

Birmingham

ISSUE 468 JANUARY 2026

# What's On

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

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the battle that rocked the nation**



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BLUR vs OASIS**



written by  
**john niven**



directed by  
**matthew dunster**



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**the  
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## inside:

### LIGHTNING THIEF...

The Percy Jackson Musical comes to the Hippodrome



### STRICTLY ON TOUR

live version of the hit TV show waltzes back into the region



### A FAREWELL TO OZZY

final chance to see BMAG's Ozzy Osbourne exhibition







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**Now on sale**

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**WARWICK**

**ARTS**

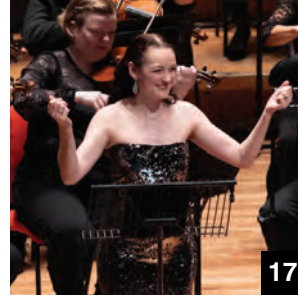
**CENTRE**



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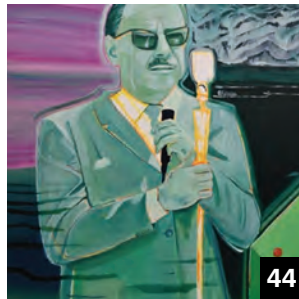
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### What's On

MEDIA GROUP

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## The Silence Of The Lambs heading for the stage in 2027

A new modern adaptation of Thomas Harris' novel *The Silence Of The Lambs* will tour to four Midlands theatres next year.

Best known from the 1991 Academy Award-winning film version, the story focuses on FBI trainee Clarice Starling's encounter with infamous murderer Hannibal Lecter.

The production will show at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 January 2027, returning to the region later that month to play Malvern's Forum Theatre (Tuesday the 26th to Saturday the 30th). Other dates include Coventry's Belgrade Theatre, from Tuesday 30 March to Saturday 3 April, and the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, from Monday 26 April to Saturday 1 May. For more information and to book tickets, visit [silenceofthelambsplay.com](https://silenceofthelambsplay.com)

## Ikon announces its 2026 exhibition programme

Ikon Gallery's programme of exhibitions for 2026 includes a collaboration between visual artist Angela de la Cruz and Birmingham Royal Ballet. The new commission, presented alongside a selection of Angela's other work, explores the human body and the tension between strength and fragility. Taking the title *Upright*, the exhibition is available to view at the Brindleyplace-located gallery from Wednesday 25 March to Sunday 6 September.

## Bellowhead to celebrate anniversary in the city

Bellowhead are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their full-length debut album, *Burlesque*, by heading out on a UK tour.

The folk-music favourites will hit the road in the autumn, making a stop-off at Symphony Hall in Birmingham on Wednesday 25 November. Tickets are available to purchase by visiting [bellowhead.co.uk](https://bellowhead.co.uk)



## Lisa and Kim to star in *Single White Female*

Familiar television faces Lisa Faulkner and Kym Marsh will star in the world premiere stage production of *Single White Female* when it visits Birmingham theatre The Alexandra in the spring.

Based on the bestselling novel by John Lutz and the hit 1992 film adaptation, the show makes its second-city stop-off from Tuesday 5 to Saturday 9 May. For further information and to book tickets, visit [atgtickets.com](https://atgtickets.com)



## Birmingham live music venue doubles capacity

One of Birmingham's leading live music destinations, Forum Digbeth, has doubled its capacity from 2,000 to 4,000 with the addition of a brand-new adjoining warehouse space. The expansion is being heralded as marking 'a new era for large-scale live music, club events and immersive experiences in the city'.

## Birmingham Town Hall awarded a blue plaque

Birmingham Town Hall has been awarded a blue plaque by Birmingham Civic Society to mark a significant moment in literary history: the first-ever public reading of *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens himself, which took place at the venue in December 1853. To find out more, visit [bmusic.co.uk](https://bmusic.co.uk)

## Literature & music festival returning to Kings Heath

The Heath Bookshop Literature & Music Festival 2026 will take place from Wednesday 15 to Sunday 19 April.

Based in Birmingham's Kings Heath, the biannual event this year features solo acts, author events, specially commissioned performance pieces, children's activities and music gigs. For more information and to buy tickets, go to [theheathbookshop.co.uk](https://theheathbookshop.co.uk)



## Scottish favourites The Proclaimers in the region

Scottish music legends The Proclaimers are heading for the Midlands in the autumn, bringing their new touring show to Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Saturday 7 November. The tour comes in support of their soon-to-be-released 13th studio album. For more information and to book tickets for their concert, visit [nothird.co.uk](https://nothird.co.uk)

## Dance showcase at MAC

Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) is hosting a showcase performance by students of kathak, contemporary, folk and Bollywood dance styles in the middle of the month. Designed, directed and choreographed by local dance teacher Nilakshi Mazumder, *Rasadhara* shows at the venue on Sunday 18 January. To find out more, visit the website at [macbirmingham.co.uk](https://macbirmingham.co.uk)

## RSC's *Matilda* auditions to be held in Birmingham

The Royal Shakespeare Company is hosting auditions in Birmingham this month and next for its hit show *Matilda The Musical*. The auditions will be for the role of Matilda herself and her classmates. To find out more, including how to apply, visit [tour.matildathemusical.com](https://tour.matildathemusical.com)



## Michael Ball set to tour in the autumn

Michael Ball will visit two Midlands venues later in the year in support of soon-to-be-released studio album, *Glow*. Stopping off at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Sunday 30 August, he then returns to the region on Wednesday 16 September, at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre.

To find out more and purchase tickets, visit the website of the relevant venue.

## Spring stop-offs for Boyzlife stars

Boyzone's Keith Duffy and Westlife's Brian McFadden - aka Boyzlife - are heading out on tour next month and will be visiting two West Midlands venues in March. The dynamic duo will stop off at Stoke's Victoria Hall (Sunday the 8th) and Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre (Sunday the 22nd).

To find out more, visit the website at [ticketmaster.co.uk](http://ticketmaster.co.uk)

## December date for Kevin Bridges

Scottish comedian Kevin Bridges will return to the stage in late 2026 with a brand-new stand-up show.

Kevin brings *Here If You Need Me* to Birmingham's Utilita Arena on Wednesday 2 December.

For more information and tickets, visit [kevinbridges.co.uk](http://kevinbridges.co.uk)



## Call The Midwife's Helen George to star in High Society

Call The Midwife star Helen George will play the part of Tracy Lord when a brand-new production of Cole Porter's *High Society* visits Birmingham theatre The Alexandra in late summer (Tuesday 18 - Saturday 22 August).

Commenting on the news, Harborne-born Helen said: "Theatre is my first love, and I adored playing the iconic role of Anna in *The King & I*,

so I jumped at the chance to flex my musical comedy chops and play Tracy.

"Cole Porter's musicals are packed with his signature wit, glamour and unforgettable tunes, and *High Society* is no exception."

For more information and to book tickets, visit the show's website at [HighSocietyMusical.com](http://HighSocietyMusical.com)

## Midlands return for Bill Bailey

Bill Bailey will tour a new show to the Midlands in November.

The much-loved comedian and 2020 *Strictly Come Dancing* winner stops off at Utilita Arena Birmingham on Wednesday the 11th and Coventry Building Society Arena on Friday the 13th. Bill will be presenting *Vaudevillean* - a show which he describes as "a celebration of comedy, songs and multifarious skill". For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at [billbailey.co.uk](http://billbailey.co.uk)

## Fundraising campaign launched by Birmingham Museums Trust

A major fundraising campaign has been launched by Birmingham Museums Trust to protect the city's cultural heritage and help 'deliver bold ambitions'.

The campaign - entitled *Your Museums, Your Move* - aims to raise at least £2million over the next two years.

Commenting on the initiative, Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah, co-chief executives of Birmingham Museums Trust, said: "Your Museums, Your Move is a call to action to the people of Birmingham and beyond, including businesses and organisations, to invest in the city's greatest cultural asset, helping us to create a world-class museum service which can be at the forefront of making Birmingham a great place to live, work, play and visit.

"The campaign is vital to ensure that the city has museums that make us all proud - for learning, remembering and imagining."



## Fatboy Slim to headline Forest Live this summer

In-demand DJ Fatboy Slim will headline at Forest Live - Forestry England's annual concert series - this summer, appearing in Cannock Chase Forest on Thursday 25 June. For further information and to book tickets, visit [forestlive.com](https://forestlive.com)



## February date for region's Tractor World Show

The Tractor World Show returns to Malvern's Three Counties Showground on Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 February.

This year's event will feature historic farm machinery and agricultural exhibits, hundreds of vintage, veteran, classic and brand-new tractors, and a selection of classic commercials, lorries, trucks, Land Rovers, vans and stationary engines. For further information and to book tickets, visit [tractorworldshow.co.uk](https://tractorworldshow.co.uk)



## Legacy charity to support the city's light festival

United By 2022, the legacy charity of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, will once again support Birmingham Light Festival when it returns next month. Taking place from Thursday 12 to Sunday 15 February, the festival will see streets, squares and public spaces across the city transformed by light installations and interactive artworks.

Nicola Turner, CEO of United By 2022, said: "Our dedicated volunteers last year helped create a fantastic atmosphere and inspire others to get involved, and we can't wait to build on that success when the festival returns to light up our city next month."



## Anniversary return for The Mousetrap in the autumn

The world's longest-running play, Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap, will kickstart its 75th-anniversary tour at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra in the autumn, stopping off at the venue from Thursday 3 to Saturday 12 September. The iconic play then returns to

the Midlands in 2027, playing Stoke's Regent Theatre from Monday 1 to Saturday 6 March, ahead of visiting Lichfield's Garrick Theatre the following week (Monday 8 - Saturday 13 March). For further information and to book tickets, visit [themousetrap.com](https://themousetrap.com)

## Mumford & Sons to bring acoustic show to Brum

Mumford & Sons are heading out on tour next month in support of their new album and will be bringing an acoustic show to Birmingham's O2 Institute on Thursday 12 February. For more information and tickets, visit the website at [viagogo.co.uk](https://viagogo.co.uk)

## Ellen Kent bids farewell

Productions of Puccini's Madame Butterfly, Verdi's La Traviata and Bizet's Carmen will visit Birmingham theatre The Alexandra in March.

The shows mark the farewell of Ellen Kent's opera company, which has been touring productions for the last 33 years. Madame Butterfly shows at the Alex on Sunday 1 March, La Traviata on Friday the 27th and Carmen on Saturday the 28th. For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at [atgtickets.com](https://atgtickets.com)

## Last chance to catch Made At MAC exhibition

Visitors to Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) this month have a final chance to check out the venue's Made At MAC display. Showcasing the diverse range of work produced in MAC's studios during 2024/25, the exhibition remains available to view until Sunday 25 January.

## A new Monster Truck!

An all-new Rhino-themed truck will be joining the Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live tour when it visits Birmingham in the spring (Utilita Arena, Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 April)... Charging horn-first into challenges, Rhinomite will 'explode on the scene with a mission to destroy the competition'. For tickets and event information, visit the website at [hotwheelsmonstertruckslive.com](https://hotwheelsmonstertruckslive.com)

## Half-season tickets now available for Villa Women

Half-season tickets for Aston Villa Women's matches are now available.

As well as offering the opportunity to watch the team in action, the ticket also provides access to the pre-match Fanzone experience, which, for the Sunday 11 January fixture against Brighton & Hove Albion, will feature a set from comedian Suzi Ruffell.

Future Fanzone highlights include a star-studded line-up for the Manchester City match on Sunday 15 March, with former Villan & Lioness Jill Scott and fellow Lioness Karen Carney in attendance.

Villa Women are also teaming up with party starters Baller FC, Underground Fan Club, and Guinness across selected fixtures 'to elevate the atmosphere even further'.

Half-season tickets (for six matches) start from £35 for under-14s and can be purchased by visiting [tickets.avfc.co.uk](https://tickets.avfc.co.uk)



# B:Music

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**2026 Goals:** *thanks All sorted,  
B:Music!*  
See more live shows  
Spend time with friends & family  
Make memories not landfill

19.04 SUZI QUATRO  
Mom & Dad would  
love this!

17.02 PETER ANDRE  
Auntie Lils Birthday

12.03 ALEX JAMES'  
BRITPOP CLASSICAL  
Excuse to get the  
uni lot together!

05.03 LILY ALLEN  
Girls Night Out

20-22.07 JAMES ACASTER  
Date night!

**Great Nights Out** start with **B:Music!**



## La Voix to appear as Miss Hannigan in Annie

Much-loved drag favourite La Voix is to star as Miss Hannigan when a new touring production of Annie visits Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from



Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 June.

The hit musical then returns to the West Midlands in the autumn - showing at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre from Tuesday 13 to Sunday 18 October - and stops off at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in early 2027 (Tuesday 16 - Sunday 21 February).

It's yet to be announced who will play the role of Miss Hannigan at the Regent and Grand.

To find out more and purchase tickets, visit the website of the relevant venue.

## Ragley Hall to host Peter Pan drone light show

The world's first Peter Pan drone light show is coming to Ragley Hall in Warwickshire in the spring.

Presented by sky-theatre specialists Lumina Drones, the aerial production features more than 600 LED drones and takes place at the venue on the evening of Saturday 11 April. Donations from every ticket sold will be gifted to Great Ormond Street Hospital. For further information and to book, visit the Ragley Hall website at [ragley.co.uk](http://ragley.co.uk)

## January drop-in at the Birmingham Hippodrome

Birmingham Hippodrome is this month hosting its third Access Social Drop-In. The free-to-attend event provides anyone age 16-plus (or 14-plus if accompanied by an adult) with the opportunity to socialise and share ideas about how the theatre can be made more accessible as a venue. The drop-in takes place during the afternoon of Thursday 29 January. To find out more, visit [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)



08 [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)



## New Chaka Khan musical stopping off at the Belgrade

Musical theatre favourite Alexandra Burke will star in I'm Every Woman: The Chaka Khan Musical when it visits the Coventry Belgrade Theatre in the spring.

Featuring a selection of Chaka hits, including I Feel For You, Tell Me Something Good, Ain't Nobody, Sweet Thing and Through The Fire,

the show stops off at the venue from Wednesday 1 to Saturday 4 April. Alexandra will appear as Chaka on Thursday the 2nd, Friday the 3rd and in the evening performance on Saturday the 4th. For further information and to book tickets, visit the venue's website at [belgrade.co.uk](http://belgrade.co.uk)

## Netflix kids' favourite heading to the Midlands

A stage musical version of Gabby's Dollhouse, the most-watched children's show on Netflix, is coming to Birmingham's Utilita Arena on Tuesday 7 April.

The show follows the fun adventures of title character Gabby as she jumps into a fantastical world full of cat characters that live inside her magical dollhouse. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at [GabbysDollhouseLive.com/UK](http://GabbysDollhouseLive.com/UK)

## Appeal launched to help conserve Hall's Croft

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has launched a fundraising campaign to conserve Hall's Croft - one of England's most significant Jacobean buildings - after a car accident caused severe damage to the property in November.

The Trust - the charity that cares for Shakespeare's family homes - is looking to raise £500,000 immediately as part of a conservation programme to safeguard the 400-year-old timber-framed house for future generations. For further information, visit [shakespeare.org.uk/support](http://shakespeare.org.uk/support)

## John Cooper Clarke at Birmingham Town Hall

Dr John Cooper Clarke will visit two West Midlands venues as part of an autumn tour.

The veteran performance poet & comedian stops off at Stoke-on-Trent's Victoria Hall on Friday 23 October and Birmingham Town Hall the following night (Saturday the 24th). More information and tickets are available at [johncooperclarke.com](http://johncooperclarke.com)



## Popular folk festival to return in the autumn

Moseley Folk & Arts Festival 2026 will feature performances by North America's The Dead South, the UK's Johnny Flynn - accompanied by his sister Lillie - and Ireland's Joshua Burnside.

The much-loved festival takes place at Birmingham's Moseley Park from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 September... To find out more and book tickets, visit [moseleyfolk.co.uk](http://moseleyfolk.co.uk)



# A SPARKLING SEASON AWAITS



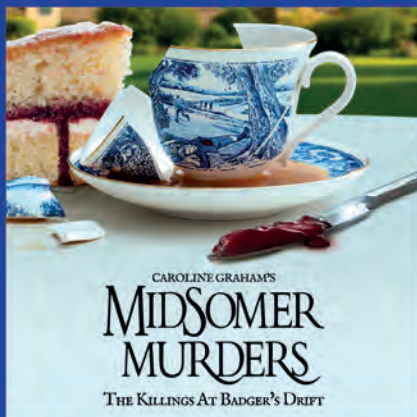
Tue 27 – Sat 31 Jan



Mon 16 Feb



Fri 20 & Sat 21 Feb



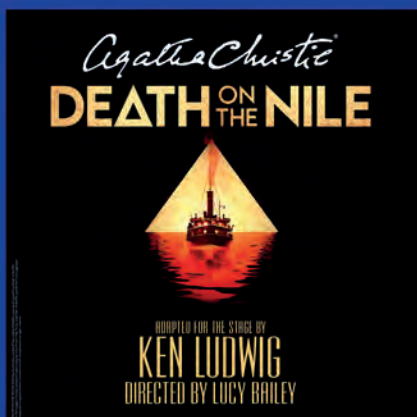
Tue 10 – Sat 14 Mar



Tue 17 – Sat 21 Mar



Tue 31 Mar – Sat 4 Apr



Tue 7 – Sat 11 Apr



Tue 21 – Sat 25 Apr

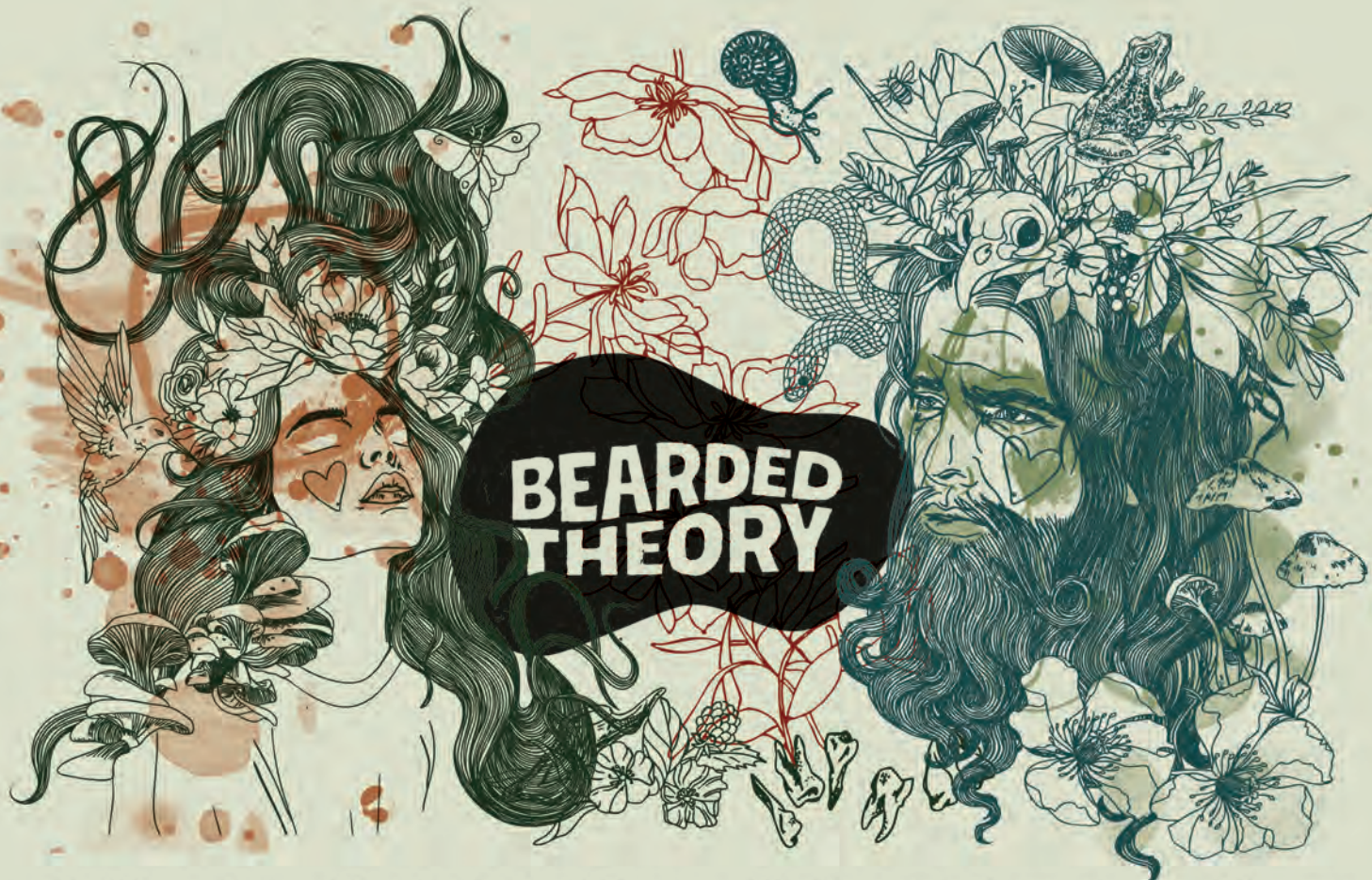


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NEWDAW • PANIC SHACK • PETER HOOK AND THE LIGHT • REVEREND AND THE MAKERS • SPRINTS

**A-Z** ADULT DVD • A CERTAIN RATIO\* • AU PAIRS • BEANS ON TOAST • BEZ • CHALK • DUB PISTOLS (DJ SET) • EMF†  
GANS† • GIRL SCOUT • GOLDIE • GOOD HEALTH GOOD WEALTH • GRAEME PARK • HEARTWORMS • HENGE • JASMINE.4.T  
KEZIA GILL • KING PRAWN • LEEROY THORNHILL (EX-PRODIGY) • NEVILLE STAPLE - FROM THE SPECIALS  
PHIL HARTNOLL (ORBITAL DJ SET) • POP WILL EAT ITSELF • SENSER • STEWART LEE • THE MAGIC NUMBERS

THE MOLOTOVS • THE SABRES OF PARADISE (LIVE) • THE UNTHANKS\* • THE WEDDING PRESENT  
TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS FEAT LEBE HIBBERT • UTAH SAINTS • VENUS GRRRLS\* • WESTSIDE COWBOY

**A-Z** 3 DAFT MONKEYS\* • AMELIA COBURN • AN DANNSA DUB\* • ANDREA KENNY\* • BLOODWORM\* • CARA MEANS FRIEND†  
CHRIS HAWKINS (BBC 6 MUSIC) DJ SET\* • DJ RAP • DRUM MACHINE • GRANDMAS HOUSE • JESS SILK • JOOLS† • LA SÉCURITÉ • LIINES\*  
MEATDRIPPER\* • MERYL STREEK† • MIKI BERENYI TRIO • MUDDY SUMMERS & THE DFWS\* • NATIVE JAMES\* • SHE'S IN PARTIES  
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## Festivals to look forward to in 2026



When it comes to music, regardless of your preference - be it jazz, indie, folk, classical, world or pop - you're sure to find a festival in the Midlands (and/or beyond) to suit your taste. So let's make 2026 a year to remember for all the right reasons... Get your diary out and get booking!

### APRIL

**NANTWICH JAZZ, BLUES & MUSIC FESTIVAL** Line-up includes King King, Rebecca Ferguson & The Stumble, Thurs 2 - Mon 6 April, various venues in Nantwich, Cheshire

### MAY

**CHELTHENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Wed 29 April - Mon 4 May, Montpellier Gardens, Cheltenham  
**LOOPFEST** Line-up includes Ash, Reef & Gentleman's Dub Club, various locations in Shrewsbury, Fri 1 - Sun 3 May

**UPTON UPON SEVERN FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Bob Fox, Rowen & Charlie Piggot, James Delarre & Saul Rose, Fri 1 - Mon 4 May, various venues, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire

**FOCUS WALES** Line-up includes Idlewild, Shame & Fat Dog, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 May, various venues in Wrexham, Wales

**BEARDED THEORY** Line-up includes Pixies, Skunk Anansie & Lambrini Girls, Wed 20 - Sun 24 May, Catton Hall, South Derbyshire

**GLASTONBUDGET** Line-up includes Flash, Arctic Monkeys & The Clone

Roses, Thurs 21 - Sun 24 May, Turnpost Farm, Leicestershire

**BREAKING BANDS** Line-up includes Virgin Marys, Skarlett Riot & Dirtbox Disco, Thurs 21 - Sun 24 May, Droitwich Rugby Club, Droitwich Spa

**CHESTER FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Rosie Hood Band, Tarren & Granny's Attic, Fri 22 - Mon 25 May, Kelsall Village, Cheshire

**HOWTHELIGHTGETSIN** Line-up tba, Fri 22 - Mon 25 May, Hay on Wye, Hereford

**BIRMINGHAM PRIDE** Line-up tba, Sat 23 - Sun 24 May, Birmingham Gay Village

**DOT TO DOT FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Sun 24 May, various venues in Nottingham

**WYCHWOOD MUSIC FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Kaiser Chiefs, Fri 29 - Sun 31 May, Cheltenham Racecourse

### JUNE

**FORBIDDEN FOREST** Line-up includes Andy C, Shy FX & Holy Priest, Thurs 4 - Sun 7 June, Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire

**DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Limp Bizkit, Linkin Park & Guns 'N Roses, Wed 10 - Sun 14 June, Donington Park, Derby

**GOTTWOOD FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Call Super, Christian AB & DJ Masda,

Thurs 11 - Sun 14 June, Carreglwyd Estate, Anglesey

**BEARDY FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Roving Crows, Peatbog Faeries, Ian Prowse & Amsterdam, Thurs 18 - Sun 21 June, Hopton Court, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire

**SONIC ROCK SOLSTICE 2026** Line-up includes The Lene Lovich Band, Punishment of Luxury & The March Violets, Thurs 18 - Mon 22 June, Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club, Bromsgrove

**PARKLANDS FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 19 - Sun 21 June, Telford Town Park, Shropshire

**DARESBURY FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Annie Mac, Roger Sanchez & 808 State, Sat 20 June, Walton Hall & Gardens, Cheshire

**UPTON JAZZ FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 26 - Sun 28 June, various venues in Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire

**BLENHEIM PALACE FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Katy Perry, Teddy Swims, Pete Tong Ibiza Classics, Sat 27 June - Sat 4 July

### JULY

**GATE TO SOUTHWELL** Line-up includes Richard Thompson, The Proclaimers &

Edwina Hayes, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 July, Kirklington, Southwell, Nottinghamshire

**THE BRIT FEST** Line-up includes Holly Johnson, Wet Wet Wet & Jason Donovan, Thurs 2 - Sun 5 July, Ashley Hall, Altrincham

**ALDERFEST** Line-up tba, Fri 3 - Sat 4 July, Alderford Lake, Shropshire

**NAPTON MUSIC FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 3 - Sat 4 July, Napton Village Hall Grounds, Napton On The Hill, Warwickshire

**CAMPERJAM** Line-up tba, Fri 3 - Sun 5 July, Weston Park, Shropshire/Staffordshire border

**2000TREES FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Alkaline Trio, Lambrini Girls & Glassjaw, Wed 8 - Sat 11 July, Upcote Farm, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

**THE MOSTLY JAZZ FUNK AND SOUL FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 10 - Sun 12 July, Moseley Park, Birmingham

**ALSO FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 10 - Sun 12 July, Park Farm, Warwickshire

**UPTON BLUES FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Wed 15 - Sun 19 July, various venues around Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire

**WOODSHROP TRIBUTE FESTIVAL** Line-up includes tributes to Oasis, Queen & Robbie Williams, Fri 17 - Mon 20 July,



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**SHREWSBURY  
FOLK  
FESTIVAL**

**28-29-30-31 AUG 2026**

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Ferocious Dog ft The Celtic  
Folk Orchestra ★ Cara Dillon  
Steve Knightley &  
The Winter Yards Band  
Slambovian Circus of Dreams  
Dustbowl Revival**

★ Steve Knightley (solo) ★ Chris Wood  
★ Kerr Fagan ★ Man The Lifeboats ★ Sawol  
★ Thunder and Rain ★ Cable Street Collective  
★ Taff Rapids ★ The Lost Notes ★ Daisy Chute  
★ Sam Carter sings Nic Jones  
★ Three Idle Women ★ Jess Silk  
★ Shane's Singo Bingo  
★ The Rusty Tubs  
★ The Gleaves


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## Festivals to look forward to in 2026



Shrewsbury Folk Festival

DMOS People West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

**SOLIHULL SUMMER FEST** Line-up includes Craig David & Culture Club, Sat 18 - Sun 19 July, Tudor Grange Park, Solihull

**WARWICK FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 July, Castle Park, Warwick

**TRUCK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Maccabees, Two Door Cinema Club & The Wombats, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 July, Hill Farm, Oxfordshire

**BEACON PARK TRIBUTE FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Aka...Noel Gallagher, Michael Jackson by David Boakes, That Rule The World, Fri 24 - Sun 26 July, Beacon Park, Lichfield

**HIDE AND SEEK** Line-up tba, Fri 24 - Sun 26 July, Weston Park, Shropshire/Staffordshire border

**FOREST LIVE** Line-up includes Billy Ocean, Fatboy Slim & UB40 ft. Ali Campbell, Fri 24 - Tues 28 July, Cannock Chase Forest

**BIRMINGHAM JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 24 July - Sun 2 August, multiple venues around Birmingham

**WILDERNESS FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Thurs 30 July - Sun 2 August, Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire

**Y NOT FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Reytons, Two Door Cinema Club & The Streets, Thurs 30 July - Sun 2 August, Pikehall, Derbyshire

### AUGUST

**LAKEFEST** Line-up includes Madness, Example & Reef, Wed 5 - Sun 9 August, Eastnor Castle Deer Park, Herefordshire

**BACK 2 FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Vengaboys, Right Said Fred & Cartoons, Wed 5 - Sun 9 August, Cattows Farm, Leicester

**DEVAFEST** Line-up includes Ronan Keating, K Klass & Symphonic Ibiza, Thurs 6 - Sun 9 August, Cholmondeley Castle, Cheshire

**BLOODSTOCK OPEN AIR** Line-up includes Lamb of God, Slaughter To Prevail & Judas Priest, Thurs 6 - Sun 9 August, Catton Hall, Derbyshire

**FARMER PHIL'S FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 7 - Sun 9 August, Near Gatten Farm, Ratlinghope, Shropshire

**TRENTHAM LIVE** Line-up includes Five, Primal Scream & The Coral, Thurs 20 - Sun 23 August, Trentham Estate

**GREEN MAN FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Thurs 20 - Sun 23 August, Brecon Beacons, South Wales

**THE MOIRA FURNACE FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Other Roads, Gaelforce & Anthony John Clarke, Fri 21 - Sun 23 August, Moira Furnace Museum and Monument Site, Leicestershire

**CREAMFIELDS** Line-up includes Calvin Harris, Sonny Fodera & Armin Van

Buuren, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 August, Daresbury, Halton, Cheshire

**BEERMAGEDDON FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Xentrix, Kensei & Higher State, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 August, Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

**SUNSHINE FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 August, Fish Meadow, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire

**SHAMBALA** Line-up includes Bob Vylan, BCUC & Goat, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 August, a secret location in Northampton

**BIG FEASTIVAL** Line-up includes Basement Jaxx, The Streets & Bastille, Fri 28 - Sun 30 August, Alex James' Farm, The Cotswolds

**CAMPER CALLING** Line-up tba, Fri 28 - Sun 30 August, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

**THE BIG STATFOLD WEEKENDER** Line-up tba, Fri 28 - Sun 30 August, Statfold Country Park, Tamworth

**PENKRIDGE OPEN AIR** Line-up tba, Fri 28 - Sun 30 August, Penkridge Sports and Recreation Centre

**SHREWSBURY FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up includes Cara Dillon, Ferocious Dog featuring The Celtic Folk Orchestra & Andy Fairweather Low and the Low Riders, Fri 28 - Mon 31 August, DMOS People West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

### SEPTEMBER

**MOSELEY FOLK & ARTS** Line-up includes The Dead South, Johnny & Lillie Flynn & Joshua Burnside, Fri 4 - Sun 6 September, Moseley Park, Birmingham



**BROMYARD FOLK FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 September, Bromyard, Herefordshire

**ONBOARD THE CRAFT** Line-up includes Doctor and the Medics, Quantum Fantasy & The Vampyres, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 September, Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club, Bromsgrove

**AVONSTOCK TRIBUTE FESTIVAL** Line-up includes T-Rex, Elvis & The Rolling Stones, Fri 11 - Sat 12 September, Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse

**HEAL FESTIVAL** Line-up tba, Fri 11 - Sat 12 September, DMOS People West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury





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Live music from across the city...

## Kaia Kater

Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham,  
Tues 27 January

Rich and low tenor vocals, jazz-influenced instrumentation, and beautifully understated banjo provide the fuel for the musical output of Montreal-born Grenadian-Canadian Kaia Kater, whose lush songwriting sees her draw on influences rooted in Quebec, Appalachia and the Caribbean.

Kaia's 2024 album, *Strange Medicine*, was longlisted for the Polaris Music Prize.



## Biffy Clyro

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Fri 16 January

Biffy Clyro were no overnight success story. The album with which they made a really significant breakthrough, *Puzzle*, was their fourth, released more than a decade after they formed.

The Scottish rockers' subsequent popularity flowed from their decision to adhere to more conventional song structures and incorporate more accessible hooks, albeit while retaining their commitment to genre-blending and bold experimentation...

The three-piece visit Birmingham mid-month with their *Futique* tour. Support on the night comes from *Soft Play* and *The Armed*.



## Mon Rovia

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Mon 26 January

With a sound that effectively blends indie-folk, Americana, and shoegaze pop stylings, Liberia-born TikTok star Mon Rovia is reinventing Appalachian folk for a new generation. And he's doing so from an unusual perspective, too - a Black West African, adopted by white Christian missionaries and taken from his homeland during a violent civil war.

"Kids that have my experience are very lonely, you know?" he told the website BGS. "A Black person that spoke white - because I spoke pretty properly - there's not really a place you fit. You don't fit with the white kids because you're Black in their eyes, clearly. And then the African Americans don't accept you because you don't know their world either."

## Lucinda Williams

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 29 January

Lucinda Williams' Town Hall concert comes in support of latest studio album *World's Gone Wrong*, a battle-cry offering in which the three-time Grammy Award winner aims 'to confront America's socio-political chaos head-on'... The album is the Louisiana-born singer-songwriter's 16th, released 47 years after debut offering *Ramblin' On My Mind* whispered her arrival on the traditional country & blues scene.



## Oslo Twins

The Victoria, Birmingham, Tues 27 January

"Although our music is both melodic and melancholic," explain Oslo Twins' Eric Davies and Claudia Vulliamy, "it's also subtly influenced by dance, industrial and lo-fi music of the 1980s and 90s. But our melodies are pop melodies - we always like to have a hook."

The Bristolian dream pop/trip-hop group stop off in Birmingham late this month as part of a short UK tour.

## The Golden Dregs

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham,  
Thurs 29 January

Tugging a forelock in the direction of the Velvet Underground, Cornwall band The Golden Dregs - led by baritone Benjamin Woods - boast an Americana-infused sound and wrap their music around some delightfully dark and funny lyrics. This Hare & Hounds gig provides further opportunity for the talented six-piece to hone their live act - their performances can sometimes feel a little bit awkward and in need of some sharper stage choreography.



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Symphony Hall, Birmingham

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### BEST OF BOND

Friday 20 February 2026, 7:30pm  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

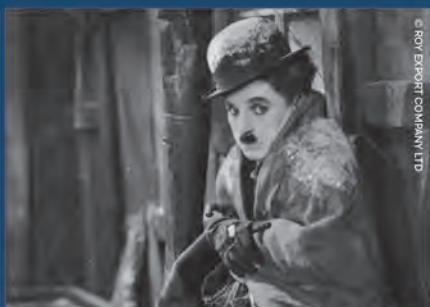
Brush off your tuxedo and let us pour you a martini as the CBSO brings all the glitz and glamour of 007 to Symphony Hall.



### FAMILY CONCERT: TUNES & TALES

Sunday 22 February 2026, 3pm  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Tales from fairy stories, classic novels and modern fables are given a gloriously cinematic treatment.



### CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S THE GOLD RUSH WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA

Saturday 25 April 2026, 7:30pm  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Join us for an extraordinary cinematic experience as this timeless silent film comes to life like never before.



### CLASSIC FM HALL OF FAME

Thursday 30 April 2026, 7:30pm  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

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### MOVIES AND VIDEO GAMES IN CONCERT

Friday 29 May 2026, 7:30pm  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

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Classical music from across the city...



## CBSO: Viennese New Year

Symphony Hall welcomes in the new year with an afternoon concert performed by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Highly rated soprano Jennifer France lends her incredible voice to proceedings, as Nil Venditti conducts a selection of playful

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 4 January

polkas and wonderful waltzes. The programme is approximately two hours in length and includes Die Fledermaus Overture, Champagne Galop, Blue Danube and Mein Herr Marquis.

## CBSO: Kazuki Conducts Rhapsody In Blue

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 21 January

Rhapsody In Blue, widely considered to be one of the great American masterpieces of classical music, is also one of the most hastily composed, with George Gershwin setting about producing it a mere 36 days before its premiere.

His reason for working at such a frenetic pace? He didn't even know he was supposed to be writing it!...

While relaxing one night with his brother, Ira, and lyricist Buddy DeSylva, he found out from a newspaper that he was apparently contributing to a concert of all-new music which was being performed five weeks later to celebrate the anniversary of former president Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

And so Gershwin set to work on what was to become one of the most celebrated symphonic pieces of the 20th century... The pianist for this Symphony Hall performance of the work is Stewart Goodyear. To check out the concert's full programme, visit [cbsco.co.uk](http://cbsco.co.uk)



## Li-Wei Qin (cello) & Jeremy Young (piano)

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Wed 14 January

If you skip a leisurely lunch in favour of catching this hour-long concert, you won't be disappointed - Chinese-Australian Li-Wei Qin (pictured left) is one of the foremost cellists of his generation. Performing regularly around the world as soloist and chamber musician, he's also in great demand both as a teacher and jury member for international competitions.

He's performing here with his longstanding duo partner Jeremy Young (pictured right). One of the UK's most well-regarded pianists and chamber musicians, Jeremy is also Head of Chamber Music at the Royal Northern College of Music.

The concert's programme comprises three pieces: Britten's Sonata, Schumann's Fantasiestücke, and Beethoven's Sonata For Cello And Piano No5 in D major.



## Birmingham Bach Choir: Mendelssohn's Hymn Of Praise

Selly Oak Methodist Church, Birmingham, Sat 31 January

One of the city's oldest musical groups here invites enthusiasts to join them in an afternoon workshop and informal performance of Mendelssohn's Hymn Of Praise, which premiered in 1840.

"We will be focused, of course, on the cantata part," says Birmingham Bach Choir's conductor, Paul Spicer, "singing in English, for which Mendelssohn assembled passages from Luther's translation of the Bible that show the progression of light to darkness. With fabulous choruses, soprano and tenor solos, and the familiar Now Thank We All Our God, this will be a rewarding sing for all who come."

## The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 28 January

Much-loved period-instrument ensemble The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment head to Coventry late this month to present an evening of music both written and inspired by Mozart.

The programme features the composer's A Little Night Music and Clarinet Concerto swan-song, presented alongside an elegant Overture from Arriaga (aka the Spanish Mozart) and an entertaining Divertimento from Michael Haydn.

## CBSO: Centre Stage

CBSO Centre, Birmingham, Fri 16 & Thurs 22 January

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's Centre Stage season continues in fine style this month with two concerts that give audiences the chance to experience the artistry of the musicians in an intimate setting... The first concert, on the 16th, showcases the best of 20th-century British music in a complimentary combination of the flute and harp. This is followed six days later by a powerful performance of all-American string repertoire. Both concerts have a 2pm start-time.





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Fri 20 Feb | Ages 3+

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## Comedy previews from across the region...

## Milton Jones

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 27 January; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 4 February; Rugeley Rose Theatre, Thurs 5 February; Civic Centre, Stourport, Fri 6 February

With a style of humour that's mainly based around puns and one-liners, Milton Jones has established himself as one of Britain's most in-demand funny men. "If my comedy is working well, I put a cartoon in people's heads that surprises them," explains Milton. "So you start off and they're thinking one thing, then you surprise them by changing the ending as you go along. It's not political or particularly edgy, it's just daft." Gags include: "Militant feminists - I take my hat off to them. They don't like that," and, "Recently on a flight to America, all the way across, my wife was going, 'Why don't you get an upgrade, why don't you get an upgrade?' It took a bit of time, but in the end I got a better wife."



## Comedy All Stars

Dudley Town Hall, Sat 24 January

The organisers of this first-ever Comedy All Stars night are very much starting as they mean to go on, presenting a bill that features four seriously talented comedians. Headliner Sara Pascoe (pictured) is joined for the show by Rhys James and Midlands-born comics Sarah Keyworth and Josh Pugh.



## Matt Forde

Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 28 January; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 4 March; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Wed 15 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 4 June

A one-time advisor to New Labour (he gave up his membership of the party when Jeremy Corbyn became leader), Nottingham-born Matt Forde is this month returning to the Midlands with Defying Calamity, a show in which he aims to 'find positivity in life, despite all the evidence to the contrary in politics and his own health' (Matt was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer in 2023 but is now disease-free).



## The Eternal Shame of Sue Perkins

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 23 January; Malvern Theatres, Sat 24 January; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 25 January; Warwick Art Centre, Coventry, Sat 14 March

Here presenting her first stand-up show in more than a decade, Bake-Off, Taskmaster and Just A Minute star Sue Perkins is promising 'a hilarious treatise on stigma, humiliation and misunderstanding'. In the process, she's aiming to answer a tsunami of questions: what's the fallout

when your pituitary gland goes haywire on live TV? How do you convince the public you didn't really fall onto that Hoover attachment? And when intimate photos get splashed all over the internet, how do you switch the shame to dignity and joy?

## Mark Simmons

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 31 January; New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Mon 2 March; Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 2 April; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 7 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 8 May; Stafford Gatehouse, Thurs 17 September

A runner-up in the Top 10 Jokes of the Edinburgh Fringe competition in 2022 - "Did you know, if you get pregnant in the Amazon, it's next-day delivery" - Mark Simmons went one better in 2024, emerging from the summertime get-together in the Scottish capital with the Funniest Joke award: "I was going to sail around the globe in the world's smallest ship, but I bottled it." And there's plenty more where those little gems came from, with Mark's talent for one-liners knowing no bounds. He's visiting Coventry this month with brand-new show Jest To Impress.



## Phil Wang And Guests

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 16 January

Phil Wang's first-ever five minutes behind the mic as a stand-up comedian were spent telling other people's gags. "I thought stand-up was like karaoke with jokes," he recalls. "Most of the material I used was stolen, but I learned fast and immediately started writing my own material." Inspired to become a comedian by his desire to avoid having to get up in the mornings, Phil describes his style of humour as smart, cheeky and always changing. He's sharing the Garrick spotlight mid-month with Tom Ward and Shaparak Khorsandi.





## Pantomimes continuing into January



### Dick Whittington

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,  
until Sun 4 January

Telling the terrific tale of a young man who heads for London in search of fame and fortune, Dick Whittington makes for a fantastic pantomime - not least because of the top adventures in which the happy-go-lucky title character finds himself involved...

If you're a dyed-in-the-wool fan of the Theatre Severn panto experience, you'll be delighted to know that this year's offering is following the usual recipe for success.

What does that mean in practice? Well, to put some meat on the bone, it means Telford-born Paul Hendy is writing it, Evolution is producing it, and Brad Fitt is both starring in it and taking the directorial reins.

"There are pantos out there that go a bit near the knuckle - but I don't think ours does," says Brad. "I would never tell a joke that was offensive or rude. Sometimes, you can use a double entendre - but then that's in *your* mind, that's not me. You have to blame yourself!"

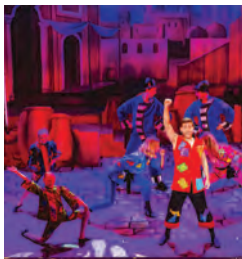
### Aladdin

The Core, Solihull, until Sun 4 January;  
Palace Theatre, Redditch, until Sun 4 January

A perfect story for an evening of family-friendly entertainment finds street youth Aladdin trying against all odds to win the hand of the beautiful princess - and being helped in his endeavours by the mystical genie of the lamp...

At Solihull's Core Theatre (image below), the award-winning Little Wolf Entertainment are presenting their 'most lavish, action-packed family adventure yet'...

Meanwhile, there's an all-star cast adding to the panto magic in Redditch (image above), with children's favourite Dave Benson-Phillips, soap star Bill Ward (Coronation Street and Emmerdale) and Britain's Got Talent's Tony Rudd topping the bill.



### Beauty And The Beast

The Albany Theatre, Coventry,  
until Sun 4 January

When a young woman is captured by a hideous beast, she finds herself facing a life of isolation in his mysterious palace.

The Beast, too, is trapped - seemingly forever - inside the grotesquery of his physical appearance, the consequence of a spell cast upon him by an evil witch. Only Beauty's ability to look beyond his ugliness and see the person within can save him...

Coventry's Albany Theatre is proudly declaring its version of the much-loved fairytale to be 'a dazzling alternative to the traditional Christmas show'.

The production comes complete with 'bold storytelling, breathtaking visuals, music and dance'.

### Robinson Crusoe

Oldbury Rep Theatre, Fri 9 - Sat 17 January

It's Robinson Crusoe, but not as you know it! This amateur take on the world-famous story features a few elements not found in the Daniel Defoe original, among which are a pantomime Dame and an evil seafarer named Captain Blacktashe. Heck, there's even a fish & chip shop!

So, if you fancy treating yourself to one final dose of traditional Christmastime merriment before the curtain finally comes down on this winter's pantomime season, be sure to grab yourself a ticket asap.

### Mother Goose

Stourbridge Town Hall, Sat 17 - Sat 24 January

Just when you thought you were pretty much bidding a fond farewell to pantomime fare for another year, up pops this late arrival on the Midlands panto scene.

Telling the much-loved story of a kindly old lady who's behind on her rent, and a magical goose whose golden eggs might just save her bacon, the production is presented by the award-winning Stourbridge Pantomime Company.

### Peter Pan

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa,  
until Sun 4 January

Fly away to Neverland with the boy who wouldn't grow up, meet a real fairy, marvellous mermaids, wonderful Wendy and the down-on-their-luck lost boys. Oh, and beware the ever-so-wicked Captain Hook and a very hungry crocodile who goes tick-tock (he swallowed a clock!).

JP McCue and Sean Dodds have made a welcome return for this year's festive family show, which is being produced by pantomime specialists Imagine Theatre.







## Robin Hood Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sun 1 February

As if Robin Hood didn't already have enough on his plate dealing with the dastardly Sheriff of Nottingham and wooing the beautiful Maid Marion, the festive season also finds Sherwood Forest's most famous resident getting tangled up in all manner of pantomime traditions (custard pie, anyone?). Gok Wan, Faye Tozer and Matt Cardle here

join Hippodrome panto regular Matt Slack, who's playing Robin, for 'the ultimate sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza'. Christopher Biggins makes a special appearance as King Richard, with Andrew Ryan and Sandra Marvin completing the high-quality line-up.

## Cinderella

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, until Sun 4 January; The ICC, Telford, until Fri 2 January; Lichfield Garrick, until Sun 11 January

With its comical Ugly Sisters, matchmaking fairy godmother, drop-dead-gorgeous Prince Charming, super-cute mice, and fits-one-foot-only glass slipper, Cinderella can justifiably lay claim to being the nation's favourite pantomime story...

The Garrick's version of Cinders (image below) sees a 'Dame of longstanding' take centre-stage; namely, Sam Rabone, who has spent many a festive season in a nice frock or several at the venue. Panto regular Ben Thornton is back too, taking on the role of Buttons...

In Stoke-on-Trent, Jonathan Wilkes leads the Regent Theatre pantomime cast as usual, and is joined by Potteries panto favourite Kai Owen, while the ICC Telford version of the much-loved fairytale is promising 'an unforgettable experience for children and adults alike'.



## Sleeping Beauty

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, until Sat 3 January; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, until Sun 4 January; Worcester Swan Theatre, until Sun 4 January; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, until Sun 4 January

The tragic tale of a young princess who's tricked by an evil fairy and pricks her finger on a spinning wheel, causing her to fall asleep for 100 years, offers a great story around which to build a pantomime

production of real quality... And *this* festive season has seen four of the region's most popular theatres doing exactly that!

RuPaul's Drag Race UK winner Danny Beard top-bills in Wolverhampton, where the cast also includes impressionist Debra Stephenson and much-loved pantomime favourites Tam Ryan and Ian Adams. Over at the Coventry Belgrade, panto veteran Iain Lauchlan is, as usual, the creative force

behind the venue's festive-season offering, while at the Swan Theatre, the Worcester Repertory Company are promising a 'dazzling production' that comes complete with fairies, magic, and heaps of traditional panto fun. The Sleeping Beauty is getting her head down at Stafford's Gatehouse Theatre too, with Mark Rhodes, David Phipps-Davis and Samantha Spragg all making a welcome return to Pantoland.





# CHART ATTACK

**A new musical tells the story of the battle of Britpop -  
and one of the greatest rivalries in rock history**



## A brand-new comedy, about how the race for a number-one single gripped an entire nation, premieres at The Rep in Birmingham next month. Writer John Niven explains how *The Battle between Blur and Oasis* made national news in the summer of 1995, and why it's worth revisiting in 2026...

The first must-see play of 2026 has its roots in the gloriously hot summer of 1995, when the main item on the British media's agenda - other than ways to avoid overexposure to the blazing sunshine - was the red-hot race for number one between Blur and Oasis.

The hugely popular bands and their fans had developed (some might say manufactured) a rivalry that somehow encompassed the north-south divide as well as working versus middle class. That rivalry only intensified when they released new singles on exactly the same day.

The race between Country House and Roll With It (spoiler alert: the former came out on top) was fuelled by management and marketing teams as much as the bands themselves. This is a key premise of *The Battle*, a brand-new comedy 'based (mostly) on real events' by award-winning author John Niven (pictured).

Best known for *Kill Your Friends*, a hilarious music-industry satire set at the height of Britpop (he worked for record label Independent at the time, and famously passed on the chance to sign Coldplay), the Scottish author was initially reticent about writing a play when producer Simon Friend first approached him about doing so.

"I wondered if he was after a Britpop musical, and that's not really what I do," John explains in a glorious central Scottish brogue barely dented by years of living south of the border. "Then I thought there might be a really funny comedy, a sort of David Mamet piece, of men screaming at each other in rooms about something which, when you pull the camera back, is really ridiculous - two pop records; who cares?"

"I thought if we could invest it with the sort of drama of the Cuban missile crisis, it could be really funny."

The seed sown, John dived into research, as well as his own recollections of the industry at the time, and was instantly reminded that the feuding bands had actually started off as comrades in arms.

"I was there in February 1995, and I remember Damon Albarn holding up the Brit Award for Best British Group and saying it should be shared with Oasis, with much love and respect to them. I also found an interview with Noel Gallagher from the same

night where he said: 'It's us and Blur against the world now.' But then in August, you have Noel saying he wanted them to get AIDS and die - that's quite a dramatic arc in the course of five months! How do you get from one to the other? It was quite fun unpicking how it happened."

That fun is what fuels the play, which is John's first. He's penned a number of novels and screenplays, but admits he found writing for the stage a huge learning curve.

"If you're writing a movie, you can just put 'cut to Central Park' or whatever, and you don't have to care because it's somebody else's job to hire the camels, train the camels and so on. You can't do that in the theatre. You're much more limited - not in your imagination or what the characters can say, but in terms of where you can go. The 10/12-minute scenes felt very long to me, and it took a bit of getting used to."

Fortunately he had great characters to write about, not least the Gallagher brothers, who he describes as an absolute gift.

"Liam Gallagher is just a joy to write, because you can have him say something pretty crazy and then go online and within a minute find five interviews where he's said something 10 times crazier. His brain works in quite an odd way in terms of whether he's going for metaphors or similes, and that's a gift for a writer."

"Noel talks like a stand-up comedian - his speech is very structured and precise, his timing's impeccable, and he knows how to land a gag. He's great with understatement and exaggeration, and that's fun to write in a different way, whereas Liam's much more unscripted and untutored - you almost can't guess where he's gonna go."

John says putting members of the bands at the heart of the play was never his original intention - the first draft was more about record-company executives and the machinations of the industry - but once he started to do so, he really began to enjoy the process.

"As I went through the drafts, it became less and less about the record-company people. Alan McGee's in it, the Creation Records boss who signed Oasis, and Andy Ross, the A&R guy who signed Blur, because the bands have to receive news of what's happening, so we

needed a conduit to do that.

"But as soon as I started writing it by jumping between the two band's camps, it became much more fun."

The play's release misses out on the 30th anniversary of the chart race by a year, but the overwhelming response to the Oasis reunion shows, and the potential for more gigs this year (at the time of writing, a glorious return to Knebworth is rumoured), will undoubtedly fuel interest in the show - another gift, given that Liam and Noel's reconciliation was never even on the cards when *The Battle* was written.

"By the time we open in February, hopefully Knebworth shows will very much be on the horizon. But I don't think interest in Oasis is going anywhere, is it? I went to the show in Edinburgh with Irvine Welsh, and to see 80,000 people singing every word to every song was just unreal. I like both bands, but I couldn't explain to you why Oasis' music has tattooed itself into the DNA of British people in a way that no other band bar The Beatles has done."

"In the play, there's a line from Justine Frischmann [Elastica singer and one-time girlfriend of Albarn], who makes the point that Damon writes about British people very brilliantly and perceptively, but Noel writes *for* them. He articulates yearnings and feelings that they don't quite know they have in a non-specific way - and there's something hugely appealing to a lot of people about that."

Judging by the audience demographic at the Oasis reunion shows, that includes younger admirers potentially oblivious to a 30-year-old feud which took place before they were even born.

"Yeah, absolutely. It's funny with the new-generation fans - they kinda know there was some historical gangland beef between the two tribes, but not how it started, what it was about or how it ended. That's all great for us!"

.....  
**The Battle shows at The Rep, Birmingham, from Wednesday 11 February to Saturday 7 March**





## Blood Brothers

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 27 - Sat 31 January; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 20 - Sat 24 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 17 - Sat 21 November

Genuinely moving, surprisingly funny, and filled with all of Willy Russell's usual astute observations about the British class system, Blood Brothers tells the story of twins, separated at birth, who spend their lives in contrasting social circumstances but are inextricably

drawn together. A musical loved even by theatre-goers who don't love musicals, the show boasts a raft of memorable songs, including Bright New Day, Marilyn Monroe and the emotionally charged Tell Me It's Not True.

## All Is But Fantasy

The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, Wed 21 January - Sat 21 February

Hailed as a groundbreaking theatrical event, All Is But Fantasy focuses on four Shakespeare characters - Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Emilia and Richard III - and poses the question: can you have ambition and love and still be alive in Act Five?

Whitney White is the award-winning artist in search of an answer to that particular conundrum, presenting two high-energy gig-theatre performances that bring together rock, soul, pop and gospel music. Whitney is ably assisted in her endeavours by Macbeth's three witches as backing singers!



## Six The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 20 - Sat 31 January; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 25 - Sat 28 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 31 March - Sat 11 April

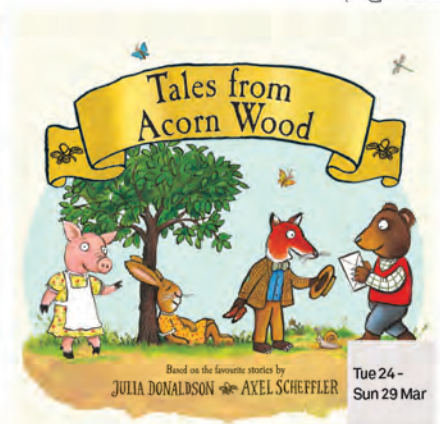
From Tudor queens to battling boss-women, the 2022 Tony Award-winning Six The Musical sees the wives of Henry VIII take to the stage 'to remix 500 years of historical heartbreak' and tell their own versions of their lives...

A colourful show that sits somewhere between a Girls Aloud gig and a traditional musical, the one-act production - premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017, where it was performed by a group of Cambridge University students - is a loud and proud 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power.

The show sees the cast being ably supported by all-female band The Ladies In Waiting.











## Sherlock Holmes And The Twelve Days Of Christmas

The Rep, Birmingham, until Sun 18 January

Think Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber and three critically acclaimed musicals come to mind: Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita.

Now, a new show has been added to the list of productions on which the legendary pair have collaborated: Sherlock Holmes And The Twelve Days Of Christmas.

A Birmingham Rep production created in association with Rice's company, Heartaches Ltd, the brand-new comedy whodunnit - penned by and starring The Penny Dreadfuls' Humphrey Ker and David Reed - finds Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson investigating a series of murders most foul in Victorian London's theatreland...

And what's more, each of the grisly crimes comes complete with an intriguing link to The Twelve Days Of Christmas...

The game, as Sherlock is famous for saying, is most definitely afoot...

## Fiddler On The Roof

The Alexandra, Birmingham, until Sat 3 January

After winning last year's Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival, director Jordan Fein's acclaimed version of Fiddler On The Roof headed out on a national tour in the autumn and has spent Christmas in Birmingham. The show's story follows Tevye - an impoverished milkman and the father of five daughters - as he desperately attempts to maintain his family and religious traditions in the face of troublesome outside influences...

The show's hit songs include Matchmaker, Matchmaker and the hugely famous If I Were A Rich Man.



## The Forsyte Saga

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 10 January

An epic family drama, written by Nobel Prize winner John Galsworthy and here adapted for

the stage by Lin Coghlan and Shaun McKenna, The Forsyte Saga shows in Stratford-upon-Avon this month having received rave reviews during its sell-out run at London's Park Theatre last year. Presented in two parts and telling a story of love, ownership, and the end of Empire, the production is set across a time period of more than 40 years, from 1886 to 1927.



## Done To Death, By Jove

Central Library, West Bromwich, Mon 19 January; The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Sat 31 January

Fun-loving duo Gavin Robertson and Nicholas Collett blend humour, variety, theatre and dance in a show that pays spoof homage to 'the great British detective'. The production is based around the idea that its cast of six has become a cast of two due to an M6 breakdown of the van carrying the props, the set and four of the performers. The intrepid remaining cast members, Messrs Robertson and Collett, are therefore left to present the show on their own - an

endeavour which, not surprisingly, leads to all manner of mix-ups and mayhem.

## The Little Mermaid

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, until Sat 24 January

Hans Christian Andersen's famous fairytale tells the much-loved story of a beautiful mermaid princess who believes a better life awaits her out of the water...

Adapted for the stage by Theresa Heskins, who co-directs with Vicki Dela Amedume, this brand-new production features the New Vic's signature blend of impressive circus skills and imaginative storytelling.

"There's such rich visual language in the story of The Little Mermaid," says Theresa.

"Our audience members have been captivated by the way we combine contemporary circus and storytelling, and this is a perfect opportunity to bring these elements together into our biggest family show of the year."

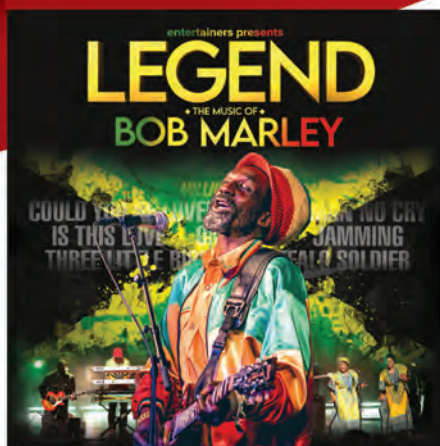




# What will you see next?



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**SAT 7 FEB '26**  
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DEAD RINGERS



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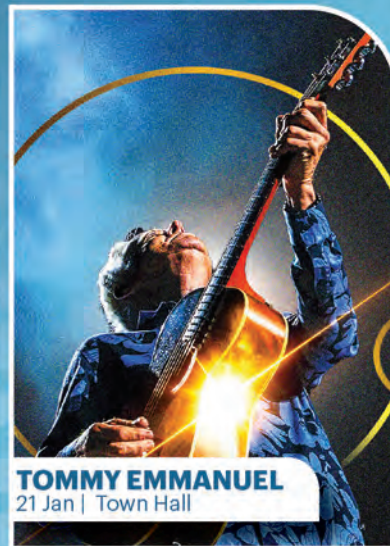
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## Theatre previews from around the region



### The BFG

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 7 February

Roald Dahl's delightful tale, written way back in 1982, is here given the Royal Shakespeare Company Christmas-show treatment.

The story follows the adventures of a little girl named Sophie, who's taken to a magical land by the Big Friendly Giant (or BFG, for short). There, he teaches her whizzpopping, shows her his secret collection of dreams, and lets her taste his extraordinary food, the snozzcumber. When it becomes apparent a tribe of man-eating giants are planning to rampage through England, Sophie and the BFG realise they must save the country from unprecedented disaster...

### Sweet Henry V

The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 23 & Sat 24 January

As evenings at the theatre go, this one promises to be somewhat unusual...

A script-in-hand concert performance, Sweet Henry V (here pronounced Vee) is described by its publicity in the following way:

'Imagine if Shakespeare's history plays donned their lippy and heels and were taken out for a night on the tiles... We're talking Hamilton meets Braveheart meets Priscilla Queen Of The Desert in this radical reinvention of history that's pounding with camp Celtic vibes'.

Written by Seiriol Davies - a playwright from 'rurales Wales' who specialises in 'fierce, camp musicals that attack knotty political questions in a cloud of glitter' - the production is helmed by The Rep's artistic director, Joe Murphy.

### Please Do Not Touch

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 29 - Sat 31 January

The Coventry Belgrade here teams up with local theatre company China Plate to present an ambitious play

which not only shines a light on the criminal justice system but also aims to ask important questions about colonial legacy, contested heritage, and how stories are told.

Written by former Birmingham Poet Laureate Casey Bailey - who previously made a splash as a playwright with the critically acclaimed Grimeboy - Please Do Not Touch follows the fortunes of committed activist Mason.



A young man who finds himself incarcerated, he determines to keep fighting injustice, even as the system against which he rails seeks to shut him down...

### The Guy Who Didn't Like Musicals

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 23 & Sat 24 January

When a meteor hits and causes an alien outbreak, an awful Grinch named Paul teams up with a group of pals to try and save the world from his biggest nightmare... musical theatre!

Having enjoyed a hit with previous theatrical endeavour The Trail To Oregon, Puzzles Productions here make a welcome return with what they're billing as a 'horror comedy'. The show is suitable for audience members aged 13 and older.

### Sherlock Holmes: The Hunt For Moriarty

Malvern Theatres, Tues 13 - Sat 17 January

The ever-audacious Blackeyed Theatre have excellent form when it comes to Sherlock Holmes, having previously scored successes with stage adaptations of two novels featuring the famous fictional detective: The Sign Of Four and The Valley Of Fear. This latest foray into the world of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Victorian supersleuth sees them creating a show that's a little bit different from either of those predecessors. "We've pulled together a handful of



wonderful short stories," explains writer & director Nick Lane, "and interwoven them into one singular, thrilling tale featuring Holmes' most feared but little-seen adversary, Professor Moriarty. It's been fun capturing the pace, the spirit, and the character of Doyle's original adventures. Our hope is that, like the stories themselves, The Hunt For Moriarty will keep audiences gripped - and guessing - along with the great detective himself, right to the last."

### The Woman In Black

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 27 - Sat 31 January

Solicitor Arthur Kipp believes that his family have somehow been cursed by a mysterious woman in black. In an attempt to tell his story, and to exorcise the evil curse which he's convinced hangs over him, he hires a young actor to assist him in recounting his experiences...

Adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from the same-named Susan Hill novel, The Woman In Black is a classic ghost story first performed in 1989. It has since become one of the West End's most successful plays and was memorably made into a film starring Daniel Radcliffe in 2012.





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## Theatre for younger audiences



## No Such Thing As Wolves

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sun 4 January

Following on from the success of Christmas 2024 show *The Jingleclaw*, this fun-filled family musical - created by *Horrible Histories'* Gerard Foster and Richie Webb - is the second of the Hippodrome's *My First Musical* commissions.

Directed by Emily Ling Williams, *No Such Thing As Wolves* follows Hettie the Hedgehog as she opts to throw a party instead of settling

down into hibernation.

"I think it's such a feelgood show," says Emily. "There's such a sense of how important friendship is, family, and also appreciating the natural world. I think it's really uplifting - there are definitely lots of jokes. I think people of all ages will find it very funny."

## Search For The Second Star, Reimagined

The Rep, Birmingham, Sat 24 January

Described as an immersive adventure through Neverland that's full of music, play and discovery, this variation on the much-loved story of Peter Pan is presented by the highly regarded Open Theatre. The Coventry-based company, which specialises in non-verbal physical theatre with young people with learning disabilities, uses movement, music and visual storytelling to connect with audiences 'in ways that go beyond words'.



## Well Done, Mummy Penguin

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, until Sat 3 January

Heartwarming humour and daring acrobatics are promised by the producers of this 'wintery treat for everyone aged three and up'. The show's story follows the adventures of Mummy Penguin as she swims through icy waters, climbs perilous cliffs and tiptoes past some grumpy seals in search of a fishy dinner for her family.

The production is based on the same-named picture book by award-winning writer & illustrator Chris Haughton.

## Anansi The Spider

The Rep, Birmingham, until Sun 11 January

A trickster spider from West African and Caribbean folklore, Anansi is weaving his web in Birmingham with a show that enjoyed huge success in London a couple of years back.

The production, created by the critically acclaimed Unicorn Theatre, features a selection of stories and is suitable for children aged between four and eight.







# CATCH THE THIEF

**The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical visits  
Birmingham Hippodrome**



**Rick Riordan's hit book series, *Percy Jackson And The Olympians*, tells the story of a seemingly ordinary boy (Percy) who struggles in school with ADHD and dyslexia - before it's revealed that he's actually the son of a Greek god. The epic adventures that ensue for Percy and his friends have previously been captured on the big screen and recently found a new audience via a Disney+ TV series. Now, fans around the country have the chance to catch up with Percy live on stage in a touring musical. What's On spoke to the cast of *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* to find out more...**

It's been 20 years since the publication of *The Lightning Thief* - the first novel in Rick Riordan's hit fantasy-adventure series, *Percy Jackson And The Olympians*. The story follows the character of teenager Percy, who keeps finding himself in trouble at school and struggling to fit in. He eventually discovers that he is a demigod - his mother is human, but his absent father is a god from Greek mythology.

Vasco Emauz plays the title character in *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical*, which, after its UK premiere in 2024, is now travelling to theatres across the nation, visiting Birmingham Hippodrome next month.

"Percy is just a kid who doesn't seem to fit in anywhere," Vasco explains. "He's got ADHD, and he's just coming to terms with being the son of a Greek god."

"I remember being a teenager trying to figure out what to do with my life and who I was at the same time. I feel like that's why a lot of writers gravitate towards having teenagers as heroes. The classic 'hero journey' is finding out who you are, what you're good at, and going through all these trials - finding your ground. I think it translates really well into a 'coming of age' story."

According to Vasco, who loved Riordan's books as a child, the character offers important representation for teenagers who have faced similar struggles - even if they don't have divine blood in their veins.

"It's always amazing to see how teenagers relate to this story. I've gotten so many people at Stage Door talking about how they struggle with ADHD or dyslexia, and they find it so special to see heroes who have qualities that are usually seen in the world as negative traits - which is not true; they're just different."

Joining Vasco in the cast are Cahir O'Neill as Grover, a satyr, and Kayna Montecillo as Annabeth, who, like Percy, is a demigod. Together, they portray the three heroes of the story.

"Grover Underwood is Percy's best friend through this whole experience," says Cahir. "He just drags him along and tries to protect him from all the monsters!"

"I play Annabeth Chase, daughter of Athena,

the goddess of wisdom," adds Kayna. "She's got a lot of strength in her knowledge and the way she fights."

As the story is inspired by the adventures and quests told in Greek myths, there is some considerable pressure to ensure that the stage production is also suitably bombastic.

"It's absolutely epic," says Cahir. "I mean, we go on such a huge journey throughout the show. Expect the unexpected - one minute we're on a bus, the next minute, we're blowing up the bus, and then there's monsters flying everywhere! What Lizzi Gee, the director, has done to the show suits it perfectly, I think. She's done an amazing job of bringing the novel to life. The joy of [meeting] children at the Stage Door, when they say 'I've grown up with the movies and I've grown up with the books,' and knowing that we've done a perfect job for them, is honestly so rewarding in itself."

The production is, after all, a real treat for fans of *Percy Jackson* - whether they devoured the book series, enjoyed the film adaptations made in the 2010s, or have rekindled their love of the story through a new television series, released by Disney in 2023. The books are particularly popular with teenage and pre-teen readers - so, for many, this is the first time they will be able to see their heroes come to life on stage; the musical's tour has offered fans across the country the chance to see the story in a new way.

"I never really thought about how much more accessible it would be for people to come and see it," says Kayna. "Every time we go to Stage Door, there's been moments where someone's like 'This is the first time I've ever seen a musical,' and a lot of them are kids. I think that's been my favourite part [of the tour], and probably the part that surprised me the most."

"It's so exciting, bringing this show on the road for people who didn't have the option to go to London," says Cahir. "It's so lovely, because the *Percy Jackson* community spans so many different places. No matter where we go, there's fans in orange 'Camp Half Blood' T-shirts."

And for the cast themselves, the tour has opened up some new opportunities as well.

"It's just been so great to see so much of the UK," says Vasco, who hails from Portugal. "Speaking for myself, I've never actually left London, apart from going to see my sister in Southampton. So being able to see the country and getting paid to do it, and being able to do a show at the same time, has just been a huge privilege. We've seen some amazing places!"

The trio have now been on the road with this production since August, but they show no signs of losing passion for their characters.

"I feel like I'm still learning so much about Annabeth every time I tell the story," says Kayna. "Especially her relationship with everyone on stage. That's always the fun of it - once rehearsals have finished, you never really stop learning new things, and you never stop discovering things about the character. Every time I play her, I love her so much more. I didn't think I ever could."

"Grover is such a goofy character," adds Cahir. "He has so much comic energy throughout the whole show, but since starting the show, I've found so much depth in him, and so much emotional connection to him as well. It's just so beautiful to open that and release it to the audience. I'll cherish Grover forever. I think he's just going to stick with me for life now."

Part of the magic of live performance is the opportunity to see beloved characters as you've never seen them before - and for the young stars of *The Lightning Thief*, stepping out onto the stage to portray them is just as exciting.

"In any show, every time you do the show, you find something new," says Vasco. "It's great to not settle into what you've done; to keep it fresh, while at the same time keeping it consistent. I've loved Percy since I was a young kid. He was my childhood hero. I love him a lot, and I will continue to love him for the rest of this tour, and afterwards."

.....

**The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 February**





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Light entertainment from around the region



## London Symphonic Rock Orchestra

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,  
Wed 14 January

The classically trained London Symphonic Rock Orchestra have been tearing up world stages with 'strings that shred and drums that detonate' since 2018, delivering epic, reorchestrated hits from the likes of Queen, Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Guns N' Roses, AC/DC, Metallica and Fleetwood Mac. "We're more than just a group of musicians," explain the orchestra. "We are passionate, skilled and dedicated professionals who share a love for music that transcends genres. Our passion is to create top-notch musical performances that are certain to captivate and engage."

## Dead Ringers

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 28 January

Topical satire show Dead Ringers has been delighting BBC Radio Four audiences for the last quarter century with its veritable smorgasbord of uncannily accurate and routinely amusing comedy impressions.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary, long-standing cast members Jon Culshaw, Jan Ravens, Lewis MacLeod and Duncan Wisbey have hit the road with the show's first-ever UK tour.



## Send In The Clowns: Unpopular

The Rep, Birmingham,  
Thurs 29 - Sat 31 January

Raucous drag revue night Send In The Clowns usually takes place at the Old Joint Stock Theatre but is here making its debut at the Birmingham Rep. Presenting a parody celebration of the magic and madness of musical theatre, the production is hosted by drag-cabaret favourite Fatt Butcher.



## Drag Me To The 80s

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Fri 16 January;  
Walsall Arena, Sat 31 January

The title says it all, as a cast of camp-as-Christmas drag queens pump out an evening of chartbusters from the decade of big hair

and even bigger shoulder-pads. The show features hits from Kylie, Madonna, Whitney, Bananarama, Queen, Abba, Rick Astley, Pet Shop Boys, Erasure, Duran Duran, Wham, Tina Turner and many more.

## Richard Jones: The Sound Of Magic

Stourbridge Town Hall, Sat 31 January;  
The Core Theatre, Solihull, Sat 28 March;  
Kidderminster Town Hall, Sat 9 May; The  
Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent,  
Sat 13 June

Lance Corporal Richard Jones has followed up years of service in His Majesty's Royal Household Cavalry with a hugely successful career as a magician. The only prestidigitator ever to win Britain's Got Talent, Richard will no doubt be packing out theatres across the country on this latest tour.



## Crooners

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,  
Sun 18 January

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



## A Celebration Of Father Ted

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent,  
Sat 24 January

This is an evening that no self-respecting fan of long-lamented Channel Four sitcom Father Ted will want to miss. Stand-up comedian Joe Rooney presents a screening of The Old Grey Whistle Theft, the episode in which he starred as the rebellious Father Damo, who led Dougal astray with his cigarette smoking and bad-boy attitude. Joe will also take you behind the scenes of the hit show, set a Craggy Island quiz, host an all-inclusive Lovely Girls Competition and lead a singalong to My Lovely Horse. Throw in a dancing priests contest plus appearances by Ziggy Stardust, Nirvana and Johnny Cash, and it's clear an evening of manic Father Ted-celebrating entertainment is very much on the cards.

## Shen Yun

ICC, Birmingham, Fri 2 - Sun 4 January;  
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 17 &  
Wed 18 February

The New York Times described Shen Yun as '5,000 years of Chinese music and dance in one night' - which, as evenings of theatrical entertainment go, sounds like a pretty good deal.

Shen Yun is an organisation dedicated to reviving authentic Chinese culture, presenting shows which have been enjoyed by millions of people across the globe. Expect ethnic and folk dancers, impressive costuming, picturesque backdrops and plenty more besides when the company stops off in Birmingham early this month...



# WIND OF CHANGE

The RSC is set to stage the  
world premiere of a bold new musical





## A new musical, telling the remarkable true story of how a young boy built a windmill to save an African village from starvation, premieres at the RSC next month. Actor Alistair Nwachukwu describes *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind* as an inspiring testament to resilience and hope - one which he feels certain will make a big impact on its audience...

As extraordinary true-life stories go, the tale of William Kamkwamba takes some beating. Born to a family of farmers in the village of Wimbe in Malawi, he single-handedly saved his community from starvation by building a windmill to power the village's broken water pump. The budding inventor used scrap materials from the local junkyard and parts from the family bicycle - the only one in the village, and their only real asset - which he convinced his relatives he needed to dismantle. And all at the age of 13.

"It's crazy; unbelievable," says actor Alistair Nwachukwu, who will portray William in a new stage adaptation of the story at the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. "When I was 13 I was playing PlayStation and messing around - he's creating a windmill!"

Based on Kamkwamba's bestselling memoir and a movie adaptation written and directed by well-known actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind* will be the RSC's first musical since Daniel Evans and Tamara Harvey took over as co-artistic directors. The brand-new production - described by the duo as 'a landmark moment' - will be directed by Lynette Linton, former artistic director of the Bush Theatre, with book & lyrics by Richy Hughes and music & lyrics by Tim Sutton. Ejiofor serves as creative associate, and will be executive producer when the show subsequently transfers to the West End.

The combination of talent involved was a huge draw for Alistair, a British actor born to Nigerian parents - coincidentally, he's from the same tribe as Ejiofor - although he admits he wasn't sure he was right for the part when it was first offered to him: "I'd been doing workshops with Lynette for two years, so I knew the story and knew what it was going to be like, but I never expected to play the main role. I told Lynette - who's an amazing director - that I'd never sung before, but she and [producer] Kenny Wax said they wanted me for the part."

Playing William will be a big change from his most recent role as Leo in the sold-out production of *The Line Of Beauty* at London's Almeida Theatre, but the former LAMDA

student (he graduated in 2021) has been preparing for months. As well as immersing himself in Malawian culture, he's been having singing lessons to enable his tenor voice to hit the high notes of the numbers he'll have to perform.

"All my songs are Michael Jackson-high - like, *really* high," he laughs, admitting that playing a 13-year-old (his typical age range is 25 to 35) presents another big challenge: "I've got a movement coach who's helping me to find the physicality of a younger man, and a dialect coach to help me get the voice of a younger person. It's slowly all coming together."

Alistair has had plenty of inspiration along the way. Members of the show's creative team went to Malawi to see William and his family at their home, and Alistair got to meet the man he would play when he visited the cast in the UK.

"William came to the workshops and spoke to us about what it was like for him and his sisters and what inspired him. It was really nice to speak to him and have him here in the flesh and understand his psyche and what he was going through at the time."

It turns out the actor is no stranger to overcoming adversity himself. As a youngster he was all set to become a professional footballer with Millwall FC until a broken femur and dislocated knee put paid to his career before it had even begun.

"That was game over," he says matter-of-factly. "My mum was like 'Now you've got to do something serious with your life.' I went to university to study marketing but dropped out after two years and stumbled into acting - and now I'm the lead at the RSC! What a journey..."

But if he sounds relatively laidback about the way things have transpired, he admits getting the lead role at such a prestigious venue - and at a relatively young age - is very much a dream come true.

"I can't describe how much it means to me. When I was at drama school, I never thought this would happen - ever. I was at LAMDA from nine till nine every day, and some days it was so hard and I thought 'What am I

doing?' I was the oldest in my year, and my family don't really come from much, so five years on, to be the lead at the RSC is unbelievable. When Lynette told me, I was crying."

A bit like getting to Wembley as a footballer? "Yeah, exactly!"

And despite being hugely different professions - he doubts many of his former teammates are theatre lovers - there are similarities in that both require discipline, training and total dedication.

"To become a great footballer, you have to be working on your craft every single day - and it's the same for acting. Before I went to drama school, I didn't know you had to work with your voice, on your movement, on your mind."

"There's a huge parallel between them both. It's working on your craft to become the best version of yourself so that you're then able to transform into these different characters, to play William, or Hamlet or Othello."

It's interesting that he cites a couple of iconic Shakespearean roles - an eye on the future perhaps? - but there's a sense that he thinks *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind* has the potential to impact audiences every bit as much as the Bard's work. And, he suggests, as much as the book and the movie were powerful, the musical version has the potential to resonate even more: "Music can sometimes express things that words can't, and the stage version brings a different kind of immediacy - it puts the audience right there in the room with the characters."

"I think the musical element will capture the drought, the tension with the family, the soaring hope when the windmill is finally built. There are going to be some really powerful moments that will really touch the audience. I guarantee you will be moved."

.....

**The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind shows at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Tuesday 10 February to Saturday 28 March**



Phil McIntyre Live in association with BBC present



# Strictly

## THE PROFESSIONALS



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## Dance previews from across the region



## Strictly Come Dancing Live

Utilita Arena, Birmingham, Fri 23 - Sun 25 January

BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing hits the road again this month, complete with all its usual glitz and glamour. Hosted by Janette Manrara and with three judges in tow - Shirley Ballas, Anton Du Beke and Craig Revel Horwood - the live version sees the show's popular dancers putting their celebrity partners through their paces with a host of new routines.

Artists confirmed for the Birmingham dates are: model, actor & influencer Ellie Goldstein with her dance partner, Vito Coppola; TV star & broadcaster Vicky Pattison with Kai Widdrington; Gladiator & Olympian Harry Aikines-Aryeetey with Karen Hauer; and performer La Voix with Aljaž Škorjanec. Check out utilitaarenabham for further updates.



## ACE Dance & Music Double Bill: Twasi

The Rep, Birmingham, Sat 24 January

Committed to the presentation of contemporary dance inspired by the African Diaspora, ACE Dance & Music here collaborate with two internationally acclaimed Black male choreographers - Serge Aime Coulibaly (Burkina Faso) and Vincent Mantsoe (South Africa) - to present a double bill of work which they describe as 'powerful contrasting visions of our world today'.

Echoes In Dust - taking place against the backdrop of war, disaster and the invisible collapse of human connection - asks the question: when all seems lost, what hope can we still hold on to?

Letlalo, meanwhile, draws from African, Indigenous and contemporary dance languages to explore the deep connection between humanity and the earth.







# VIVA ESPAÑA!

**Next month sees Birmingham Royal Ballet revisit another of its highly acclaimed works: Carlos Acosta's *Don Quixote*. A tale of love and loyalty, the story is one of Carlos' favourites - as he recently explained to What's On...**

Dancer Carlos Acosta was just 16 when he won the gold medal at the prestigious Prix de Lausanne, performing a solo from Marius Petipa's ballet *Don Quixote*. The prize win launched an international career which saw him dancing with leading ballet companies worldwide - and *Don Quixote* has remained one of his favourite works ever since.

So, when he took over as director of Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) in 2020, Carlos was keen to create a *Don Quixote* for Birmingham. Premiered in 2022, the work was hugely acclaimed - and this spring Midlands audiences have another chance to see the production.

For Carlos, adding *Don Quixote* - a comic opera based on Miguel Cervantes' novel about the knight Don Quixote and his sidekick Sancho Panza - to the BRB repertoire was essential.

"Dance is a living art form, and we always have to rejuvenate the repertoire," he explains. "We are lucky in Birmingham that we have fantastic productions, but for me as a director, I wanted to add to what has already been established.

"BRB had never had a production of *Don Quixote*. It is the ballet that I danced the most when I was a dancer, so I have a grasp of what it is and what it takes, and I could transfer all this expertise to this company."

With a host of different characters, from knights to lovers and innkeepers to gypsies, the ballet offers dancers plenty of opportunities to shine.

"It's a very important production because it has a lot of parts for dancers in the company, not just the principal rank. And it is also very difficult dancing, so the company really like it because it is a great challenge for them.

"I want BRB to be a company of virtuosos, and that means bringing difficult and diverse repertoire that improves the standards of the dancers."

Carlos' determination to create new work for the repertoire has seen the company dance a host of premieres, including the sell-out *Black Sabbath - The Ballet*. But, he says, there is a need for balance in the programming.

"Even when we go increasingly into contemporary repertoire which is forward-thinking and pushing the boundaries, we

mustn't forget what ballet is, and who we are as a ballet company. And who we are in many ways is these classical productions. We train every single day with ballet vocabulary, and *Don Quixote* has every step in the vocabulary that you could think of."

Carlos was also keen for his *Don Quixote* to stand out from the crowd.

"I made the production so that people speak and shout, and there are special effects of sound and projection, and there is acoustic guitar playing. I'm very proud of what we accomplished.

"It's one of those productions which is a feel-good production, and at the end, the audience is joyful. It has so many elements to it. You name it and it's in there: comedy, romance, sunshine."

For the new tour, the company has updated some of the show's sets and costumes - a campaign supported by this year's Big Give Appeal.

"Touring is a very expensive activity, but we are a touring company and this is what we do, this is why we exist - to tour big-scale ballets. But undoubtedly when you take a ballet production on tour, there is something that needs repairing or replacing, and that costs.

"We also wanted to work on some of the costumes, to make them look better, and we are very grateful to everyone who has supported us in this. People are so generous; they know the circumstances we are facing, and there are a lot of people who are willing to help because ballet and this company gives them a lot of pleasure."

Touring is not only the lifeblood of the company - it also ensures BRB is an ambassador for Birmingham both across the UK and internationally.

"It's very good for the morale of the city and the community that supports BRB - and that is Birmingham. We have the title of the city as a headline of the institution; it is the *Birmingham Royal Ballet*, so I think when we tour, it's a way of bringing awareness of how important this city has been in the world.

"If you don't make an effort to bang the drum and keep this history alive, people will forget. People forget they made classic cars in Coventry; that Birmingham was the shop place of the world, the city of a thousand

trades; that Birmingham has more canals than Venice and all that.

"One of the things I wanted to do to herald the importance of the city and its community was to bring ballets that no other companies have. Hence, *Black Sabbath*, which represents directly the culture of Birmingham to the world, and *Don Quixote*, which I made directly for Birmingham.

"No one else in the world has these productions, and that gives the audience an opportunity to come and see something they can't see anywhere else."

Carlos' support for the city was marked last June when he was awarded an honorary degree by University of Birmingham. And his role in the world of the arts was celebrated in October when he won the UK Theatre Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Theatre.

"The Theatre Award was amazing and unexpected. It was for the productions I've put on, all the things I am programming. It was fantastic, not just for me but also for the ballet sector to be recognised in the world of theatre."

Last year also saw BRB principal Beatrice Palma win the Outstanding Female Classic Performance at the National Dance Awards, for her role as Lise in *La Fille mal gardée*. She also won the prestigious Dance Europe's Dancer of the Year award.

Carlos says this recognition is heartily deserved: "Beatrice is a very versatile ballerina. In *Fille* she is pure Ashton, with great technical ability. And then, in *Luna* - that is very hard contemporary language. So to have a ballerina who mastered those two spectrums of dance is incredible, and people took notice of that. It's great to see how some people just rise to the challenge, and she is a ballerina who doesn't rest. She wants more; she is 100 per cent committed - and if you have that attitude, you see the results."

.....  
**Birmingham Royal Ballet present Carlos Acosta's *Don Quixote* at Birmingham Hippodrome from Thursday 12 to Saturday 21 February**



## Film highlights in January...



### Song Sung Blue

CERT tbc (133 mins)

Starring **Hugh Jackman, Kate Hudson, Ella Anderson, Hudson Hensley, King Princess, Michael Imperioli** Directed by **Craig Brewer**

Based on the 2008 documentary of the same name by Greg Kohs, *Song Sung Blue* stars Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson as Mike and Claire Sardina, a real-life Milwaukee husband & wife duo who performed as Neil Diamond tribute band Lightning & Thunder.

The film follows the couple's story from its late 80s beginnings, when Mike - a divorced and one-time alcoholic Vietnam veteran - meets hairdresser Claire at a Wisconsin State Fair concert...

Theirs is an absorbing enough story, but the film's real strength is its musical numbers, not only because of Diamond's dazzling back catalogue but also on account of impressive performances by both of the leads.

**Released Thursday 1 January**

### Hamnet

CERT 12a (125 mins)

Starring **Jessie Buckley, Paul Mescal, Joe Alwyn, Justine Mitchell, Emily Watson, David Wilmot** Directed by **Chloé Zhao**

When it comes to 'delivering the goods' on screen, Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal are probably among the most trusted of modern-day Irish film actors. And their performances in this impressively impactful love story provide plenty of evidence as to why they're held in such high regard.

Mescal plays William Shakespeare, Buckley his wife Agnes, in an adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's bestselling novel from 2020.

Set in England across the final two decades of the 16th century, Chloé Zhao's critically acclaimed film charts the couple's relationship - from heady days of romance and wedded bliss, to the death (from the plague) of their 11-year-old son, Hamnet - a tragic event which inspired Shakespeare to pen his most famous play of all: *Hamlet*.

**Released Friday 9 January**



### Rental Family

CERT 12a (110 mins)

Starring **Brendan Fraser, Takehiro Hira, Mari Yamamoto, Shannon Mahina Gorman, Akira Emoto, Takao Kin** Directed by **Hikari**

A not-so-long-ago Oscar winner - for his portrayal of a reclusive and morbidly obese English teacher in *The Whale* - Brendan Fraser here stars as Phillip Vandarploeug, a struggling middle-aged American actor living in Tokyo who's previously enjoyed significant success in a toothpaste commercial. After taking a series of minor acting roles, he's offered the opportunity to work for Rental Family, a company which hires actors to play stand-in roles in clients' lives. But before too long, Phillip finds himself making genuine connections that threaten to blur the line between performance and reality...

**Released Friday 16 January**



### 28 Years Later: The Bone Temple

CERT 15 (115 mins)

Starring **Ralph Fiennes, Jack O'Connell, Emma Laird, Erin Kellyman, Chi Lewis-Parry, Alfie Williams** Directed by **Nia DaCosta**

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

And 18 years after its predecessor, movie number three finally arrived last summer, with Academy Award-winning director Danny Boyle reuniting with Oscar-nominated writer Alex Garland to present a terrifying 'auteur horror' story titled *28 Years Later*. Now, the fourth installment - once again written by Garland - hits cinema screens. Shot back-to-back with last year's release, and with Nia DaCosta taking over the directorial reins, *The Bone Temple* picks up the story after the events of *28 Years Later*...

As teenager Spike is inducted into Sir Jimmy Crystal's gang of acrobatic killers in a post-apocalyptic Britain ravaged by the Rage Virus, Dr Ian Nelson forms a new relationship - one which has potentially world-changing consequences...

**Released Friday 16 January**



## The History Of Sound

CERT 15 (128 mins)

Starring **Paul Mescal, Josh O'Connor, Chris Cooper, Molly Price, Raphael Sbarge, Hadley Robinson** Directed by **Oliver Hermanus**

When it comes to film releases, Paul Mescal is certainly having a busy month, not only starring in *Hamnet* (see opposite page) but also this period romance drama.

In 1917, Lionel - a young, talented music student - meets David at the Boston Conservatory, where they bond over a deep love of folk music. Years later, Lionel receives a letter from David, leading to an impromptu journey through the backwoods of Maine to collect traditional songs. The unexpected reunion, ensuing love affair, and the music they collect and preserve, shape the course of Lionel's life far beyond his own awareness...

**Released Fri 23 January**



## Is This Thing On?

CERT tbc (124 mins)

Starring **Will Arnett, Laura Dern, Andra Day, Bradley Cooper, Blake Kane, Calvin Knechten** Directed by **Bradley Cooper**

As his marriage quietly unravels, Alex seeks new purpose on the New York comedy scene. Wife Tess, meanwhile, confronts the sacrifices she made for their family... With an amicable divorce pending, the couple is forced to navigate issues around co-parenting, identity, and the challenge of love taking on a new form...

Loosely based on the story of how Liverpool

funnyman John Bishop stumbled into a career in comedy, *Is This Thing On?* is the third film to be directed by American Hustle actor Bradley Cooper, following on from *Lady Gaga* vehicle *A Star Is Born* in 2018 and Leonard Bernstein biopic *Maestro* (2023). Much smaller in scale than its two predecessors, it's nevertheless an absorbing, heartfelt and memorable entry, showcasing exceptionally strong performances from lead actors Will Arnett and Laura Dern while also providing further evidence of Cooper's considerable talent as a director...

**Released Friday 30 January**

## Saipan

CERT 15 (91 mins)

Starring **Éanna Hardwicke, Steve Coogan, Peter McDonald, Alice Lowe, Jamie Beamish, Harriet Cains** Directed by **Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn**

Football fans will probably be raising an eyebrow at the prospect of Steve Coogan as Mick McCarthy, wondering whether the Alan Partridge actor will have what it takes to play the blunt and Barnsley-born one-time Republic of Ireland player and manager. Coogan will certainly have his work cut out, no question - but then he *did* make a decent fist of playing Jimmy Savile a while back, so perhaps football-loving cinema-goers should brace themselves for a pleasant surprise. The film tells the story of the infamous confrontation between iconic Republic of Ireland captain Roy Keane and his national team manager McCarthy during the Irish squad's preparations for the 2002 FIFA World Cup. The feud remains, to this day, one of the most fractious fallings-out in the history of sport.

**Released Friday 23 January**



## Send Help

CERT tbc

Starring **Rachel McAdams, Dylan O'Brien, Xavier Samuel, Bruce Campbell, Dennis Haysbert, Chris Pang** Directed by **Sam Raimi**

Survival horror thriller *Send Help* focuses on the fortunes of two colleagues, Linda Liddle and Bradley Preston, who become stranded on a deserted island, the only survivors of a plane crash. As they battle to overcome past grievances and work together to survive, tensions between them mount, leading to a battle of wills and wits to make it out alive... "I found the two lead characters, Linda and Bradley, to be complex, human, and constantly at odds with each other in often conflicting situations," director Sam Raimi told *Entertainment Weekly*, in talking about what attracted him to the project. "The pitch was outrageous and original, all the while tracking these two in their conflict as their power dynamic changed dramatically. "I knew right away that I wanted to direct this picture."

**Released Friday 30 January**



## Visual Arts previews from around the region

### ANDI

New Art Gallery, Walsall,  
Tues 13 January - Sun 5 April

Coventry-based artist ANDI is spending 12 weeks in the New Art Gallery's purpose-built artists' studio, developing new paintings and working at a larger scale for the first time. The residency, which comes as a direct result of winning the venue's coveted Clive Beardsmore Artist Award, will see the up-and-coming creative make oil paintings that document and reflect on queer and trans experiences.



### Saba Khan: Riverless Water

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 10 January - Mon 6 April

London-based Pakistani artist Saba Khan here continues her critical inquiry into how environmental disruption shapes identity and migration. At the exhibition's heart is the subject of South Asian water histories, with paintings, interviews and

an installation being used to examine the impact of the Mangla Dam's construction in the 1960s - an event which led to the mass migration of people from Mirpur in Pakistan to Birmingham.

### What Are The Odds?

Library of Birmingham,  
Wed 21 January - Sat 27 June

An Ikon gallery exhibition which is being presented at the Library of Birmingham, What Are The Odds? explores the role of art in supporting health and care systems. The exhibition's graphic identity has been designed by Birmingham-based artist Foka Wolf. Playing on a 1970s 'game of life' TV show aesthetic, the presentation simulates a journey through the different institutions that define a life course, along the way reflecting a range of lived experience, from diversity in infant feeding to ageing and dying well.

### Grayson Perry: The Annunciation Of The Virgin Deal

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 12 April

Part of the Turner Prize-winning artist's The Vanity Of Small Differences series, this artwork is a four-metre-long tapestry telling the story of Tim Rakewell, a fictional 21st-century software developer who climbs the social and economic ladder from his working-class roots.



### Obelisk

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, Wed 7 - Sat 31 January

Garry Jones' photo documentary focuses on three athletes from Olympic Team GB: the legend, Andy MacDonald; the medal winner, Sky Brown (pictured above); and the breakout star, Lola Tambling. The series follows their journey to the

famous Obelisk in the heart of the Concorde in Paris in the summer of 2024, when skateboarders from around the world competed for the second time at an Olympic Games and for the first time in front of Olympic crowds.



Last chance to see...



## Wildlife Photographer Of The Year

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 25 January

"We are facing urgent biodiversity and climate crises," says Dr Doug Gurr, director of the Natural History Museum, which has developed and produced this prestigious competition, "and photography is a powerful catalyst for change..."

"As we celebrate 60 years of Wildlife Photographer Of The Year, 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.

## Coventry Biennial 2025: Obsessions, Possessions

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Sun 25 January

An exploration of the roles and functions of collecting - within the art sector, the community and the studio - lies at the heart of the fifth Coventry Biennial. Artists whose work is being displayed at the city's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum include Helsinki-based Sophia Ehrnrooth, who is presenting a major four-screen moving-image installation. Also featured is a Simeon Barclay-curated group exhibition exploring 'the rich and complex history of Coventry'.



## Greener Glass

Stourbridge Glass Museum, until Sat 17 January

The transformative power of recycled materials, turning waste into captivating art, is explored in this thought-provoking exhibition, co-curated by local and regional UK artists in collaboration with University of Birmingham students. Delving into the future of glassmaking, emphasising eco-friendly practices and focusing on the artistic exploration of environmental themes, Greener Glass showcases a variety of techniques, among which are kiln work, glass blowing and flame working. The exhibition features work produced by 11 talented creatives, including artists-in-residence at Stourbridge Glass Museum, whose pieces have been created using 100% renewable energy.



## Designing Terry Pratchett's Discworld

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, until Sun 4 January

This popular 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'.



## Ozzy Osbourne (1948-2025): Working Class Hero

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 18 January

"Ozzy is proof that no matter where you start in life, with passion, grit, and a little bit of madness, you can achieve the extraordinary."

So speaks Sharon Osbourne, celebrity wife of heavy metal legend Ozzy, who passed away last summer.

The Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery exhibition, which is free to enter, showcases Ozzy's most prestigious international honours, presenting them alongside photographs and videos that chart his journey from working-class kid to global rock legend.

"This exhibition is a thank-you to the fans and the city of Birmingham, the place where it all began," continues Sharon. "We're so proud to bring it home."







# FAMILY TIES

New exhibition illuminates the life of a South Asian family





**Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation is a new immersive exhibition which travels through the life of a single South Asian family in Coventry across a period of 40-plus years. Created by Hardish Virk and his sister Manjinder, from Hardish's personal archives, the exhibition reveals much about their activist father and Punjabi poet mother, not to mention Hardish himself, whose formative years were shaped by Coventry in the 1980s. What's On spoke to Hardish - and the exhibition's archive assistant, Shaniece Martin - to find out more about this multi-generational project...**

A dynamic new exhibition at Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum traces four decades of a single South Asian family in the city - and in doing so illuminates the wider South Asian experience in Coventry and beyond.

Created and co-curated by Hardish Virk, *Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation* traces the Virk family's time in Coventry from 1968 to 2010. Using sound, film, photographs, music and literature, the exhibition creates an immersive environment and explores the lives of Hardish, his parents and siblings.

It's an idea that has been a long time in the making - the product of a life spent collecting personal items, memories and stories.

"In 1996 I had this idea of opening a living museum of South Asian stories," explains Hardish. "It was a tangible response to this archive I've been building since the early 1980s - a response to the lack of nuanced South Asian stories that I was seeing."

Organising the archive and ensuring that the artefacts were securely preserved - after years of being stored in cold, damp conditions - was a huge job.

"I started to transport my archive from my house, from my loft and garage, into this space. I spent months working through it, pulling it out of boxes and bin bags - spending time to place it in a space where the environment was accessible."

Shaniece Martin was brought on board as the project's archive assistant, to help unpick stories from the available items - and the existing Virk Collection of photographs.

"My relationship has been very much with the Virk Collection in the Coventry Archives, which was donated by Hardish's father in 2004," says Shaniece. "My relationship was getting to grips with that collection - understanding who his father was and all the activism he was a part of, and also what that represents about Coventry."

The exhibition is surrounded by three timelines which span the walls, offering context for the time and place of each era. The Virk Family Timeline anchors the story, flanked by timelines of British and Western history, and South Asian history, to provide historical and cultural touchstones.

"I did a lot of research for the South Asian timeline," says Shaniece. "For me, being of South Asian culture, it gave me a nuanced

look on it, making me realise how long we've actually had a presence in the UK. My understanding comes from my grandparents, who migrated here from Kenya in the late 60s, so it was great to [realise] that, actually, we've been here a long time."

Indeed, the fact that South Asian history and British history have been entwined for centuries is something which Hardish was keen to convey in the exhibition: "Often the conversation, particularly around young people, is 'We don't know where we belong.' But also we've got people of my parents' generation who feel like their story started in the 1950s and 60s. What I was very keen to say - and this is what the living museum is designed to do as well - is that our story goes back at least 425 years, and we've contributed to every facet of British life."

"I come from a theatre-making background, and from the outset I always said that this needs to be a theatrical experience and exhibition, not a static one. At the heart of it, there's a human story, a family story. Visitors find their own story in the family story - the frame around this is this timeline of facts."

Having first travelled through a clinical passport office, visitors to the exhibition are then met with a very different setting: the Virk family living room, complete with sofa and TV. None of the rooms are invented - they're all replicated from photographs in the Virk Collection.

"The spaces of comfort," explains Shaniece, "like the living room, the sofa, the bed in the bedroom - that was all to make it feel real and immersed, like a living space. Without those objects, you can't get that sense of the space at all - it [would feel] like a standard exhibition. But it doesn't, because there are so many layers that make and recreate those spaces."

Shaniece, who never met Hardish's father, Harbhajan Singh Virk, has grown to know him through her exploration of the archives: "It made me recognise the importance of these objects and the archives. Other people would call it hoarding, which we really don't think is the case. It's about collecting. I feel like I've got to know the people in the process, through those objects and the stories that come alive through those objects."

Hardish has one eye on the future and the possibility of creating a whole living museum representing South Asian experiences. After initially toying with the idea of repurposing a

terraced house for the museum, he now hopes to find a warehouse space in which he could create a similar effect, but in a more accessible environment.

And this is just the beginning...

"Digital methods of making archives and living museums accessible to the world are really important. We're going to have a drone that's going to go through this exhibition, and that's going to make it available, digitally, to the world. I've already been thinking about AI technology, as well as VR technology... I really want to talk about how personal archives lend themselves to living museums in lived spaces, and how we use new technologies to make them global experiences and highly accessible."

With so many fascinating objects represented in the exhibition - collected and preserved by Hardish - it's hard to pick just one which best represents the whole. Shaniece's selection is an item which illuminates an experience shared by many. Hardish's choice, by contrast, is deeply personal.

"I think for me it would be the passports," says Shaniece. "When Hardish showed me those passports, I remember thinking about the film in the passport-control room... I remember watching that video, seeing those passports and thinking to myself: 'That's exactly the passport my grandparents had; that's exactly the journey that they went through.' Without the physical passport, there wouldn't be a trace of that journey."

"There's a clock in the living room," says Hardish, in talking about the single item which *he* would select as being most representative of the whole exhibition. "And that is *the clock* from that era in the 1970s - you can see it in the photographs. That clock has sat through nearly 50 years of our family life. If it had a brain and eyes, and had all the senses, it would have listened to and watched these men congregating in that living room, reciting poetry, talking about the anti-racist protests, drinking whiskey and listening to music."

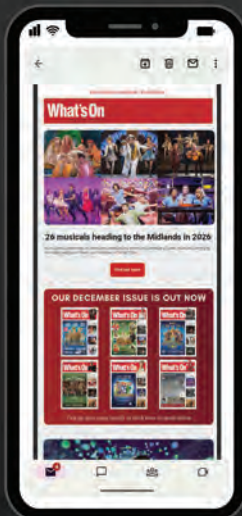
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**Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation shows at Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum until Monday 25 May**



# What's On

MEDIA GROUP



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## Events previews from around the region



### Winter Steam Gala Severn Valley Railway, Sat 3 & Sun 4 January

Severn Valley Railway's two-day festival of steam is back this month, with the home-fleet locomotives operating a busy timetable between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth. Ride in a heritage carriage behind every

locomotive, visit The Engine House at Highley to break up your day, and sample real ales in the pubs. The station gift shops, cafes and restaurant kiosks will also be open, selling food and hot drinks.



### Winter Funland NEC, Birmingham, until Sat 3 January

Described as a 'full-on festive extravaganza', Winter Funland is home to the UK's largest indoor Christmastime funfair, with all of the show's rides and attractions being included in the ticket price. Alongside a whole host of funfair favourites -

think dodgems and waltzers - the event also features Birmingham's largest ice rink and a special festive-season circus, complete with clowns, acrobats, and the 'jaw dropping' Globe of Steel.

### Winter Wonderland Stoke

Lichfield Street, Stoke-on-Trent, until Sun 4 January

Winter Wonderland Stoke is once again transforming the city centre into a glittering world of seasonal cheer. Visitors can glide across the ice rink, check out rides and fairground attractions, and sample an array of seasonal food & drink. Popular attractions such as ice skating fill up quickly, though, so visitors are encouraged to book ahead to guarantee their space. They can do so by going to the event's website at [winterwonderlandstoke.com](http://winterwonderlandstoke.com)



### Christmas Tree Festival

Worcester Cathedral, until Tues 6 January

Worcester Cathedral's Christmas Tree Festival is bigger than ever this year, with 100 additional trees - decorated by charities, schools, businesses and community groups - featuring in the display. New for 2025/26 - and located in the ancient Chapter House - are 60 trees dedicated by members of the general public 'in memory of a loved one, in celebration of someone, or simply to say thank you'.

### Tattoo Freeze

Telford International Centre, Shropshire, Sat 31 January & Sun 1 February

Hundreds of tattoo artists from the UK and beyond will take over Telford International Centre at the end of the month for the return of Tattoo Freeze. The popular annual event gives visitors the opportunity to get tattooed by some of the very best artists in the industry. Live music, vehicle displays, traders and competitions also feature.





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*Your week-  
by-week  
listings guide*  
**January 2026**

# thelist



*The Woman In Black at The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 27 - Sat 31 January*

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

## What's On

Thurs 1 - Sun 11 January



Jo Enright -  
The Glee Club, Birmingham  
**Sat 3 January**

Mon 12 - Sun 18 January



Rave On -  
Swan Theatre, Worcester  
**Sat 17 January**

Mon 19 - Sun 25 January



Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde -  
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Wed 21 January**

Mon 26 - Sat 31 January



Russell Howard -  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry  
**Thurs 29 & Fri 30 January**



## VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

### Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

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

### 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 January

### Compton Verney, Warwickshire

#### THE SHELTER OF STORIES

Groundbreaking exhibition exploring the art of storytelling, its close relationship with the sense of home and belonging and its vital role in times of upheaval and displacement, until Sun 22 February

#### COMMODITIES: SCULPTURE AND

**CERAMICS BY RENEE SO** Hong Kong-born artist Renee So creates darkly playful ceramic sculptures, exploring how perceptions of history can be distorted, re-fashioned and changed, until Sun 8 March

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

#### MODERN MASTERPIECES: PAINTINGS FROM THE BARBER INSTITUTE OF FINE

**ARTS** An intimate display of six exceptional paintings by major modern artists, including Vincent van Gogh, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Édouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard, until Sun 6 September

### Coventry Music Museum

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

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

### The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

**SUNSETS, FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP** An exhibition of young people's photography focused on the importance of culture, heritage and identity in shaping a sense of self and

belonging, until Sun 22 February

### Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

**COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2025: KINDA BLU** Drawn from the Arts Council Collection and curated by artist Simeon Barclay, Kinda Blu explores Coventry's rich contradictions, until Sun 25 January

**COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2025: IN TRANSIT UNDER ANOTHER SKY** Highlighting and expounding upon the work of novelist Yvonne Vera, whose words have been borrowed for the title of this exhibition. A curatorial response to Coventry Biennial's wider interest in 'obsessions', until Sun 25 January

**COVENTRY'S LOST LIBRARY** Explore Coventry's old school library, founded more than 450 years ago. Exhibits include a medieval manuscript and the chance to discover what a Tudor schoolchild would have been reading, until Sat 31 January

### Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

**DONALD LOCKE: RESISTANT FORMS** An exploration of the Guyanese-British artist's work across five decades, including early ceramics, mixed media sculptures and large-scale paintings, until Sun 22 February

### Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

**CHILDISH THINGS** A playful, nostalgic and intergenerational exhibition that explores childhood, through artworks and objects from the Museum's collection, until Sun 1 February

### Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**TAKURO KUWATA: TEA BOWL PUNK** The first UK solo exhibition of the internationally celebrated Japanese ceramic artist, fusing traditional Japanese pottery techniques with bold and experimental sculptural processes, until Sun 15 March



### Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

**MADE AT MAC: CONNECTED BY THREAD** A showcase of textile works by learners from MAC's creative

courses, until Sun 25 January

### HARDEEP PANDHAL: SAAG AND FISH

**FINGERS** Pandhal's major mid-career exhibition, presented in his hometown of Birmingham, creating mythical narratives that explore the complexities of contemporary culture, until Sun 1 February

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

### New Art Gallery, Walsall

**BETWEEN HERE AND THERE: ART & DESIGN STAFF FROM WALSALL COLLEGE** Featuring a variety of work in a broad range of media, until Sun 8 March

**STUDIO PRINTS: CELEBRATING THE BALAKJIAN COLLECTION** Major exhibition featuring artworks acquired for the Gallery's permanent collection from the archive of London-based Studio Prints. The show includes prints by, among others, Frank Auerbach, Marc Balakjian, Lucian Freud and Dorothea Wight, until Sun 12 April

**HANNAH MAYBANK: UN-STILL** With her practice having been heavily influenced by access to the Garman Ryan Collection, Hannah has created a brand-new painting featuring chrysanthemum flowers, as a gift for the Gallery's 25th birthday, until Sun 17 May

### Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

**NUNEATON SCHOOL OF ART ALUMNI EXHIBITION** A show examining the history of the organisation, and a show of work by artists who have attended or taught at the institution, until Sat 28 February

**CORLEY & FILLONGLEY PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB** Exhibition featuring 50-plus works displaying a rich selection of differing subjects - including portraiture, nature, action and still life - many of which will be for sale, until Sat 28 February

### RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

**RBSA ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2025** Yearly showcase of works, with a broad spectrum of practices represented, until Sat 3 January

**RBSA FRIENDS EXHIBITION 2026** Showcase for artists at all stages of their careers. The exhibition is open to all RBSA Friends working in any media, Thurs 8 January - Sat 7 February

### Rugby Art Gallery

**A HISTORY OF RUGBY IN 50 OBJECTS**

Exhibition featuring 50 objects from the museum's collection which represent a moment, person or event that helped shape the town.

### TRIPONTIUM: FINDS FROM THE STORES

Exhibition of archaeological finds from a small Roman settlement about four miles north-east of present-day Rugby, permanently donated to the museum, until Sat 11 April

### Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**GRAYSON PERRY: THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN DEAL** A four-metre-long tapestry - part of The Vanity Of Small Differences series - telling the story of Tim Rakewell, a fictional 21st-century software developer who climbs the social and economic ladder from his working-class roots, until Sun 12 April

### Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**DESIGNING TERRY PRATCHETT'S DISCWORLD: 30 YEARS OF PAUL KIDBY'S ILLUSTRATION** Colourful paintings, exquisite pencil drawings, and a rogue's gallery of favourite characters from Pratchett's Discworld, until Sun 4 January

**WORCESTER SOCIETY OF ARTISTS: ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2025** Members come from a wide range of backgrounds with different levels of skills, experience and styles; some are lifelong artists while others have only recently come into art, until January

**JOHN SINGER SARGENT: AN AMERICAN IN WORCESTERSHIRE** Showcase of works by one of the most celebrated portrait painters of his time. Sargent's summers spent in the county saw the American artist break free from the conventions of Salon-style studio painting, to experiment with Impressionism and work 'en plein air', Sat 17 January - Sun 14 June

### Elsewhere:

**THREADS OF HIV: EMPOWERING QUILTS EXHIBITION** Ground-floor exhibition of quilts that share real stories of life with HIV, until Sat 31 January, Library of Birmingham

**INSIDE THE PLAYROOM** Imaginative new exhibition inviting children, and their families, to become art collectors! The gallery will be transformed into a colourful playroom where a selection of affordable, child-friendly illustrations, paintings, collages and soft sculptures will be for sale, until Sat 31 January, Stryx Gallery, Digbeth, Birmingham

**IRONBRIDGE FINE ARTS WINTER EXHIBITION** Featuring visual arts by Dave Gunning and Clare O'Hagan, until Sat 21 February, Ironbridge Fine Arts, Ironbridge, South Shropshire



## Gigs

**EDWINA HAYES** Thurs 1 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham



**SKULL DUGGERY** Thurs 1 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**THE BLACK JEANS** Fri 2 - Sat 3 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

**THE SIDE OF THE ROAD** Fri 2 Jan, The Victoria, Birmingham

**GUNS 2 ROSES** Fri 2 Jan, The Rigger, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**THE EMINEM SHOW** Fri 2 Jan, The Station, Cannock

**SKA TRAIN** Fri 2 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**TAYLORMANIA** Sat 3 Jan, Kidderminster Town Hall

**THE CUREHEADS** Sat 3 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**THE BRYAN ADAMS EXPERIENCE** Sat 3 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**GAIA PACIFICA** Sat 3 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**NICKLEBACK UK** Sat 3 Jan, The Station, Cannock

**STATEASE QUO** Sat 3 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**TRAVELLING RIVERSIDE BLUES BAND** Sun 4 Jan, The Brasshouse, Birmingham

**RICH PARSONS** Sun 4 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

## Classical Music

**LONDON CONCERTANTE: VIENNESE SPECTACULAR BY CANDLELIGHT**

Programme includes works by Strauss, Tchaikovsky & Brahms, Fri 2 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**HALLE: VIENNESE NEW YEAR** Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor) & Soraya Mafi (soprano). Programme includes works by Strauss, Lehar, Suppe & more..., Fri 2 Jan, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**A NEW YEAR CELEBRATION: VIENNESE GALA** Featuring Stourbridge Choir & Orchestra, Sat 3 Jan, Stourbridge Town Hall

**CBSO: VIENNESE NEW YEAR** Featuring Nil Venditti (conductor) & Jennifer France (soprano). Programme includes works by Johann Strauss & more..., Sun 4 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

## Comedy

**ANDY ROBINSON, JO ENRIGHT & PHIL NICHOL & SIMON WOZNIAK** Sat 3 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF** Critically acclaimed production of the iconic musical, featuring classic numbers If I Were A Rich Man, Tradition and Sunrise, Sunset, until Sat 3 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**A SHODDY CHRISTMAS CAROL** 'Quick changes, questionable accents and chaotic carolling' are all present and correct in this 'unhinged retelling' of Dickens' festive favourite, until Sun 4 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**THE FORSYTE SAGA PART 1: IRENE** Acclaimed stage adaptation of John Galsworthy's Nobel Prize-winning saga of love, ownership and the end of Empire, until Sat 10 Jan, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE FORSYTE SAGA PART 2: FLEUR** As above, until Sat 10 Jan, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS** World premiere comedy whodunnit, written by and starring Fringe favourites The Penny Dreadfuls and featuring brand-new songs by Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber, until Sun 18 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

**THE LITTLE MERMAID** Theresa Heskins directs a new version of Hans Christian Andersen's famous fairytale, until Sat 24 Jan, The New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**THE BFG** Tom Wells' brand-new adaptation of Roald Dahl's story about a gentle giant and the smallest human bean, until Sat 7 Feb, The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

## Pantomimes

**CINDERELLA** Get ready to go to the biggest ball in the land in this traditional family pantomime. The show stars Coronation Street's Alex Bain as Dandini, Britain's Got Talent finalist Lucy Kay as Cinderella and Shelley Ann Rivers & Orla Ridpath as the Ugly Sisters. Telford favourites Ian Smith (Fairy Godmother) and Carl Dufield (Buttons) also star, until Fri 2 Jan, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

**SLEEPING BEAUTY** Iain Lauchlan's dreamy tale for the festive season. Featuring Andy Hockley (Grumbleweed), Craig Hollingsworth (Muddles), Wendi Harriot (Carabosse) and Mia King-Harmes (Princess Belle/Queen Hyacinth), until Sat 3 Jan, The Belgrade Theatre,



*The BFG - The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*

Coventry

**MOTHER GOOSE A** 'cracking' family pantomime, until Sat 3 Jan, The Courtyard, Hereford

**ROBINSON CRUSOE** Amateur version of a traditional family pantomime, until Sat 3 Jan, Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre, Kenilworth

**SLEEPING BEAUTY** 'The pantomime of your dreams', presented by Worcester Repertory Company, until Sun 4 Jan, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**JACK & THE BEANSTALK** Starring Mark James as Silly Billy, Tom Lister (Emmerdale) as Fleshcreep, Nick Wilton (EastEnders) as Dame Trott, Ella Holt as The Spirit of the Beans and Ruth Betteridge as Jill Pickle, until Sun 4 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS** Festive treat in which fairytale magic meets panto family fun, until Sun 4 Jan, Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

**CINDERELLA** Jonathan Wilkes (Buttons) and Kai Owen (Dandini) are joined by Rhiane Drummond (Fairy Godmother), Kirsty Ingram (Cinders) and Ben Oatley (Prince Charming) in 'a feast of a festive show where everyone gets to go to the ball'..., until Sun 4 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK** A giant pantomime adventure starring Jennifer Ellison, Malcolm Lord and Ste Johnston, until Sun 4 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**ALADDIN** High-flying panto featuring children's TV legend & Masterchef Dave Benson Phillips, Emmerdale's Bill Ward and Britain's Got Talent's Tony Rudd. Simon Bashford, Indiya Payne, Laura-Dene Perryman and Niall Gray also star, until Sun 4 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ALADDIN** Amateur version promising 'enough magic to fill a genie's lamp', until Sun 4 Jan, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** Theresa

Heskins' 'spellbinding staging', inspired by the original 18th-century fairytale, until Sun 4 Jan, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**SLEEPING BEAUTY** Family pantomime starring Samantha Spragg as Carabosse, Mark Rhodes as Hilarious Harry and David Phipps-Davies as Nurse Nora Knickerbocker, until Sun 4 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**PETER PAN** Journey to the magical island of Neverland and help Peter Pan and the Lost Boys defeat the villainous Captain Hook. JP McCue, Sean Dodds, Hollie Smith-Nelson, Charlie Smart & Emma Marsh star, until Sun 4 Jan, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**DICK WHITTINGTON** Fun-filled family musical featuring Brad Fitt, Tommy J Rollason, Tim Whitnall, Cara Dudgeon, Ollie Wray and Lottie Stone, until Sun 4 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SLEEPING BEAUTY** 'Magical festive fairytale' starring Danny Beard (Carabosse) and Debra Stephenson (Queen) alongside pantomime royalty Tam Ryan and Ian Adams, until Sun 4 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**CINDERELLA** 'Festive extravaganza' in which panto favourite Sam Rabone stars as Aldianna. Also starring Matt Daines (Lidleena), Shannon Bourne (Cinderella), Ben Thornton (Buttons), Joe Feeney (Dandini), Adam Craig (Prince Charming) and Clarice Julianda (Fairy Twinklethistle), until Sun 11 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK** A 'giant panto adventure', until Sun 18 Jan, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**ROBIN HOOD** A 'sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza' featuring Gok Wan (pictured), Matt Slack, Faye Tozer, Andrew Ryan, Matt Cardle, Sandra Marvin and special guest star Christopher Biggins, until Sun 1 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome



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### Kids Theatre

**WELL DONE, MUMMY PENGUIN** Daring acrobatics, integrated sign language and heartwarming humour combine in this wintry treat for children aged three-plus, until Sat 3 Jan, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**READY STEADY COLOUR'S CHRISTMAS FEAST** A 'merry blend' of creativity, comedy and music. Suitable for Kids aged three-plus, until Sat 3 Jan, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon



**THE MINCE PIE MOUSE** Our Star Theatre Company present 'a super-sensory tale for little people and their grown-ups', until Sun 4 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**NO SUCH THING AS WOLVES** A fun-filled musical adventure featuring 'catchy songs, hilarious scenes' and 'a wolfy twist in the tale'. Suitable for children aged three and older, until Sun 4 Jan, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ANANSI THE SPIDER** Classic West African & Caribbean folk tales about a loveable spider are brought to life 'in a festive show for children and their grown-ups', until Sun 11 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

### Light Entertainment

**THE RAT PACK SWING INTO 2026** David Alacey (Lovejoy) stars as Frank Sinatra alongside West End favourite Tim Harwood as Dean Martin and Coronation Street & Hollyoaks star Ashley Campbell as Sammy Davis Jnr, Thurs 1 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**CLASSIC ROCK ON STRINGS BY CANDLELIGHT** A live, multi-sensory musical experience - discover classic rock on strings at Birmingham Cathedral under the gentle glow of candlelight, Fri 2 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**A TRIBUTE TO LUDOVICO EINAUDI BY CANDLELIGHT** A live, multi-sensory musical experience - discover the music of Ludovico Einaudi at Birmingham Cathedral under the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 3 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**TRIBUTE TO ADELE BY CANDLELIGHT** A live, multi-sensory musical experience - discover the music of

Adele at Birmingham Cathedral under the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 3 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

### Events

#### LUMINATE - WINTER LIGHT TRAIL

Journey through installations, projections and glowing tunnels of light, until Thurs 1 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

**SANTA'S WINTER WONDERLAND** Step into a winter wonderland, complete with real snow, until Sat 3 Jan, SnowDome, Tamworth

**THE ENCHANTED GARDENS OZ** Follow the yellow brick road as the Enchanted Gardens return for a fifth year, until Sat 3 Jan, Webbs at Wychbold, Worcestershire

**AESOP'S FABLES - CHRISTMAS AT UPTON HOUSE AND GARDENS** See the house decorated with Aesop's Fables-themed displays, until Sun 4 Jan, Upton House & Gardens, Warwickshire

**CHRISTMAS THROUGH THE DECADES** Experience generations of Christmas traditions brought to life, until Sun 4 Jan, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



**ICE SKATE BIRMINGHAM** The popular ice rink and big wheel are back! until Sun 4 Jan, Centenary Square, Birmingham

**CHRISTMAS AT BADDESLEY CLINTON** A Christmas feast is laid out in the dining room, while in the parlour, a winter-wonderland surprise awaits, until Sun 4 Jan, Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire

**SNOWY'S CONSERVATION CREW** Join Snowy on an arctic adventure to learn about the North Pole and the animals that live there, until Sun 4 Jan, National SEA LIFE Centre, Birmingham

**LUDLOW CASTLE'S AVENUE OF CHRISTMAS TREES** Each tree has been beautifully decorated by local schools, business and organisations until Sun 4 Jan, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

**CHRISTMAS AT PACKWOOD HOUSE** Step into the warmth of the Tudor manor, where the rooms are dressed for the season, until Sun 4 Jan, Packwood House, Warwickshire

**CHRISTMAS AT CROOME: RAPTUREOUS DELIGHT** A festive sensory experience, with glowing interiors, immersive



Lights, Science, Action! The Science of Light Show - Thinktank Birmingham

projections, and a festive feel throughout, until Sun 4 Jan, Croome Park, Worcestershire

#### CHRISTMAS AT SHUGBOROUGH

Featuring festive displays celebrating food, gift giving, games and family traditions, until Sun 4 Jan, Shugborough Estate, Staffordshire

#### TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS AT WIGHTWICK

Celebrate a traditional Victorian Christmas, until Sun 4 Jan, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

**CHRISTMAS AT THE CASTLE** Featuring an ice rink, a light trail and stories with Santa, until Sun 4 Jan, Warwick Castle

**WINTER LIGHT TRAIL** Brand-new light trail, until Sun 4 Jan, Trentham Estate, Stoke-Trent

**CHRISTMAS AT ALTON TOWERS** Enjoy a sleighful of festivities, including the UK's only CBeebies Land at Christmas, until Sun 4 Jan, Alton Towers Resort, Tamworth

#### BAGS OF FUN: CHRISTMAS CRAFTS

Make your own Christmas decoration, design a jolly Christmas card, and create a paper wreath, until Sun 4 Jan, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

#### THE CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Featuring real Christmas trees decorated by local businesses, schools and charities, until Sun 4 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**BIG BLUE BLOCKS** Build, stack, channel and connect larger-than-life play blocks, until Sun 4 Jan, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**FESTIVE STORY TRAIL** Inspired by storytelling, look for clues and pose for a photo along the way, until Sun 4 Jan, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**A DISCOVERY WINTER HOLIDAY CLUB HAF PROGRAMME** Featuring creative crafts and outdoor activities, until Mon 5 Jan, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

**CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2025**

Featuring trees from charities, schools, businesses, community groups and others from across the region, until Tues 6 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**THE SNOWMAN SCULPTURE TRAIL** Find all the decorated sculptures around the gardens, until Sun 11 Jan, Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire



**BIRDLAND TRAIL** A trail of ceramic birds inspired by those found in Cannon Hill Park, until Sun 22 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

**LIGHTS, SCIENCE, ACTION! THE SCIENCE OF LIGHT SHOW** A live show all about the science of light, Fri 2 Jan, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**ARTIST PLAY DAYS** Transform the art studio into an imagined storyland using recycled materials, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Jan, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**TWIXMAS** Enjoy family rides, Thomas Land, dazzling decorations and winter treats, Fri 2 - Sun 4 Jan, Drayton Manor Resort, Tamworth

**NEW YEAR CRAFTS AT THE MUSEUM** Family fun with Lego, Fri 2 - Mon 5 Jan, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

**WINTER STEAM GALA** Featuring the home-fleet locomotives operating a busy timetable between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Jan, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster





Jaz Delorean - Hare & Hounds, Birmingham & Temperance, Leamington Spa

## Gigs

**SALT PEANUTS** Mon 5 Jan, Bill's Kitchen, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**JAZ DELOREAN** Thurs 8 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**DAVIDE GIOVANNINI'S MINAS PROJECT** Thurs 8 Jan, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**MUSIC OF THE FOUR TOPS** Thurs 8 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**ELKIE BROOKS** Thurs 8 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**YOUNG CULTURE + DREAD MAN COLLECTIVE** Fri 9 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**MICK FOSTER QUARTET** Fri 9 Jan, 1000 Trades, B'ham

**JAZ DELOREAN** Fri 9 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE GLASS CANNONS + SUNSCAPES + MAGINDARA + MATTY COLES** Fri 9 Jan, hmv Empire, Coventry

**ICONIC 80S VS 90S** Fri 9 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**ED SHEERAN EXPERIENCE** Fri 9 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**NORTHERN LIVE - DO I LOVE YOU** Fri 9 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**ANNIE LENNOX & EURYTHMICS BY JAYNE MIDDLETON BAND** Fri 9 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**KC JONES + PELICAN BABIES** Fri 9 Jan, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**FLATWORLD** Fri 9 Jan, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**ANT-TROUBLE** Fri 9 Jan, The Station, Cannock

**MAN OF THE WORLD: THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN** Fri 9 Jan, Lichfield Guildhall

**THE DETOURS** Fri 9 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**THE PIANO MAN STARRING BILLY JOEL UK TRIBUTE GAZ JENKINS** Fri 9 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**THE GROOVE ASSEMBLY** Fri 9 - Sat 10 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

**BLACK ELVIS** Sat 10 Jan, The Night Owl, B'ham

**THE CHRIS STAPLETON EXPERIENCE** Sat 10 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**TIN DRAGONS** Sat 10 Jan, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**ROOTS OF QAWWALI FEAT. CHAND ALI KHAN** Sat 10 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

**QUEEN OF THE NIGHT - A TRIBUTE TO WHITNEY HOUSTON** Sat 10 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**PUBLIC IMAGE LTD** Sat 10 Jan, hmv Empire, Coventry

**ANGELS OF DARKNESS** Sat 10 Jan, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**BORN IN THE 80S** Sat 10

Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**BRYAN CORBETTS INSTRUMENTAL GROOVE UNIT** Sat 10 Jan, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**DANIELLE NICOLE + MALINA MOYE** Sat 10 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**SKY FULL OF STARS - COLDPLAY TRIBUTE** Sat 10 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**HI ON MAIDEN** Sat 10 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**NEARLY ELTON** Sat 10 Jan, The Station, Cannock

**DARK SIDE OF THE LEDGE** Sat 10 Jan, Lichfield Guildhall

**POPPY JAM** Sat 10 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**GLAM 45** Sat 10 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**LUKE JACKSON** Sat 10 Jan, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shrops

**FIREBIRDS** Sun 11 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**TOM SOUTH AND THE LIFELINE + SPLIT SECOND + THE MARS LOUNGE** Sun 11 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW** Sun 11 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**FRANKIE'S GUYS** Sun 11 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE DRIFTERS** Sun 11 Jan, Crewe Lyceum

## Classical Music

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA: SHIMMER** Featuring Alexandre Bloch (conductor) & Inbal Segev (cello). Programme includes works by Debussy, Al-Zand, Clyne & Ravel, Mon 5 Dec, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**RBC LUNCHTIME CONCERT** Featuring Royal Birmingham Conservatoire students, Thurs 8 Jan, St Paul's Church, B'ham

**PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL** Programme includes works by Spicer, Mendelssohn, Glass & more..., Thurs 8 Jan, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

**GUS COX ORGAN RECITAL** Thurs 8 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**MARK SWINTON ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 9 Jan, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**SPIRES PLAY & SING: HANDEL'S MESSIAH** Featuring Jack Lovell-Huckle (director), Sat 10 Jan, Baginton Road URC, Coventry

**WORCESTER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: NEW YEAR FAMILY FAVOURITES** Featuring Dan Watson (conductor) & Graham Longfils (leader). Programme includes works by Mozart, Bartók, Saint-Saëns & Borodin, Sat 10 Jan, Number 8, Pershore

**CBSO: VIENNESE NEW YEAR** Featuring Nil Venditti (conductor) & Jennifer France (soprano). Programme includes works by Johann Strauss & more..., Sat 10 Jan, Malvern Festival Theatre

**BLACK DYKE BAND IN CONCERT** Programme includes classical favourites, jazz and film standards and some of the world's finest brass instrumental soloists, Sun 11 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

**TALA TARANG!** Featuring Eleanor Turner (harp) & Mendi Singh (tabla), Sun 11 Jan, Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire

## Comedy

**BOB MILLS, JAMIE SUTHERLAND, LENNY SHERMAN, KIE CARSON & DAVE TWENTYMAN** Thurs 8 Jan, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**LEWIS GARNHAM, MICHAEL ODEWALE, CELYA AB & COMIC TBC** Fri 9 - Sat 10 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROGER MONKHOUSE, SAM SERRANO, PETER BRUSH & DAVE LONGLEY** Sat 10 Jan, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**LEWIS GARNHAM, MICHAEL ODEWALE, CELYA AB (PICTURED) & MICK FERRY** Sat 10 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham



## Theatre

**THE FORSYTE SAGA PART 1: IRENE** Acclaimed stage adaptation of John Galsworthy's Nobel Prize-winning saga of love, ownership and the end of Empire, until Sat 10 Jan, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE FORSYTE SAGA PART 2: FLEUR** Acclaimed stage adaptation of John Galsworthy's Nobel Prize-winning saga of love, ownership and the end of Empire, until Sat 10 Jan, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS** World premiere comedy whodunnit, written by and starring Fringe favourites The Penny Dreadfuls and featuring brand-new songs by Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber, until Sun 18 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham



**THE LITTLE MERMAID** Theresa Heskins directs a new version of Hans Christian Andersen's famous fairytale, until Sat 24 Jan, The New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

## Pantomime

**CINDERELLA** 'Festive extravaganza' in which panto favourite Sam Rabone stars as Aldianna. Also starring Matt Daines (Lidleena), Shannon Bourne (Cinderella), Ben Thornton (Buttons), Joe Feeney (Dandini), Adam Craig (Prince Charming) and Clarice Julianda



# Monday 5 - Sunday 11 January

(Fairy Twinklethistle), until Sun 11 Jan, Lichfield Garrick



**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK** A 'giant panto adventure', until Sun 18 Jan, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**ROBIN HOOD** A 'sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza' featuring Gok Wan, Matt Slack, Faye Tozer, Andrew Ryan, Matt Cardle, Sandra Marvin and special guest star Christopher Biggins, until Sun 1 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**CINDERELLA** Three Spires Guildhall present a 'magical' pantomime packed with 'laughter, music and sparkle', Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Jan, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**GOLDOLOCKS** Join Goldilocks and her curiously queer circus compatriots as they take on dastardly ringmaster Ivor Blackheart and his hypnotic and

conniving crony, Seyonce. Presented by Birmingham Youth Theatre, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**ROBINSON CRUSOE** Amateur version of Daniel Defoe's famous adventure story, Fri 9 - Sat 17 Jan, Oldbury Rep

**HANSEL AND GRETEL** A panto for all the family as the Brothers Grimm tale is brought to life on stage, Sat 10 - Sat 31 Jan, Theatre on the Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

## Adult Pantomime

**JACK OFF THE BEANSTALK - GRAB YOUR CHOPPER** Happy Ending Pantomimes' adult version of a seasonal favourite, Thurs 8 & Fri 9 Jan, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**SNOW WHITE AND THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN!** Adult panto featuring farcical fun and bawdy sexual innuendo, Fri 9 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**JACK OFF THE BEANSTALK - GRAB YOUR CHOPPER** Happy Ending Pantomimes' adult version of a seasonal favourite, Sat 10 Jan, Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Kids Theatre

**ANANSI THE SPIDER** Classic West African & Caribbean folk tales about a loveable spider are brought to life 'in a festive show for children and their grown-ups', until Sun 11 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

## Light Entertainment

**PSYCHIC SALLY** An evening of mediumship, Thurs 8 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**CÉLINE DION BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Céline tribute January Butler and her live band, Fri 9 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

## Talks & Spoken Word

**AN EVENING WITH THE FOUNDER OF CUAN WILDLIFE RESCUE** A moving and inspiring evening with Megan Morris-Jones, the heart and vision behind Cuan Wildlife Rescue, Fri 9 Jan, The

Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**AN EVENING WITH KALEB COOPER** An 'intimate evening' in the company of one of the stars of Amazon Prime's hit series Clarkson's Farm, Sat 10 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



## Events

**DEMENTIA CARERS WALK** Connect with others who understand your journey, Tues 6 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

**ENVISAGE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** Showcasing sci-fi and fantasy films, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Jan, Millennium Point, Birmingham

**DOLLS HOUSE AND MINIATURES FAIR** Sun 11 Jan, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford

# ROBINSON CRUSOE

by Tom Whalley

Will Robinson save the family Fish 'n Chip shop, will Captain Blacktasche get his evil way and who will find the hidden treasure?!

January 9th to 17th

0121 552 2761

oldburyrep.org

This amateur production of 'Robinson Crusoe' is presented by arrangement with tomwhalleypantomimes.com

# Travellers Tunes

# An Evening with Steve Cradock

Playing & Singing hit songs from:

Ocean Colour Scene

THE BUTTERMARKET SHREWSBURY

SUN 12 APRIL 2026



## Gigs

**SUBHUMANS** Tues 13 Jan, The Dark Horse, B'ham

**THE MOLOTOVS** Wed 14 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**CHRISTOPHER CROMPTON & JULIE DISNEY** Wed 14 Jan, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**THE SWAPS + STEVIE WATTS + RACHEL CROFT** Wed 14 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE BLUEJAYS** Wed 14 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**MARCUS & MARTINUS** Thurs 15 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MIDNIGHT TIL MORNING + ALEKSIAH** Thurs 15 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MARIAH THE SCIENTIST** Thurs 15 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE ROCKET MAN - A TRIBUTE TO SIR ELTON JOHN** Thurs 15 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU - A TRIBUTE TO ROBBIE WILLIAMS** Thurs 15 Jan, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC: TRIBUTE TO ABBA** Thurs 15 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**DEFINITELY GREEN DAY** Thurs 15 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**THE DRIFTERS** Thurs 15 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**BLACK HILLS + BALABAN & THE BALD ILLEGALS + SIMON DAVIES** Thurs 15 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**DURAN** Fri 16 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THEN JERICO** Fri 16 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ROADRUNNER** Fri 16 Jan, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**FRANK HARRISON** Fri 16 Jan, 1000 Trades, B'ham

**SONS OF NIRVANA** Fri 16 Jan, The Flapper, B'ham

**BUGEYE** Fri 16 Jan, The Victoria, Birmingham

**HOME/LANDS** Fri 16 Jan, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU: A TRIBUTE TO ROBBIE WILLIAMS** Fri 16 Jan,

Birmingham Town Hall

**MAGIC OF MOTOWN** Fri 16 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BIFFY CLYRO + SOFT PLAY + THE ARMED** Fri 16 Jan, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

**OASIS** Fri 16 Jan, Rother Street Arts House, Stratford-upon-Avon

**DANIEL BARRIE AND THE DROP D'S** Fri 16 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE SOUND OF THE APOCALYPSE** Fri 16 Jan, hmv Empire, Coventry

**DIRTY DC** Fri 16 Jan, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**FOREVER CLAPTON** Fri 16 Jan, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**PINK - BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA** Fri 16 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**GUNS 2 ROSES** Fri 16 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**TOTALLY BLONDIE** Fri 16 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**CHLOË CHADWICK** Fri 16 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**CYDONIA KNIGHTS - MUSE TRIBUTE** Fri 16 Jan, The Station, Cannock

**THE MUSIC OF SIMON & GARFUNKEL** Fri 16 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**THE DIRTY ROCKING SCOUNDRELS** Fri 16 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**JOHN BRAMWELL** Fri 16 Jan, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

**THE SUPERSKAS** Fri 16 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**THE FOURMOST** Fri 16 Jan, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shrops

**WOMEN IN ROCK** Fri 16 Jan, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**THE KING'S VOICE STARRING GORDON HENDRICKS** Fri 16 - Sat 17 Jan, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**MAJOR TOMS** Sat 17 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**BORN OF OSIRIS + WITHIN DESTRUCTION + AVERSIONS CROWN + LARCENIA ROE** Sat 17 Jan, The Asylum, Birmingham

**THE CONTEMPORARY CHOIR** Sat 17 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ELLES BAILEY** Sat 17 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**JOHNNY RICKARD IS ELVIS & NEIL DIAMOND** Sat 17 Jan, hmv Empire, Coventry

**JACKSON: THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO THE KING OF POP** Sat 17 Jan, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**WHO'S NEXT** Sat 17 Jan, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**TALON** Sat 17 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**LABOUR OF LOVE - UB40 TRIBUTE** Sat 17 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**A FOREIGNER'S JOURNEY** Sat 17 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC - ABBA TRIBUTE** Sat 17 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**KINGS OF LYON + THE UK STROKES** Sat 17 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**LUKE COMBS UK** Sat 17 Jan, Top Of The World, Stafford

**FATMAN ALLEY** Sat 17 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**ALL 4 INDIE + BRITPOP UNITED** Sat 17 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**GERMA ADAN AND XHOSA COLE** Sat 17 Jan, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**THE HIGHSTOOL PROPHETS** Sun 18 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SLAUGHTER TO PREVAIL + DYING FETUS + SUICIDE SILENCE + ANNOTATIONS OF AN AUTOPSY** Sun 18 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW** Sun 18 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DUST** Sun 18 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**FOREVER BILLY JOEL** Sun 18 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**THE SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY EXPERIENCE** Sun 18 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE LYDIA RAE QUARTET** Sun 18 Jan, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**RICH PARSONS** Sun 18 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**TEDDY SWIMS AND RAG 'N' BONE MAN - PERFORMED BY SAM MURRAY** Sun 18 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

## Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach, Ligeti, Bourgeois & more..., Mon 12 Jan, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**THE KNIGHT'S DREAM** Featuring Helen Charlston (mezzo-soprano) & Sholto Kynoch (piano). Programme includes works by R Schumann, H Werner & more..., Tues 13 Jan, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**LI-WEI QIN (CELLO) AND JEREMY YOUNG (PIANO)** Programme includes works by Britten, R Schumann & Beethoven, Wed 14 Jan, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS MAHLER** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Peter Moore (trombone). Programme includes works by Mahler & Dai Fujikura, Thurs 15 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SPRING LUNCHTIME ORGAN RECITALS** Featuring Nicholas Freestone (organ), Thurs 15 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: FLUTE & HARP** Featuring Marie-Christine Zupancic (flute) & Katherine Thomas (harp). Programme includes works by Bax, Dodgson, Harty & Alwyn, Fri 16 Jan, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**ROYAL STRING QUARTET** Featuring Izabella Szalaj-Zimak & Elwira Przybyłowska (violins), Paulenne Czarny (viola) & Michał Pepol (cello). Programme includes works by Mozart, Grażyna Bacewicz & Brahms, Fri 16 Jan, Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa

**SEBASTIEN SGOURADITIS IN CONCERT** Fri 16 Jan, St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

**AN EVENING OF MEDIEVAL MUSIC** Featuring Marco Cannavo (hurdy gurdy) & Ricardo De Noronha (percussion), Sat 17 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**RACHEL PODGER (VIOLIN) & BRECON BAROQUE IN CONCERT** Programme includes works by Biber, JJ Froberger & JH Kapsberger, Sun 18 Jan, Malvern Festival Theatre

## Comedy

**RUSSELL HOWARD** Wed 14 - Thurs 15 Jan, Crewe Lyceum  
**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY**

**ROBINSON & COMIC TBC** Thurs 15 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham  
**JACK BARRY, KEITH FARNAN, ELAINE ROBERTSON, MATT ROUSE & ALFIE PACKHAM** Fri 16 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PHIL WANG, TOM WARD & SHAPPI KHORSANDI (PICTURED)** Fri 16 Jan, Lichfield Garrick



**RICHARD BLACKWOOD** Fri 16 Jan, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**EDDY BRIMSON, RICKY BALSHAW, DEE ALLUM & STEVIE GRAY** Fri 16 Jan, Bedworth Civic Hall

**SCOTT BENNETT, DEAN COUGHLIN, ROB ROUSE & COMIC TBC** Sat 17 Jan, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**JACK BARRY, KEITH FARNAN, ELAINE ROBERTSON & COMIC TBC** Sat 17 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**IAN STONE** Sat 17 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**RICHARD BLACKWOOD** Sat 17 Jan, Wolverhampton Arts Centre



## Theatre

**SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS** World premiere comedy whodunnit, written by and starring Fringe favourites The Penny Dreadfuls and featuring brand-new songs by Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber, until Sun 18 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

**THE LITTLE MERMAID** Theresa Heskins directs a new version of Hans Christian Andersen's famous fairytale, until Sat 24 Jan, The New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**ANNIE** Mellow Dramatics present an amateur version of the much-loved rags-to-riches musical, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Jan, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE HUNT FOR MORIARTY** World-premiere production based on short stories by Sir Arthur Conan



Doyle, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**TOAD OF TOAD HALL** Don't Go Into The Cellar's one-man show, in which Jonathan Goodwin plays author Kenneth Grahame, Mr Toad and a host of other characters, Thurs 15 Jan, The Regal, Tenbury

**THE JURY EXPERIENCE** A live theatre show in which the audience becomes the jury, with the ultimate goal of delivering justice, Fri 16 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**SWIVE** The Crescent Theatre Company present an amateur version of Ella Hickson's play about Elizabeth I, Sat 17 - Sat 24 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

## Pantomime

**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK** A 'giant panto adventure', until Sun 18 Jan, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**ROBIN HOOD** A 'sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza' featuring Gok Wan, Matt Slack, Faye Tozer, Andrew Ryan, Matt Cardle, Sandra Marvin and special guest star Christopher Biggins, until Sun 1 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS** Presented by Phoenix Theatre Group, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 Jan, The Henrican, Evesham

**JACK & THE BEANSTALK** Amateur version presented by the Norbury Players, Thurs 15 - Sat 31 Jan, Norbury Theatre, Droitwich

**TREASURE ISLAND** Solihull Society of Arts (SSA) Drama present an amateur version of Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling adventure, Fri 16 - Sun 18 Jan, The Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull

**MOTHER GOOSE** Presented by Stourbridge Pantomime Company, Sat 17 - Sat 24 Jan, Stourbridge Town Hall

## Dance

**NBB (NILAKSHI'S BELLS AND BEATS) PRESENTS: RASADHARA** An annual celebration where artistry meets dedication in a 'mesmerising' display of classical dance, Sun 18 Jan, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

## Light Entertainment

**LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA** Performing a programme of greatest hits from Led Zeppelin, Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Queen, AC/DC, Fleetwood Mac and more..., Wed 14 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE EMPIRE STRIPS BACK: A BURLESQUE PARODY** A show that drops classic Star Wars characters into the world of burlesque, Thurs 15 Jan, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**CÉLINE DION BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Céline tribute January Butler and her live band, Thurs 15 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**PRIMARY SCHOOL BANGERS LIVE** Join James Partridge for an evening of pure nostalgia, stepping back in time to enjoy singalong tunes from primary-school days, Thurs 15 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**PRIMARY SCHOOL BANGERS LIVE** Join James Partridge for an evening of pure nostalgia, stepping back in time to enjoy singalong tunes from primary-school days, Fri 16 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**DRAG ME TO THE 80S** Featuring a full live band and the hits of Kylie, Madonna, Whitney, Bananarama, Abba and more..., Fri 16 Jan, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**SING THE MUSICALS** Featuring a live band, a programme of musical theatre's finest, and a giant screen with lyrics so that audiences can sing along, Fri 16 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**SING-A-LONG-A MATILDA** A screening of the hit musical, accompanied by lyrics so that everybody can join in. Fancy dress is encouraged, Sat 17 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**CANDLELIGHT: CLASSIC ROCK ON STRINGS** A live, multi-sensory musical experience - discover classic rock on strings at Birmingham Cathedral under the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 17 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**CANDLELIGHT: THE BEST OF HANS ZIMMER** A live, multi-sensory musical experience - discover the music of Hans Zimmer at Birmingham Cathedral under the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 17 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE CABARET** The promise of glamour, laughter and feelgood fun, Sat 17 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**THE MAN WHO WAS MAGIC** An 'evening of wonder', as 'secrets unravel and the impossible becomes possible', Sat 17 Jan, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**RAVE ON** Evening of nostalgia featuring renditions of hits from the 1950s and 60s, Sat 17 Jan, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**STUART MICHAEL - THE PSYCHIC MEDIUM** Sat 17 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse

**SING-A-LONG THE GREATEST SHOWMAN** A screening of the hit musical, accompanied by a host who will teach dance moves and explain how to use the interactive prop bag



Rave On - Swan Theatre, Worcester

supplied, Sat 17 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**THE RAT PACK SWING INTO 2026** David Alacey (Lovejoy) stars as Frank Sinatra alongside West End favourite Tim Harwood as Dean Martin and Coronation Street & Hollyoaks star Ashley Campbell as Sammy Davis Jnr, Sat 17 Jan, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE CONTEMPORARY CHOIR** Warwickshire's premier show choir bring 400 powerhouse voices to the stage, accompanied by live musicians from the Jam Hot Showband. All proceeds will support Myton Hospices, Sat 17 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CROONERS** A show full of one liners, laugh-out-loud silliness and musical numbers performed by the Mini Big Band live on stage, Sun 18 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

City manager, Tues 13 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER** Join Peter Bleksley, a founding member of Scotland Yard's undercover unit and former star of Channel Four's Hunted, as he lifts the lid on the most dangerous and hidden aspects of murder investigations, Wed 14 Jan, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**WEST BROM LEGENDS** Join former Baggies footballers Jonas Olsson, Chris Brunt, Zoltan Gera and Jonathan Greening as they share stories and anecdotes from their careers, Fri 16 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**HARRY REDKNAPP - MY LIFE IN FOOTBALL** An evening of 'laughter, football stories and feelgood moments' with the much-loved ex-Spurs, West Ham and Birmingham City manager, Fri 16 Jan, Dudley Town Hall

## Talks & Spoken Word

**HARRY REDKNAPP - MY LIFE IN FOOTBALL** An evening of 'laughter, football stories and feelgood moments' with the much-loved ex-Spurs, West Ham and Birmingham

## Events

**CANDLELIT GHOST TOURS** Join an atmospheric tour of the castle and hear stories of strange noises and mysterious sightings, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Jan, Tamworth Castle



Primary School Bangers Live - Palace Theatre, Redditch & Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



## Gigs

**SHIPZY & LUCY LUNDSTRÖM**  
Tues 20 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**GREG RYAN** Wed 21 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE 502S** Wed 21 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JOHNNIE GUILBERT** Wed 21 Jan, O2 Academy, B'ham

**JOHN RICHARDS BAND** Wed 21 Jan, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**TOMMY EMMANUEL** Wed 21 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

**NICK HARPER** Wed 21 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**TONY CHRISTIE** Wed 21 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**DETTA KENZIE** Thurs 22 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE VINTAGE EXPLOSION** Thurs 22 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

**DETROITWICH FUNK MACHINE** Thurs 22 Jan, Marris Bar, Worcester

**JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW** Thurs 22 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**MONEY FOR NOTHING** Thurs 22 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**FONTAINES YC** Thurs 22 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**THE ROD STEWART STORY** Thurs 22 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**JOHN BRAMWEL** Thurs 22 - Fri 23 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**CRYSTAL CLEAR + TYKE** Fri 23 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**JEFFREY MARTIN** Fri 23 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**GARETH TAYLOR & HIS QUEENIES** Fri 23 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MAN OF THE WORLD: THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN** Fri 23 Jan, Jo Jo Jims, B'ham

**THE UK ROCK SHOW** Fri 23 Jan, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**VOODOO ROOM - A NIGHT OF HENDRIX, CLAPTON & CREAM** Fri 23 Jan, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: MOTOWN SHOW** Fri 23 Jan, Bedworth Civic Hall

**DOWN FOR THE COUNT ALL-STARS** Fri 23 Jan, Number

8, Pershore

**FASTLOVE: THE GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE** Fri 23 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? TINA TURNER TRIBUTE** Fri 23 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**THE SPECIALS LTD** Fri 23 Jan, Kidderminster Town Hall

**GO YOUR OWN WAY - FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY** Fri 23 Jan, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE** Fri 23 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**SOUNDS OF SEATTLE** Fri 23 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**THE MOLOTOVS** Fri 23 Jan, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**DRESSED TO KILL** Fri 23 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**KAISER MONKEY KILLERS** Fri 23 Jan, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

**TOTALLY TINA** Fri 23 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**MAN IN THE MIRROR** Fri 23 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**SIGHT N SOUND** Fri 23 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**ZZ TOPP'D** Fri 23 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**APOLLO SOUL** Fri 23 - Sat 24 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

**HORSE FEATHERS** Sat 24 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**GOON + NERVE AGENT + STRANGLEHOLD + POSER + BLOOD MONEY** Sat 24 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**8 BEFORE AVA + SONS OF EL PASO + CALLUM & THE POOKIES + THE SUPERSEEDERS + PARLEY** Sat 24 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MARMOZETS** Sat 24 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BURNING WITCHES + HAMMER KING** Sat 24 Jan, The Asylum, Birmingham

**THE DRIFTERS** Sat 24 Jan, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**THE BLACK CHARADE + FELL OUT BOY + DOOKIE** Sat 24 Jan, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**BACK TO BACHARACH** Sat 24 Jan, Sutton Coldfield

Town Hall

**STANDARD SOUND PROJECT + VOYEAKS + THE UNSAINTED + DANNY MARLEY** Sat 24 Jan, hmv Empire, Coventry

**LIPSKNOT + INFLECTIONS** Sat 24 Jan, Arches Venue, Coventry

**SOUND OF THE LIONESS - A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF AMY WINEHOUSE** Sat 24 Jan, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**THE HIGHTONES** Sat 24 Jan, Bedworth Civic Hall

**RADIO COSTELLO - ELVIS COSTELLO TRIBUTE** Sat 24 Jan, Marris Bar, Worcester

**RUSS BALLARD** Sat 24 Jan, Huntingdon Hall, Worcs

**THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN** Sat 24 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**JEAN GENIE** Sat 24 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**ROXETTE UK** Sat 24 Jan, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**CYDONIA KNIGHTS - MUSE TRIBUTE** Sat 24 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**DARKSIDE THE PINK FLOYD SHOW** Sat 24 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE PHONICS** Sat 24 Jan, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**NOT RADIOHEAD** Sat 24 Jan, The Station, Cannock

**LOST IN MUSIC: ONE NIGHT AT THE DISCO** Sat 24 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**ONE VOICE - THE BARRY MANILOW SHOW** Sat 24 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROCK FOR HEROES** Sat 24 Jan, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**ANNURAL KHALID** Sun 25 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ROMEO STODART & REN HARVIEU** Sun 25 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LUTHER LIVE & VELVET VOICES** Sun 25 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**HEARTBREAK - THE TOM PETTY SHOW** Sun 25 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

**WILL BARNES QUARTET** Sun 25 Jan, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**MARTYN JOSEPH** Sun 25 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Classical Music

**RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC** Featuring Ella Cordon Vieito (piano), Mon 19 Jan, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CBSO: RUSH HOUR CONCERT** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Oliver Janes & Toby Kearney (presenters). Programme includes works by Gershwin, Tues 20 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS RHAPSODY IN BLUE** Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Stewart Goodyear (piano). Programme includes works by Gershwin, Ives, Carlos Simon & Missy Mazzoli, Wed 21 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: AMERICAN STRINGS** Featuring Georgia Hannant, Yuriko Matsuda & Bethan Allmand (violins), Jessica Tickle & Amy Thomas (violas), Kate Setterfield & Miguel Fernandes (cellos) & Jeremy Watt (double bass). Programme includes works by Walker, Jessie Montgomery & John Adams, Thurs 22 Jan, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**CBSO: MUSIC FROM STAGE AND SCREEN** Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor), Katie Birtill & Tim Howar (vocalists), Fri 23 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**VOXBOX: BRILLIANCE, FREEDOM AND VITALITY** Featuring Members of the RBC Vocal Department. Programme includes works by Dowland, Purcell & Britten, Fri 23 Jan, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**JULIAN HELLABY PIANO RECITAL SERIES** Fri 23 Jan, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**CLARA SCHUMANN PIANO CONCERTO** Featuring Juan Ortuño (conductor) & Ben Powell (soloist). Programme also includes works by Chabrier & Sibelius, Sat 24 Jan, St John Fisher Catholic College, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs

**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: NIGHT MUSIC** Featuring Craig Ogden (guitar) & Miloš Milivojević (accordion). Programme includes works by Mozart, Piazzolla, Richter & Tchaikovsky, Sun 25 Jan, Warwick Hall

**LONDON HANDEL PLAYERS** Featuring Rachel Brown (flute & recorder), Adrian Butterfield (violin), Sarah McMahon (cello) & Silas Wollston (harpsichord). Programme includes works by Telemann, Hotteterre, Schmelzer

& more..., Sun 25 Jan, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

## Comedy

**JASON MANFORD** Tues 20 Jan, Lichfield Garrick



**BEN NORRIS, DARREN HARRIOTT & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN** Wed 21 Jan, Henry Tudor Inn, Shrewsbury

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, FRED COOKE & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN** Thurs 22 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SUE PERKINS** Fri 23 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

**FRED COOKE, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN & COMIC TBC** Fri 23 - Sat 24 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**NICK PAGE, JACOB NUSSEY, PETER JAMES & CARL JONES** Sat 24 Jan, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**SARA PASCOE, RHYS JAMES, SARAH KEYWORTH & JOSH PUGH** Sat 24 Jan, Dudley Town Hall

**SUE PERKINS** Sat 24 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**LEE PEART, RICKY BALSHAW, ROGER MONKHOUSE & CHLOE REYNOLDS** Sat 24 Jan, Macready Theatre, Rugby

**SIMON BRODKIN** Sat 24 Jan, Regal, Tenbury Wells

## Theatre

**DONE TO DEATH, BY JOVE!** Gavin Robertson and Nicholas Collett present 'a whodunnit with a difference', in which Holmes & Watson, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple join forces in 'a whirlwind of fast costume changes and misdirected acting hiccups', Mon 19 Jan, Central Library, West Bromwich

**REVISION ON TOUR: MACBETH** Dickens Theatre Company present Shakespeare's 'bloodiest and most thrilling tragedy', Tues 20 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**BLOOD BROTHERS** Willy Russell's iconic musical, telling the story of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on opposite sides of the track, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



**SIX THE MUSICAL** Award-winning musical in which the six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their tales, remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak into an 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power, Tues 20 - Sat 31 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE** Dickens Theatre Company's acclaimed version of Robert Louis Stevenson's gothic thriller, Wed 21 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**ANIMAL FARM** Amateur version of Peter Hall's satirical classic, Wed 21 - Sat 31 Jan, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

**ALL IS BUT FANTASY: LADY MACBETH, EMILIA** A 'theatrical event' in which Shakespeare characters are revisited across two high-energy gig-style performances, Wed 21 Jan - Sat 21 Feb, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

**OLD HERBACEOUS** Giles Shenton's one-man play is a humorous love story of a single-minded man with a passion for plants, Thurs 22 Jan, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**THE GUY WHO DIDN'T LIKE MUSICALS** A horror comedy in which a Grinch named Paul tries (together with his friends) to save the world from musical theatre, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**SWEET HENRY V** Joe Murphy directs Seiriol Davies' new musical - a 'radical reinvention of history that's pounding with camp Celtic vibes', Fri 23 - Sat 24 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

**A COUPLE OF SWELLS** Sarah Archer's show brings to life the story of original drag kings Vesta Tilley and Hetty King - complete with classic music-hall songs, Sat 24 Jan, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND** Amateur production of Lewis Carroll's magical adventure, Sat 24 & Sun 25 Jan, The Little Theatre, Donnington, Telford

## Pantomime

**ROBIN HOOD** A 'sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza' featuring Gok Wan, Matt Slack, Faye Tozer, Andrew Ryan, Matt Cardle, Sandra Marvin and special guest star Christopher Biggins, until Sun 1 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS** Amateur pantomime presented by Kays Theatre Group, Thurs 22 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**TREASURE ISLAND** Amateur pantomime based on Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling adventure, Fri 23 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, Rugby Theatre

## Kids Theatre

### SEARCH FOR THE SECOND STAR:

**REIMAGINED** An immersive journey through Neverland packed with music, play and discovery. Suitable for younger audiences, the performance is presented by Open Theatre, who specialise in non-verbal physical theatre, Sat 24 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

## Dance

**BALLET OF LIGHTS** Fri 23 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**STRICTLY COME DANCING LIVE TOUR** An evening of glitz and glamour as the much-loved TV show takes to the stage. The judges are Shirley Ballas, Anton du Beke and Craig Revel Horwood. Former Strictly dancer Janette Manrara hosts the evening's entertainment, Fri 23 - Sun 24 Jan, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**ACE DANCE: TWAWSI - THE WORLD AS WE SEE IT** New double bill presenting two powerful and contrasting visions of the modern world, Sat 24 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

## Light Entertainment

**MEMORIES STARRING ANITA HARRIS WITH FREDDIE DAVIES** Two of Britain's best-loved entertainers share stories and experiences in celebration of more than 60 years in the business, Wed 21 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**PUNK OFF: THE SOUNDS OF PUNK & NEW WAVE** A 'full-throttle' celebration of the era that tore up the rulebook and made 'being loud' a lifestyle, Thurs 22 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**MOTOWN BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring a cast of talented singers and a live band, Thurs 22 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**AT THE HOP** High-energy musical theatre celebration of the greatest hits of the 1950s and 60s, Fri 23 Jan, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**THE DOUBLE DOLLY'S LINE DANCING PARTY** A show described as 'a hilarious hoedown featuring live Dolly Parton hits, raucous comedy and extraordinary line dancing', Fri 23 Jan, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DAME IDA'S INTERNATIONAL CABARET SHOW** Featuring 25 costume changes and a medley of hits from favourite musicals, Sat 24 Jan, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**ONE VOICE - THE BARRY MANILOW SHOW** Live tribute featuring a full band and showgirls, Sat 24 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde - Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

### BOTTOMS UP: BURLESQUE & CABARET

The 'creme de la creme' of the cabaret world take to the stage 'to surprise and delight', Sat 24 Jan, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**JOE ROONEY: A CELEBRATION OF FATHER TED** Popular tribute show featuring, among other attractions, a dancing priests competition and appearances by a nursery-rhyme singing Ziggy Stardust, Nirvana and Johnny Cash..., Sat 24 Jan, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**BACK TO BACHARACH** A musical journey featuring masterpieces from Burt Bacharach's songbook, Sat 24 Jan, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

## Talks & Spoken Word

### BLACK BALL 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Snooker greats Steve Davis & Dennis Taylor recreate the match that gripped the nation - the 1985 World Snooker Final. John Virgo hosts the evening's proceedings, Wed 21 Jan, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**AN EVENING WITH STOKE LEGENDS** Join Stoke City's Robert Huth, Glenn Whelan and Ricardo Fuller for an

evening of dressing-room tales, Fri 23 Jan, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**AN EVENING WITH SUSIE DENT** Brand-new touring show celebrating the joys of the English language with Britain's best-loved wordsmith Susie, Sat 24 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Events

**WILD ABOUT WINGS** Featuring the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, Sat 24 Jan, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shrops

**DISCO BLISS DAY PARTY** Featuring 70s disco and 80s pop, Sat 24 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**WINTER LADIES DAY 2026** Enjoy live jump racing as horses and jockeys tackle fences and hurdles, Sat 24 Jan, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

**BONGO'S BINGO** The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 24 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**BRITISH MINI CLUB - MINI FAIR** Featuring top Mini traders & Mini jumble exhibitors, and a decade-spanning display of Minis, Sun 25 Jan, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford



Done To Death By Jove - Central Library, West Bromwich



## Gigs

**THISTLE. + AIN'T** Mon 26 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**MON ROVIA** Mon 26 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DEAN Z - THE ULTIMATE ELVIS** Mon 26 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**SHADER + THE GROVES** Mon 26 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**CLASSIC ROCK SHOW** Mon 26 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**KAIA KATER** Tues 27 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**BROWN HORSE** Tues 27 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**OSLO TWINS** Tues 27 Jan, The Victoria, Birmingham

**CAROL HODGE + EVE BUCKLEY** Tues 27 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY** Tues 27 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**JANET KAY** Wed 28 Jan, The Jam House, B'ham

**HARRY STRANGE** Wed 28 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SATURDAYS AT YOUR PLACE** Wed 28 Jan, The Flapper, Birmingham

**DEAFDEAFDEAF** Wed 28 Jan, The Victoria, B'ham

**BRADLEY** Wed 28 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE ORIELLES** Wed 28 Jan, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**JOHN BRAMWELL** Wed 28 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE GOLDEN DREGS + DANA GAVANSKI** Thurs 29 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**LUCINDA WILLIAMS** Thurs 29 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

**PAUL DUNMALL INVITES: FAITH BRACKENBURY** Thurs 29 Jan, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**BEN HOLDER** Thurs 29 Jan, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**BIG SEXY NOISE** Thurs 29 Jan, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**MARTYN JOSEPH** Thurs 29 Jan, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**WE THREE KINGS OF ROCK N ROLL** Thurs 29 Jan, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**WREX + DIE DAN DIE** Thurs 29 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**SOUL BROTHERS SYNDICATE** Thurs 29 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**RADIO GAGA - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Thurs 29 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL** Thurs 29 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**THE BEAT FEATURING RANKING JNR** Fri 30 Jan, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**THE COLLECTIVE** Fri 30 Jan, The Jam House, B'ham

**DISGUSTING SISTERS** Fri 30 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE BLACK FRIDAYS** Fri 30 Jan, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**XANA** Fri 30 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JINJER + UNPROCESSED + TEXTURES** Fri 30 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**GREEN FAKE + RAGE UK** Fri 30 Jan, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE DUNWELLS** Fri 30 Jan, The Victoria, Birmingham

**DONOVAN HAFFNER** Fri 30 Jan, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**JASON DERULO** Fri 30 Jan, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**WOMEN IN ROCK** Fri 30 Jan, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE KILLERZ** Fri 30 Jan, hmv Empire, Coventry

**LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY SHOW** Fri 30 Jan, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**GWENIFER RAYMOND + HARESS** Fri 30 Jan, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**SOUL REBELLION + JIM SANDERS** Fri 30 Jan, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**THE BAR STEWARD SONS OF VAL DOONICAN** Fri 30 Jan, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**SOPHIE LLOYD + BEX** Fri 30 Jan, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**THE BUG CLUB** Fri 30 Jan, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**LAID - JAMES TRIBUTE** Fri

30 Jan, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**DOOMSDAY SUN + ATARKA + A THOUSAND CUTS** Fri 30 Jan, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

**MUCH ADD ABOUT JAZZ** Fri 30 Jan, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**LEGEND - THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY** Fri 30 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**TOM ROBINSON WITH ADAM PHILIPS** Fri 30 Jan, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**TARGET** Fri 30 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**LOST IN MUSIC** Fri 30 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**GREEN DAY NIGHT STARRING NO.1 TRIBUTE DOOKIE** Fri 30 Jan, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**NAISSANCE** Fri 30 Jan, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shrops

**VERSAINTS + SUPERHOUSE** Fri 30 Jan, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shrops

**RESOLVE + WINDWAKER + ASHEN + TROPIC GOLD** Sat 31 Jan, The Asylum, Birmingham

**DOWN FOR THE COUNT** Sat 31 Jan, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**UK QUEEN** Sat 31 Jan, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**HEDERA** Sat 31 Jan, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**ROB LAMBERTI PRESENTS: PERFECTLY GEORGE** Sat 31 Jan, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**LAST RESORT** Sat 31 Jan, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE BILLY JOEL COLLECTION** Sat 31 Jan, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**TOM HINGLEY + ANDY GOWER** Sat 31 Jan, The Artisan Tap, Stoke

**THE DUSTY SHOW** Sat 31 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE JO BALDWIN PROJECT** Sat 31 Jan, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS** Sat 31 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TONY CHRISTIE** Sat 31 Jan, Shrewsbury Abbey

**WEST COAST EAGLES** Sat 31 Jan, Rugeley Rose Theatre

## Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by Mozart, Mon 26 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

**RBC OUT AND ABOUT: DOUBLES** Featuring RBC Percussion & RBC Stage Management. Programme includes works by Reich, M Mazzoli, Glass & more..., Tues 27 Jan, Centrala, Minerva Works, Birmingham

**ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT** Featuring Katherine Spencer (clarinet). Programme includes works by Arriaga, Mozart & Haydn, Wed 28 Jan, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**APOLLO'S CABINET** Programme includes works by C.P.E. Bach, Buxtehude, Telemann & more..., Wed 28 Jan, Keele University Chapel

**CHRISTOPHER HUGHES ORGAN RECITAL** Thurs 29 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

**ALIM BEISEMBAYEV PIANO RECITAL** Programme includes works by Schubert & Liszt, Thurs 29 Jan, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**RBC MUSICIANS: TRY ME, GOOD KING** A semi-staged concert bringing to life the extraordinary tales of Henry VIII's six wives. Programme includes works by Libby Larsen, Alec Roth, a new commission by Christopher Churcher & more..., Fri 30 Jan, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**POLINA OSETINSKAYA PIANO RECITAL** Programme includes works by J.S. Bach & Rachmaninov, Fri 30 Jan, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: COME AND SING!** Featuring Paul Spicer (director), Paul Carr (accompanist) plus Isaac Boulter & Corinna Gregory (soloists). An afternoon singing workshop, followed by an informal performance of Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise, Sat 31 Jan, Selly Oak Methodist Church, B'ham

**ARMONICO: A MOMENT OF CALM** Featuring Eloise Irving (soprano & electric harp) & Christopher Monks (director), Sat 31 Jan, St Mary's Church, Warwick

## Comedy

**MILTON JONES, IAN SMITH & LAURA LEXX** Tues 27 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JORDAN BROOKES, KAZEEM JAMAL & COMIC TBC** Thurs 29 Jan, The Glee Club, B'ham

**RUSSELL HOWARD** Thurs 29 - Fri 30 Jan, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ED BYRNE AND FRIENDS** Fri 30 Jan, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**SCOTT BENNETT, ALEXANDRA HADDOW, JAMES DANIELEWSKI & ADAM BEARDSMORE** Fri 30 Jan, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**CHUCKL. MALVERN WITH RUSSELL KANE** Fri 30 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**ANDY ROBINSON, JORDAN BROOKES, KAZEEM JAMAL & COMIC TBC** Fri 30 - Sat 31 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MARLON DAVIS, ALEX MITCHELL, TADIWA MAHLUNGE & JON PEARSON** Sat 31 Jan, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**MARK SIMMONS** Sat 31 Jan, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**NICK HELM, STEPHEN WILLIAMS & GAV WEBSTER** Sat 31 Jan, The Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

## Theatre

**ONE FOR THE ROAD** The Nonentities present an amateur version of Willy Russell's suburban comedy, Mon 26 - Sat 31 Jan, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**THE WOMAN IN BLACK** Susan Hill's chilling production - a 'brilliantly successful study in atmosphere, illusion and controlled horror', Tues 27 - Sat 31 Jan, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**BLOOD BROTHERS** Willy Russell's iconic musical, telling the story of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on opposite sides of the track, Tues 27 - Sat 31 Jan, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**THE HERBAL BED** Amateur version of Peter Whelan's historical drama, based on real events that took place in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1613, Tues 27 - Sat 31 Jan, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**PEOPLE** Highbury Players present an amateur version of Phil Astle's comic play about two sisters tasked with managing the family estate, Tues 27 Jan - Sat 7 Feb, Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield

**LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL JR** Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur version of the upbeat musical, Wed 28 - Thurs 29 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SEASONS GREETINGS** Swan



# Monday 26 - Saturday 31 January

Theatre Amateur Company present Alan Ayckbourn's comedy classic, Wed 28 - Sat 31 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**ALL IS BUT FANTASY: JULIET, RICHARD III** A 'theatrical event' in which Shakespeare characters are revisited across two high-energy gig-style performances, Wed 28 Jan - Sat 21 Feb, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

**MYRA'S STORY** Acclaimed one-hander in which Fionna Hewitt-Twamley, playing various characters, tells the heart-wrenching story of Myra and the events that led to her becoming homeless and living on the streets of Dublin, Thurs 29 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

**WAKE UP, SAMMY!** The journey of one man's life, told by the people he met, loved and inspired, Thurs 29 - Fri 30 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE ORESTEA: LIBATION BEARERS AND EUMENIDES** Warwick Classics Society present a play that showcases the boldness and experimental imagination of Greek dramatist Aeschylus, Thurs 29 - Fri 30 Jan, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH** Former Poet Laureate Casey Bailey's acclaimed production asks important questions about colonial legacy and contested heritage, at the same time shining a light on the criminal justice system, Thurs 29 - Sat 31 Jan, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND** Amateur production of Lewis Carroll's magical adventure, Sat 31 Jan, The Little Theatre, Donnington

**DONE TO DEATH, BY JOVE!** Gavin Robertson and Nicholas Collett present 'a whodunnit with a difference', in which Holmes & Watson, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple join forces in 'a whirlwind of fast costume changes and misdirected acting hiccups', Sat 31 Jan, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**THAT NIGHT IN MANCHESTER** A 'deeply personal, funny, and emotional tale', set against the backdrop of Manchester in the 1980s and 90s, Sat 31 Jan, Dudley Town Hall

**MADAM BUTTERFLY - THE FAREWELL TOUR** Ellen Kent's award-winning production of Puccini's heart-breaking tale, Sat 31 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**AGATHA APPLETON AND THE PERIL OF THE PYRAMIDS** Rain Or Shine Theatre promise 'an evening of side-splitting spills and thrills in a theatrical tour-de-force for all the family', Sat 31 Jan, The Regal Theatre, Tenbury Wells

**DARE TO DREAM JR** Get Your Wigle On present a Disney musical revue featuring numbers from Encanto, Frozen II, The Princess And The Frog,

Coco and many more, Sat 31 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Pantomime

**JACK & THE BEANSTALK** Presented by Startime Variety, Thurs 29 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, Halesowen Town Hall

**SNOW WHITE** Amateur version presented by Starlight School of Dance, Fri 30 - Sat 31 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

## Adult Pantomime

**JACK OFF THE BEANSTALK** Adult-only version of a seasonal favourite, Fri 30 - Sat 31 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

## Kids Theatre

**THE 3 LITTLE PIGS TAILS** A funny, warm-hearted and interactive rustic tale featuring puppetry and live music to entertain the whole family, Sat 31 Jan, Wednesbury Library

**JUSTIN LIVE: JUSTIN TIME TO ROCK** A show suitable for the whole family in which CBeebies star Justin Fletcher (and his rock band) need help in choosing the best songs to sing and dance to, Sat 31 Jan, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

## Light Entertainment

**DEAD RINGERS** The multi-award-winning topical satire show takes to the road. Jon Culshaw, Jan Ravens, Lewis MacLeod and Duncan Wisbey star, Wed 28 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**PUNK OFF: THE SOUNDS OF PUNK & NEW WAVE** A 'full-throttle' celebration of the era that tore up the rulebook and made 'being loud' a lifestyle, Wed 28 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**THE D-DAY DARLINGS** A nostalgic journey through the defining sounds of the 20th century, from the heartfelt harmonies of the 1940s to the swinging rhythms of post-war eras, Wed 28 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

**IT'S MY LIFE! TENUOUS LINKS AND OTHER THINGS I WISH I'D WRIT** Musical comedy celebration - a 'tuneful night of belly laughs', Thurs 29 Jan, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

**THE DRIFTERS BY CANDLELIGHT** Evening of classic hits featuring Saturday Night At The Movies, You're More Than A Number, Come On Over To My Place, Under The Boardwalk and many more, Thurs 29 Jan, Worcester Cathedral

## BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

**WORLD TOUR** Brand-new collection of short films featuring 'extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography', Thurs 29 Jan, Malvern Theatres

**SEND IN THE CLOWNS: UNPOPULAR** Raucous drag revue promising 'an unforgettably wild evening packed with outrageous comedy, spine-tingling live vocals, camp cabaret, and audience singalongs', Thurs 29 - Sat 31 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

**DIVINA DE CAMPO - BACK ON THE ROAD** The Drag Race UK star is joined by Ric 'the Piano Guy' Neale for an evening of soaring songs, signature humour and sparkling cabaret, Fri 30 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

**THE MUSIC OF U2 BY CANDLELIGHT** Hear all your favourites performed live by candlelight, Fri 30 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**LOST IN MUSIC** Dress to impress and re-live timeless hits from Donna Summer, Gloria Gaynor, Earth, Wind & Fire, Sister Sledge and Chic, Fri 30 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THAT'S LIFE! - A CELEBRATION OF SWING** 'An evening of crooning, class and a whole lot of brass', Sat 31 Jan, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**SWING THAT MUSIC!** Down For The Count All-Stars recreate the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Nat King Cole and Ella Fitzgerald, Sat 31 Jan, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**COUNTRY BY CANDLELIGHT** Hear all your favourite hits from the likes of Dolly Parton, Luke Combs, Kenny Rogers, Rascal Flatts, Shania Twain, John Denver, Darius Rucker, Chris Stapleton and many more... Sat 31 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**THE BOLLYWOOD BRATPACK FEAT. CHIRAG RAO** Featuring much-loved numbers from, among others, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Dean Martin, presented alongside hits from Bollywood icons Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar and Sonu Nigam, Sat 31 Jan, Wolverhampton Arts Centre



**DRAG ME TO THE 80S** Featuring a full live band and music from Kylie, Madonna, Whitney, Bananarama, Abba and more..., Sat 31 Jan, Walsall Arena

**THE DAZZLING DIAMONDS: COMEDY DRAG REVUE SHOW** Featuring a cast of three 'internationally acclaimed' performers showcasing 'outrageous

comedy, sensational live vocals and jaw-dropping dance routines', Sat 31 Jan, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**RICHARD JONES: THE SOUND OF MAGIC** An evening with the only magician ever to win Britain's Got Talent, Sat 31 Jan, Stourbridge Town Hall

**COUNTRY BY CANDLELIGHT** Experience the biggest and best of country music in a show featuring a cast of world-class vocalists and live band, Sat 31 Jan, Lichfield Cathedral

**ED SHEERAN MEETS COLDPLAY BY CANDLELIGHT** A live, multi-sensory musical experience under the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 31 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**TRIBUTE TO QUEEN BY CANDLELIGHT** A live, multi-sensory musical experience under the gentle glow of candlelight, Sat 31 Jan, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

## Talks & Spoken Word

**STRANGE, BUT TRUE CRIME** Join ex-forensics lecturer Jennifer Rees as she examines strange-but-true crime stories. An ideal evening for fans of true-crime documentaries and podcasts, Wed 28 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**BLACK BALL 40TH ANNIVERSARY** Snooker greats Steve Davis & Dennis Taylor recreate the match that gripped the nation - the 1985 World Snooker Final. John Virgo hosts the evening's proceedings, Thurs 29 Jan, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**MURDER STAGED** Join research psychologist and psychopathy expert Cheish Merryweather for a deep dive into the 'embedded lies at crime scenes', Thurs 29 Jan, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**AN EVENING WITH JASON ROBINSON** An audience with the England sporting legend, who achieved success in both rugby league and rugby union, Thurs 29 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**WOLVERHAMPTON LITERARY FESTIVAL POETRY SLAM 2026** Watch 15 poets go head-to-head in a fast-paced poetry competition, Sat 31 Jan, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

## Events

**THE ARENACROSS TOUR 2026** Riders go bar-to-bar on one of the most demanding indoor tracks ever built, Sat 31 Jan, bp pulse LIVE, B'ham

**NATIONAL RUNNING SHOW 2026** Bringing together inspirational speakers, cutting-edge technologies and the best in nutrition, Sat 31 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, NEC, Birmingham



## WIN! with What's On...



### Win! A family ticket to see Robin Hood!

Featuring stunning scenery and dazzling costumes, Robin Hood at the Birmingham Hippodrome is 'the ultimate sheriff-busting pantomime extravaganza', with Gok Wan, Faye Tozer, Christopher Biggins and Matt Cardle joining panto regular Matt Slack. What's On is offering readers the chance to win a family ticket to see the show on Friday 9 January at 7.30pm.

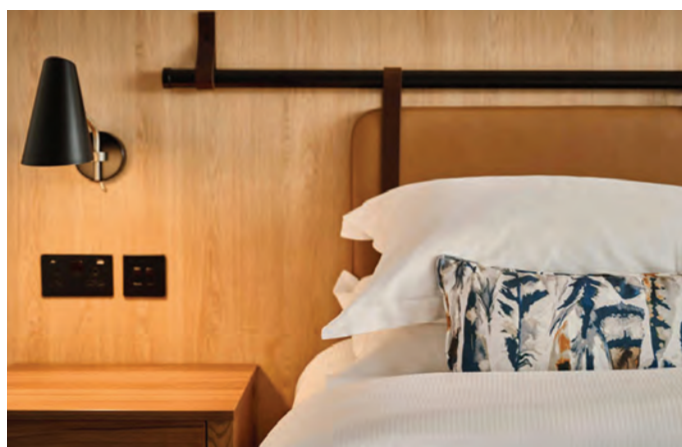
**Competition closes Friday 2 January**



### Win! Two tickets to see Sherlock Holmes And The 12 Days Of Christmas!

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson investigate a series of murders in Victorian London's theatreland in this laugh-out-loud murder-mystery, showing at Birmingham Rep until the middle of the month. What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win a pair of tickets to see the Thursday 15 January performance of the show.

**Competition closes Monday 5 January**



### Win! An overnight stay at The Belfry!

The Belfry Hotel & Resort boasts stylish bedrooms, vibrant dining, and elegant event spaces. Unwind at the spa, work out at the club, or tee off on the world-class golf courses, including the renowned Brabazon, which hosts the Ryder Cup and the British Masters. What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win an overnight stay in a deluxe room at the hotel.

**Competition closes Friday 9 January**



### Win! Two tickets to Strictly Come Dancing Live!

The Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour is waltzing its way into Birmingham this month with a cracking line-up of celebrities and professional dancers, alongside judges Shirley Ballas, Anton Du Beke and Craig Revel Horwood. What's On is offering one lucky reader two tickets to see the show at the city's Utilita Arena on Sunday 25 January at 6.30pm.

**Competition closes Monday 12 January**

# For your chance to WIN! with





### Win! A family ticket to see the RSC's *The BFG*!

Roald Dahl's delightful tale, packed full of frobscottle and whizzpoppers, has been given the Royal Shakespeare Company family-show treatment and runs throughout this month. What's On is offering readers the chance to win a family ticket to see the production on Saturday 24 January (at 2pm) at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

**Competition closes Wednesday 14 January**



### Win! A Freedom of the Line family ticket to Severn Valley Railway!

The Severn Valley Railway offers visitors the chance to enjoy journeys behind original steam trains and heritage diesel locomotives as they make their way through 16 miles of picturesque countryside. What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win a Freedom of the Line family ticket (two adults and up to four children).

**Competition closes Monday 19 January**



### Win! A meal for two at 24 Stories restaurant!

Birmingham's 24 Stories - the city's highest restaurant - boasts a modern British menu, signature cocktails, and panoramic 360° views from its rooftop location.

What's On is giving away a meal for two as a competition prize. The deal includes a welcome drink, a three-course meal, and a bottle of wine as selected by the sommelier.

**Competition closes Monday 19 January**



### Win! Two tickets to see BRB's *Don Quixote*!

Carlos Acosta's sparkling production of 19th-century masterpiece *Don Quixote* shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Thursday 12 to Saturday 21 February.

What's On is offering readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to see this Birmingham Royal Ballet production at the theatre on its opening night (Thursday the 12th).

**Competition closes Friday 30 January**

**What's On visit: [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)**



## WIN! with What's On...



### Win! A family ticket to Birmingham International Tattoo!

A parade unlike any other, the Birmingham International Tattoo brings together massed marching bands, pipes & drums, and displays including the Inter-Service Field Gun Competition and the British Flyball Association competition.

What's On is offering readers the chance to win a family ticket to see the show at bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham, on Saturday 14 February.

**Competition closes Monday 2 February**



### Win! Two weekend tickets to Bearded Theory!

One of the UK's most beloved alternative festivals, Bearded Theory is returning to Catton Park, Derbyshire, from Wednesday 20 to Sunday 24 May and this year features headliners Pixies, Garbage and Skunk Anansie.

What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win two adult weekend tickets (Thursday - Sunday) to the festival.

**Competition closes Monday 9 February**



### Win! Two weekend camping tickets to Shrewsbury Folk Festival!

Shrewsbury Folk Festival returns to the West Mid Showground from Friday 28 to Monday 31 August, with Andy Fairweather Low & The Low Riders, Ferocious Dog and Cara Dillon among the performers. What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win two weekend camping tickets to this year's event.

**Competition closes Monday 2 March**



### Win! Two tickets to see Legally Blonde The Musical!

Based on the award-winning film, Legally Blonde The Musical follows Elle Woods as she transforms from It Girl fashionista to legal ace at Harvard Law School - and all in the name of love!

What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win a pair of tickets to see the hit show at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra on Tuesday 31 March.

**Competition closes Friday 13 March**

For your chance to WIN! with What's On, visit:

# whatsonlive.co.uk



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