

ISSUE 468 JANUARY 2026

What's On

warwickshirewhatson.co.uk



The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind opens at the RSC



Blood Brothers makes a welcome return to Coventry



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





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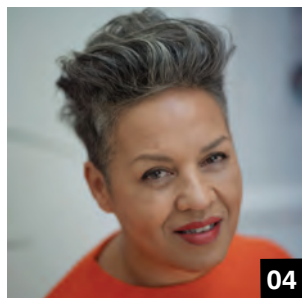


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for more information

*T&Cs apply



**West
Midlands**
Railway



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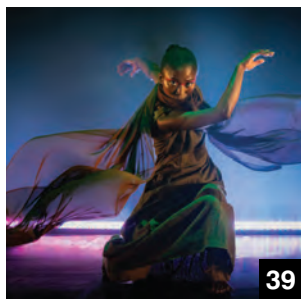
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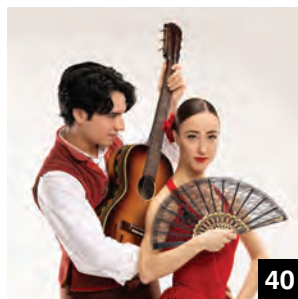
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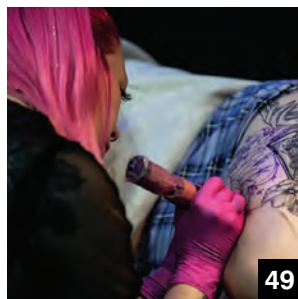
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What's On

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Wolverhampton literature event returns next month

Wolverhampton Literature Festival makes a welcome return next month, running from Friday 6 to Sunday 8 February. Taking place across the city's arts & culture venues, the festival features a programme of literature, poetry, dance and children's activities. Highlights include in-conversation events with writer Kit de Waal and broadcaster Dr Hilary Jones (both pictured). An Evening With Jack The Ripper and The Black Country Women's Poetry Show also feature... To check out the full festival line-up across the three days, and to book tickets, visit wolvesliteraturefestival.co.uk



Panto favourite Tommy J back at Theatre Severn

Theatre Severn pantomime favourite Tommy J Rollason makes a swift post-panto return to the Shrewsbury venue next month to perform his show Keep Smiling. Featuring his signature blend of 'zany comedy, incredible juggling and wild antics', the production shows at the theatre on Saturday 7 February. For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at theatresevern.co.uk

The War Of The Worlds coming to Wolverhampton

Jeff Wayne's Musical Version Of The War Of The Worlds Live! The Concert Experience will be presented at Wolverhampton Civic Hall in the autumn (Thursday 22 October). The hit show 'will immerse audiences in the musical craftsmanship of the original double-album', which was released in 1978 and spent a record-breaking 330 weeks in the UK charts. Tickets can be purchased via the website at thehallswolverhampton.co.uk



Eyes down in Telford...

A 'truly interactive comedy thriller' will visit Dawley Town Hall in Shropshire in the early spring. Presented by Manchester-based ensemble

Just Some Theatre, Eyes Down (Friday 13 March) is a murder-mystery in which the audience play actual games of bingo, complete with prizes. To find out more about the show and book tickets, visit telfordtheatre.com



Intimate date with Russell Watson in Stourbridge

Singing superstar Russell Watson is heading to Stourbridge in the autumn for an intimate show in which he will lift the lid on his life and career. Tickets for the Stourbridge Town Hall event on Friday 20 November can be purchased at boroughhalls.co.uk



Rick Astley to perform in Ludlow this summer

Pop favourite Rick Astley is the latest artist to join the line-up for Ludlow Castle's 2026 concert series, performing on Friday 24 July alongside Liverpool alt-pop icons the Lightning Seeds. Tickets for the performance can be booked at futuresound.seetickets.com

Trentham Live confirmed to make a return in 2026

After a hiatus in 2025, Trentham Estate has announced that its popular music festival, Trentham Live, will return this summer, taking place at the venue from Thursday 20 to Sunday 23 August. Chart-topping boyband Five have been announced as headliners for the Saturday night. They will be supported by The Wanted 2.0. For more information and to book tickets, head to trentham.co.uk

Ironbridge eatery to host its first ever Fire Festival

Shropshire restaurant Embers is to host its first-ever Fire Festival in the spring. Headed up by Adam Purnell, aka Shropshire Lad, and taking place at Ironbridge's Dale End Park on Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 May, the family-friendly event will feature live fire cooking demonstrations, 'world-class' pit masters & BBQ vendors, live music and DJs. Tickets can be purchased via the event's website at embersfirefestival.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



Michael Ball set to tour in the autumn

Michael Ball will visit two West 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.

A 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



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



The Silence Of The Lambs heading for the region 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

Lisa and Kim team up for 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



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

Call The Midwife's Helen George to star in classic musical 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, Midlands-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 tickets, visit HighSocietyMusical.com



West End star Kerry Ellis set to rock in Shrewsbury

West End musical theatre favourite Kerry Ellis will stop off at Shrewsbury venue The Buttermarket next autumn (Sunday 15 November) with her Rock Anthems tour. Commenting on the news, Kerry said: "I've been a fan of classic rock music all my life, having been introduced to the genre as a little girl by my parents. This tour is incredibly special to me - I get to perform the rock anthems that punctuated my life and share the stories behind them. Get ready to rock!" For more information and to book tickets, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk



Shropshire Oktoberfest to return in the autumn

Shropshire Oktoberfest returns to Shrewsbury's Quarry Park on Friday 2 & Saturday 3 October. The ever-popular event will once again be championing the region's best breweries, cider makers, drinks producers and distilleries. As well as showcasing 150-plus drinks and a wide selection of street food, the festival will also include a programme of entertainment, with a live-music stage, a silent disco and carpool karaoke all featuring. Tickets are available by visiting tickets.shropshirefestivals.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



The Beekeeper Of Aleppo returns to Theatre Severn

Nesrin Alrefaai & Matthew Spangler's stage adaptation of Christy Leftieri's bestselling novel The Beekeeper Of Aleppo will return to Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn in the spring as part of a new UK tour (Tuesday 19 - Saturday 23 May). The story follows the characters of beekeeper

Nuri and artist Afra, a husband & wife enjoying a simple life in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo. But when war breaks out, the couple must flee for their lives... For more information about the production, and to book tickets, visit the venue's website at theatresevern.co.uk

West Midlands dates for Dr John Cooper Clarke

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



Alexandra Burke to star in new Chaka Khan musical

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

SVR shortlisted for three heritage railway awards

The Severn Valley Railway (SVR) is celebrating after being shortlisted in three categories of the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2026. The awards are widely regarded as the benchmark of excellence across the heritage-rail industry. SVR has been nominated in the Rolling Stock, Innovation of the Year and Rising Star categories. This year's winners will be announced at a high-profile ceremony in Llandudno in March. Fingers crossed!

Bellowhead to celebrate anniversary in the region

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



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2026 Goals: *thanks All sorted,
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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!**

Fatboy Slim in Cannock Chase forest 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

Drag performer La Voix to star as Miss Hannigan

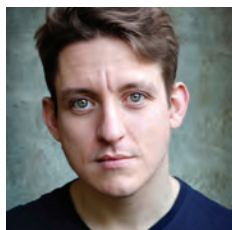
Much-loved drag favourite La Voix is to star as Miss Hannigan when a new touring production of Annie visits Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 June.

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.

Matthew Duckett to play Richard III in Stafford

Matthew Duckett will play the title character in this summer's Stafford Shakespeare production of Richard III, which runs at the town's Gatehouse Theatre from Tuesday 23 June to Saturday 4 July. Matthew recently appeared in the Netflix version of Lady Chatterley's Lover and has previously worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company. To find out more about the production and purchase tickets, visit gatehousetheatre.co.uk



Fundraising walk gets set to celebrate 30th edition

Hill walkers, hikers and fell runners are being invited to a special anniversary event: the 30th edition of Severn Hospice's Pontesbury Potter.

The much-loved community fundraising walk takes place on Saturday 21 March, with a limited number of places available.

To find out more and sign up to take part, visit severnospice.org.uk/events



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 the Lichfield Garrick the following week (Monday 8 - Saturday 13 March). For further information and to book tickets, visit themousetrap.com

Summer date for Hide And Seek at Weston Park

Shropshire's Weston Park estate is the new home of the Hide And Seek music & arts festival.

The popular annual event, which presents a programme of vintage house, disco and techno music, is now in its fifth year and will take place at the venue from Friday 24 to Sunday 26 July.

For further information and to book tickets, visit hideandseekfestival.co.uk

Tickets for the event are now available and can be purchased by visiting the venue's website at theatresevern.co.uk



An intimate evening with Embrace star Danny

Danny McNamara will pay a visit to Shrewsbury's Buttermarket in the autumn. The Embrace lead singer stops off at the venue on Sunday 13 September as part of an intimate talking tour.

For more information and to book tickets, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk

The Proclaimers to visit the region in late 2026

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, visit the website at nothird.co.uk

Comedy favourites to star in Shrewsbury gala show

Comedians Ignacio Lopez (pictured) and Esther Manito will feature on the bill when Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival's flagship gala show takes place at the town's Theatre Severn on Sunday 12 July.

Mumford & Sons touring to Midlands venue

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

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Wed 28 Jan – Sat 7 Feb



The award-winning
children's series on-stage
Bluey's Big Play
Fri 13 – Sun 15 Feb



A celebration of classical
Chinese dance
Shen Yun
Tue 17 & Wed 18 Feb



The Queen of Rock 'n' Roll
**What's Love Got To
Do With It? A Tribute
to Tina Turner**
Thu 19 Feb



See the iconic sitcom
live on stage
**Fawlty Towers
– The Play**
Tue 24 – Sat 28 Feb

Victoria Hall



See Stoke City icons on stage
Stoke Legends
Fri 23 Jan



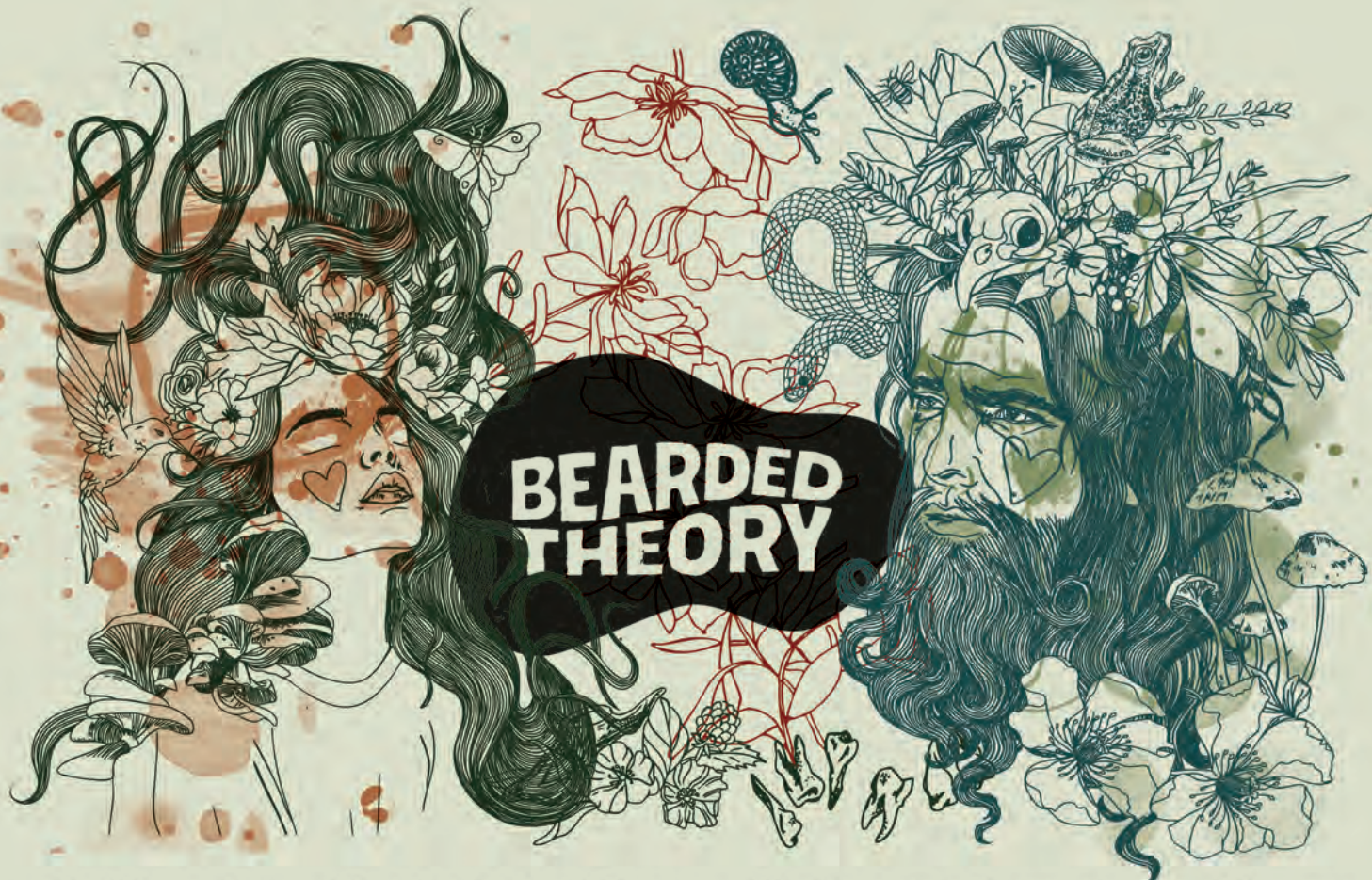
A night of Billy Joel hits
**Uptown Girl – The Billy
Joel Collection**
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Thu 5 Feb



Sing along to your
favourite musical hits
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Thu 12 Feb



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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

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THE LEAGUE OF REBELZ • THE NIGHTINGALES & TED CHIPPINGTON • THE PALE WHITE • THISTLE • PLUS MUCH MORE

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TICKETS & INFO
BEARDEDTHEORY.CO.UK

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, Antarctic 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

BLENHIM 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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2026

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SHREWSBURY FOLK FESTIVAL
28-29-30-31 AUG 2026

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Low & The Low Riders
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

refolkus
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P@ndemonium!
Children's Festival

shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk

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Wolverhampton Art Gallery

KIT DE WAAL
Sat 7 Feb • 3pm
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

IMANI ERRIU
Sun 8 Feb • 1.30pm
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

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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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Birmingham City University

Live music from across the region...

Germa Adan and Xhosa Cole

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 17 January

Two young talents for the price of one is the Assembly Rooms' not-to-be-missed offer to music fans with this mid-month concert... Composer, vocalist & string musician Germa's music traverses Haitian, American and British folk traditions, the rich sonic languages of the Afro-diaspora, and the improvisational spirit of jazz... Hailing from Handsworth, Xhosa was voted the 2018 BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year and is following in the footsteps of fellow Brummie saxophonists Soweto Kinch and Shabaka Hutchings.

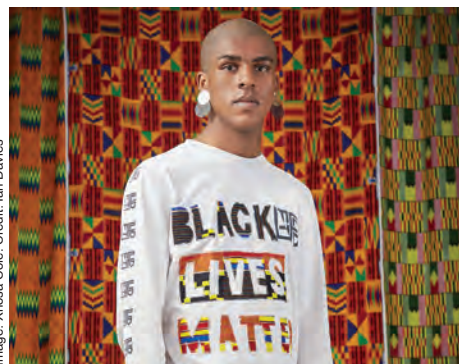


Image: Xhosa Cole. Credit: Ian Davies

Martyn Joseph

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 25 January

Modern folk artist Martyn Joseph is a unique performer who is driven by passion, social awareness, and an abiding love for his trade. "Really, what I do is try to write songs that might step up and make some sense of a moment in time," explains Martyn, whose career has spanned 40-plus years, during which time he's made 27 studio albums and accumulated more than half a million record sales. "A good song makes you feel like you're not alone in the world."



The Molotovs

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 23 January

From busking on the streets of London at the end of lockdown to garnering praise from such industry behemoths as The Libertines and Paul Weller, teenage siblings The Molotovs have moved at an impressive pace to establish themselves as a real force to be reckoned with on the UK music scene. Generating a distinctive sound via a winning combination of raw and gritty

guitar riffs, punchy basslines, and riptide percussion, the London-based creatives have played more than 600 gigs in just a handful of years, a statistic which reflects their unbridled passion for performing live... They visit the Potteries this month in support of debut album *Wasted On Youth*, slated for release exactly a week after their Sugarmill gig.

Danielle Nicole + Malina Moya

The Robin, Bilston, Sat 10 January

Widely considered to be among the finest female blues musicians on the planet, powerhouse vocalist and bass-player-supreme Danielle and genre-blending lefty guitarist Malina are co-headlining this mouthwatering gig at The Robin as part of a short UK tour. Expect songs from their most recent albums, *The Love You Bleed* (Danielle) and *Dirty* (Malina).

Sophie Lloyd

KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton, Fri 30 January

Four million followers across her social channels and more than 180 million views on YouTube is testament to the irrefutable fact that Sophie Lloyd's star is most definitely in the ascendant. Highlights of her still-blossoming career have included touring globally as guitarist for Machine Gun Kelly and receiving a host of rave reviews for her debut album, *Imposter Syndrome*, released back in 2023. Sophie is joined on the bill at KK's by punk rocker Bex.

The Bluetones

Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 24 & Sun 25 January

Cast your mind back to the 1990s and you may recall that The Bluetones were teetering on the edge of Britpop greatness. So what went wrong?... Well, fate can sometimes deal a dodgy hand to those aspiring to musical greatness, and so it proved with The Bluetones. To give them their due, though, they've gamely battled on across the ensuing decades and enjoyed modest success on the touring circuit. They're unlikely to win over any new fans at this stage in proceedings, but the existing ones are unlikely to desert them either.



WHAT'S ON

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC THAT'S RIGHT UP YOUR STREET



Absolutely stoked to witness this magical concert from the front row! It was both thrilling and emotional.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, CBSO CONCERT



THE STORIES OF MOVIE MUSIC WITH MARK KERMODE

Saturday 7 February 2026, 7:30pm
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Hear some of your favourite film scores performed by a full orchestra, presented by film-critic Mark Kermode.



BEST OF BOND

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

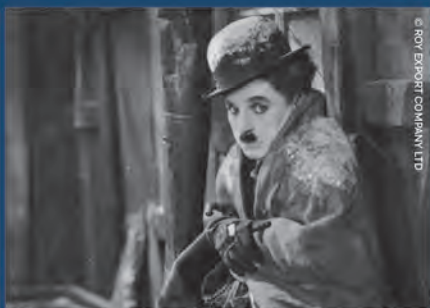
Brush off your tuxedo and let us pour you a martini as the CBSO brings all the glitz and glamour of 007 to Symphony Hall.



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

You love them, so we play them! The Classic FM Hall of Fame is the definitive countdown of Britain's favourite classical music.



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: 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.

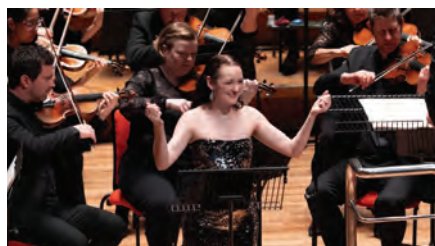
His reason for working at such a frenetic pace? He didn't even know he was supposed to be writing it!...

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 cbso.co.uk



CBSO: Viennese New Year

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 4 January

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 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.

Alim Beisembayev Piano Recital

Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 29 January

Kazakhstan-born Alim rose to international prominence after the Leeds International Piano Competition in 2021, during which his performance of Rachmaninov's Rhapsody On A Theme Of Paganini - accompanied by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra - secured him first prize.

Two years later, he won the hearts of Potteries audiences when he appeared in the Stoke-on-Trent Classics series, his masterful performance ensuring that any and all return visits to the region would be eagerly anticipated.

This latest Stoke stop-off sees Alim performing works by Schubert (Moments Musicaux and Wanderer Fantasy) and Liszt (Sonata in B minor).



Polina Osetinskaya

St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 30 January

Polina Osetinskaya is riding on the crest of a wave professionally, having recently given a series of triumphant recitals at venues across Europe, an engagement that saw her perform three of Prokofiev's piano concertos in a single concert. Accompanist to revered Soviet-born Israeli violinist Maxim Vengerov, she visits Shrewsbury for this Shropshire Music Trust concert prior to appearing with him at the Barbican Centre in London.



The Halle Orchestra: Viennese New Year

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 2 January

Admired around the world for their extensive orchestral repertoire, the Manchester-based Halle welcome in the new year with a selection of much-loved waltzes and polkas.

Stephen Bell is the conductor for a concert that features works by Strauss, Lehar, Suppe, Zeller and Adam. The soloist for the evening is soprano Soraya Mafi (pictured).



WHAT'S ON

Spring 2026



DAVE ROWNTREE

Blur's drummer presents exclusive photography tales and Q&A.
FRI 6 FEB - SPOKEN WORD



JACK RHODES

Brilliant magic show from the BGT runner up.
THU 12TH FEB - THEATRE



BRAVE BETTIE

A magical woodland adventure about friendship and finding your voice.
WED 18TH FEB - THEATRE AGE: 3-8 YRS



JULIAN JOSEPH

Masterful pianist in rare solo night of brilliance.
THU 19TH FEB - JAZZ



I'M MUSLAMIC DON'T PANIK

A joyous story revealing Iran's humour, humanity & hidden warmth.
SAT 24TH FEB - THEATRE



THE BLUETONES ACOUSTIC

Mark Morriss & Adam Devlin bring stripped-back Bluetones faves.
THU 26TH FEB - MUSIC



SKY CONSORT AND EMMA BJORLING

Scandi-Celtic folk fusion delivered with gorgeous chamber energy.
SAT 21ST MAR - FOLK



MILES HUNT

Matinee show added: limited tickets available.
SAT 28TH MAR - MUSIC



HENRY NORMAL AND JAN BRIERTON

An evening of wit, warmth and poetry from Henry Normal and Jan Brierton.
SAT 18TH APR - SPOKEN WORD

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January

Go Your Own Way - Fleetwood Mac Legacy

Fri 23 January 7.30pm £28.50



Drag Me To The 80's

Sat 31 January 7.30pm £27.50



February

Emilio Santoro as Elvis

Fri 27 February 7.30pm £31



May

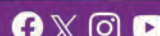
A Night To Remember

Sat 9 May 7.30pm £29.50



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Walsall Council

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 funnymen. "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.

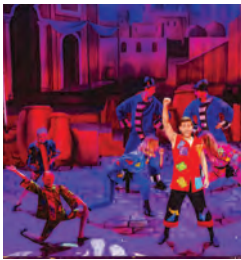
"There are pantos out there that go a bit near the knuckle - but I don't think ours does," says Brad. "I would never tell a joke that was offensive or rude. Sometimes, you can use a double entendre - but then that's in your mind, that's not me. You have to blame yourself!"

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

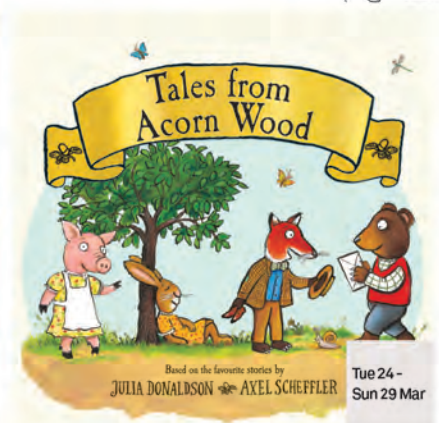
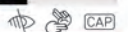
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 20 - Sat 31 January; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 25 - Sat 28 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 31 March - Sat 11 April

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.

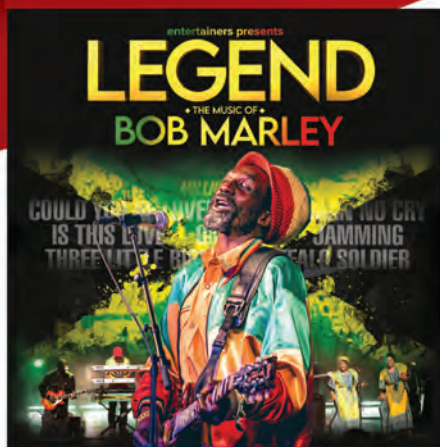
"There's such rich visual language in the story of The Little Mermaid," says Theresa. "Our audience members have been captivated by the way we combine contemporary circus and storytelling, and this is a perfect opportunity to bring these elements together into our biggest family show of the year."



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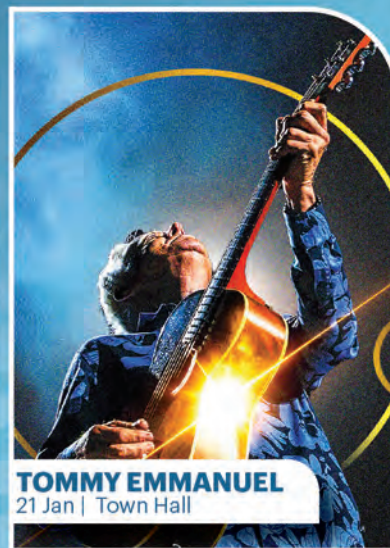
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Theatre previews from around the region



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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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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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 Monro, 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

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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 Kelson 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 Little 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 wits and wills 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."

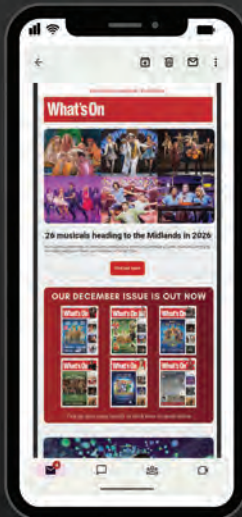
"There's a clock in the living room," says Hardish, in talking about the single item which *he* would select as being most representative of the whole exhibition. "And that is *the clock* from that era in the 1970s - you can see it in the photographs. That clock has sat through nearly 50 years of our 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

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Events previews from around the region



Winter Steam Gala

S 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



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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MATES**



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SHORT**

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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 anthemic song recorded by Coventry trio The Enemy, but also exploring how football, music and Coventry all combine.

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

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

DISC WORLD: 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, Strux 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

CSBO: 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 Duffield (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 Trot, 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 & EURHYTHMICS 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

GOLDILOCKS 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

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

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

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 + VOYEAS + 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 BRODWIN 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 production of George Orwell'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

GOLDLOCKS 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

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

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



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 Wigle 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 ORESTEIA: 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 Wiggle 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

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



OUR BIGGEST EVER LINE-UP IN 2026

JANUARY ▼

Fri 9 Jan:
Billy Joel UK Tribute
Sat 10 Jan:
Glam 45
Fri 16 Jan:
The Superskas
Sat 17 Jan:
Brit Pop United
Sun 18 Jan:
Teddy Swims & Rag&Bone tribute
Fri 23 Jan:
ZZ Topp'd
Sat 24 Jan:
Bongo's Bingo
Sat 24 Jan:
Disco Bliss - 70s/80s Party
Sun 25 Jan:
Country Fest
Fri 30 Jan:
Dookie Live Green Day tribute
Sat 31 Jan:
Bongo's Bingo

FEBRUARY ▼

Fri 6 Feb:
Shep Leppard
Sat 7 Feb:
Miss Rachel Experience Live
Sat 7 Feb:
Martin Kemp - Back to the 80s
Sun 8 Feb:
K Pop Superstars
Fri 13 Feb:
Paul Young & Los Pacaminos

Sat 14 Feb:
Bongo's Bingo
Fri 20 Feb:
These Smiths
Sat 21 Feb:
70s Day Party
Sun 22 Feb:
Dr Hook Songbook
Fri 27 Feb:
Coldplace Coldplay tribute
Sat 28 Feb:
Country Day Party
Sat 28 Feb:
Bongo's Bingo

MARCH ▼

Fri 6 Mar:
Quo Connection
Sat 7 March:
Sounds of Seattle
Fri 13 March:
Chasing Mumford
Sat 14 March:
Trance Club The Cellars
Sat 14 March:
Bongo's Bingo
Sun 15 March:-
Frankie Valli & Four Season tribute MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL
Thurs 19 March:
Calvin Price - Psychic
Fri 20 March:
MacBusted
Sat 21 March:
Ultra White Collar Boxing
Sun 22 March:
Faulty Towers Dining

Fri 27 March:
Tasha as Madonna
Sat 28 March:
Knackered Knees
Sat 28 March:
Bongo's Bingo
Sun 29 March:
Luke Combs UK

APRIL ▼

Thurs 2 April:
Remi's Hot Trio Club
Sat 4 April:
RnB Orchestra
Fri 10 April:
Westlife Tribute
Sat 11 April:
Emo Fest
Sat 11 April:
The Endings The Cellars
Sun 12 April:
Steve Craddock (OCS)
Fri 17 April:
Maet Live - Meat Loaf's Greatest Hits
Sat 18 April:
90s Revival Day Party
Sun 19 April:
John Power (Cast Band)
Thu 23 April:
Stuart Michael Medium
Fri 24 April:
Moretallica PLUS Ghost

MAY ▼

Fri 8 May:
Don't Stop Queen Now ft Mickey Callisto
Sat 9 May:
Fleeting Rumours
Fri 15 May:
Airtight 80s
Fri 22 May:
Northern Live
Fri 29 May:
Blackmoore
Sat 30 May:
Indie Fest
Sun 31 May:
Chris Stapleton UK

JUNE ▼

Thurs 4 June:
Desperados
Fri 5 June:
Nirvana UK / Brain of G
Sat 6 June:
Special Kinda Madness - SKA Night
Sun 7 June:
The Blues Rock Roadshow
Fri 12 June:
Vicky Jackson The No.1 P!NK Show
Thurs 18 June:
The History of Soul
Fri 19 June:
Motorheadache UK

Sun 21 June:
School of Rock
Sat 27 June:
HipHop Fest

JULY ▼

Fri 3 July:
Rammlied - Rammstein Tribute
Sat 4 July:
ABBA Rooftop Party
Fri 10 July:
Tribute to The Doobie Brothers
Fri 24 July:
Dream On: Aerosmith
Sat 25 July:
The RnB Lovers Fest

ALSO ON SALE: ▼

Fri 7 August:
The Fooz
Thurs 3 Sept:
Man of The World
Fri 4 Sept:
DS:UK - Dire Straits
Sun 6 Sept:
Tom Petty Heartbreak Show
Fri 11 Sept:
Antarctic Monkeys
Sun 13 Sept:
Danny McNamara Embrace
Fri 18 Sept:
Essentially Cher
Sat 26 Sept:
Downloaded Metal Fest

Sun 27 Sept:
Morgan Wallen UK
Fri 2 Oct:
Bon Giovi
Fri 9 Oct:
Gerry Cinnamon Experience
Sun 11 Oct:
Superstar - Ben Forster
Fri 16 Oct:
Complete Beatles
Fri 23 Oct:
Dirty DC
Sat 24 Oct:
Take That & Party
Fri 30 Oct:
Eminem Show
Sun 1 Nov:
Go West with Peter Cox
Wed 4 Nov:
John Lydon (Sex Pistols /PIL)
Fri 13 Nov:
Definitely Oasis
Sun 15 Nov:
Kerry Ellis Power Ballads
Sun 22 Nov:
Faulty Towers Dining
Fri 4 Dec:
Abba Revival Gold Party
Sat 5 Dec:
Erasured
Thurs 17 Dec:
Rob Lamberti

PLUS LOTS MORE GIGS & EVENTS BEING ADDED!

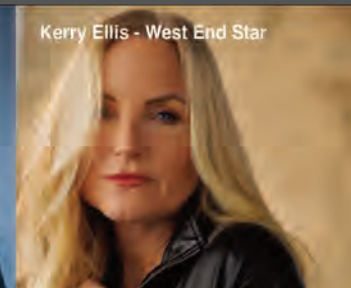
Check out our website for the latest gigs!

THE BUTTERMARKET

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