crissy Rock, Leah Bell & Vanessa Karon star, Fri 3 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE TWITS Roald Dahl's classic tale is brought to life, Fri 3 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Rugeley

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH Lamphouse present a new comedy take on Jules Verne's classic novel. Expect silly jokes, catchy tunes, ridiculous costumes and lots and lots of cardboard, Fri 3 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



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

THE TWITS Roald Dahl's classic tale is brought to life, Sat 4 Oct, Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone, Staffs

HELIOS A story about life, the invisible monuments we build, and the little things that leave big marks, Sat 4 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

FATHERHOOD Dance & physical theatre combine in Altered Skin's laugh-out-loud take on fatherhood across generations, cultures and languages, Sun 5 Oct, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick



THE TWITS Roald Dahl's classic tale is brought to life, Sun 5 Oct, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

Kids Theatre

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

SCIENCE MUSEUM LIVE Entertaining and educational show that promises to ignite curiosity, fuel imagination and inspire 'in new and exciting ways', Sun 5 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

PAUL ZERDIN: JAW DROP New show from the former America's Got Talent winner, Wed 1 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

NIK KERSHAW - MUSINGS AND LYRICS An intimate evening of 'songs, stories and silliness', to coincide with the release of Nik's new book, Wed 1 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

NIK KERSHAW - MUSINGS AND LYRICS An intimate evening of 'songs, stories and silliness' to coincide with the release of Nik's new book, Thurs 2 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

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

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

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

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

SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST Featuring independent drinks producers from across the region, live music, comedy, carpool karaoke, silent disco, food and fun... Comedy line-up includes Shazia Mirza, Tony Vino, Steve Gribbin & James Dowdeswell, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Oct, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

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

PUMPKINFEST Carve in the farm's huge pumpkin shed, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Oct, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

ADVENTURE CINEMA With screenings of The Lost Boys, Hocus Pocus and Scream, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Oct, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

RIDE TO THE WALL 2025 Moving tribute remembering the 16,000 people named on the Armed Forces Memorial, Sat 4 Oct, National

Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

THE MUSIC OF QUEEN BY CANDLELIGHT Experience an unforgettable evening of Queen's greatest anthems, performed by a world-class cast of West End vocalists and epic live rock band, Sat 4 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING EVENT Presented by DBP, Sat 4 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

PYO PUMPKINS Discover Staffordshire's biggest pick-your-own pumpkin patch, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Oct, Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge

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

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pick a pumpkin from the patch, enjoy live music and browse stalls, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

CLASSIC CAR & VINTAGE VEHICLE RALLY Sun 5 Oct, Foxfield Railway, Stoke-on-Trent

CHIC & SOUL CHIC PRESENTS

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OCTOBER



THURS 9th Oct



SUN 12th Oct



SUN 12th Oct



WED 15th Oct



FRI 17th Oct



21st & 22nd Oct



SUN 26th Oct



SUN 26th Oct



THURS 30th Oct

COMING UP



SAT 1st Nov



SUN 9th Nov



SUN 9th Nov



WED 12th Nov



SAT 15th Nov



SUN 23rd Nov



SUN 23rd Nov



3rd to 6th Dec



7th to 24th DEC

Gigs

MASS OF THE FERMMENTING DREGS

Mon 6 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

GOLDLINK Mon 6 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ODHRAN MURPHY Mon 6 Oct, Dead Wax, Birmingham

LULU Mon 6 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JOE BAYLISS Mon 6 Oct, Bill's Kitchen, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

NXDIA Tues 7 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LORRAINE NASH & DAN SEALEY Tues 7 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

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

JASON MRAZ Tues 7 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KANE BROWN Tues 7 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

TOM HICKOX Tues 7 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE ELVIS WORLD TOUR Tues 7 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CURTISY Wed 8 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ROSE GRAY Wed 8 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JOJO SIWA Wed 8 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TESTAMENT + OBITUARY + DESTRUCTION + NERVOSA Wed 8 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

CANNED PINEAPPLE Wed 8 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

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

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER - MOTOWN SHOW Wed 8 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

DAN SEELEY + LORRAINE NASH Wed 8 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Wed 8 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

ZO LIEF Thurs 9 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE BEST OF GROHL Thurs 9 Oct, Actress & Bishop, B'ham

NEW MODEL ARMY + THE AUTUMN SAINTS Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

HUGO HAMLET Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LOLA YOUNG Thurs 9 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CAGES FOR PREACHERS Thurs 9 Oct, Dead Wax, Birmingham

ECKOES Thurs 9 Oct, The Victoria, B'ham

RISHAB SHARMA Thurs 9 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

G-DFATHER RETURNS - JAMES BROWN TRIBUTE Thurs 9 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

HARVEST - A CELEBRATION OF NEIL YOUNG Thurs 9 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 9 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MAN OF THE WORLD - THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN Thurs 9 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

DAN SEALEY + LORRAINE NASH Thurs 9 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SIMON KEMPSTON Thurs 9 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE WAVE PICTURES Fri 10 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

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

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

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

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

SICK AS THIEVES Fri 10 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

ALEXA NAVA Fri 10 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE KOOKS Fri 10 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

U2 VS SIMPLE MINDS Fri 10 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

LUTHER LIVE Fri 10 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

RHYTHM OF THE 90S Fri 10 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

STILL INTO YOU + BLINK 182 Fri 10 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

MAIDEN UNITED Fri 10 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

TOTALLY BLONDIE Fri 10 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

PARADISE LOST + MESSA + HIGH PARASITE Fri 10 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

DISTRACTION - HUMAN LEAGUE TRIBUTE Fri 10 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

DIRT ROAD BAND Fri 10 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE Fri 10 Oct, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SINGAROUND Fri 10 Oct, The Albion, Burton upon Trent

THE UK ROCK SHOW Fri 10 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

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

THE DEVOUT Fri 10 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

CALLUM & THE POOKIES Fri 10 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

TINA LIVE Fri 10 Oct, The Little Theatre, Donnington, Shrewsbury

LEAF + ATHENA'S REVENGE + WOLVES IN ALCATRAZ + BLACKWATER Fri 10 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

YE VAGABONDS Sat 11 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GYASI Sat 11 Oct, The Night Owl, Birmingham

VISTAS Sat 11 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

MOIRA SMILEY Sat 11 Oct, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

FEEDER + EVERYONE SAYS HI Sat 11 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

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

BOOMTOWN RATS Sat 11 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KATY PERRY Sat 11 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

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

THE QUAD ROX Sat 11 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

OASISH Sat 11 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

GOLDIE LOOKIN CHAIN Sat 11 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

FUNKE AND THE TWO TONE Sat 11 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SAMBROSO ALL STARS Sat 11 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE BILLY JOEL SONGBOOK Sat 11 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

POPPYCOCK + LUNED RHYS Sat 11 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

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

BREABACH Sat 11 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NIGEL PRICE ORGAN TRIO Sat 11 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

THE EMO FEST Sat 11 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

HOTROX Sat 11 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

KLEZMER FOYGL Sat 11 Oct, Dawley Town Hall, Telford

LADY NADE SINGS NINA SIMONE Sat 11 Oct, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

A FOREIGNER'S JOURNEY Sat 11 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

HEIDI BROWNE Sat 11 Oct, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

OGBERT THE NERD Sun 12 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

REUBEN'S DAUGHTERS Sun 12 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

CHLOE SLATER Sun 12 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

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

LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA Sun 12 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

IAN MATTHEWS + ANDY ROBERTS Sun 12 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE ROCK ANTHEMS SHOW Sun 12 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ELVIS YEARS Sun 12 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AMY WINEHOUSE SHOW Sun 12 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

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

GLEN PIANO TRIO Featuring Liana Storey (piano), Tues 7 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO: NIELSEN'S FOURTH SYMPHONY Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) & Fenella Humphreys (violin). Programme also include 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

CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET Featuring Roderick Williams (baritone). Programme comprises works by Schubert, Fri 10 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury



SOT CLASSICS: BBC PHILHARMONIC Featuring Gemma New (conductor) & Noa Wildschut (soloist). Programme includes works by Grieg, Bruch & Sibelius, Fri 10 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SEASONS WITH C SONS Featuring Ros Crouch (music director) & Catharine Boyd-Moss (piano). Programme includes works by Poulenc, McDowall, a premier of Iain James Veitch's Summer Days, & more..., Sat 11 Oct, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

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

GIG CARITAS: CLASSICAL CHILLS Featuring Keith Horsfall (conductor). Programme comprises works by Tchaikovsky, Sun 12 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

Comedy

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

GARY DELANEY Mon 6 Oct, Comedy Junction, Sutton Coldfield

CHRIS MCCAUSLAND Mon 6 - Tues 7 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



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

CHRIS KENT Wed 8 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Wed 8 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

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

MARCEL LUCONT Thurs 9 Oct, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Thurs 9 Oct, Aston Hall, Wrexham

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

ALISTAIR WILLIAMS & TANIA EDWARDS Fri 10 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

HENNING WEHN Sat 11 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

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

MARCEL LUCONT Sat 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

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

ADAM ROWE, PAUL SINHA, JAMIE HUTCHINSON & FREDDIE QUINNE Sat 11 Oct, Top Of The World, Stafford

JASON MANFORD Sat 11 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

STEVE HARRIS, PIERRE HOLLINS, MARK ROW & SUSAN MURRAY Sun 12 Oct, Molineux Stadium, W'hampton

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

BLACK TIE BALL John Godber comedy which recounts the proceedings of the glitziest night of the year, from arrival at seven to carriages at midnight..., Mon 6 - Sat 11 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

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

THAT KNAVE, RALEIGH Dyad Productions take audiences on a journey through the highs and lows of one of Britain's most famous historical figures, Tues 7 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

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 7 - Sat 11 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



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

JUST MACBETH! Our Star Theatre Company present 'the stupidest version of Shakespeare's great big gory tragedy you might ever see', Tues 7 - Sat 11 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE UNFRIEND Stoke Rep Players present an amateur version of Steven Moffat's farce examining the complexities of modern social interactions, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

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

DRIFT A multi-sensory theatre show where audiences are drawn inside an old arcade game, Wed 8 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

LITTLE WOMEN Cabaret Theatre Company present a version of Louisa May Alcott's classic tale, Thurs 9 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT Shrewsbury Musical Theatre Company present a version of the hit musical based on the film Monty Python And The Holy Grail, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



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

OUTLAWED Nonsuch Studios present 'the fiercest night of burlesque, drag and comedy the middle ages can muster', Fri 10 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Amateur version of the classic Disney musical, Fri 10 - Sat 18 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

THE HAUNTING OF BLAINE MANOR Joe O'Byrne's story of a renowned American parapsychologist invited to attend a seance in England's most haunted building, Sat 11 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CASTING THE RUNES Nunkie Theatre Company present two of MR James' classic horror stories, Sun 12 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

Dance

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

TRIGGER HAPPY TV: LIVE! Dom Joly brings his most iconic characters and sketches to the stage, Tues 7 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

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

ROUND THE HORNE: 60TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Step back in time to the BBC's Paris Studios and experience this comedy classic, live..., Fri 10 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MYSTIQUE CABARET VARIETY SHOW Step into a world of jazz, sequins, and pure glamour, complete with 'a touch of the unexpected'..., Fri 10 Oct, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE CABARET Featuring showgirls, cabaret artists, and stars of stage & screen, Fri 10 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DROGGED TO THE MUSICALS WITH DIVINA DE CAMPO Divina top-bills an evening of sassy showstoppers. Also featuring Veronica Green, Le Fil, Mimi Chanel and Viola, Sat 11 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

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

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, Mon 6 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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, Mon 6 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Rugeley

THE WITTERING WHITEHALLS: BARELY ALIVE Join Michael and Hilary for an exclusive show as they bring their hit podcast to the stage, Wed 8 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SIMON SOLE, WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE ANGLO ZULU WAR OF 1879

One of a series of monthly talks facilitated by the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum. This particular talk argues that there is much to learn from the Anglo Zulu War of 1879 and its famous battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, Thurs 9 Oct, Shrewsbury Castle

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

Events

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

SCAREFEST Featuring 'frantically funny and seriously spooky attractions for all ages', Fri 10 - Sun 12 Oct, Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire

PUMPKINFEST Carve in the farm's huge pumpkin shed, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Oct, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

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

IN-CONVERSATION WITH HANNAH MAYBANK AND LIMITED EDITION PRINT LAUNCH Join exhibiting artist Hannah Maybank and Gallery Collections Curator Julie Brown for an in-conversation event about the new exhibition, Un-Still, Sat 11 Oct, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

STITCH AND SHOUT! Choose your words, pick your neon threads and stitch something loud and proud, Sat 11 Oct, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

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

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pick a pumpkin from the patch, enjoy live music and browse stalls, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

WARLEY AT STATFOLD Featuring up to 30 model railway layouts spanning an array of scales and eras, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Oct, Statfold Country Park, Tamworth



Dragged To The Musicals with Divina De Campo - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

PYO PUMPKINS Discover Staffordshire's biggest pick-your-own pumpkin patch, Sat 11 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge, Staffs

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 Centre, B'ham

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

MADE IN SHROPSHIRE ARTISAN FAIR Comprising local stalls selling everything from Shropshire honey to handmade glass, Sun 12 Oct, Dudmaston, South Shropshire

WORLD OF WEDGWOOD ARTISAN MARKET Featuring 30 stalls helmed by independent local makers and small businesses, Sun 12 Oct, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent





Cardinal Black - KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

Gigs

TRACY HAMLIN & HOWARD

JOHNSON Mon 13 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

CHLOE FOY Mon 13 Oct, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

RUMER Mon 13 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

GRAHAM NASH Mon 13 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

GRANT-LEE PHILLIPS Tues 14 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

PALE WAVES Tues 14 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WYTCHES + PYNCHER Wed 15 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JOSH KUMRA Wed 15 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

MAIDVALE Wed 15 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

BARBARA Wed 15 Oct, The Night Owl, Birmingham

EADES Wed 15 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

GILMORE & ROBERTS + NICK EVANS Wed 15 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

AS LIVING ARROWS + DARK IS THE WATER + IO Wed 15 Oct, The Rainbow, B'ham

SAVANNAH JAZZ BAND Wed 15 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Jazz Club

SKATING POLLY Wed 15 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

TAYLORMANIA Wed 15 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HEIDI TALBOT Wed 15 Oct, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

DUTCH CRIMINAL RECORD Thurs 16 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ADMT Thurs 16 Oct, O2

Institute, Birmingham

JADE Thurs 16 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NEWTON FAULKNER Thurs 16 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

VIGILANTES Thurs 16 Oct, Dead Wax, Birmingham

GEORGE BENSON TRIBUTE Thurs 16 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

BUZZCOCKS Thurs 16 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

CARDINAL BLACK Thurs 16 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ANKORA Thurs 16 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 16 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SKINDRED Thurs 16 Oct, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

ALIMÖ + LIAM PYATT Thurs 16 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

SWEET CAROLINE - NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE Thurs 16 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

GORDON GILTRAP AND JOHN ETHERIDGE Thurs 16 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

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

SOMEBODY'S CHILD Fri 17 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

SOFIA CAMARA Fri 17 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

COBER MOUTH Fri 17 Oct, The Flapper, Birmingham

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

WET WET WET Fri 17 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

SIMON & OSCAR - THE SONGS OF OCEAN COLOUR SCENE Fri 17 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

BEN PORTSMOUTH - THIS IS ELVIS Fri 17 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Fri 17 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

VERY BEAUTIFUL SOUTH Fri 17 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

GLENN HUGHES + SOPHIE LLOYD Fri 17 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

STEVE 'N' SEAGULLS Fri 17 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BRIT POP UNITED + ALL 4 INDIE Fri 17 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

CASSIDY RISING + ANGEL B VALENTINE + JOSH PAUL FRI 17 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

NINEBARROW Fri 17 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

CÉLINE DION BY CANDLELIGHT Fri 17 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

RADIO COSTELLO Fri 17 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE EMINEM SHOW WITH JAMES WYTHES Fri 17 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE BARTELLS Fri 17 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

QUEEN ALIVE Fri 17 Oct, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

FOREVER ELTON Fri 17 Oct, The Little Theatre, Donnington, Shrewsbury

LAZY FIFTY + FREEKSHOW + BLACK MAGIC ORGY Fri 17 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

HEIDI TALBOT Fri 17 Oct, Clungunford Village Hall, Shropshire

THE SCHEMERS Sat 18 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE ROYSTON CLUB Sat 18 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

SL Sat 18 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

COHEED + CAMBRIA + HAKEN Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE CLONE ROSES + DEFINITELY MIGHTBE + THE JAMES EXPERIENCE Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE LOST + THE FLANEURS + THE SPOILS + PEG LEG +

MIKKI BULL Sat 18 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

A.R. RAHMAN Sat 18 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SYNTH Sat 18 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

TYSON KELLY - IMAGINE LENNON Sat 18 Oct, Kidderminster Town Hall

ABBA - SWEDE DREAMZ Sat 18 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

VINCENT FLATTS FINAL DRIVE Sat 18 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

GRACE WILL LEAD ME HOME Sat 18 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sat 18 Oct, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS Sat 18 Oct, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

MARTIN MCALOON Sat 18 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

GORDON GILTRAP & JOHN ETHERIDGE Sat 18 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

FLASH: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Sat 18 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JAMIE LAWSON Sat 18 Oct, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

SERPENTYNE Sat 18 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

RUFFNECKS Sat 18 Oct, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + DIVIDE THE TRUTH Sat 18 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

JESSIE MURPH Sun 19 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HIPPIES & COWBOYS Sun 19 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

ROB HERON & THE TEA PAD ORCHESTRA Sun 19 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

GRACE Sun 19 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ARMORY SHOW + ZIPSTYLE Sun 19 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

MAN IN THE MIRROR Sun 19 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

FRANKIE THE CONCERT Sun 19 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Alison Loram (violin) & Chris Symons (piano), Tues 14 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

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

CBSO: REFORMATION SYMPHONY

Featuring Jörg Widmann (clarinet/director). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn & Widmann, Thurs 16 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING OF OPERA HIGHLIGHTS AND HITS FROM THE MUSICALS

Featuring The British Police Symphony Orchestra, Shrewsbury Choral, Dr Richard Jenkinson & Dr Martin Cook (directors), Sat 18 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

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

KEITH HEARNshaw ORGAN CONCERT

Programme includes works by Guilman, Elgar, J.S. Bach & more..., Sat 18 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

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

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: FROM ITALY WITH LOVE

Featuring Jason Thornton (conductor). Programme includes works by Puccini, Tchaikovsky, Respighi & more..., Sun 19 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Comedy

ANGELA BARNES Tues 14 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GRIFF RHYS JONES Tues 14 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JOSH BAULF Wed 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT RICHARDSON & MARK BITTLESTONE Wed 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

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

STEPHEN BAILEY Fri 17 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOHN BISHOP Fri 17 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ALAN DAVIES Fri 17 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ARDAL O'HANLON Fri 17 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JON PEARSON, AARON WOOD, BARNABY SLATER & LOUISE YOUNG Fri 17 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

ABIGOLIAH SCHAMAUN, MICHAEL FABBRI, BRENNAN REECE & FUNMBI OMOTAYO Fri 17 - Sat 18 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANIEL O'REILLY Sat 18 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

KIERAN HODGSON Sat 18 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RIA LINA & REB DAY Sun 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

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

WAY MARKER FROM WEEPING BANK A folk-horror tale of isolation and dark secrets, presented by The Librarian of Weeping Bank, Tues 14 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

GHOST THE MUSICAL Presented by Newcastle Amateur Operatic Society, Tues 14 - Sat 18 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

EARTH ANGEL Alan Ayckbourn's play takes a deep look into one of life's greatest mysteries: what makes someone a good person? Tues 14 - Sat 25 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

WHEN VINCENT MET JOHN Play imagining what might have happened had Vincent Van Gogh and John

Lennon met, Wed 15 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

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

ODE TO JOYCE Cheryl Knight's one-woman show pays homage to Joyce Grenfell - widely considered to be one of the greatest female entertainers of the 20th century, Sat 18 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH Lamphouse present a new and humorous take on Jules Verne's classic novel. Expect silly jokes, catchy tunes, ridiculous costumes and lots and lots of cardboard, Sun 19 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Kids Theatre

PIRATES LOVE UNDERPANTS Theatre for younger audiences, featuring music, puppetry and glittering pants of gold, Sat 15 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE LITTLEST YAK Uplifting tale of self-acceptance, told via puppetry and music. Based on Lu Fraser's award-winning children's book, Sat 18 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Light Entertainment

LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY: THE 'ALLO 'ALLO PODCAST - LIVE Members of the original TV show - Kim Hartman (Helga!), Guy Siner (Lieutenant Gruber!) and Richard Gibson (Herr Flick!) - bring their secret operations into the open, Mon 13 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JAMES MAY: EXPLORERS - THE AGE OF DISCOVERY TOUR New live show in which the Top Gear co-presenter brings to life the stories of the extraordinary explorers who traversed the deserts, scaled the mountains and sailed into the unknown, Wed 15 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MURDER STAGED Join psychologist/psychopathy expert Cheish Merryweather for a true-crime show exploring killers who fake crime scenes, Thurs 16 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

PSYCHOLOGY OF DOGS - LIVE EVENT Presented by expert dog whisperer and specialist canine behaviourist Paula O'Sullivan, Thurs 16 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

W@NKERNOMICS Brand-new show from Australia's favourite workplace w@nkers - 'masters at skewering the buzzwords, bureaucracy and bulls**t

of the modern workplace', Thurs 16 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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', Fri 17 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

SHEILA'S MENTAL HEALTH SHOW A 'thought-provoking, educational and transformative show' featuring music, humour and fun, Fri 17 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

PSYCHOLOGY OF DOGS - LIVE EVENT Presented by expert dog whisperer and specialist canine behaviourist Paula O'Sullivan, Fri 17 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NIK KERSHAW - MUSINGS AND LYRICS An intimate evening of 'songs, stories and silliness' to coincide with the release of Nik's new book, Sat 18 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

TRES TRES CABARET A 'silly and saucy night to remember', with a unique line-up at every show, Sat 18 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

JOHN LYDON - I COULD BE WRONG, I COULD BE RIGHT An evening with 'the man who changed the face of music and sparked a cultural revolution', Sat 18 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

BOX OF FROGS The Birmingham-based ensemble present an evening of high-octane, improvised comedy nonsense, based on audience suggestions, Sat 18 Oct, SpArC, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

THE PHANTOMS Lee Mead stars alongside former West End Phantoms in a celebration of musical theatre's most iconic shows, Sat 18 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

UNCANNY - AFRAID OF THE DARK Danny Robins is back with a new show featuring 'the most spine-tingling range of Uncanny stories yet', Sun 19 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

NIK KERSHAW - MUSINGS AND LYRICS An intimate evening of 'songs, stories and silliness' to coincide with the release of Nik's new book, Sun 19 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

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

SIMON YATES: PLEASURE & PAIN Join the Touching The Void mountaineer as he shares stories from his expeditions, Wed 15 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Events

THE MOTORHOME AND CARAVAN SHOW The UK's biggest display of new motorhomes and caravans, Tues 14 - Sun 19 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

EXHIBITION TOUR - SHELTER THE OUTSIDE IN NATIONAL OPEN Led by artist Sajida Asif, Fri 17 Oct, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

PUMPKINFEST Carve in the farm's huge pumpkin shed, Fri 17 - Sun 19 Oct, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SCAREFEST Featuring 'frantically funny and seriously spooky attractions for all ages', Fri 17 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire

GANDEYS CIRCUS HALLOWEEN SPOOKTAKULAR A brand-new, spine-chilling, and action-packed Halloween Spooktacular, Fri 17 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill

BONGO'S BINGO The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 18 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MIDDLEPORT POTTERY FESTIVAL OF CRAFT A chance to discover local craftspeople and have a go at making your own creations, Sat 18 Oct, Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent

DIWALI FAMILY CRAFT: CREATE YOUR OWN LIGHT CATCHER Sat 18 Oct, Stourbridge Glass Museum

DIWALI Celebrate the colourful and vibrant Hindu and Sikh Festival of Lights with traditional music, dance and craft activities, Sat 18 Oct, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT See the museum come to life with the vibrant sights, sounds, and spirit of Diwali, Sat 18 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

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

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pick a pumpkin from the patch, enjoy live music and browse stalls, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

SPOOKY SPECTACULAR A mix of 'thrilling adventures, spooky shows, and monstrously good fun for the whole family', Sat 18 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley

HALLOWEEN CRAFT AND GIFT FAIR Sun 19 Oct, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

CHINA PAINTING FOR BEGINNERS Paint a floral motif on bone china before trying to recreate the famous Broseley Green Dragon design, Sun 19 Oct, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

Gigs

JIM JONES ALL STARS Mon 20 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE CAT EMPIRE Mon 20 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD Mon 20 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

DISTURBED Mon 20 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ERIC STECKEL Tues 21 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

MARTHA TILSTON Tues 21 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

BATTLE BEAST + DOMINUM + MAJESTICA Tues 21 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RICK WAKEMAN Tues 21 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOHN SMITH Tues 21 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY Tues 21 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

KID KAPICHI Wed 22 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

NICK HARPER Wed 22 Oct, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

SPANISH LOVE SONGS + THE DIRTY NIL + KALI MASI + SINCERE ENGINEER Wed 22 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

LARKIN POE + SON LITTLE Wed 22 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KATHRYN ROBERTS + SEAN LAKEMAN + SUNJAY BRAIN Wed 22 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

WARREN JAMES-LONESOME TRAVELLERS Wed 22 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Jazz Club

GRAHAM BONNET BAND + VICTORY OR DIE Wed 22 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Wed 22 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BETH NIELSEN CHAPMAN & JUDIE TZUKE Wed 22 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE HAAR Wed 22 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

WILLY MASON Thurs 23 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

IAIN MATTHEWS AND ANDY ROBERTS Thurs 23 Oct, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

THE WEDDING PRESENT Thurs 23 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CMAT Thurs 23 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TUNDE Thurs 23 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ABBAMANIA Thurs 23 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

THE HOT ONE TWO Thurs 23 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

SPEAR OF DESTINY Thurs 23 Oct, The Rigger, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

KATHRYN ROBERTS + SEAN LAKEMAN Thurs 23 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BEN OTTEWELL Thurs 23 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE VAN MORRISON ALUMNI BAND Thurs 23 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HAYSEED DIXIE Thurs 23 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HOME OF THE FREE Thurs 23 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

LEVI WASHINGTON Fri 24 Oct, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BRANDY CLARK Fri 24 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

POP WILL EAT ITSELF Fri 24 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

SENER Fri 24 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

NEWDAD Fri 24 Oct, XOYO, Birmingham

EIGHTY EIGHT MILES Fri 24 Oct, Mama Roux's, B'ham

BOOTLEG ABBA Fri 24 Oct, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

THE DRIFTERS Fri 24 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

TOM BALL Fri 24 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

PINK - BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA Fri 24 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE KITCHEN COLLECTIVE Fri 24 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

JAH WOBBLE AND THE INVADERS OF THE HEART Fri 24 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SCOTT LAVENE + CROWSPEAK + NICK DEGG Fri 24 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

MÖTLEY CRÜDE Fri 24 Oct, The Rigger, Newcastle-

Under-Lyme

THUNDER HAMMER Fri 24 Oct, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

SINGAROUND Fri 24 Oct, The Albion, Burton upon Trent

MARTIN STEPHENSON AND THE DAINTIES Fri 24 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

THE ROCK ANTHEMS SHOW Fri 24 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE SENSATIONAL 60S EXPERIENCE Fri 24 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JUST RADIOHEAD Fri 24 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HINAKO OMORI + KIT GRILL + INNERKEY Fri 24 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

THE SANDKINGS Fri 24 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

INTO THE SHADOWS Fri 24 - Sat 25 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BIG IMAGE Sat 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KEO + SARAH BROOKI Sat 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM Sat 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FELL OUT BOY + THE BLACK CHARADE + METEORA Sat 25 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KILLERSTREAM Sat 25 Oct, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

BLACK SABBITCH + CHERRY DEAD + SLUMP Sat 25 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

THE ELO SHOW Sat 25 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

LEGEND - THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY Sat 25 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN Sat 25 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

BRITPOP UNITED + ALL 4 INDIE Sat 25 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

NAVI - THE KING OF POP WITH JENNIFER BATTEN Sat 25 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE NEW CRANE Sat 25 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE BAR-STEWARD SONS OF VAL DOONICAN Sat 25 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

THE BARFLYS Sat 25 Oct,

Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

GREG MURRAY & THE SEVEN WONDERS Sat 25 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

SOUND & VISION - DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE Sat 25 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

STEVE KNIGHTLEY AND THE WINTER YARDS BAND Sat 25 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

DIRTY/DC Sat 25 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE ENDINGS Sat 25 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MIRANDA SYKES Sat 25 Oct, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

ANNA MASSIE Sat 25 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

DOCTOR & THE MEDICS Sun 26 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MEGSON Sun 26 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

DAN WHITLAM Sun 26 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

OLIVER SAMUELS Sun 26 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

MARTI PELLOW Sun 26 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Sun 26 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE LEGEND OF BARRY WHITE Sun 26 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

SABBOTAGE Sun 26 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

JAKE MARTIN + HENSHAW + HARRISON RIMMER Sun 26 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

OLLIE CANHAM GROUP Sun 26 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

ANNA MASSIE Sun 26 Oct, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

TOM BALL Sun 26 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN Sun 26 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHRIS STAPLETON UK Sun 26 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

STEVE GUNN + JAMES ELKINGTON Sun 26 Oct, The Firefly, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire

Classical Music

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: FROM FRANCE TO AMERICA Featuring Lowri Porter & Amy Jones (violins), David BaMaung (viola), Arthur Bouillier (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

LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Musicians from Concord College, Tues 21 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

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

THURSDAY CLASSICAL Featuring Fenella Humphreys (violin) & Martin Roscoe (piano). Programme includes works by Ravel, Fauré, Boulanger & Vaughan Williams, Thurs 23 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

RUSSELL WATSON: THE EVOLUTION TOUR Performing some of his best-known tracks and favourite pieces both old and new, Fri 24 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



Comedy

JONNY COLE Mon 20 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JAMES ACASTER Tues 21 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Tues 21 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Wed 22 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LEWIS SPEARS Wed 22 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE ALTER COMEDY CLUB Wed 22 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

JONNY COLE Wed 22 Oct, Walsall

Arena & Arts Centre

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

MARK SIMMONS Thurs 23 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

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

ALISTAIR WILLIAMS & TANIA EDWARDS Fri 24 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ALISON SPITTLE, MARK MAIER, JARRED CHRISTMAS & COMIC TBC Sat 25 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROBERT WHITE, DOUG CARTER, JAKE BAKER & JAMES COOK Sun 26 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

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

ME AND MY GIRL North Staffs Operatic Society present an amateur version of a musical comedy classic, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SISTER ACT Amateur version of the hit musical, presented by Tamworth Musical Theatre Company, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

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

ROCK OF AGES Amateur version presented by Musical Theatre Stafford, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

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

CAN YOW REMEMBER Brand-new verbatim-style show which captures memories of people living with dementia across the Black Country. Created in partnership with the Wolverhampton Grand, Arena Theatre & Forget Me Not Cafe. Can Yow Remember features three new songs written, learned and recorded by participants, composer Jonny Amos and Anthem Voices, Thurs 23 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR Tadlop present an amateur version of Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE MONKEY'S PAW AND THE GHOST OF JERRY BUNDLER The Clockwork Donkey Theatre Company present two classic tales of terror from the pen of WW Jacobs, Fri 24 Oct, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

JEKYLL & HYDE Ropetackle Storytellers reanimate a classic tale by blending the original text with 'sinuous physicality, mesmerising puppetry and dark humour', Fri 24 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

Kids Theatre

TALES FROM ACORN WOOD Toe-tapping songs and puppetry combine in this lift-the-flap stage experience for younger audiences. Based on Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's book, Tues 21 & Wed 22 Oct, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

THE GREAT BALDINI'S FAMILY MAGIC SHOW 'A joyously silly romp, guaranteed to have children (and parents) screaming with laughter!', Thurs 23 Oct, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

THE GREAT BALDINI'S FAMILY MAGIC SHOW A joyously silly romp, guaranteed to have children (and parents) screaming with laughter!, Sat 25 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE WITCH WHO COULDN'T SLEEP Action, music, song and animation combine in a production for younger audiences, based on Steven Lee's bestselling story How The Koala Learnt To Hug And Other Australian Fairytales, Sat 25 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE WITCH WHO COULDN'T SLEEP



Star Wars: In Concert with the CBO - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Action, music, song and animation combine in a production for younger audiences, based on Steven Lee's bestselling story How The Koala Learnt To Hug and Other Australian Fairytales, Sun 26 Oct, The Anstice, Madeley, Telford

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

ABSINTHE - THE BREWHOUSE CABARET Featuring magician & comedian Captain Eden Jackson; burlesque artist Fleur du Mal; award-winning LGBTQ+ poet Dan Webber; and non-conformist drag king Loki Lavender, Wed 22 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

80S MANIA Europe's official 1980s multi-tribute concert, Thurs 23 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

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

THE SPOOK SPECTACULAR Join the House of Allure for a spooky, themed night of burlesque, drag and cabaret,

Fri 24 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

DARREN BRITTAIN - A DEMONSTRATION OF MEDIUMSHIP Fri 24 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

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 CBO 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

DRAWN 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

WITCH, PLEASE! Halloween drag variety show featuring special spooky guests, games, music and lots of fun..., Sat 25 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

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



Tales From Acorn Wood - The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

THE ROCK ORCHESTRA BY CANDLELIGHT

A band of 14 musicians unleash 'enchanted melodies alongside powerful walls of distortion', Sun 26 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

WIFI WARS A 'very spooky version' of the live comedy game show, Sun 26 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

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, Mon 20 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

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

STRANGE, BUT TRUE CRIME Join Jennifer Rees as she explores the world's most shocking crime cases, Wed 22 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

Events

ANIMAL LANTERNS WITH CALDMORE

COMMUNITY GARDEN Make lanterns using recycled plastic bottles and tissue paper, inspired by this year's Festival of Lights theme of migration, Tues 21 Oct, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

FASHION TO DIE FOR: MOURNING DRESS & JEWELLERY

Join Kate Cadman as she unravels the etiquette of mourning attire alongside original garments and jewellery from IGMT's Collections, Tues 21 Oct, Glass Classroom, Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM COCKTAIL WEEKEND £6 signature cocktails across all participating venues, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 Oct, venues across Birmingham

CARNEVIL BONGO'S BINGO Halloween special, Fri 24 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

HALLOWEEN DRIVE IN CINEMA Three days of spooky screenings, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Oct, Alderford Lake, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

PUMPKINFEST Carve in the farm's huge pumpkin shed, Fri 24 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry,

North Shropshire

DJ BOOTH AND THE WHEELS OF STEEL - ZOMBIE DISCO

Experience Saturday Night Fever and Sunday Night at the Palladium rolled into one big Halloween glitzy ball of music, mullets and bingo-calling, Sat 25 Oct, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIR Featuring a wide array of unique gifts, handmade crafts, delicious treats and more, Sat 25 Oct, Edgbaston Stadium, B'ham

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

DIWALI COMMUNITY DAY The gallery's annual celebration of the Festival of Lights, Sat 25 Oct, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

HALLOWEEN PADDLE Lighthearted paddleboarding session, during which everyone can play games and soak up the atmosphere, Sat 25 Oct, Alderford Lake, Whitchurch, Shrops

HALLOWEEN FAMILY FUN: SPOOKY SCAVENGER HUNT & GLOW-IN-THE-DARK CRAFT Sat 25 Oct, Stourbridge Glass Museum

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

ANNIVERSARY FIREWORKS Enjoy your favourite rides after dark and end the night with a fireworks show, Sat 25 Oct, Drayton Manor, Tamworth

HAGLEY'S HAUNTED HOUSE & PUMPKIN TRAIL BY NIGHT Suitable for brave tweens, teens and their adults, Sat 25 Oct, Webbs, West Hagley

BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS Featuring a full bar, catering, and family entertainment, Sat 25 Oct, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR A family-friendly day out featuring trick or treating, maze, fairground and more... Sat 25 - Sun 26 Oct, Statfold Country Park, Tamworth

HALLOWEEN NIGHTS Featuring spinetling entertainment and the chance to meet a kooky cast of spooky historic characters, Sat 25 - Sun 26 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

CHRISTMAS GIFT FAYRE A whole host of suppliers showcase hand-crafted items, Sat 25 - Sun 26 October, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

TRENTHAM HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL Enjoy live music and dance along with roaming performers, 'whose eerie antics will keep you entertained all night', Sat 25 - Sun 26 Oct, Trentham

Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pick a pumpkin from the patch, enjoy live music and browse stalls, Sat 25 - Fri 31 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

PUMPKIN PICKING Get your wellies on and pick your perfect pumpkin, Sat 25 - Fri 31 Oct, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

MONSTERS & MAGIC HALLOWEEN

Drayton Manor transforms into an enchanted world, where spooky creatures and mystical wonders await, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Drayton Manor, Tamworth

JET AND SPACE WEEK 2025 Featuring activities, engaging talks, and lots of interactive elements, Sat 25 - Sun 2 Nov, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

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

PUMPKIN TRAIL AND GAMES Follow the pumpkin-themed trail through the castle grounds before joining in with some pumpkin-inspired games and activities, Sat 25 - Sun 2 Nov, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

HALLOWEEN MONSTER CAPER Armed with your monster-hunt trail sheet, explore the castle's eerie rooms, searching high and low for the sneaky spooks, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Tamworth Castle

A FANG-TASTIC OCTOBER HALF TERM

Featuring thrills, chills and plenty of family-friendly fun, Sat 25 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Shrewsbury Prison

SHREWSBURY RESTAURANT WEEK 2025 Thirty-plus local venues are expected to participate, Sat 25 - Sun 2 Nov, venues across Shrewsbury

HALLOWEEN HALF TERM IN THE GARDENS Spooky family-friendly fun, Sat 25 - Sun 2 Nov, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

GANDEYS CIRCUS HALLOWEEN

SPOOKTAKULAR Gandey's Circus returns, bringing you a brand-new, spinechilling and action-packed Halloween spooktacular, Sat 25 - Sun 2 Nov, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

BIG FISH LITTLE FISH HALLOWEEN

FAMILY RAVE Featuring bubbles, snow foam, confetti and giant balloons, Sun 26 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

ULTIMATE STANCE Event bringing together over 300 modified cars, Sun 26 Oct, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

CANAL O WEEEN Enjoy a family-friendly journey to the monster mashup party, Sun 26 - Fri 31 Oct, Dudley Canal & Caverns

JOHN POWER
CAST, THE LA'S, AND ME

John Power the lead singer with CAST - who are currently on tour with OASIS

SUN 19 APRIL
THE BUTTERMARKET
SHREWSBURY



Baskery - St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

Gigs

SLOW CRUSH Mon 27 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WITHERED HAND Mon 27 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

ALLIE SHERLOCK Mon 27 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

FREE THROW + PRINCE DADDY AND THE HYENA Mon 27 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

BIG SKY ORCHESTRA Tues 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE TROOPS OF DOOM Tues 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

INVADERS + KIMBERLITE + THE INSTINCT Tues 28 Oct, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL + DANNY GRUFF + DAVE GILES Tues 28 Oct, Dead Wax, Birmingham

TODD RUNDGREN Tues 28 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

STONE JETS Tues 28 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

BUSTED VS MCFLY Tues 28 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ALFONSO CONSPIRACY + THE TEALS + DENIED LEGACY + FAKE HASTE + OSIRIS Tues 28 Oct, The Rainbow, B'ham

THE AMAZONS Tues 28 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MAGPIES Wed 29 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

MARC SCIBILIA Wed 29 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BEN ELLIS + MARTI PERRAMON + DOLDER Wed 29 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE LOVELY EGGS Wed 29 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

SCUMBAG SEASON + SIDETRACKED + RETROGRADE + KEANE BALDWIN Wed 29 Oct, The Rainbow, B'ham

EMMA-JEAN THACKRAY Thurs 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE NEVERS Thurs 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DONALD WG LINDSAY & ALASDAIR ROBERTS Thurs 30 Oct, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

OCIE ELLIOTT Thurs 30 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THOSE DAMN CROWS + TAKIDA + JAMES BRUNER Thurs 30 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE ENTITLED SONS Thurs 30 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

LES SAVY FAV Thurs 30 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

JOEL SARAKULA Thurs 30 Oct, Dead Wax, Birmingham

THE VINTAGE CARAVAN Thurs 30 Oct, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

BRAINROT + INDISPOSED + 40 REASONS + ILLUSIVE + STRANGWAYS Thurs 30 Oct, The Rainbow, B'ham

RE-TAKE THAT Thurs 30 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

ALICE ARMSTRONG + THE DAVIDSON TRIO + CHLOE MOGG Thurs 30 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

CUD + MIGHTY MIGHTY Thurs 30 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

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

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Thurs 30 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

TALON Thurs 30 - Fri 31 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BRIAN LIGHTNING + CHEMTRAILS + EFFIGY Fri 31 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE AMAZONS Fri 31 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BLUETONES Fri 31 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KRIS BARRAS' HOLLOW SOULS +

TROY REDFERN Fri 31 Oct, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

LAKES Fri 31 Oct, Dead Wax, B'ham

SOLARS Fri 31 Oct, The Flapper, B'ham

SUZANNE VEGA Fri 31 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING OF CLASSIC REGGAE Fri 31 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

WOMEN IN ROCK Fri 31 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

UNDER THE COVERS Fri 31 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

NIGHT IN MANCHESTER Fri 31 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

DESPERADO Fri 31 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

SKINDRED + DEAD PONY + DEAD AIR Fri 31 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE EMINEM TRIBUTE SHOW Fri 31 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

CALLING PLANET EARTH Fri 31 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

INFIRM OF PURPOSE + PANIC AT THE EMO Fri 31 Oct, The Rigger, Newcastle-under-Lyme

TONY CHRISTIE Fri 31 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

PETE COE Fri 31 Oct, The Albion, Burton upon Trent

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY SHOW Fri 31 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BASKERY Fri 31 Oct, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

LEFT TO REIGN Fri 31 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

GHENGIS GRIMES + GOAT MAN AND THE MOTH + SIOUXSIE SUICIDE Fri 31 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

Classical Music

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

JACK DEE Mon 27 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TOM HOUGHTON + TOM HENRY Wed 29 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROSIE JONES Wed 29 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SARA PASCOE Thurs 30 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

FUN! WITH BARBARA NICE Thurs 30 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HARRIET DYER Fri 31 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

EVEN MORE... GHOST STORIES BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring four brand-new spooky stories from award-winning writers, Tues 28 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

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



BORN IN THE USA Richard Vergette's timely exploration of what drives populist politics, Wed 29 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MAKING A KILLING Dark and razor-sharp comedy about justice, corruption, and the cost of survival..., Wed 29 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE: THE LADY WITH THE HAMMER Oddsocks bring their trademark humour to the bloody background of Britain's most famous nurse..., Wed 29 Oct, The Anstice, Madeley, Telford

A THREE DAY THING Brand-new comedy 'crammed with hilarious one-liners and observations, presented alongside beautiful and poetic digressions', Thurs 30 Oct, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone



Todd Rundgren - The Alexandra, Birmingham

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JR. Get Your Wigle On present an amateur version of the Disney classic, Fri 31 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Kids Theatre

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE: SCIENCE SAVED THE WORLD Entertainment and education combine in a fun family show featuring 20ft liquid nitrogen clouds, exploding oxygen & hydrogen balloons, a self-built hovercraft and more..., Mon 27 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE GREAT BALDINI'S FAMILY MAGIC SHOW 'A joyously silly romp that's guaranteed to have children (and parents) screaming with laughter!', Mon 27 Oct, Tipton Library

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS - THE MUSICAL Wise Owl Theatre Company bring new life to a classic story, with catchy songs, clever rhymes and heaps of humour, Tues 28 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

PUSS IN BOOTS Lyngo Theatre present their version of the famous children's story, Tues 28 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

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

CARDBOARD CARNIVAL (THE CARNIVAL OF ANIMALS) Lempen Puppet Theatre present a very visual form of theatre, Tues 28 Oct, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

FUN FOR LITTLE ONES - A TRIBUTE TO MISS RACHEL Interactive live-on-stage performance with lots of audience participation, Tues 28 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE SPOOKTASTIC HALLOWEEN SHOW Family-friendly and interactive musical adventure, featuring Dantastic and his spooky sidekicks, Wed 29 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

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

THE EXTRAORDINARY TIME-TRAVELLING ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN Award-winning improvised storytelling show for children of all ages, Wed 29 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

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

HORRIBLE HISTORIES LIVE ON STAGE! Entertainment and education combine as the Gorgeous Georgians and Vile Victorians are brought to life in a show suitable for audiences aged five-plus, Thurs 30 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HONK! Market Drayton Amateur Operatic Society's Junior Theatre Workshop present an amateur version of Hans Christian Andersen's The Ugly Duckling, Thurs 30 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

MISCHIEF AND MYSTERY IN MOONIN VALLEY Puppetry, participatory storytelling, music and play combine in a show in which nature thrives and adventures are plentiful, Suitable for audiences aged three-plus, Fri 31 Oct, Wednesbury Library

Light Entertainment

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, Thurs 30 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

WOMEN IN ROCK - HALLOWEEN 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

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

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

VINCENT SIMONE: TANGO PASSIONS New show from the 'king' of Argentine tango and star of Strictly Come Dancing, Tues 28 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RIVERDANCE 30: THE NEW GENERATION Award-winning music and mesmerising choreography come together in this special anniversary show, Tues 28 - Fri 31 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SWAN LAKE Imperial Classical Ballet's version of the world-famous tale of love, betrayal and redemption, Thurs 30 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SLEEPING BEAUTY Imperial Classical Ballet present the classic story of love, innocence, mystery and magic, set to Tchaikovsky's sublime score, Fri 31 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

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

PAM AYRES The 'people's poet' talks about her latest book, Doggedly Onward - A Life In Poems, 1970 To 2020s, Wed 29 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Events

ESCAPE ROOMS Can your team solve the escape-room puzzles to unlock the team members' certificates? Mon 27 - Thurs 30 Oct, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

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

OCTOBER HALF TERM Featuring outdoor trails, arts & crafts and storytelling, Mon 27 - Fri 31 Oct, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

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

THE TRICKS BEHIND THE TREAT: THE HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN Uncover the fascinating history of Halloween, Tues 28 Oct, Glass Classroom, Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Shrops

ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING Featuring 'some of the very best wrestlers from around the world', Tues 28 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

FLYING BAT CRAFTS Make a bat with moving wings using paper, straws and string, Tues 28 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

WEDNESDAYS FOR ALL - COLOURFUL PUMPKINS Draw and paint seasonal pictures using oil pastels and

watercolour paints, Wed 29 Oct, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

HALLOWEEN SPOOKY TOUR OF BLAKESLEY HALL Learn about Halloween traditions and listen to spiningtling stories, Wed 29 - Fri 31 Oct, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR Family-friendly day out featuring trick or treating, a maze, a fairground and more, Wed 29 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Statfold Country Park, Tamworth

HALLOWEEN THEMED FILM & CRAFTY MAKING WORKSHOP Thurs 30 Oct, SpArc Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

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

HALLOWEEN NIGHTS Featuring spiningtling entertainment and the chance to meet a kooky cast of spooky historic characters, Thurs 30 - Fri 31 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

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

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

CARNEVIL BONGO'S BINGO Halloween special, Fri 31 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

COFFINS AND COCKTAILS: A HALLOWEEN TREAT Atmospheric after-hours tour, Fri 31 Oct, Coffin Works, Birmingham

THE WITCH TRIALS Follow the gatekeeper through the atmospheric medieval castle, Fri 31 Oct - Sat 1 Nov, Tamworth Castle

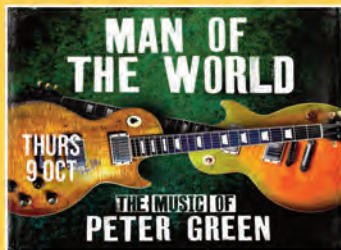
CAKE INTERNATIONAL AND BAKE INTERNATIONAL The biggest cake decorating and baking event in the world, Fri 31 Oct - Sun 2 Nov, NEC, Birmingham



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