

Worcestershire

ISSUE 469 FEBRUARY 2026

# What's On

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

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## inside:

### HOUSE OF GHOSTS

Tom Chambers stars as  
Inspector Morse in Malvern



### OMID DJALILI

Comedy powerhouse brings  
Namaste to the Palace Theatre



### BOOGIE ON DOWN...

musical party train returns to  
the Severn Valley Railway



## MALVERN FESTiVAL OF iDEAS

2026

MARCH 13-15

malvernfestivalofideas.org.uk 01684 565708



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TRAIN TRAVEL TIPS

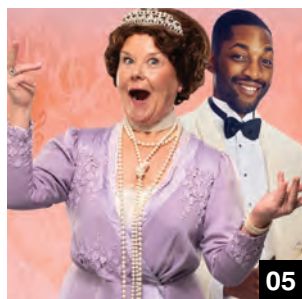


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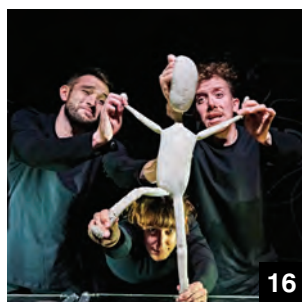
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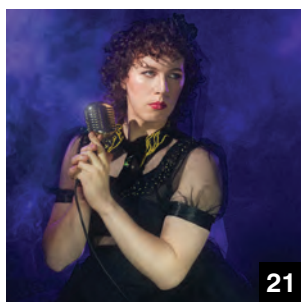
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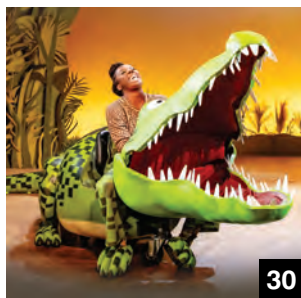
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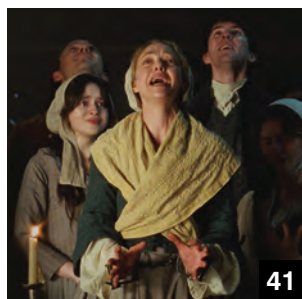
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### What's On

MEDIA GROUP

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## Exploring social change at Malvern Festival Of Ideas

Malvern Festival Of Ideas makes a welcome return next month, taking place at Malvern St James School from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 March. This year's event will explore the theme of 'social change', presenting a programme featuring 16 speakers and a dedicated series of family and schools' sessions. Contributors include children's author Michael Rosen, Jeanette Winterson, John Crace & Will Hughes. Wildlife biologist Lucy Eckersley, journalist Adele Zeynep and geographer Danny Dorling also feature. For the full line-up and to purchase tickets, visit [malvernfestivalofideas.org.uk](http://malvernfestivalofideas.org.uk)

## Indiana Jones film 'live in concert' at Symphony Hall

Birmingham's Symphony Hall will this summer host a special screening of the 1981 film *Indiana Jones And The Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, complete with a live performance of John Williams' Grammy Award-winning score. To find out more about the Thursday 4 June event and to book your ticket, visit the website at [bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)

## More acts announced for Shrewsbury Folk Festival

A performance by a three-time Grammy Award winner, and the UK premiere of an exclusive new Celtic music & dance show, will feature among the attractions at this year's Shrewsbury Folk Festival. Singer-songwriter & guitarist Lucinda Williams will top the bill on the festival's Severn stage on Sunday 30 August. The four-day event will also host the debut UK performance of Talisk x Gardiner Brothers: Unleashed (pictured). The show unites the Scottish musicians with dancers led by five-time world champions and former Riverdance leads, Michael and Matthew Gardiner. To find out more about the festival and book tickets, visit [shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk](http://shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk)



## Othello to be screened in cinemas nationwide

A critically acclaimed theatrical version of Shakespeare's *Othello* - starring David Harewood, Toby Jones and Caitlin FitzGerald - will be screened in cinemas across the West Midlands region next month (from Wednesday 4 March). The play was filmed at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London. To find out at which cinemas it's showing, and when, visit [OthelloInCinemas.com](http://OthelloInCinemas.com)



## Dance-theatre showcase for early-years children

Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre will host a non-verbal introduction to dance theatre for early-years children late next month. A 'heartwarming tale of friendship, curiosity and play', *Early Weaves* runs for 35 minutes and sees 'two friends embark on a journey of connection and companionship'. For further information, visit [warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://warwickartscentre.co.uk)

## Malvern murder-mystery

Murder-mystery fans should make a beeline for Malvern's Colwall Village Hall late this month, where the Colwall Players will be

presenting a Swiss Alps-set whodunnit entitled *Death Mountain*. The production shows at the venue from Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 February. For more information, and to purchase tickets (which include a free drink and two-course meal), visit the website at [Ticketsource.co.uk/ColwallPlayers](http://Ticketsource.co.uk/ColwallPlayers)

## New shows coming to Warwick Arts Centre...

Appearances by Mo Gilligan, Ruby Wax, Haircut 100 and Vitamin String Quartet are among the highlights of Warwick Arts Centre's spring/summer line-up of shows. Other big names featuring in the Coventry venue's programme of entertainment across the next few months include Nigel Kennedy, Omar, Professor Brian Cox and Sir Lenny Henry. James B Partridge's Primary School Bangers and acclaimed productions of Julia Donaldson's *Tales Of Acorn Wood* and *Zog* also feature. To check out the full line-up of entertainment, and to book tickets, visit the venue's website at [warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://warwickartscentre.co.uk)

## A Sea Symphony in a Leamington church

Leamington Chamber Orchestra will team up with Birmingham Festival Choral Society next month to perform Ralph Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* (premiered in 1910). The concert - taking place on Saturday 21 March at Leamington's All Saints Parish Church - will also feature a performance of Charles Villiers Stanford's *Songs Of The Fleet* (also premiered in 1910), a song cycle celebrating Britain's strong naval tradition. For further information about the concert - which is conducted by David Wynne - and to purchase tickets, visit [ticketsource.co.uk](http://ticketsource.co.uk)



## B:Music unveils its spring season

B:Music, the Birmingham music charity behind city venues Symphony Hall and Town Hall, has announced its Spring 2026 programme, 'showcasing a dynamic mix of comedy, live music, dance and spoken word'. Highlights include: 'the UK's most talked-about courtroom experience', Murder Trial Tonight 4: Death Of A Landlord; Alex James' Britpop Classical; performances by Imelda May and Suzi Quatro; and Julia Donaldson's hit Edinburgh Fringe show, The Gruffalo, The Witch & The Warthog... To check out the full programme and book tickets, visit the website: [bmusic.co.uk](http://bmusic.co.uk)

## Flying Scotsman steams into Brum

World-famous steam locomotive The Flying Scotsman is visiting Birmingham this half-term holiday and will be operating five one-hour trips a day from Wednesday 18 to Friday 20 February. To find out more about the visit and check ticket availability, go to the website at [vintagetrains.co.uk](http://vintagetrains.co.uk)

## Is a river alive?

Celebrated nature writer, academic & performer Robert Macfarlane visits Stratford-upon-Avon next month. Appearing at Rother Street Arts House on Friday 6 March, Robert will be posing 'the perspective-shifting question': is a river alive? To find out more about the event and book yourself a ticket, visit the website at [stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](http://stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk)



## What a racket! Florence Foster Jenkins sent to Coventry...

Soap actors Wendi Peters (Coronation Street) and Matthew James Morrison (EastEnders) will visit Coventry's Belgrade Theatre in the spring with *Glorious!*, the true story of American socialite Florence Foster Jenkins, who was

famously dubbed 'the worst singer in the world'. The show runs at the Belgrade from Monday 18 to Saturday 23 May. Further information and tickets are available by visiting the venue's website at [belgrade.co.uk](http://belgrade.co.uk)

## Dark fantasy at the cathedral...

Coventry Cathedral will this spring host a live concert celebrating 'whimsical and otherworldly dark fantasy film music'. Performed by an 18-piece chamber orchestra - and taking place at the venue on Friday 22 May - An Orchestral Tribute To Tim Burton & Dark Fantasy Illuminated will feature music from, among other movies, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Alice In Wonderland*, *Beetlejuice* and *Batman*. Further information and tickets are available at [coventrycathedral.org.uk](http://coventrycathedral.org.uk)

## Room On The Broom trail launched at three West Midlands locations

Forestry England has launched 'a magical forest adventure' based on a much-loved book by author Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler. Available to experience in Staffordshire's Cannock Chase Forest, Worcestershire's Wyre Forest and at Shropshire's Haughmond Hill, the brand-new Room On The Broom Trail is 'packed with activities, fascinating forest facts, and plenty of hands-on fun'. For more details, visit [forestryengland.uk](http://forestryengland.uk)

## Armonico Consort get Passionate!

Warwickshire's critically acclaimed Armonico Consort will be getting their teeth into one of the finest choral works ever composed next month: JS Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (premiered in 1727). Performing the work at Malvern Theatres on Tuesday 24 March, they then appear at Warwick's Collegiate Church of St Mary two nights later (Thursday the 26th)... To find out more and book a ticket, visit the website at [armonico.org.uk](http://armonico.org.uk)



## Work begins on Malvern Theatres redevelopment

Work has begun on the landmark redevelopment of Malvern Theatres. The groundbreaking project - which has secured £20million in funding from the Government's Local Regeneration Fund - will deliver 'a world-class cultural facility'. The state-of-the-art development, scheduled to open in late 2027, will include a modern 240-seat studio theatre, new workshop spaces, and significant improvements to the Forum Theatre.

## It's all about guitar & bass at Solihull music show

The Guitar Show and its companion event, The Bass Show, are heading back to Cranmore Park in Solihull on Saturday 28 February & Sunday 1 March.

Publicised as 'a jam-packed event celebrating all things guitar and bass', the shows provide visitors with the chance to 'explore the latest gear, watch live performances, and attend workshops to improve your skills'. Tickets are available via the website at [eventbrite.co.uk](http://eventbrite.co.uk)



## Prestigious Malvern show to return in the summer

The award-winning Royal Three Counties Show returns to Malvern this summer (Three Counties Showground, Friday 12 - Sunday 14 June).

The annual event is one of the largest livestock and equine shows in England. Organisers are promising that the 2026 edition will include 'a packed programme of new features, exciting entertainment, agricultural innovations, plenty of family fun for all ages, excellent local food & drink, and thousands of animals'. To find out more, visit [royalthreecounties.co.uk](http://royalthreecounties.co.uk)



## Ibiza Classics coming to Coventry's Coombe Abbey

Café Mambo Ibiza Classics will return to Coventry's Coombe Abbey in the spring (Saturday 30 May), with Grammy-nominated duo Groove Armada (DJ set) and Roger Sanchez headlining.

The event will also feature contributions from Chicane, Gok Wan, K-Klass, Lovely Laura & Ben Santiago, with support from Mambo residents and Bongo Ben. Commenting on the news, Kris Jones, event

director at organisers New Vision Events, said: "Café Mambo Coombe Abbey has become such a landmark event for us. Every year it just gets bigger and better - and for 2026, we want to create something truly unforgettable. Bringing together Groove Armada and Roger Sanchez feels like the perfect match for that iconic Mambo vibe: sunshine, house anthems and Ibiza magic, right here in Coventry."

## Blossoms are blooming at National Trust property

West Midlandsers are being invited to 'appreciate the beauty of blooming blossoms' this spring, courtesy of a National Trust initiative.

Taking place at Worcestershire's Hanbury Hall from Friday 20 March to Sunday 10 May, the Festival of Blossom includes free, drop-in blossom-themed craft sessions and the chance to have a go at blossom bathing in the venue's walled orchard... For further information, visit [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)

## Three for the price of one as craft shows return

The Creative Craft Show, Sewing For Pleasure and Fashion And Embroidery return to Birmingham's

NEC from Thursday 12 to Sunday 15 March. The 2026 editions of the shows will feature hands-on workshops, rare craft demonstrations, and 'first-time appearances from exciting new makers'.

For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at [creativecraftshow.co.uk](http://creativecraftshow.co.uk)



## Exploring oceans with Sir David Attenborough

Birmingham's Symphony Hall is next month hosting a screening of award-winning documentary



Ocean With David Attenborough - with the film's original music score being performed live by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The event takes place at the city-centre venue on Sunday 1 March. For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at [oceanconcert.live](http://oceanconcert.live)

## University series set to focus on healthy foods

The University of Warwick's Science On The Hill series returns this month with an event entitled Our Intrinsic Right To Healthy Foods.

The Tuesday 24 February get-together offers interested parties the chance to 'find out more about the pressures for change in agriculture, on breeding better crops, and keeping them pest-free and healthy'. Tickets for the event can be booked by visiting the website at [resonatefestival.co.uk](http://resonatefestival.co.uk)



# B:Music

Town Hall & Symphony Hall

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 0121 7803333



**The Lost Notes**  
04 February | JBPS at Symphony Hall



**Transatlantic Sessions**  
05 February | Symphony Hall



**Al-Barakah-Mohamed Tarek Live  
ft Aashiq al Rasul**  
08 February | Town Hall



**Twilight in Concert: Film with Live Band**  
08 February | Symphony Hall



**Czech Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra**  
12 February | Symphony Hall



**Talking Sopranos**  
16 February | Town Hall



Pop in & try!

**Tandoori Chicken Skewer Flatbread  
B:Eats at Symphony Hall:**  
11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show



**Lions & Tigers & Bears  
with Gordon Buchanan**  
18 February | Town Hall



**Disney in Concert: Sound of Magic**  
21 February | Symphony Hall



**Nashville Sounds in the Round:  
The Guitar Show**  
26 February | JBPS at Symphony Hall



**Banff Mountain Film Festival**  
28 February | Town Hall

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## New Kenilworth festival to make week-long debut

A new week-long arts & culture festival launches in Kenilworth this month. Running at venues across the town from Monday 2 to Sunday 8 February, Kenilworth Fringe will feature events focusing on books, music, art, culture and politics. More information about the new festival is available at [kenilworthbooks.co.uk](http://kenilworthbooks.co.uk)

## Evita at Worcester venue

Worcester Operatic & Dramatic Society are 'heading to Argentina' for their next show: Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1978 classic, *Evita*. WODS will be presenting their version of the much-loved musical at the Swan Theatre in Worcester from Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 April. To find out more about the show and book tickets, visit [wods.co.uk](http://wods.co.uk)

## Local author to discuss debut novel in Solihull

Solihull-based author Anna Byk will be marking International Women's Day by discussing her debut novel, *It's Never Really Over*, at Solihull Library on Saturday 7 March. The free-to-attend event will include a Q&A session, as well as the opportunity to purchase signed copies of the novel directly from Anna.

## Picture perfect...

If visual storytelling is your thing, then get a date in your diary for next month's Photography & Video Show at Birmingham's NEC (Saturday 14 - Tuesday 17 March). A must for anyone passionate about photography, video or content creation, the four-day event showcases the latest camera kit and accessories - with more than 250 top brands featured - and offers bags of inspiration. An immersive creator playground, inspiring galleries, a line-up of top speakers, the Photo Live stage, and sessions for beginners and professionals alike further add to the show's appeal. Visit [photographyshow.com](http://photographyshow.com) for further information and to purchase tickets.

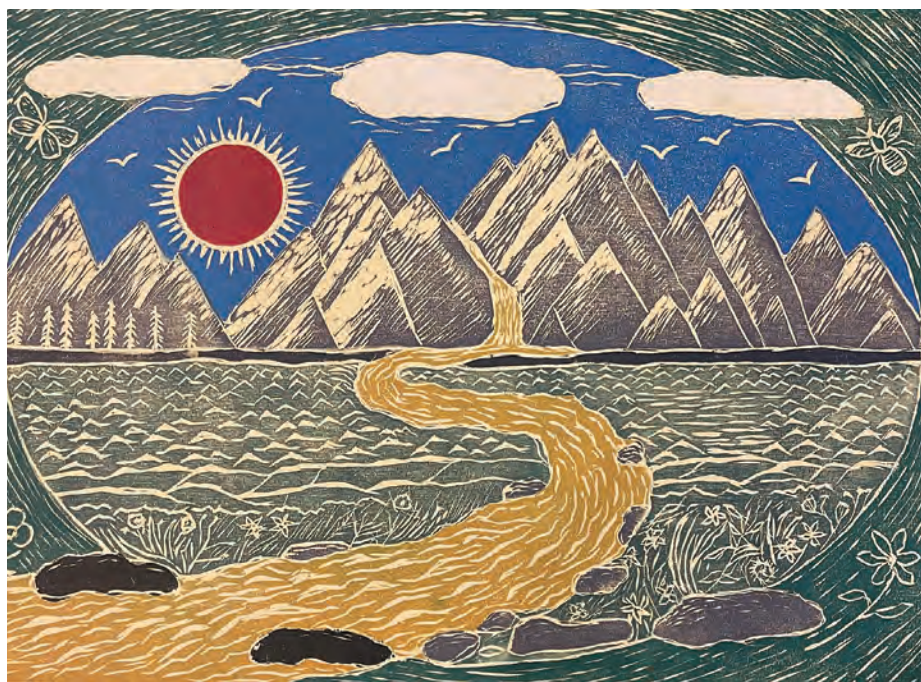


Image: Golden River by Pat McHale

## Warwickshire artists' work goes on show at the Herbert

A 'diverse and inspiring' collection of artworks, created by members of art societies and groups across Warwickshire, opens at Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum this month.

Paintings, sculpture and ceramics all feature in the show, which is available to view at the venue from Friday 20 February to Sunday 19 April. To find out more about the exhibition, visit the website at [theherbert.org](http://theherbert.org)

## Paddington Bear to visit Severn Valley Railway

Paddington Bear will be spending three days at Highley's Engine House Visitor Centre in the middle of this month (Tuesday 17 - Thursday 19 February). Michael Bond's much-loved marmalade-eating creation will be appearing at regular intervals throughout each day. Fans can meet up with him by taking a Severn Valley Railway journey from either Kidderminster or Bridgnorth. For further information and to book a ticket, visit the heritage railway's website at [svr.co.uk](http://svr.co.uk)

## Coventry 'crime and dine'

Murder most foul meets luxury cuisine at the Coventry Belgrade Theatre's Nineteen 58 bar & restaurant this month (Tuesday the 10th), courtesy of crime historian Adam Wood and celebrated chef Sarah Jenkins. Sarah will be serving up starter, main course, dessert and petit fours. Adam, meanwhile, will regale diners - between courses, not while you're eating - with the grisly story of a 'frighteningly local murder'. For further information about the Crime And

Dine event, and to book yourself a ticket, visit the venue's website at [belgrade.co.uk](http://belgrade.co.uk)

## Live Aid musical heading for the Midlands in 2027

Hit West End production *Just For One Day - The Live Aid Musical* is heading out on a major UK & Ireland tour in 2027, including a summertime stop-off at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Tuesday 22 June to Saturday 3 July.



The show tells the behind-the-scenes story of Live Aid, the global music event staged on 13 July 1985 and broadcast to an estimated audience of 1.5 billion people worldwide. Songs by a host of legendary artists are featured in the production, including Bob Dylan, David Bowie, The Who, U2, Queen, Madonna, The Police, Elton John, Paul McCartney and Diana Ross.

For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at [atgtickets.com](http://atgtickets.com)



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# Eastside Jazz Festival

Thu 12 & Fri 13 Feb, 2026

Eastside Jazz Festival brings together internationally-renowned musicians with some of today's most innovative talent, alongside grassroots promoters and musicians showcasing Birmingham's thriving jazz scene.

BBC Big Band

Chris Potter with Pablo Held Trio

TDE Promotions: Olie Brice with Rachel Musson

Digbeth Jazz

Aurum Trio - Rebecca Nash, Henrik Jenson & Dave Smith

Dave Sear Sextet

RBC Jazz Orchestra plays Porgy and Bess Suite

Birmingham Jazz Orchestra

RBC Banda Brasileira

Tony Levin Drum Prize featuring Jean Toussaint and Arnie Somogyi

Book Now at [www.bcu.ac.uk/performances](http://www.bcu.ac.uk/performances)



Birmingham City University



# ALL THAT JAZZ

The inaugural Eastside Jazz Festival makes its debut at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire this month (Thursday 12 & Friday 13 February), presenting performances in the venue's foyers, purpose-built jazz club and concert halls. A showcase of the city's creative jazz scene, the festival brings together esteemed musicians and innovative performers, grassroots promoters and exciting local and student musicians. 'Roaming' tickets provide access to each day's events - including performances by the four internationally acclaimed headline acts featured below, all of whom will be taking to the stage in the venue's atmospheric Eastside Jazz Club...



## CHRIS POTTER WITH THE PABLO HELD TRIO

Thursday 12 February, 8pm - 9.30pm

German pianist Pablo Held (pictured) and his acclaimed trio are celebrating two decades of jazz, joining forces with American master saxophonist Chris Potter for a European tour. They stop off in Birmingham to cause a stir on Eastside Jazz Festival's opening night. It's not the first time Chris has made music at the Conservatoire - he worked with a large ensemble of students back in 2012, creating a jazz suite which was subsequently performed at Cheltenham Jazz Festival.



## OLIE BRICE QUARTET

Friday 13 February, 6pm - 7.30pm

Double bassist Olie Brice is here joined for a night of forward-thinking music featuring Alexander Hawkins on piano, Rachel Musson on tenor sax and Will Glaser on drums... Offering a combination of formal structure and free improvisation, the quartet brings to life Olie's own compositions, which are presented in balance with his interactive free-playing. The result is an engaging and impressively original contemporary jazz performance.



## AURUM TRIO

Friday 13 February, 5pm - 6pm

Already well established on the UK jazz scene, Bristol-born pianist Rebecca Nash (pictured) is now beginning to make a splash internationally with her distinctive and heartfelt sound. The evening's gig features the newly formed Aurum Trio, promising to combine Rebecca's ethereal melodies and densely saturated harmonies with warm tones provided by Henrik Jensen on bass and the punk-spirited drumming of Dave Smith.



## BBC BIG BAND

Friday 13 February, 8pm - 10pm

One of the world's most versatile jazz orchestras, the BBC Big Band, under the musical direction of Barry Forgie, continues to delight audiences across the globe with its radio broadcasts. Boasting a star-studded list of previous collaborators - Robert Palmer, Van Morrison, Amy Winehouse and Ray Charles, to name but a few - the orchestra's pedigree is undisputed. Their Eastside Jazz Club gig is the perfect way to close this inaugural festival.

Visit [bcu.ac.uk/performances](http://bcu.ac.uk/performances) for more information and to book tickets



# KILLER THRILLER

**Twisted comedy thriller *Murder At Midnight* visits  
the Coventry Belgrade Theatre**



**Stars of stage & screen visit Coventry's Belgrade Theatre early next month to present a crime drama with a difference. A darkly comic mystery thriller, *Murder At Midnight* has been keeping its audiences spellbound until the final curtain. Cast members Jason Durr, Susie Blake and Katie McGlynn spoke to Theo Bosanquet about what's in store - while keeping the play's surprises tightly under wraps...**

*Murder At Midnight*, billed as 'a murder mystery like no other,' offers a winning blend of suspense and dark comedy.

Featuring erstwhile *Heartbeat* star Jason Durr and *Coronation Street*'s Susie Blake and Katie McGlynn, the production makes a Midlands stop-off at the Coventry Belgrade Theatre at the start of next month.

"It's a brand-new comedy thriller from a great writer called Torben Betts - a follow-up to his play *Murder In The Dark*," explains Jason. "It's a blend of razor-sharp wit and gripping murder-mystery, full of twists and turns, dark humour and chilling suspense. Throw in a suitcase full of cash, a bunch of ravenous dogs, a chainsaw and an unsolved murder, and what's not to like? If Tarantino was to write a play, this would be it. And I can guarantee it will keep the audience guessing almost until the curtain comes down."

"It's a thrilling and witty mystery, set in a mansion in Kent," adds Katie. "I don't want to give too much away, but I can say it's bonkers in the best sort of way. If people want drama, comedy, thrills, and some emotion too, it's all there."

Playwright Torben Betts and producers Original Theatre have collaborated before - which is not the only creative reunion among the *Murder At Midnight* company. Susie Blake also makes her return, after appearing in Torben's previous production, in 2023.

"We had huge fun touring *Murder In The Dark*, and it was a great success," she says. "The audience really went with it, which was wonderful. Torben Betts is a brilliant writer, because his dialogue is so unexpected and unpredictable."

Meanwhile, Jason also has a history with *Murder At Midnight*'s director, Philip Franks. "He played Sergeant Craddock to my PC Mike Bradley back in our *Heartbeat* days," he says. "We spent several happy years up in Leeds filming the show. And he's become not just a dear friend but a terrific director as well, so it's lovely to be working with him again."

Although fans of Torben's previous

production will be glad that the band's back together, Susie is keen to explain that *Murder At Midnight* is an entirely fresh story, with plenty of unexpected moments: "It's brand spanking new, not a direct sequel. It's a comedy thriller - quite dark and funnily gruesome. It all takes place in a modern, swish house in Kent, the sort of place that might have been called 'nouveau riche' when I was a child. It's owned by a drugs baron called Jonny the Cyclops, who's surrounded by lots of different and eccentric characters - including mine. There are surprises galore." Susie plays Jonny's mother, Shirley, who, as she grows older, is more reliant on support from her son. Katie plays Lisa, Jonny's glamorous girlfriend.

"She's quite misunderstood and underestimated," says Katie. "She's got a childlike energy about her; she's quite unpredictable, and she's got lots of layers, so she's really interesting to play. I can really empathise with her because she's always wanted to be an actress - but never quite made it."

And Jason plays the infamous Jonny the Cyclops himself.

"He's such a colourful character, who lives in a luxury Kent mansion," he explains. "He's a one-eyed drug dealer, pig farmer, and notorious gangland killer whose past is catching up with him fast..."

Jason is no stranger to colourful characters, with a career spanning stage & screen and featuring more than a few crime dramas.

"I always knew I wanted to act, ever since being a young boy. We had a dressing-up trunk full of funny hats and props, which I loved playing with then and have done ever since. I've been fortunate in my career, starting off at the Royal Shakespeare Company and then getting to explore a huge range of roles on screen as well."

Katie also found her love of acting in childhood: "My mum took me to a drama club when I was about seven, because I was really shy, and within a week I was up on stage playing a main character. My parents

couldn't believe it. Since then I've always been in love with acting; it was always my hobby, so I was really lucky to be able to turn it into a long-term career and earn a living from my biggest passion."

It's a career which saw Katie win Best Serial Drama Performance at the National Television Awards for her portrayal of Sinead Tinker on *Coronation Street*.

"It was one of the best times of my life and my biggest achievement. Being part of that show was such an honour, and I still pinch myself. I also learnt so much and made friends for life. It's like being part of a big family, and it's a lovely place to work."

"I'm always thrilled to be in the cast with a fellow *Coronation Street* alumnus," says Susie. "When we first met, making the promo, we had to visit a field surrounded by alpacas, and Katie and I just lay on a bench and merrily chatted about Corrie."

However, for Susie, there's nothing like a live theatrical performance: "I love an audience - that feeling of telling a story from beginning to end and being in charge for that period of time, which is not something you tend to get on screen. And to top it off, at the end everyone says thank you, which is lovely!"

One of the perks of a theatre tour is the chance to explore venues and cities around the country - and Susie is determined to make the most of that opportunity: "I love exploring different parts of the country, armed with my National Trust card and Art Pass! I'll be carefully planning my itinerary around every venue."

"I know a lot of the venues we're visiting very well," says Jason. "I'm looking forward to seeing how audiences in different parts of the country react, and keeping them on the edges of their seats. I'm really excited to get out there."

.....  
**Murder At Midnight shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 March**

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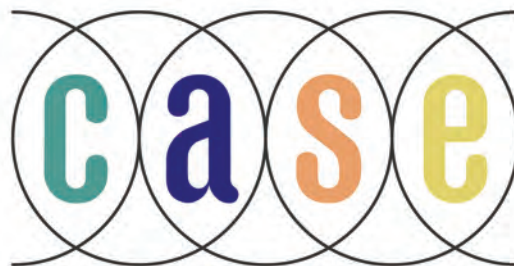
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Live music from across the region...

## Stealing Sheep

The Tin at The Coal Vaults, Coventry,  
Fri 6 February

Stealing Sheep crept into the consciousness more than a decade ago with their beguiling debut album, *Into The Diamond Sun*.

The Liverpool trio have since carved out a unique place for themselves on the UK pop scene, regularly embracing new instruments and styles in an effort to keep their music developing both sonically and conceptually. Last year saw them release their sixth studio album - the audacious *GLO* (Girl Life Online) - via their new label, G-IRL (Girl In Real Life).



## Scott Lavene

Just Dropped In, Coventry, Sun 8 February

Master storyteller Scott Lavene visits Coventry just six months after the release of his critically acclaimed album *Cars, Buses, Bedsits And Shops*, a record widely celebrated for its bringing together of dark humour, unique love songs, and snapshots of squalor and cheek.

"On tour, I'd become used to playing the story-based songs, the spoken-word ones," explains Scott, in talking about the motivation behind the album. "But fans kept asking me why I didn't sing anymore, which surprised me. So over the course of a month, I wrote a dozen proper songs!"



## Seckou Keita

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Mon 2 February

Award-winning Senegalese musician Seckou Keita is a true master of the kora - a 22-string West African harp - and has played and appeared with an impressive array of hugely talented performers, including Yossou N'Dour, Miriam Makeba and Neil Finn. This UK tour sees him blending traditional

rhythms and modern compositions to create a unique sound that embraces afro-pop, urban and hip-hop. Transitional musical poetry - written and delivered by award-winning poets and rap artists from both the UK and Senegal - will be 'craftily sampled and woven' into the music.

## Laurence Jones

The Marris Bar, Worcester, Sun 15 February

Laurence Jones' CV provides ample evidence of just how hugely talented and well regarded he is. Legendary American guitarist & singer Buddy Guy hailed him "a young Eric Clapton", while music-industry icons Ringo Starr, Van Morrison, Jeff Beck and Johnny Winter have all been so impressed that they've had the Liverpool-based blues-rock guitar maestro hit the road with them. Status Quo are also among his many admirers, taking him on their farewell tour back in 2024... Laurence is visiting Worcester this month to perform a special acoustic concert. Support comes from his real-life partner, Amy Eftekhari.

## Collabro

Worcester Cathedral, Fri 13 February

Since winning Britain's Got Talent, Collabro have earned themselves an impressive following with their musical-theatre renditions. Their visit to Worcester comes as part of a tour which sees them performing intimate, piano-led concerts in some of the UK's most beautiful cathedrals.

## Suede

hmv empire, Coventry, Mon 16 February

Think back to the Britpop era of the 1990s, and four bands spring readily to mind: Oasis, Blur, Pulp and Suede.

The latter, formed in 1989 by singer Brett Anderson, guitarist Justine Frischmann and bassist Mat Osman, launched their debut album in 1993, and in so doing also kickstarted the whole Britpop movement. Splitting up 10 years later, they re-formed in 2010 and have been active ever since, releasing five well-received studio albums, including last autumn's *Antidepressants*.









# MYTHICAL MAGIC

**Dance Consortium's MÂM - a dizzying gateway between modern dance and the ancient heartbeat of Ireland - is taking to the road this month, stopping off at Birmingham Hippodrome as part of a debut UK tour. What's On recently caught up with the show's creator, choreographer & dancer, Michael Keegan-Dolan, to find out more...**

When choreographer & dancer Michael Keegan-Dolan was creating his production MÂM, he turned to the music and landscape of his native Ireland for inspiration: "I was born in Ireland in 1969. There was a lot going on politically and economically. I think much of the work I make comes from where and how I was formed.

"I perceive the world through that history, our native language, the landscape and our musical tradition - and MÂM is very linked to that. When I made the piece in 2019, it was an expression of my relationship to many of these things - from land to history to folklore to mythology to music to religion to spirituality."

Having moved to Irish-speaking West Kerry in the year he created the work, Michael says the spirit of Ireland is inescapable in the land and its people.

"The foundations of the making of the piece were my moving to the West Kerry Gaeltacht," he recalls. "When I stand in my garden in West Kerry, I can see Skellig Michael, the iconic island, a UNESCO site, kind of floating in the distance in the Atlantic ocean. And we grow some of our own food here, in that ancient West Kerry soil - so when we eat our carrots, broccoli or cabbage, we are kind of imbibing Kerry!

"When I go to the supermarket and talk to the people there, they might speak with a particular rhythm and they might make a joke about something West Kerry. When you speak in the Irish language, your brain is functioning in an entirely other way. So it's a powerful place to reevaluate who you are, in an ancient landscape where people have been living for a long time. It has endured conquest and famine and war, but people are still here - living, breathing, talking, making music and celebrating life."

Musicality is an integral part of MÂM. The show features the music of Irish traditional concertina player Cormac Begley and European music collective Stargaze, performing live on stage alongside 11 dancers and a young girl.

"My relationship to the traditional music in MÂM is through the lens of Cormac, through the ancestry and connections that Cormac has. Then my aspiration was to put around his sound a European classical/contemporary sound. It could be from any time - they play some Telemann, 17th-century German music, in the show also, so there's a European tradition around an Irish tradition in conversation.

"Through that, we made a piece that feels direct, immediate and visceral; poetic and imaginative."

Michael was artistic director of Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre between 1997 and 2015. He then founded Teac Dańsa in 2016. The company features dancers from across the globe performing works strongly grounded in Ireland's heritage. The company's first production, Swan Lake/Loch na hEala, in 2016 combined dance, storytelling and live music in a new interpretation of the classic ballet.

This was followed by MÂM, which was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production when it performed to sell-out audiences at London's Sadlers Wells in 2020. MÂM has toured to venues in Europe, New Zealand, Australia, North and South America and Taiwan. Michael says audiences everywhere have responded to it well: "MÂM creates an experience for the dancers dancing it, connecting, releasing and breathing in these rhythmical ways. And there's this lovely collective truth about MÂM - it was made collectively and is performed collectively, and

I think that's a beautiful thing to behold."

The show's Birmingham Hippodrome stop-off this month forms part of a nine-venue tour presented by Dance Consortium, a group of 24 large-scale venues aiming to bring the best contemporary dance from across the world to local audiences in the UK and Ireland. And Michael says each audience member will have their own unique response to the production: "An important aspect of dance is how it can connect you to your being, to reality. It kind of forces you into life. I've made work built around stories like Swan Lake, and they are exciting... but ultimately, what we probably need most as a species just now is to switch our brains off a bit more and to allow ourselves to feel a bit more. That's what I'm working on with the dances I'm making.

"It's challenging sometimes because audience expectation has been conditioned over time. We go, we sit, we get impressed, we think there is something to 'get', and if we haven't 'got' it, then it hasn't been a good experience. But I think we also need to work a little bit more to empower audiences [by encouraging an understanding] that whatever you take is valid. It's yours. If what you feel is really strange and nothing like the person next to you, that's really exciting for me. And to own that, and to feel empowered by your own imagination and your own perception of reality, I'm all for that."

.....  
**Dance Consortium's MÂM shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on Friday 6 & Saturday 7 February**



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## Classical music from across the region...

Image credit: Vera Elma Vreck



### The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 27 February

Since its formation 80 years ago, the RPO has operated under the directorship of some of the world's most respected conductors, Rudolf Kempe and Andre Previn among them. Based in the beautiful surroundings of Chelsea's Cadogan Hall, the orchestra is no stranger to the recording studio, regularly laying down soundtracks for films and enjoying a long partnership with many of the major commercial record companies... The RPO's late-month concert in Coventry features three works: contemporary

composer Samy Moussa's mournful Adgilis Deda; Strauss' Four Last Songs, written when the composer was 84 years old; and Sibelius' Second Symphony, perhaps best known for its triumphant closure. The orchestra is joined for the concert by multi-award-winning South African soprano Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha (pictured). Kevin John Edusei, the RPO's conductor-in-residence for the current season, is the man with the baton.

### Orchestra of the Swan: Shifting Light

St Nicholas Church, Warwick, Thurs 19 February

The Warwick-based Orchestra of the Swan's (OOTS) mid-month concert takes its audience on a journey through the seasons of the year. Shifting Light uses Vivaldi's Four Seasons as the framework of a programme that also includes works by, among others, Tchaikovsky and Fleetwood Mac. The 90-minute concert features in OOTS' Swan Sessions programme. The initiative typically sees between three and eight players from the orchestra performing in a relaxed and intimate setting.



### English Symphony Orchestra

Malvern Theatres, Thurs 19 February

The Worcestershire-based English Symphony Orchestra gets its teeth into the work of Mozart and Beethoven for its mid-month Malvern concert.

The former's effervescent Marriage Of Figaro overture kickstarts proceedings, with the latter's Second Symphony bringing the evening of musicmaking to an exuberant and humorous close. Mozart's Clarinet Concerto - performed by the orchestra's principal clarinetist, Alison Lambert (pictured) - and Hans Gál's Serenade For Strings also feature.



### Henschel Quartet

Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa, Fri 13 February

Described by the Los Angeles Times as "one of the best groups in the world", German ensemble Henschel String Quartet return to Leamington for the 11th time, some 26 years after making their debut in the town.

This latest appearance sees them presenting a concert featuring two well-known compositions - Haydn's String Quartet, Op64 No5 in D major, The Lark; and Mendelssohn's String Quartet No6 in F minor, Op80.

One less-familiar work - Freda Swain's String Quartet No1 in E minor, Norfolk - is also included in the programme.

### Piccadilly Sinfonietta: Vivaldi By Candlelight

Worcester Cathedral, Sat 14 February

Formed in 2017, Piccadilly Sinfonietta have established an impressive reputation for their performances of baroque and classical works for chamber orchestra. This candlelit Worcester Cathedral presentation of Antonio Vivaldi's The Four Seasons sees the ensemble accompanied by renowned violinist Henry Chandler.

### CBSO: Haydn's Nelson Mass

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 19 February

Joseph Haydn's Nelson Mass was one of six masses written near the end of his life. The work is reflective of a period of terrible turmoil for Austria, during which the country was under serious threat from Napoleon Bonaparte's army. However, around the time of the mass' first-ever performance - in mid-September 1798 - news filtered through that Rear-Admiral Horatio Nelson's British fleet had defeated the French Emperor at the Battle of the Nile. The mass' triumphant conclusion seemed like a perfect musical celebration of Bonaparte's defeat, a fact which saw the composition become forever linked with Nelson and his game-changing victory... Alongside the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's performance of the work, this mid-month Symphony Hall concert also features Beethoven's third piano concerto.



# FRED ALERT

**Hijinx Theatre bring a highly acclaimed and  
'unmissable comedy' to the Midlands**



**A darkly satirical comedy about a cloth puppet's attempts to navigate society and disability rights in order to live an ordinary life, Hijinx Theatre's Meet Fred is heading out on a major UK tour to celebrate its 10th anniversary. But, as its director, Ben Pettitt-Wade, explains to What's On, the show is also aiming to remind audiences that the issues it highlights are as relevant as ever...**

When director Ben Pettitt-Wade began work on his first theatrical show involving puppetry, little did he know he'd still be getting its two-foot-tall cloth-puppet star in and out of its storage box 10 years later.

But it seems Fred is no ordinary puppet, Meet Fred is no ordinary play, and Hijinx - which promotes the work of actors with learning disabilities and/or autism, and where Ben is artistic director - is definitely no ordinary theatre company. The production opened to audience and critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2016 and has since toured to more than 20 countries around the world.

"It's been an amazing ride," says Ben. "The show was my first as artistic director, and I don't think we could've dreamed that it would have been such a success. The reception [at Edinburgh] was brilliant; incredible reviews came in - which was a real buzz - and from that point on, it toured throughout the UK and then started going international."

The overseas demand was largely prompted by an appearance at the World Puppet Festival in Charleville-Mézières in France.

"It's kind of like the Edinburgh Festival but for puppets, so it has a mainstream programme, a fringe programme and an off-fringe programme. We were part of that. A lot of different programmers from across the world saw the piece, and we started travelling further and further afield with the show."

Meet Fred has since gone on to play all over Europe, as well as the US, Japan, China and South Korea. That's some achievement for a show based around a cloth puppet and performed by actors with and without learning disabilities, whose lived experiences add depth and authenticity to the titular character's struggle.

The connection between the puppet and the extended lives of the puppeteers - they all effectively rely on others - inspired the show's creation, according to Ben, who had been exploring ideas with puppetry experts Blind Summit.

"They have this specific form of puppetry which they call extreme Bunraku. We spent five days workshoping with these cloth puppets, and what became apparent was how fascinating this was as a form to explore. I then ordered a set of our own cloth puppets,

and we spent six to nine months exploring it with our artists.

"During those sessions, what came across was the importance of the puppeteers who hold the puppets. In essence, the puppet doesn't exist without his puppeteers. I think that parallel became apparent between many of our artists, all of whom have learning disabilities and autism, and who therefore have a network of support around them - whether that's parental or paid-for in terms of carers - enabling them to live their lives to the fullest.

"This was all at a time when benefits were being cut, barriers were being created, and there was the threat of having care packages taken away. There was a lightbulb moment of what it would be to explore this show using the puppet as a metaphor for the issues that many of our artists were facing."

The link made, the company went on to create a dark comedy that follows Fred as he tries to live an ordinary life - get a job, find love, and simply be part of society. All of which would be fine if his Puppetry Living Allowance wasn't under threat, causing his world to start to spiral out of control.

The result is a production which features black, farcical and even X-rated humour - the show comes with warnings about adult themes and 'puppet nudity'. It also takes a poignant look at disability rights, the absurdity of bureaucratic red tape (and its impact), and ultimately what it means to be human. "And there's lots of bad language as well," interjects Gareth John, who has Down's syndrome and is one of the show's stars. He's been part of the cast for nine years and gleefully reels off places he's performed in the UK as well as "China, South Korea, France and Germany".

"There is a lot of swearing," laughs Ben, who suggests the show is suitable for audience members aged 14 and older. He also acknowledges how important international touring has been for the production and its performers, not least because it reinforces Cardiff-based Hijinx's aim to exceed expectations and break down walls and stigmas.

"The opportunities this show has presented for our artists to be able to travel and perform and work professionally in the UK and across the world is something quite unique that we're very proud of. The value of experience

that people get from being in a place like China - completely out of their comfort zone, and what that means in terms of how a person approaches their life - is something pretty special."

This is all well and good for the company and its performers, but it's always important for any show deemed 'worthy' to also entertain its audience - something Ben is both acutely aware of and quick to confirm.

"Absolutely. In our minds, a lot of the work we make is a deliberate attempt to avoid those kinds of tropes of worthiness that can sometimes be connected to this sort of issue-based work. [Meet Fred] is certainly not that - it's satirical, dark, and I think speaks to the frustrations that people have in all walks of life."

Ben is confident that the show's audiences typically come out of the theatre feeling energised, maybe a bit angry, but with no sense that a message has been laid on too heavily.

"It's very much focused on finding humour in the situations that people find themselves facing. Often, it's true that a certain element of dark humour exists for anyone who's facing these sorts of challenges, because naturally it's bureaucratic and Kafka-esque, and you need some sort of humour to get through those moments.

"Our role as a theatre company is to provide entertainment for an audience. Of course, a lot of our work is based around issues that are pertinent to the artists making it, but unless that's presented in as entertaining a format as possible, then we've lost the fight already. So it's even more important for us to provide a cracking evening's entertainment alongside whatever our message is."

.....

**Meet Fred shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Tuesday 10 February; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Monday 2 & Tuesday 3 March, and The Rep, Birmingham, on Wednesday 4 & Thursday 5 March.**

**It then returns to the region in the summer, visiting Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Tuesday 2 & Wednesday 3 June and Lichfield Garrick on Fri 5 June.**



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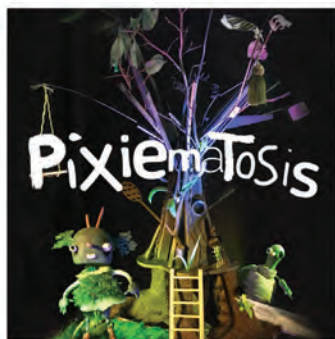
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## Comedy previews from across the region...

## Cally Beaton

The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 13 February;  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 21  
February; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South  
Shropshire, Wed 20 May

Comedian Sally Phillips is among Cally Beaton's many and varied admirers. "She spins tales like Aisling Bea," says Bridget Jones star Sally, "has the hair and strength of Pippi Longstocking, and the punk edge of Debbie Harry. Do I want a Cally Beaton rebrand? Hell yeah!"

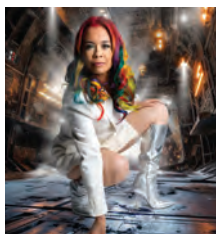
Cally is visiting the Midlands with Namaste Motherf\*ckers, a show described by its publicity as 'a quick-witted, unexpected and unapologetic insight into life in midlife'.



## Ria Lina

The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock,  
South Shropshire, Sat 14 February

The state of the world, the eternal battle of the sexes - and the delight of throwing life up in the air after years of following the rules - are among the subjects that comedian and forensic scientist Ria Lina puts under her microscope in current touring show Riabellion. Her jokes include: "I wanted to do a show about feminism, but my husband wouldn't let me."



## Desiree Burch

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 12  
February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Fri 13 February

The menopause may not be the most novel of subjects around which to build a stand-up show, but Desiree Burch is aiming to make it seem like it is, courtesy of a winning blend of 'childlike wonder and crone-like wit'. Her show, titled The Golden Wrath, proved a big hit with Edinburgh Fringe audiences last summer.



## Bridget Christie

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 13 February; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 14 February

Christie's star is most definitely in the ascendant, in part due to her hugely successful menopause-themed comedy drama The Change, which enjoyed excellent ratings when its second series was screened on Channel Four last spring. With a loyal and ever-expanding fan

following, and a number of successful stand-up tours under her belt, she visits the region this month with Jacket Potato Pizza, the official publicity for which reads: 'A kidney stone. A stray cat. An eye-themed fetish. Bridget Christie hits the road again with a brand-new show'.



## Hannah East

Walsall Arena & Arts Centre, Fri 20 February;  
Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 3  
October; Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 15  
October; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Fri 16  
October; Kings Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 15  
November

Brand-new skits, more wigs, celebrity send-ups and laugh-out-loud moments are promised by Hannah East when she visits the Midlands this month with her latest comedy offering, in which she takes a deep dive into the highs and lows of parenting. Hannah splits her professional life between stand-up and presenting. "After graduating, I competed on the TV show Gladiators," explains Hannah. "During the semi-final stage, I was waiting for a scene to be filmed with [ex-footballer] Ian Wright when

he told me to read Caroline Flack's autocue. After doing this, he gave me some advice - I should go into presenting. The rest, as they say, is history!"

## Ladies Of Laughter

Birmingham Hippodrome, Sat 7 February

Championing female comics who appeal to comedy lovers of all backgrounds is the name of the game whenever Ladies Of Laughter takes to the stage.

This latest edition of the show features sets from five top-quality funny-women: Maureen Younger, Ola Labib, Esther Manito, Samira Bank and Shalaka Kurup.

The show's line-up has been known to change at the last minute, but whoever turns up, an evening of high-quality comedy is pretty much a guarantee.





# BABYDOOMER

**Sam Nicoresti visits the Midlands with  
award-winning comedy show**





**Harborne-born trans comic Sam Nicoresti came to prominence by winning the prestigious Leicester Square Theatre New Comedian of the Year award in 2021. Numerous nominations and awards have followed, including the Best Comedy Show gong for his Edinburgh Fringe 2025 offering, Baby Doomer - a revamped version of which he's touring to the Midlands this very month. What's On recently caught up with Sam to find out more...**

One of the biggest comedy shows at Edinburgh's 2025 Fringe, Sam Nicoresti's Baby Doomer was highly praised for its charm, gag rate and relatability. But, off stage, Sam paid a price for the extended sold-out run: "I completely lost my voice! I wasn't speaking outside of the shows. I would come on stage, do an hour, and then I'd go back to a monkish existence. I'd shut myself away, drink Chinese cough syrup and make myself a Lemsip.

"I was doing it all by the end of the run - the vaporiser, hot showers, Lemsip, cough syrup, old wives' tales, hacks off the internet ... I was pouring all kinds of gloop down my throat."

Thankfully, the gloop paid off, as Sam deservedly scooped the Edinburgh Comedy Award for Best Comedy Show - although by the time the ceremony came around, a rejuvenating rest would probably have been preferable to a surge of media attention!

What's more, despite the guaranteed rush of photographers and journos, award organisers provide no make-up assistance to ensure winners look their best.

"You work so hard all month, you have to really give it everything you've got, and then, at the end of it all, when you're limping across the finish line, the national press come and take your photo, and they're probably going to be the photos that most people see of you ... and you've never looked worse!

"You really are flying solo up there. I'm glad I had a little team around me who were able to provide a bit of blush on the day, straighten my shirt and so on. But it was horrible!"

Previous winners of the coveted Best Comedy Show award - the trophy now takes pride of place on Sam's mantelpiece, next to a beloved cat's cremated ashes - include Frank Skinner, Steve Coogan, Al Murray, Bridget Christie and Tim Key. Sam is delighted to have joined them: "It feels very nice ..."

Originally from the Birmingham suburb of Harborne, though now residing in London,

Sam acquired a taste for performing in front of a live audience when still a teenager, participating in productions mounted by Birmingham-based youth theatre company Stage2.

Mastering stage craft was no walk in the park, but one particular comedic exchange in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance Of Being Earnest* proved to be a real turning point: "To be honest, I was just a bad actor, but I knew I was good at getting laughs. I think people were probably often laughing at how bad I was, but it's that classic thing of there just being something inside you that makes you an attention seeker; not good enough to get the tears, but sort of strange enough to get the laughs of sympathy. And that probably started something in me."

There were occasional tentative public appearances in the West Midlands, but Sam embraced comedy more enthusiastically after moving to Sheffield for university, making waves first with award-winning sketch trio Staple/Face, then as one half of Sam & Tom.

Aside from a 2018/19 solo show inspired by UFOs and a relative - Uncle Victor - Sam was "really having a lot of fun with Sam & Tom!" But Covid lockdowns forced a reassessment: "It's just the isolation. It's much harder to keep projects going with other people. And also, I was looking around at my life and came to a point where, all of a sudden, it just seemed obvious that it wasn't really going as well as I'd convinced myself it was.

"Part of that is the [comedy] industry - it's really hard to make a career out of being a double-act because you're obviously splitting everything two ways. Also, no one's really booking shows like that, it's harder to get on the club circuit, and it's not really clear what the progression to television is."

Making the decision to go solo, Sam developed a new show inspired by identity politics and cancel culture. Originally called *Cancel Anti Wokeflake Snow Culture*, but soon truncated to simply *Wokeflake*, it became both a cult live success, and - once the show dropped on YouTube - a viral hit,

despite staging challenges: "The show really took it out of me because it was so technically complicated - you needed two laptops, a projector, 15 HDMI cables all chained together. And travelling that around small pub-theatre rooms, watching local promoters desperately trying to get a projector working five minutes before doors opened, just made me feel like, for the next one, I should just do a standup show."

And so the more standup-centric Baby Doomer began to take shape - a show that tapped into the queer experience, building on Wokeflake's themes.

"It was an interesting challenge because I hadn't really seen myself as much of a standup comedian before the pandemic, although I've always loved it and like watching it. I started to feel a bit more like giving it a proper go, and I just wanted to challenge myself to write a standup show.

"It ended up having all kinds of bells and whistles on top, but at its core, it's fundamentally a standup hour - which was different for me, but that was the challenge that I wanted to set."

Thanks to the Comedy Award, Baby Doomer is now enjoying an extended life, with more dates throughout the year (and TV offers as well). Its success has allowed Sam to become a full-time comic, albeit with understandable concerns about how everything will pan out in the future: "Now that I'm full time, I'm struggling to figure out what the hell you're supposed to do with your days. It feels a bit more like you do have to pay rent with the jokes now. I'm not really sure what the longevity of that is - but this year at least, I am a full-time comedian!"

.....

**Sam Nicoresti plays Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre on Friday 20 February and Centrala Arts Centre, Birmingham, on Saturday 21 February**



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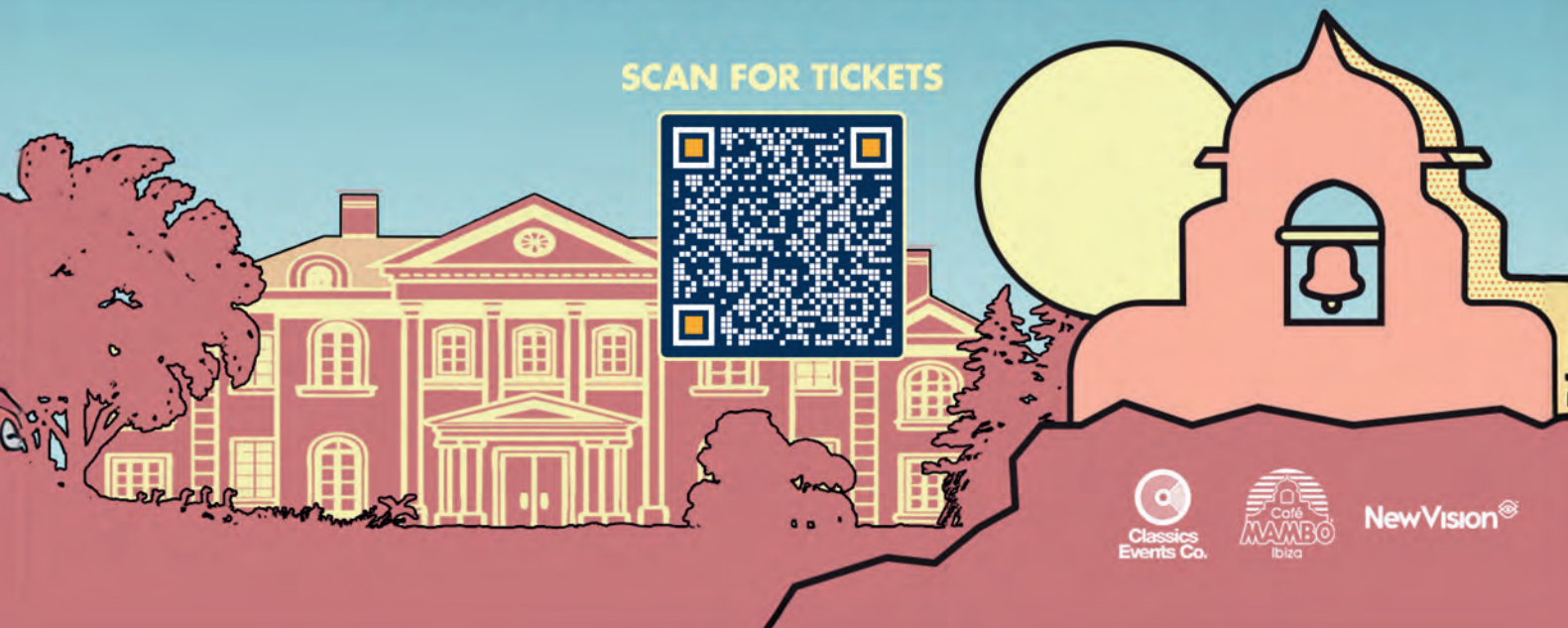
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## Comedy previews from across the region...

## Al Murray

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sat 28 February;  
Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 16 May;  
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 7 June;  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 1  
October

"I love being a pub landlord," says Al Murray. "It's a truly great calling. You're there to soothe troubled souls, pour balm on troubled waters, make people's important moments in their lives extra special, and provide a range of snacks. What's not to like?"

Al is on tour this year with brand-new show All You Need Is Guv.



## Richard Blackwood

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 1 February;  
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 28 February

Richard Blackwood's comedic style has been described as an amalgam of Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy and Chris Rock, combined with a healthy dose of Afro Caribbean and South London humour. Jokes include: "A little boy went up to his father and asked: 'Dad, where did all of my intelligence come from?' The father replied: 'Well, son, you must have gotten it from your mother, coz I still have mine.'"

## Sally-Anne Haywood

Stourbridge Town Hall, Thurs 12 February

If you're a Sarah Millican, Russell Howard, Russell Kane, Hal Cruttenden or Suzi Ruffell fan and have attended some of their shows, there's every chance that, prior to the main event, you will have had your laughter muscles nicely lubricated for you by Sally-Anne Haywood.

A real comedian's comedian, Sally-Anne's ever-so-nice persona conceals a caustic wit, a cutting cynicism and a generally bitchier side that serves her well as she takes a tongue-in-cheek look at the world around her.

Her latest stand-up offering features 'tales of juggling lovers, dodging societal expectations and thriving without kids'.



## Omid Djalili

Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sun 8 February; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Fri 13 February;  
Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 3 April

A fella who's been referred to as 'the thinking person's Iranian comedian', Omid Djalili is probably one of the most subversive comics currently doing the rounds on the UK comedy circuit.

"I've been breaking away from the Middle Eastern pigeonhole that you people [journalists] have unfairly put me in," says Omid, who's visiting the Midlands this month

with latest stand-up show Namaste. "I'm a citizen of the world, and I will not be defined by cultural stereotypes. I have a specific viewpoint, which many call 'Djalili-esque', and I think my material reflects that now. Would you like a carpet? Visit my website. I also sell fried chicken, mayonnaise, motorcycle insurance and viagra, very fine price."

## Sam Nicoresti

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 20 February; Centrala Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 21 February

Birmingham-born trans comedian Sam Nicoresti visits the region this month with a revamped version of breakout show Baby Doomer. Described by Sam's official publicity as 'a glistening diamond hour of stand-up' (its running time has been extended to 105 minutes, including an interval, for this tour), the show made a massive impact in Edinburgh last summer. It then received a similarly positive audience reaction during three weeks of sold-out performances at London's Soho Theatre in the autumn. Sam's chosen subjects for the show include love, insanity, and the hunt for the perfect skirt suit...

## Alasdair Beckett-King

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 21 February;  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 8 March;  
Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 25 March

When, as a stand-up comedian, you find that no less a laughter merchant than Stewart Lee is hailing you a five-star example of 'clockwork comedy perfection', it's reasonable to assume that you must be doing plenty right. And Alasdair Beckett-King most definitely is. Stewart's glowing recommendation is no stand-alone tribute either, with critics and audience members alike routinely praising the self-described hedge-wizard and cat burglar...

Alasdair - who also refers to himself as England's most Scottish-looking man - visits the Midlands this month with latest show King Of Crumbs.



# CHEEK TO CHEEK

Phillip Attmore and Amara Okereke  
face the music in classic comedy Top Hat





**Classic musical rom-com Top Hat visits Birmingham Hippodrome next month as part of a national tour. The production boasts dazzling Art Deco design, choreography worthy of the great Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers - who starred in the original film version - and definitive Irving Berlin hits. Tapping away in the lead roles are Phillip Attmore, who plays Jerry Travers, and Amara Okereke, as Dale Tremont. What's On sat down with Phillip and Amara to find out more about the show...**

Originally a film, now a stage show, Top Hat, as its name suggests, oozes the glamour of 1930s showbiz - a lighthearted romantic comedy which speeds from Broadway stage to luxe London hotel, and from the haute couture catwalk to the canals of Venice.

The 1935 movie, featuring music & lyrics by Irving Berlin, was adapted into an Olivier Award-winning musical in 2011. Following a Chichester Festival Theatre revival last year, the stage show has now embarked on a national tour, with Phillip Attmore playing tap dancer Jerry Travers and Amara Okereke taking the part of model Dale Tremont.

The lead roles of Jerry and Dale were originated on screen 91 years ago by two Hollywood legends, who left behind them some very large tap shoes to fill...

"I think you recognise the honour that it is to pay homage to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers," says Phillip. "But it's not a biopic - we're not playing Fred and Ginger; we're playing Jerry Travers and Dale Tremont. It's an invitation to pay due respect, as well as an opportunity to shine, getting to sing and dance to some of the greatest music ever written. I don't feel any pressure. That's what training does - when you step into roles like these, you've done everything, you've done all the work, so now's the time to shine."

"I think Fred and Ginger established their own iconic aura," adds Amara. "It doesn't even feel like we're attempting to fill those shoes. It just feels like we're carrying on the legacy - it's more of an honour than anything else."

This is Amara's first national tour, but she's well-versed in the world of musical theatre and feels particularly at home on the set of Top Hat.

"It's a very new experience, but I've been doing musical theatre for almost a decade now - which is terrifying to say out loud! My natural inclination has always been towards the classic musicals. I'm a big fan of the Golden Age era of Hollywood movie musicals, and I've always wanted to emulate those kinds of performers. I've done a lot of older musicals - My Fair Lady, Oklahoma. My first job was Les Miserables, playing Cosette.

It's been thrilling. I think I've been very, very lucky with the kind of opportunities that have come my way."

The show's plot sees Broadway star Jerry Travers chasing further fame in the UK - mirroring California-born Phillip's own journey across the pond: "This is my first time leading a show in the UK, which is a great honour, and it's a case of life, imitating art, imitating life! I'm excited. There are so many full-circle moments for me being a part of this show. On Broadway, they have the Astaire Award, which is known now as the Chita Award, named after actor Chita Rivera. I'm a three-time winner of the Astaire Award, and so getting to play this role, at a time in my life when I wasn't looking for it, is a huge honour, a great surprise and a big gift.

"My wife's from the UK. It's the first time that we've ever come over with our two little ones, and the first time in seven years that we've been here. They're based in Liverpool. My five-year-old is going to school right now."

"We're hoping they develop a scouse accent!" Amara adds with a laugh.

Phillip is reprising the role of Jerry after last year's revival, while Amara was brought into the production for the national tour. Chatting backstage, the rapport between the pair is obvious, a fact which has made it all the easier to recreate that chemistry on stage, according to Amara: "We have very similar passions, I think, when it comes to this show. The first time I saw it, Lucy St Louis - a fantastic actress - was playing Dale in Chichester. Phillip and I were chatting away about all of our favourite performers and dancers from that era, and we just *got* each other. And I think we both love this in a similar way. The playfulness is very real on stage."

The story has everything required for a true romantic comedy, from mistaken identity, to a bickering beta-couple and farcical disguises. Jerry and Dale even have a 'meet-cute' moment, where their relationship begins - Jerry is practising a tap routine, to the consternation of Dale, who is trying to sleep in the hotel room below.

Alongside hit numbers such as Let's Face The

Music And Dance and Puttin' On The Ritz, the show also boasts clever set and luxurious costume design, both of which add to the production's sense of Hollywood glamour.

"The movie is black & white," says Amara. "We honour the costume design and the design of the movie, but we really bring it into colour. We get to enjoy the brightness and add to the joy - add a new layer of joy to the beautiful design that already exists. There are still aspects of the film's design, though - we still have a beautiful feather dress that I'm very, very lucky to wear. For my character personally, she's a model. She wears original designs by Alberto Beddini, so they're quite 'out there'. They're stunning and beautiful and flashy. It's a very artsy era."

Phillip is equally effusive in his praise for the look of the show: "Peter McKintosh, who designed the costumes and the sets, has done a beautiful job of marrying the two, brilliantly fusing them together."

Top Hat is positively awash with iconic songs and brilliant dance routines - but which numbers do Phillip and Amara most enjoy performing each night when they, er, 'face the music and dance'?

"I think it's got to be Lovely Day," says Amara. "It's the first time we see Jerry and Dale come together and really fall for each other. It's so simple and it's so sweet. It communicates so much through movement, and they don't need to say any words. It's beautifully done."

"I always say it's a toss-up between Lovely Day and Top Hat," says Phillip. "Lovely Day, because of the storytelling - it says so much about the relationship that they find and then have to chase after and then find again in the end. And Top Hat because it's the title song - and it's just fun to do!"

**Top Hat shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 March**





## Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief

Malvern Theatres, Wed 4 - Sat 7 February; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 24 - Sat 28 February

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. Eventually, he discovers that he's a demigod - his mother is human, but his absent father is a god from Greek mythology...

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 this touring musical.

"The show is absolutely epic," says Cahir O'Neill, who plays the character of Grover, a satyr. "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!"

RuPaul's Drag Race UK champion Danny Beard joins the cast as Mr D.

## All Is But Fantasy

The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, until 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 (pictured) 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!



## The Battle

The Rep, Birmingham, Wed 11 February - Sat 7 March

Brand-new play *The Battle* has its roots in the gloriously hot summer of 1995, when one of the main items on the British media's agenda was the red-hot race between Britpop bands Blur and Oasis to reach the top of the charts.

"I was there in February 1995," recalls the play's writer, John Niven, "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."

Gavin & Stacey's Mathew Horne stars.









## Friends! The Musical Parody

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,  
Mon 16 - Sat 21 February

If it's not broken, don't turn it into a stage musical; that would surely have been the advice which millions of Friends fans would've given the creative team who set out to make this show...

So it's probably a good thing that those millions of fans were never actually canvassed for their opinion... because as it happens, Friends! The Musical Parody makes for a thoroughly enjoyable night out at the theatre.

Lovingly lampooning the hit TV sitcom from the 1990s and early noughties, the show is a good-hearted romp through the series' most memorable moments, but with the addition of some high-energy song & dance routines. What's not to like?...

## Our Little Hour

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 14 February;  
Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,  
Fri 27 & Sat 28 February

Award-winning playwright Dougie Blaxland's Our Little Hour tells the story of Walter Tull, the first black footballer to play at the highest level of the UK game, who then went on to become the first man of his heritage to be commissioned as an officer in the British Army... The production, described by its publicity as 'an intensely moving musical drama', includes 16 'hauntingly beautiful original songs'.



## An Improvised Murder

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,  
Thurs 26 February

Improvised theatre seems to be all the rage nowadays - a fact which should ensure plenty of bums on seats for local ensemble Foghorn Unscripted's 'rib-tickling journey into the unknown'.

"It's edge-of-your-seat suspense," they say,

"as we create a murder-mystery right before your eyes. Who harbours dark secrets waiting to be unearthed? Who bites the dust? Who's the culprit? It's all up to you! Think of yourself as the puppet master, pulling the strings of fate!"

## Crown Of Blood

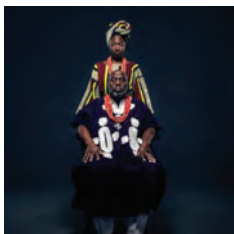
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,  
Wed 11 - Sat 14 February

An opportunity to experience Shakespeare as you've never seen it before...

That's how Utopia Theatre describes Crown Of Blood, its new co-production with Sheffield Theatres.

A National Portfolio Organisation, Utopia exists to create 'exceptional and world-class African theatre with imaginative flair'. In this particular instance, it's doing so by presenting a 19th-century-set Yoruba adaptation of Macbeth.

The production is suitable for audience members aged 11-plus.



## I'm Muslimic Don't Panik

Thimblemill Library, Smethwick, Sat 21 February; Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Tues 24 February; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 18 April

Bobak is visiting Iran to explore his cultural heritage. While on the journey of self-discovery, he encounters all manner of weird

and wonderful characters - from the women defiantly running the first-ever (and last) Tehran marathon, to the participants in an underground breakdance battle...

Blending live music, spoken word and comedy (alongside the aforementioned breakdancing!), the show will be followed by a chance to join the cast for traditional Persian tea and biscuits.



## The Ballad Of Mulan

The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Fri 27 February

Red Dragonfly and Grist To The Mill theatre companies here combine to explore the story of Mulan, a warrior woman - generally considered to be fictional - whose legendary heroics have been made familiar to modern-day audiences by two Disney movies: a 1998 animated feature and a 2020 live-action film. West Yorkshire-born British-Chinese actress Michelle Yim takes the title role.







Cassa Pancho's  
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# DOG DAYS

Family favourite Bluey returns to the stage...



**Featuring the heartwarming antics of the Heeler family - Bluey, her sister Bingo, mum Chilli and dad Bandit - Australian animated children's television series Bluey has taken the world by storm since it first hit screens back in 2018. This year sees the quartet of canine characters making a welcome return to UK stages on a second national tour. With brilliantly created puppets, Bluey's Big Play features the original voices from the beloved TV series, including the recognisable tones of Dave McCormack as Bandit and Melanie Zanetti as Chilli. Dave and Melanie chatted to What's On recently and hinted at what to expect when Bluey and her puppy pals return to the region this month...**

**Why should Bluey fans come to see Bluey's Big Play live on stage?**

**Melanie Zanetti:** It feels like a huge extended episode, with the characters played by these enormous puppets, which beautifully bring them to life. The sets are incredible, and the music is by Joff Bush, who also does the music for the TV show. It's 50 minutes with no interval, and it's a really fun ride, with a story that you won't have seen on TV. I've seen it three times so far, including at The Theater at Madison Square Garden, where the energy was so frenetic it was like being at a rock concert.

**Without giving spoilers, can you tell us a bit about the plot?**

**Melanie:** It's once again based around the family, and there are some cheeky ways in which the girls get up to mischief revolving around things that they want. And, of course, we all learn some beautiful lessons, just like in every Bluey story!

**Dave McCormack:** With Bandit, sometimes his forgetfulness leads him on funny little adventures around the house. I can't give too much away, but it's a very relatable story. All of your favourite characters are there - there's singing, there's dancing, and the way it's done on stage with the puppets is really original.

**When did your own Bluey journeys begin?**

**Dave:** A friend of mine had a friend who was doing an animated show and they needed someone to do the voice of the dad. I'm not an actor, I'm a musician and composer, but luckily my daughters were about four and six at the time, so it was quite relatable for me as a parent of young kiddies. I gave it a go, thinking, 'Oh, that was fun, I wonder if anyone will ever see it.' Time passed, then I got to see it myself. I thought it was just wonderful, with the animation, the colours, the story and the music.

**Melanie:** I was already doing voiceovers, and during one session, the person running the studio said: 'My brother's making this animation. It's already cast, but you have a great voice. Can I chuck down some vocals?' After that, they did their due diligence and auditioned some more people for, like, three months before coming back to me and saying, 'Actually, you were perfect all along.' That's how I landed the part of Chilli.

**Did you think you'd still be voicing these characters all these years later?**

**Dave:** Who could have known that? But I'm happy that it's been so successful because it has a good heart. When you watch it, it's warm, it's real, it's happy and it's sad. It's got all the bits and pieces that make up our lives, and it doesn't speak down to kids.

**Melanie:** I don't think anyone could have known how it would take off. It was just this little show coming out of Brisbane, Australia. But it's the funnest job ever, getting to work on excellent scripts with amazing people. It doesn't get much better than this.

**Do you think Bandit (Dad) and Chilli (Mum) are good role models for parents?**

**Melanie:** Absolutely. With Chilli, it's not just because she's so warm and kind and tuned into her kids - one of my favourite things about the show is that the parents are also fallible. They're not perfect, but when they make a mistake, they apologise.

**Dave:** Bandit is just a normal dude with some idiosyncratic foibles. It's funny because even though the characters are dogs, it's all about being human. Things don't always go the way we expect, but we deal with it all with love and compassion. I think that's what's made the show so relatable to people all around the world - it's about what we do to get through everyday life.

**What's the process in terms of you voicing the characters?**

**Dave:** It's all done remotely. They send me the scripts with my bits highlighted in yellow, I read through them to get a general vibe, then normally I do four episodes in about two or three hours. I don't see it for a year because it goes away, gets edited, they do the animation, fix it all up, then I see it on the telly and I go, 'Wow, they've done such a good job!'

**Melanie:** What's wild is that, because I record it myself, I can record from anywhere in the world. With my acting jobs, I'm all over the place. I've recorded in Australia, New York, LA, Latvia, Florence... Wherever I am, they find a booth, put me in it, and away I go! Chilli may live in Australia, but she's done a world tour!

**Have you based your performances on anyone you know?**

**Melanie:** I draw a lot from my own mum for

Chilli. I'm one of six kids, and she was a bit ahead of her time in terms of tuning into us as little individuals and what our particular personalities were. We were never compared to each other.

**Dave:** Bandit is just me because, like I said, I can't really act. So when this all started, it was handy that I was in a similar situation in my real life. It's interesting because sometimes Bandit inspires me to be a better parent. I'll come home from doing a recording session and I'll be like, 'Okay, kids, get rid of those iPads, get rid of those iPhones, no devices, let's do something fun.'

**What do you think kids and their families can learn from seeing the show?**

**Melanie:** One of the most wonderful messages of Bluey is about being present with each other, and how mundane, everyday things can become magical and fun within worlds that we can create together. It's how we live together and learn from our mistakes. I really love the way it's written because nothing feels explicitly didactic. It all comes very naturally, and I think that's genius writing. I don't have kids but I do have nieces, and they're around Bluey and Bingo's ages, so it's fun seeing the little comparisons between them.

**Dave:** One of the things I've learned from the TV show and stage play is not to sweat the small stuff. Don't get hung up on that stuff, because time passes so quickly, and as a parent myself, I love the fact that every day brings something new. I don't look back at any stage and go 'I miss that,' because the next stage is so rewarding.

**Can you tease anything about the forthcoming Bluey movie?**

**Melanie:** I can tell you nothing about it other than that it's going to be amazing!

**Dave:** I'm constantly amazed by the creative team behind Bluey, but other than that, my lips are sealed.

**Bluey's Big Play shows at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 February, and at Birmingham's The Alexandra from Wednesday 4 to Sunday 8 March. It then returns to the region in the summer, showing at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Thursday 23 to Sunday 26 July.**





## Murder She Didn't Write: An Improvised Parody

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 3 February; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 24 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 6 & Thurs 7 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 21 September

Now here's an improvised show with plenty to recommend it...

First and foremost, it was a multiple-sell-out hit at the Edinburgh Fringe...

Secondly, it's presented by a critically acclaimed company - Degrees Of Error - who are past masters of the improv genre...

Thirdly, the show is a real hoot. An Agatha Christie-inspired whodunnit, it features a classic murder-mystery, which is created 'on the spot'. Audience members are then encouraged to don their deerstalkers (if they've brought them along!), grab a magnifying glass and make sure their 'finger of suspicion' is 'at the ready'...

The show runs for two hours, including an interval.

## Nine Sixteenths

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 12 February

Widely admired choreographer Pauline Mayers is the remarkable talent behind this intriguing new production. Blending devised theatre, dance and lip sync, the show asks questions about the demographics of those who control the media, and aims to shed light on the ways in which black women are scrutinised in the public eye.

The production's starting-point - reflected in the title - is the nine-sixteenths of a second for which Janet Jackson's breast was exposed on screen to millions of television viewers during a half-time performance with Justin Timberlake at the 2004 Superbowl.

The incident derailed Jackson's career for many years. By contrast, the career of Timberlake, who'd been responsible for exposing her during their performance choreography - went from strength to strength...



## Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 24 February

Quentin Crisp certainly had a talent for outrageous self-publicity. Back in the mid-20th century, 'mincing around' the streets of London in gaudy makeup and dying one's hair crimson was a pretty good way for a gay man to get himself not only noticed but also thoroughly duffed up - and Quentin certainly bagged a beating or two en route to the fame and fragility of his old age...

Mark Farrelly here makes a welcome return with his much-travelled homage to the man who became known as The Naked Civil Servant.



## The Hound Of The Baskervilles

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Sat 14 February - Sat 14 March

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is one of literature's most enduring characters. The Hound Of The Baskervilles his most famous adventure. Yet no matter how many actors don the deerstalker and solve the mystery of the monstrous moorland beast, the story remains a popular choice for both stage and screen adaptation. This New Vic Theatre version brings a welcome dose of humour to the lonely wasteland of the desolate moors...

## Inspector Morse: House Of Ghosts

Malvern Theatres, Tues 24 - Sat 28 February

Author Colin Dexter's crossword-solving, ale-supping, classical music-loving Oxford detective is back in business, this time on stage.

On the back of a series of well-received novels, Morse became a household name in the 1980s and 90s courtesy of actor John Thaw, who played him in 33 feature-length television episodes. Spin-off shows Lewis and Endeavour followed in the 21st century - and now the cerebral sleuth is making a welcome return in the form of Strictly Come Dancing's Tom Chambers.

This brand-new stage adaptation, based on an original story, finds Morse investigating the on-stage death of a young actress - and in the process uncovering a connection to sinister events in his own dim and distant past.







'SPARKLING, JOYOUS, BLISSFULLY EFFERVESCENT'

Daily Mail



The Times



Musical Theatre Review



The Guardian



The Arts Desk



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# CROCS AWAY...

**Roald Dahl's Enormous Crocodile slides onto the stage  
at three Midlands venues this summer**



**A new 'mischievous' musical, based on Roald Dahl's classic children's story The Enormous Crocodile, stops off in the Midlands this summer as part of a UK tour. With its fusion of puppetry and live music, the snappy tale of a very large reptile promises to delight younger audiences - as the show's writer, Suhayla El-Bushra, recently explained to What's On...**

Roald Dahl's enormous crocodile will be snapping at the heels of audiences across the region when the stage adaptation of the ever-popular children's book - first published in 1978 - comes to local theatres in the summer.

Having premiered at Leeds Playhouse at Christmas 2023, then played Regent's Park Open Air Theatre in London, the hit show will be visiting venues in Shrewsbury, Coventry and Wolverhampton this June.

And writer Suhayla El-Bushra, who created the production's book and lyrics, is looking forward to seeing more children enjoy the show: "Roald Dahl's stories are full of drama, jeopardy and peril - that's why they're so popular. The Enormous Crocodile is the ultimate peril for its audience because it's about a very big crocodile who wants to eat a child - and the whole audience is full of children.

"I used to read the book to my kids, and we all used to enjoy that very safe sense of danger. When I came to work on the show, I wanted to tap into that feeling of when you're little and you want to be scared and you kind of enjoy the feeling of being scared but you also feel quite safe and held by that."

The production, which brings together an impressive team of creatives, was an incredibly collaborative process, says Suhayla: "It took us about five years to write a musical version of the story with puppets. I was trying to write the story as it could be translated on stage, and it was hugely challenging in the most wonderful way.

"It's a story that takes place in a jungle, with an enormous crocodile who plays lots of tricks by disguising himself, and who moves to lots of different places in the book. So there's working out how to stage the story in itself, and then there's the added layer of trying to turn this into song and lyrics and all the technical stuff that goes with that. And there was also this other factor to think about: what are the puppets going to be doing?"

To find an answer to that question, the team called on the expertise of leading puppet designer Toby Olié, whose previous work includes War Horse, Disney's The Little Mermaid, 101 Dalmatians at Regent's Park, and Imperial Theatre Tokyo's Spirited Away.

"We had lots of workshops where actors came in. Sometimes they were there specifically because they were brilliant singers and we were trying to work out the music. Or sometimes they were really excellent puppeteers, and we would sit and watch the puppets and how they were moving and how they would work. That would help give me a sense of their characters and the kind of things they would do and the lines they would say.

"We kept building up the show, layer by layer. We would all chip in and come together. It takes a long time, but it's absolutely wonderful to be working with all these incredible brains from different areas.

"I think this happens with all musicals. You can't just write it and hand it over to the next person to do their bit. It's constantly putting it together, piece by piece. It's like a game of Jenga, with 'I'll try this and then you try that and then I'll try this' and so on. And you're always feeding off what the other creatives are bringing into the process."

The music team of Suhayla, Ahmed Abdullahi Gallab and Tom Brady have worked together to ensure that the songs not only take the story forward but are also lots of fun for small children.

"Ahmed and I had never written a musical before. Tom was there to oversee and play a part in helping us construct the songs so that they told a story. When you're writing for a young audience, there has to be a simplicity to the songs - but that doesn't mean that they can't also be really complex and challenging."

The team, who were also working with the Roald Dahl Story Company, were determined that no corners would be cut just because The Enormous Crocodile was aimed at children.

"The absolute driving force throughout the whole process, from the very beginning, was that we had to treat it as seriously as we would a play for adults. The bottom line was always that we would challenge every idea that we had and ensure that everything was the absolute best that it could be.

"In fact, I kind of joked that I spent more time trying to work out the character of this enormous crocodile than I have on any other

character I've written!"

The production is aimed at children aged three and above. Suhayla says audiences have been captivated: "There's something in this show for all the family. I know it's for small kids, but like all of Dahl's books, there's also incredible wit and humour to the story. And this is a really imaginative production - the design and puppets are wonderful, and I think people of all ages will enjoy it. It's got great tunes, brilliant performances and lots of opportunities for the audiences to get involved.

"Watching the show - especially when we've done it with schools, where the audience has been almost entirely made up of children - it's just been wonderful to see the way [kids] respond to it. We want them to have a good time and have fun, and you can see that they do.

"The audience are a key part of the show; it only half exists until they come along. It's about a crocodile who wants to eat a child, so they're already involved in the story. We've leant into that in the production, and the children are encouraged to take part at various points."

Suhayla hopes the show will spark a lifelong love of live stagework for those who go to see it: "Children are a really important audience, and they deserve good-quality theatre. For a lot of kids, this show is their very first experience of going to the theatre. There's a huge amount of responsibility that comes with that. You want them to enjoy it, and for it to be really magical, and for them to want to come back. They are the future theatre makers, because we can all remember the first experience that we had when we were young and thinking 'I want to do that,' whether that was being on stage or wanting to be the person who writes."

.....

**The Enormous Crocodile stops off at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn from Thursday 4 to Sunday 7 June, the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Thursday 11 to Sunday 14 June, and the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, from Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 June**





## Tales From Acorn Wood

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 19 & Fri 20 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 21 & Sun 22 February; The Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 28 February & Sun 1 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 March

Stage adaptations of books by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler invariably offer theatrical magic aplenty, so this is definitely a show that's well worth catching.

Bringing together clever puppetry and toe-tapping songs, the production provides youngsters with an hour of lively entertainment, including the chance to join Pig and Hen for a game of hide & seek. The show is suitable for children aged one-plus.

## Horrible Histories

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Fri 20 & Sat 21 February

If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then this concert version is well worth catching.



The premise of the production is that William Shakespeare has been asked to create the greatest show on earth, but has no idea how much trouble he'll get from monstrous monarchs King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria! Things then hot up when Death appears, while both Boudica and Cleopatra have designs on taking over. The show features a live band and a selection of much-loved songs from the television series, including Stupid Deaths, Charles II, Dick Turpin and The Monarchs' Song.

## Bluey's Big Play

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 13 - Sun 15 February; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 4 - Sun 8 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 23 - Sun 26 July

Blue Heeler puppy Bluey has certainly had plenty to bark about since making her television debut eight years ago. The Australian animated pre-school series in which she stars has not only developed a huge international fanbase but also picked up prestigious Emmy and Bafta awards. On the back of such global success, it was only a matter of time before the popular pup's adventures made it onto the stage... This 50-minute show finds Bluey and younger sister Bingo determined to thwart their dad's plan to enjoy a quiet Sunday afternoon...

## Brave Bettie

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 15 February

When the council threatens to cut down Bettie's favourite tree, she must find the courage to protect it...

Half Moon and Z-arts join forces to present Tatenda Naomi Matsvai's thought-provoking woodland adventure. Telling a tale of friendship, bravery and self-discovery, the show brings together poetry, songs, live music and stories.

Suitable for children aged between three and eight.

## Justin Time To Rock

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 22 February; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunday 24 May & Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 25 May

BAFTA Award-winning children's television presenter Justin Fletcher returns to the region with a brand-new



all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza. Justin is advising his young fans to prepare themselves for a show that's positively awash with well-known songs, energetic dancing and plenty of rocktastic fun!

## There's A Monster In Your Show

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 17 - Sat 21 February; Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 23 & Fri 24 April

Children's author Tom Fletcher's interactive adventures leap from page to stage, as his critically acclaimed Who's In Your Book? series heads for the region in the form of a

well-received stage musical.

The show sees Little Monster being joined by friends Dragon, Alien and Unicorn for 50 minutes of comedy, chaos and high-energy fun, during which the pals will be learning all about the joy of friendship and books.

## The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 25 & Thurs 26 February; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 17 & Wed 18 March; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 4 & Sun 5 April

In a career stretching back to the mid-1960s, the late Eric Carle illustrated more than 70 books - writing most of them, too. None have been more famous or successful than his 1969 story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The popular picture book has been translated into more than 60 languages, selling in excess of 52 million copies.

This interactive stage version of Carle's much-loved tale, presented alongside three more of his stories, features no fewer than 45 handcrafted puppets and has a running time of one hour.

## Dinosaur Adventure Live

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sun 22 February; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Thurs 2 April; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 26 May

Dinosaur Adventure Live is being advertised as 'the greatest prehistoric show on Earth', providing audiences with a '65 million years in the making' hour of 'roarsome' fun that's 'totally T-rex-iffic'...

The interactive experience allows families to take a journey through the Jurassic era, meet dinos face-to-face, and check out the impossible-to-ignore roar of a terror-inducing Tyrannosaurus...





# FEBRUARY FAMILY FUN

## **Ruby's Worry**

Sun 1 Feb 11.30am & 2pm  
A delightful musical journey.  
Age 3-7

## **WiFi Wars**

Sun 1 Feb 2pm  
The live comedy game show  
where you play along.  
Age 6+

## **Musical Picnics**

Sun 8 Feb 11am  
All ages

## **Brave Betty**

Sun 15 Feb 11am & 2pm  
A magical woodland adventure.  
Age 3-8

## **University of Warwick**

### **Chamber Orchestra**

#### **Peter and the Wolf**

Sun 15 Feb 4pm  
Meet the instruments  
in the orchestra.  
All ages

## **Rude Science**

Tue 17 Feb 11.30am & 3pm  
All new show for 2026!  
Age 6+

## **My First Concert:**

### **We will Rock You**

Thu 19 Feb 1pm  
All ages

## **Tales From Acorn Wood Live!**

Sat 21 Feb 2pm & Sun 22 Feb  
11am & 2pm

Songs, puppetry and all the  
friends from Acorn Wood.  
All ages

## **Family Singing**

Sun 22 Feb 11.30am  
Our popular hour of family singing.  
All ages

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## **Family Films**

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**There's a Monster in Your Show** 23&24.04

**Fireman Sam** 20.06

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## Light entertainment from around the region



### Tap Factory

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 10 February; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 13 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 22 February

Tap Factory has been dancing its way around the world for a good many years now. Featuring an explosive combination of acrobatics, music and comedy, the main attraction is undoubtedly the fast-moving

feet of the show's hugely talented male tap dancers, whose dazzling performances sit at the heart of this furiously frenetic evening of family-friendly fun.

### Jack Rhodes: Part-time Wizard, Full-time Moron

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 4 February; Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Thurs 12 February

One-time nuclear engineer and Britain's Got Talent runner-up - Simon Cowell described him on the show as 'one in a million' - Jack Rhodes is a magician who doesn't take himself too seriously. Witness, for example, the title of this new touring production! Slick visuals, impressive video effects and big theatrical moments all feature in Jack's show, as do mindbending magic and high-quality comedy.

If tricks and giggles are your thing, this is an evening of entertainment that's well worth catching.



### Dita Von Teese: Nocturnelle

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 4 - Fri 6 February

Harry Styles, Tim Burton, Pamela Anderson and Prince Albert II of Monaco are among the celebrities who've been suitably impressed attendees at a Dita Von Teese production.

With a justifiable claim to the title Queen of Burlesque, Dita produces shows which are notable for their impressive level of opulence. This latest offering - 'a world of wonder' in which 'sensuality meets magic' - takes its inspiration from 'magicians of the 19th century'. The show is hosted by 'global drag icon' BenDeLaCreme.

### Massaoke: Sing The Musicals

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 12 February; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Fri 27 February; Walsall Arena, Sat 2 May; Dudley Town Hall, Fri 4 September; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 22 October

A live band, performers singing in character, and a giant screen displaying singalong lyrics to productions such as Mamma Mia!, Les Miserables, Mary Poppins, Oliver! and The Phantom Of The Opera. If you're a fan of musical theatre, what's not to like?...



### Circus Spectacular

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 16 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 February

A production that's earned plenty of plaudits on its travels, Circus Spectacular brings together magic, comedy and (of course) circus for a show which its organisers are publicising as a winning blend of skill and suspense. The production is suitable for children of all ages.

### James Phelan

The Henrican, Evesham, Sun 15 February; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 20 February; Stafford Gatehouse, Sun 18 October

The nephew of the late Paul Daniels, James Phelan baffles, befuddles and bemuses with feats of sorcery that seem certain to draw gasps of astonishment from awestruck audiences.

"I learned by watching and emulating what Paul did on TV," says James, "but I've been really careful not to do his stuff in my own show, or to inadvertently use his lines. I really need to avoid saying 'You'll like it' and then accidentally adding 'Not a lot!'"







# TOUR DE FORCE

**Ellen Kent's Farewell Tour brings  
opulent opera to the Midlands**



**Renowned producer Ellen Kent has been creating and touring extraordinary international operas - featuring world-class performers, dazzling visuals and even the occasional animal(!) - since 1992. This year marks a last outing for her critically acclaimed versions of Madama Butterfly, La Traviata and Carmen. Now being co-produced by live-entertainment promoters Senbla, each production is visiting the Midlands in the upcoming months, with two of them stopping off in the region during February. What's On spoke to Ellen about the 'Farewell' tour and her remarkable career...**

For over 30 years, Ellen Kent has toured extravagant opera and ballet productions to appreciative audiences around the UK, in the process showcasing the talents of some of Europe's major opera companies.

Famed for their ambition and spectacle, three of her productions are now travelling the nation on a celebratory 'Farewell' tour.

Ellen's first foray into theatrical touring was far removed from the grand operatic scenes for which she is now renowned. She began her producing career touring European children's theatre - but even then, she had a keen eye for the spectacular...

"When I did *Bleu D'Ecailles* - or *Why The Fish Left The River* - we had huge tanks of koi carp..." Ellen explains. "I never did things by halves. Doing things by halves is not 'me'. We went right over the top, and created this sort of liaison with Europe. We developed touring theatre from Strasbourg and all over."

The ability to make and develop relationships has served Ellen well - whether liaising with European opera greats, or approaching a national treasure to take part in a bilingual children's show...

"I got hold of Judi Dench," she recalls. "I sent this email and asked Judi Dench whether she would consider being the English narrator for us. Judi Dench became my patron - she still is!"

Ellen was born in India - her Scottish father was High Commissioner, while her mother was raised in India, in Pune. The family moved to Spain when Ellen was 12 - but being a sociable person even then, she wanted the opportunity to meet friends her own age.

"I used to read all the Enid Blyton stories; I loved Enid Blyton. My mother was a huge storyteller as well - she did very good Indian ghost stories. I said to my mother, look, I want to go to boarding school... Most people would hate going to boarding school, but guess what? I loved it. I had people of my own age, I made friends, I had a social life; it was great. I'm very good at getting on with people."

Ellen's first opera production materialised in 1992 when she and her then husband lived in Rochester.

"Rochester Castle, bless their hearts, they

rang me up and said, 'Ellen, you do all these wonderful children's shows from France; can you do something spectacular like that for us at Rochester Castle? We do these festivals in the summer...' [Even though] I had no experience of opera, I heard myself saying, 'I'm not sure that children's plays will get you your vast audience - but opera might.'"

Ellen's instincts proved sound, and in collaboration with the Romanian National Opera, she brought Verdi's *Nabucco* to Rochester Castle. She remains a firm advocate for European artists, and in recent years has been working with Ukraine's Opera International Kyiv - the company which stars in all three of this year's productions.

Speaking of which... Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* shows at Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre this month, telling the story of the beautiful Cio-Cio-San, who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant.

"It's the most popular opera in the whole world, 'The Butterfly' is very beautiful. We've got a very good cast. We've got a Korean girl, Elena Dee, who's a class act, playing Cio-Cio-San. Good cast, slick, beautiful production... For some reason, it seems to be the British favourite."

Also touring this year are Verdi's *La Traviata* and Bizet's *Carmen*. Famed for her large-scale productions, for this tour Ellen has had to make some logistical changes, returning to the cloth backdrops which were made for her when she first produced *Carmen*.

"I do love my *Carmen*. I did a spectacularly wonderful *Carmen*. I used to have horses in the show. I mean, can you imagine? Andalusian stallions galloping on!"

"With this one, it's more of an open stage. And the cloths... I looked at the cloths I had painted in Moldova, based on designs I sent them; Goya, Picasso, that sort of thing. They are beautiful - I'd forgotten how beautiful the cloths were."

After a decades-long career ("I'm rather proud of being 76 and still doing what I'm doing, to be quite honest...") Ellen takes the process in her stride, including the challenges which are inevitable with such an ambitious, international endeavour.

"What I always say is, a window will open and you'll find a way - and I always do.

Maybe the gods are looking after me - the Indian gods, of course, the goddess Kali... I always make a few pujas to Kali, and say, 'Are you going to help me, Kali?' Suddenly, a window will open up, and there it is - it all works out!"

Although the current tour may be billed as a 'farewell', Ellen isn't ready to say goodbye to her career - indeed, she's already looking forward to her next venture, with her 'Number Two', Victor Donos.

"I cannot stop and do nothing. Victor and myself - Victor being 36/37, and me being 76, not a bad combination - we're going to launch the Ellen Kent International Opera Artist Agency. We're already signing people up."

This seems like a natural step in a remarkable career. After bringing together international opera stars, rallying collaborators and creating productions which are intended to be entertaining rather than elitist, it's not surprising that, for Ellen, it's all about the people.

"I'm a people person. I mean, I believe in people. You can't do anything without people, can you? And I've managed to get an entire army. I should have been like Queen Boadicea; I could have led my army... I'm quite good at leading people and gathering the forces to support me. I don't know where that's come from, but that's probably one of my talents."

.....

**Madama Butterfly shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Friday 20 February; The Alexandra, Birmingham, on Sunday 1 March; Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre on Saturday 7 March, and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Wednesday 13 May**  
**La Traviata shows at Malvern's Festival Theatre on Sunday 15 February; The Alexandra, Birmingham, on Friday 27 March, and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Monday 11 May**  
**Carmen shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, on Saturday 28 March, and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Tuesday 12 May**



# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL PALLET



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Director Carlos Acosta

Carlos Acosta's

## Don Quixote

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## Dance performances across the region

**BRB: Don Quixote** Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 12 - Sat 21 February

Premiered in 2022 and hugely acclaimed, Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Don Quixote* - which is based on Miguel Cervantes' famous 17th-century novel of the same name - makes a welcome return to the Hippodrome stage this month.

For BRB's director, Carlos Acosta, adding the comic opera to the company's repertory was essential.

"BRB had never had a production of *Don Quixote*," Carlos explains. "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 the company."

Featuring a host of different characters, from knights to lovers and innkeepers to gypsies, the ballet provides its dancers with plenty of opportunity 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," Carlos continues. "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 repertory that improves the standards of the dancers."

**Diversity: Soul**

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 11 - Sat 14 February; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 5 & Fri 6 March

With numerous sell-out tours under their belt, it's fair to say Diversity have made the most of their Susan Boyle-beating success on Britain's Got Talent 17 years ago.



The critically acclaimed street-dance crew are this month and next visiting the Midlands with latest offering *Soul*. Based around the technological advancements of AI, the production ponders the future, exploring the question: what does it truly mean to be human in the digital age?

**Vincent Simone: Tango Passions**

Lichfield Garrick, Sun 15 February; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Tues 17 February; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 21 February

Strictly Come Dancing legend Vincent Simone makes a welcome return with a production that's publicised as 'a sexy, steamy, passionate night not to be missed!'

Featuring music from Astor Piazzolla and Gotan Project, the show tells a Buenos Aires-set tale of love, passion and lust at the turn of the 20th century...

**Motionhouse: Hidden**

Lichfield Garrick, Wed 25 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 March

"Hidden is an emotional response to the current state of the world," explains Kevin

Finnan, co-founder & artistic director of Leamington-located Motionhouse, who are once again touring their critically acclaimed show. "There's the impact of the internet and social media, which everybody hoped would bring us all closer together. Sometimes it can, but it also seems to do equally well at tearing us apart... We seem to be facing a lot of conflict. We face conflict between ourselves - with people arguing endlessly - while on a wider scale, global conflicts have emerged around us."





## Film highlights in February...



### Wuthering Heights CERT tbc (130 mins)

Starring **Jacob Elordi, Margot Robbie, Owen Cooper, Alison Oliver, Hong Chau, Martin Clunes**  
Directed by **Emerald Fennell**

You've no doubt read the 1847 gothic masterpiece, possibly danced to the 1978 Kate Bush chart-topper, and presumably seen at least one of the various film adaptations of Emily Bronte's one and only novel... Well, now it's time to catch yet another cinematic version of the famously windswept romance! This one sees Margot Robbie taking on the lead role of Catherine Earnshaw, a young woman whose life's journey sees her marry a well-to-do neighbour named Edgar Linton. Trouble is, her lustful passion lies elsewhere, in the form of the dark and brooding Heathcliff, here played by Jacob Elordi, who was all set to take a break from acting before he was offered the part.

Elordi's casting hasn't been without controversy, with critics slamming the decision to give the role of the 'dark-skinned gypsy' (as Bronte describes Heathcliff) to a white actor. Director Emerald Fennell has defended her decision to employ Elordi by explaining that he "looked exactly like the illustration of Heathcliff on the first book that I read." **Released Fri 13 February**



### 100 Nights Of Hero

CERT 15 (91 mins)

Starring **Emma Corrin, Nicholas Galitzine, Maika Monroe, Amir El-Masry, Charli xcx, Richard E Grant** Directed by **Julia Jackman**

Loyalty and desire collide in this 'richly imagined' film adaptation of Isabel Greenberg's acclaimed graphic novel. Sitting in the genre of medieval fantasy, the film focuses on the character of Manfred, whose arrival at a remote castle seriously challenges the delicate dynamic between a neglectful husband, his innocent bride, and their devoted maid... The film received its world premiere last autumn at the Venice International Film Festival, was released pre-Christmas in the US, and has been garnering generally favourable reviews; popular website Rotten Tomatoes called it a whimsical fairytale boasting sumptuous visuals but suffering from a surface-level narrative. **Released Fri 6 February**

### Twinless CERT 15 (100 mins)

Starring **Dylan O'Brien, Lauren Graham, Arkira Chantaratananond, Kody Harvard, James Sweeney, Tasha Smith**  
Directed by **James Sweeney**

When two young men meet in a support group for twinless twins, they form an unlikely friendship. Roman (Dylan O'Brien) and Dennis (James Sweeney, who also wrote and directed the film) are both seeking solace and needing to develop an identity without their other halves. But when Roman meets Dennis' ebullient co-worker, Marcie, it becomes clear that not everything is quite as it seems, with both men harbouring secrets that could potentially unravel everything...

**Released Fri 6 February**



### Goat CERT PG (95 mins)

With the voices of **Caleb McLaughlin, Gabrielle Union, Nick Kroll, Nicola Coughlan, David Harbour, Stephen Curry**  
Directed by **Tyree Dillihay and Adam Rosette**

If you love an anthropomorphic sports comedy (and who doesn't?), then be sure to check out Sony Pictures' latest animated offering. An original action-comedy set in an all-animal world, the film's story follows the character of Will, a small goat with big dreams who gets a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join the pros and play roarball - a high-intensity, co-ed, full-contact sport dominated by the fastest, fiercest animals in the world. Although his new teammates aren't thrilled about having a little goat on their roster, Will is determined to revolutionise the sport and prove once and for all that "smalls can ball!"

**Released Fri 13 February**



## The Testament Of Ann Lee

CERT tbc (137 mins)

Starring **Amanda Seyfried, Lewis Pullman, Thomasin McKenzie, Matthew Beard, Christopher Abbott, Viola Prettejohn**  
Directed by **Mona Fastvold**

After enjoying extraordinary success with last year's *The Brutalist* - which she co-wrote - Mona Fastvold takes the helm for an epic musical biopic focusing on Ann Lee, the 18th-century founder of devotional sect the Shakers.

Academy Award nominee Amanda Seyfried takes the title role in a film which not only aims to capture the agony and ecstasy of Manchester-born Ann's struggle to build a utopia, but also features more than a dozen traditional Shaker hymns reimagined as rapturous movements.

"This is one of our first feminists in America," said Fastvold of Ann, in an interview with *Vogue*. "Some stories are telling you they want to be big and expansive and have scope and scale, and Ann Lee definitely wanted a grand story."

**Released Fri 20 February**



## Cold Storage

CERT 15 (99 mins)

Starring **Joe Keery, Georgina Campbell, Liam Neeson, Lesley Manville, Sosie Bacon, Aaron Heffernan** Directed by **Jonny Campbell**

As nightshifts go, Teacake and Naomi are about to have their wildest. As they go about their duties as employees of a self-storage company built on the site of an old military base, a parasitic fungus escapes from the facility's lowest sublevel, where it was sealed by the government decades earlier.

As the temperature rises underground, the highly contagious microorganism multiplies and unleashes its terrors...

With time running out, it's down to Teacake and Naomi - with the help of a grizzled bioterror operative (Liam Neeson) - to contain the rapidly mutating menace and prevent the explosive extinction of mankind itself...

**Released Fri 20 February**



## Splitsville

CERT 12 (104 mins)

Starring **Dakota Johnson, Adria Arjona, Kyle Marvin, Michael Angelo Covino, Simon Webster, Charlie Gillespie**  
Directed by **Michael Angelo Covino**

Fifty Shades Of Grey star Dakota Johnson plays a woman in an open marriage in this well-reviewed farce about love, friendship, and sleeping with your best pal's wife. When Ashley asks the good-natured Carey for a divorce, the latter seeks solace and support in the company of his married friends Julie (Johnson's character) and Paul. He is then shocked to discover that the secret to their happiness is an open marriage. But when Carey crosses a red line, all of their relationships are thrown into an unexpected and hard-hitting chaos...

**Released Fri 20 February**

## Scream 7

CERT 15

Starring **Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox, Isabel May, Jasmin Savoy Brown, Mason Gooding, Joel McHale** Directed by **Kevin Williamson**

What's the next move for a film company when one of its franchises has yielded six successful movies?

A seventh movie, of course!

And so we have yet another chapter in the ongoing Scream slasher saga. Here's how the storyline to this one goes: when a new Ghostface killer emerges in the quiet town where Sidney Prescott has built a new life, her darkest fears are realised as her daughter, Tatum, becomes the next target.

Determined to protect her family, Sidney must face the horrors of her past to put an end to the bloodshed once and for all.

**Released Fri 27 February**







Birmingham  
Museums



The museum of fun  
and entertainment

**18 February – 31 May**

# **I photograph comedians!**

**Photography by Andy Hollingworth**

**Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery**  
**[birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk)**

I photograph comedians! is a touring  
exhibition produced by Showtown:  
The museum of fun and entertainment.



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## I Photograph Comedians!

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Wed 18 February - Sun 31 May

If you love a laugh, you should get along to Andy Hollingworth's new exhibition. As its title makes clear in a refreshingly straightforward manner, Andy photographs comedians - and it's a selection of his images of some of the UK's best-loved comics that forms the basis of this Gas Hall-located display. Photographs of Ken Dodd, Sarah Millican, Victoria Wood, Rik Mayall and Rhod Gilbert all feature, as do pics of such Midlands masters and mistresses of mirth as Jasper Carrott, Stewart Lee, Lenny Henry, Joe Lycett, Jo Enright and Shazia Mirza. The images of the latter four in that list are brand new and have never before been exhibited.

The display also features numerous items connected to particular comedians, including a jacket worn by Lenny Henry during his 1984 tour, a signed pair of Rik Mayall's underpants, and Joe Lycett's teddy suit, as worn in the advertisement for series two of Late Night Lycett. "This retrospective of my work over the last 30 years reflects the changing faces of comedy in the UK and my interaction with them," says Andy. "I'm delighted that it's being displayed in Birmingham, a city that's produced and been associated with many notable comedians over the years and a vibrant comedy scene which includes the UK's second longest running comedy festival."



## Takuro Kuwata: Tea Bowl Punk

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, until Sun 15 March

Traditional Japanese pottery techniques are fused with experimental sculptural processes in the work of Takuro Kuwata, whose signature use of vivid glazes, distorted silhouettes and explosive textures has effectively redefined the boundaries of contemporary ceramics. Inspired by the boldness of American Pop Art, the Hiroshima-born artist produces works which are not only playful and provocative but also unmistakably contemporary.

## Joy Labinjo: A Place Of Our Own

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Sat 7 February - Mon 4 May

British Nigerian artist Joy Labinjo is clear about her purpose with new exhibition A Place Of Our Own; she is reclaiming the nude, and celebrating identity, belonging, and Black



womanhood through the presentation of bold, intimate portraits. Marked by muted tones and simplified backgrounds, the paintings are explorations of the complexities of sexuality, reflecting on how Black women's bodies are often hypersexualised in mainstream media.

## Made In The Middle: A Craftspace Touring Exhibition

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 14 February - Sun 12 April

Showcasing contemporary crafts created across the Midlands region, MAC's latest Made In The Middle exhibition draws together ceramics, textiles, jewellery, metalwork and sculptural works by 37 artists ranging in age from 22 to 82.



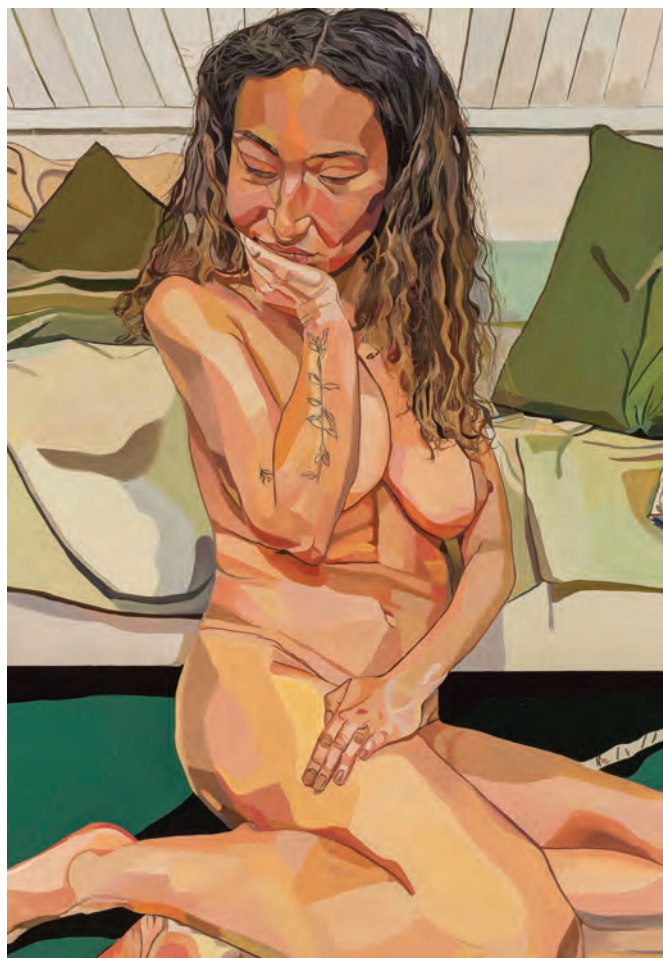
## The Shelter Of Stories

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 22 February

This groundbreaking exhibition explores the art of storytelling and has been curated by the writer Marina Warner. Bringing together historic objects with works by leading contemporary artists, the show asks: why do we tell stories, and what do they achieve?







Joy Labinjo, Untitled, 2025, courtesy the artist

# Joy Labinjo

A Place of Our Own  
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

7 February - 4 May 2026

Free admission

An exhibition of large-scale figurative paintings depicting intimate scenes of contemporary life, both real and imagined, by British Nigerian artist Joy Labinjo.

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## Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation

Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry, until Mon 25 May

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. "Often the conversation, particularly around young people, is 'We don't know where we belong,'" says Hardish. "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 is that our story goes back at least 425 years, and we've contributed to every facet of British life."

## John Singer Sargent: An American in Worcestershire

Worcester City Art Gallery, until Sun 14 June

One of the most celebrated portrait painters of his time, American artist John Singer Sargent was a familiar figure in Worcestershire in the late 19th century. During his time in the county, he broke free from the conventions of Salon-style studio painting to experiment with Impressionism and work 'en plein air'. In the process, he produced one of his most famous works, *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, which now resides at Tate Britain. This new exhibition explores the role of Sargent within the colony of avant-garde artists associated with the Worcestershire village of Broadway.



Image: Portrait of Mrs Barnard and Miss Williams courtesy of Birmingham Museums Trust

## Collage Now! Exhibition

The Gateway, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 12 March

A show rooted in collaboration, this curated celebration of contemporary collage features everything from cut paper and mixed media to assemblage and image layering. The exhibition sits within the Gateway's wider Colour Now programme.

## Saba Khan: Riverless Water

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, until 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.



## ANDI

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until 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.

## Unveiled: The Rugby Collection In Full

Rugby Art Gallery, Sat 21 February - Sat 6 June

Spanning eight decades of artistic exploration - and publicised as 'a chance to experience the Rugby Art Collection like never before' - Unveiled features in excess of 250 works, including much-loved pieces by Paula Rego, Lucian Freud and LS Lowry. The exhibition also features a selection of the Collection's newer acquisitions.



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## Boogie Lights Express

Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster, Fri 13 & Sat 14, Fri 20 & Sat 21, Fri 27 & Sat 28 February; and Fri 6 & Sat 7, Fri 13 & Sat 14 March

Departing from Kidderminster Station on Friday and Saturday nights, the Boogie Lights Express is a sound & light show consisting of thousands of LED lights and wristbands, creating a kaleidoscope of colours and flashing patterns.

Suitable for all the family, this unique musical party train comes complete with a decades-spanning soundtrack, a karaoke experience and plenty of opportunities to get involved and dance along.



## Tractor World Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Sat 21 & Sun 22 February

A firm favourite with fans of farming, trucking, classic models and amazing machinery, the Tractor World Show makes a welcome return across the third weekend of the month. As well as featuring hundreds of vintage, veteran, new and classic tractors, vans, stationary engines, lorries, trucks, classic commercials, Land Rovers and vintage vehicles, the show also includes historic displays of farm machinery and agricultural heritage.

The always-popular live auction - with over 1,000 expected lots - makes a return on the Saturday, while Sunday's attractions include the Classic Commercial Drive In and Vintage Autojumble, showcasing classic vehicles and unique motoring collectables.



## The 2026 Birmingham International Tattoo

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sat 14 & Sun 15 February

A parade unlike any other, the Birmingham International Tattoo is back this month, providing over three hours of pageantry and spectacle.

The parade brings together massed marching bands, pipes and drums, and

displays including the Inter-Service Field Gun competition and British Flyball Association competition. The show is brought to a satisfying end with the ever-popular Grand Finale, a presentation featuring more than 1,200 performers.



## Birmingham Light Festival

Birmingham City Centre, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 February

Birmingham Light Festival returns for a second year in the middle of the month, transforming city spaces into dazzling open-air galleries.

Brand-new temporary illuminated artworks will take over the streets, squares and public

spaces, alongside four legacy installations. Businesses across the city will be hosting a series of festival exclusives, with more than 50 events taking place across the weekend. Head to [birminghamlightfestival.co.uk](http://birminghamlightfestival.co.uk) for further details.



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## Birmingham Chinese New Year Celebrations

Southside, Birmingham, Tues 17 - Sun 22 February

Birmingham Chinese Festival Committee and Birmingham Hippodrome are once again hosting the city's annual Chinese New Year celebrations this month.

Festivities begin on the first day of the Chinese New Year (Tuesday the 17th), with market stalls and funfair rides in Hippodrome Square running daily throughout half-term week until Saturday. The main festival celebration, marking the Year of the Fire Horse, takes place on Sunday 22 February. The free-to-attend event will

begin with a traditional lion procession across Hippodrome Square and Chinatown. At the heart of the celebrations, the festival stage will host a packed programme of entertainment, showcasing the talent and creativity of Birmingham's Chinese and East Asian communities. A mix of traditional and contemporary music, dance and theatre performances will take place throughout the day, with market stalls, funfair rides and family-friendly activities across Southside also featuring.



## Living History The Commandery, Worcester, Sat 21 & Sun 22 February

The Commandery's Living History weekend offers visitors the chance to encounter characters from centuries ago, as reenactors mark the 375th anniversary of the English Civil War's Battle of Worcester. The venue's building and gardens will be open to explore, hosting living-history encampments and military displays across

what promises to be an action-packed two days. Further attractions include historic firing demonstrations in the walled garden, metalworkers and willow weavers demonstrating their crafts, and medieval music and performances of Tudor-style dancing in the Great Hall.

## Chinese New Year

Weston Park, Shropshire,  
Mon 16 - Fri 20 February

Weston Park has once again teamed up with the CultureKind Chinese Community for Chinese New Year celebrations to welcome in the Year of the Horse.

During February half term (Monday the 16th to Friday the 20th), the venue will host lantern-making activities in the Rose Paterson Art Gallery, providing visitors with the opportunity to make a lantern to use in the Friday evening procession. After the parade, which will be led by a traditional dancing dragon, the house will be open to explore, with its rooms 'lit by lanterns.'



## Half term at Thinktank

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum,  
Sat 14 - Sun 22 February

There's a variety of family-focused activities to enjoy at Thinktank this half-term holiday. The popular Lego WeDo Workshop is back (Saturday the 14th to Sunday the 22nd), during which you can build, program and customise your very own Lego creation. Families can watch interactive science show Electrifying Science Live (Monday the 16th to Friday the 20th), or catch Dr John Biddulph's Low Voltage Ecology performance (on the 16th).

Other attractions include Birmingham artist Tat Vision doing some papier-mâché junk-modelling on the 17th, Hours Theatre Company's walkabout performance, Space Junk, on the 19th, and Stirchley Printworks' live demonstrations on the 21st.





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**BOOK  
NOW!**





Your week-  
by-week  
listings guide  
February 2026

# thelist



Birmingham Royal Ballet's Don Quixote at Birmingham Hippodrome - Thurs 12 - Sat 21 February

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

## What's On

Sun 1 - Sun 8 February



The BFG - The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford  
**until Sat 7 February**

Mon 9 - Sun 15 February



XLOV - The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton  
**Wed 11 February**

Mon 16 - Sun 22 February



Emmanuel Sonubi - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry  
**Tues 17 February**

Mon 23 - Sat 28 February



Never The Bride - The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham  
**Thurs 26 February**



## VISUAL ARTS ACROSS 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.

### OSZY OSBOURNE: WORKING CLASS

**HERO** A celebration of the solo achievements and global awards of rock icon Ozzy Osbourne, and the album art of the original Black Sabbath line-up to coincide with their historic homecoming concert, until Sun 27 Sept

### Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**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

### 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 Sept

### Coventry Music Museum

**WE'LL LIVE AND DIE IN THESE TOWNS** A 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 Feb

### Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

**PAUL LEMMON: THROUGH THE SCREEN** A disruption of videos taken from film, TV and social media, transformed into kaleidoscopic oil paintings which foreground the illusory qualities of the screen, Wed 4 - Sun 15 Feb

### WARWICKSHIRE'S JURASSIC SEA

Discover the amazing creatures that lived in Coventry & Warwickshire during the time of the dinosaurs, until

Sat 21 Feb

### DIPPY IN COVENTRY: THE NATION'S FAVOURITE DINOSAUR

Dippy the diplodocus is in Coventry on a three-year loan from the Natural History Museum, until Sat 28 Feb

**DISCOVER DINOSAURS** Delve deeper into the world of Dippy and discover different types of dinosaur fossils - as well as some local dinos, until Sat 28 Feb

### CASE: COVENTRY ART SOCIETIES

**EXHIBITION A** 'diverse and inspiring' collection of artworks created by members of art societies and art groups across Coventry & Warwickshire, Fri 20 Feb - Sun 19 April

### 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 Feb

### 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 Feb

**LEAMINGTON OPEN 2026** Exhibition of shortlisted works by West Midlands artists, Fri 20 Feb - Sun 3 May

### 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 IN THE MIDDLE: A CRAFTSPACE TOURING EXHIBITION** A showcase of exceptional contemporary crafts - including ceramics, textiles, jewellery, metalwork and sculptural works - being made currently across the Midlands, Sat 14 Feb - Sun 12 April

**CRAFTSPACE: 40 OBJECTS FOR 40 YEARS** Graphic storyteller Stewart Francis Easton's new textile mural invites you to explore Craftspace's 40-year story through 40 objects, Sat 14 Feb - Sun 12 April

**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

### MADE AT MAC: CREATIVE FAMILY

**SHOWCASE** Mixed-media exhibition showcasing the work created by children, young people and families on MAC's creative courses, until Sun 28 June

### New Art Gallery, Walsall

### WALSALL SOCIETY OF ARTISTS 75TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Featuring works in a wide range of media, with many items listed for sale, until Sun 15 Feb

### 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

**IMPRESSIONS** A selection of contemporary prints from the gallery's collections which testify to the breadth and richness of printmaking across a range of subject matter and techniques, until Sun 12 April

### 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 Feb

### 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 Feb

### RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

### DRAWN TO DANCE: THE FIGURE IN

**MOTION** Unique exhibition celebrating a collaboration between the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and Birmingham Royal Ballet, exploring the movement and poise of the ballet dancer, Tues 10 - Sat 21 Feb

**RBSA PRINT PRIZE 2026** Show celebrating the diversity of printmaking whilst also introducing the public to a myriad of modern-day printing techniques, Thurs 26 Feb -

Sat 28 March

### COLOUR: SHADES, TINTS, AND HUES,

**ARTWORKS FROM THE RBSA PERMANENT COLLECTION** An exploration of the works held in the RBSA Permanent Collection, each chosen because they feature one dominant colour, Thurs 26 Feb - Sat 28 March

### Rugby Art Gallery

### PAST FREQUENCIES, FUTURE

**COMMUNITIES: THE HOULTON TAPESTRY** A community art exhibition that traces the journey from Rugby Radio Station in 1926 to the new town of Houlton in 2016, until Sat 7 Feb

### 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

### DAVID BIRTWHISTLE: A RETROSPECTIVE

Celebration of one of Worcester's most respected artists, whose paintings explore historic buildings and the landscapes around them, until Sun 31 May

### Elsewhere:

**FEEDING WITHOUT JAWS** Grab your snorkels and dive back in time for an immersive temporary exhibition showcasing new research into unusual ancient fish, until Sat 28 Feb, Lapworth Museum, Birmingham

### PAINTING THROUGH THE DARK MONTH

A dynamic exhibition of paintings by Rob Pointon, who completed an oil painting a day throughout the month of January, until Sun 15 March, Courtyard Gallery, The Brampton Museum, Newcastle-under-Lyme

### COMPENSARE EXHIBITION: FOR THE

**SWALLOWS WE WEIGH** Free exhibition by Marley Starskey Butler, exploring how art reflects the challenges and hopes of adoptive families, until Sat 4 April, Eastside Projects, Birmingham

### LUKE JERRAM: TIPPING POINT

Thought-provoking sound & light installation, creating a simulated forest fire. Made in collaboration with award-winning composers Dan Jones and Simon Birch, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 Feb, Birmingham Botanical Gardens



# Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 February



Transatlantic Sessions 2026 - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

## Gigs

**THE PILL + MONOXIDE BROTHERS** Sun 1 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LOZ RABONE** Sun 1 Feb, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**SLIDE BOY ROY** Sun 1 Feb, The Brasshouse, B'ham

**CONNOLLY HAYES** Sun 1 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**NAIMA BOCK + MYER U CLARK** Sun 1 Feb, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**ANTHONY GOMES** Sun 1 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**NICK HARPER** Sun 1 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**ENGELFEST FT ALGAE BLOOM + 300 SKULL AND COUNTING + MERCURY + MY RUSHMORE + MORE** Sun 1 Feb, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

**ABSOLUTE REGGAE** Sun 1 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**JONNY NASH (FT TOMO KATSURADA) + CHRISTOPHER HADDOW** Sun 1 Feb, The Darwin Room, Shrewsbury Library

**DYLAN LEBLANC** Mon 2 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**TUMMYACHE + JAZZCAT + PIP** Mon 2 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**MAGDALENA BAY + ALLIE X** Mon 2 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SECKOU KEITA: HOMELAND BAND + NATACHA ATLAS + SAMY BISHAI** Mon 2 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**A.A. WILLIAMS** Tues 3 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**KAVUS TORABI + DJABBI 3** Tues 3 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**FOGHORN STRINGBAND + KELVIN DAVIES + CHLOE TURNER** Tues 3 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**MATT STORM** Wed 4 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BIG WOLF BAND** Wed 4 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**TROUSDALE** Wed 4 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**RAT ATTACK** Wed 4 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**DROLLZ + WILL KELLEEN** Wed 4 Feb, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**THE LOST NOTES + THE ROSELLYS** Wed 4 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**DAVE BROWNING'S JAZZ CATS** Wed 4 Feb, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

**THE ROY ORBISON STORY** Wed 4 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE CARPENTERS: VOICE OF THE HEART** Wed 4 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**YOBBS + SPITS MILK** Thurs 5 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**THE CHRISTIANS** Thurs 5 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS 2026** Thurs 5 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE ILLEGAL EAGLES** Thurs 5 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**BLACK CACTUS + DISORDER** Thurs 5 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**COUNTRY SUPERSTARS** Thurs 5 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**GO YOUR OWN WAY - FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE** Thurs 5 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THE RADIOHEAD PROJECT** Thurs 5 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JOE H HENRY** Thurs 5 Feb, Priest Weston Village Hall, Shropshire

**SPEAK! + THE NEW CONSISTENT + RAY HEART** Fri 6 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SHAUN GAMBOWL WALSH AND THE PLAGIARISTS** Fri 6 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**RUN DON'T WALK + IN CROOKED WONDERMENT + SIXFOLD + LAST EXIT + ECLYPSE** Fri 6 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BASIL GABBIDON BAND** Fri 6 Feb, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

**THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND** Fri 6 Feb, Tower of Song, B'ham

**MONSTEROSA** Fri 6 Feb, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

**JACEK STACHURSKY** Fri 6 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**VIANOVA + SHIELDS** Fri 6 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

**VUKOVI** Fri 6 Feb, XOYO, Birmingham

**ROY G HEMMINGS** Fri 6 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE HISTORY OF ROCK** Fri 6 Feb, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**GREG COULSON BAND** Fri 6 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**STEALING SHEEP** Fri 6 Feb, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**BEATLEMANIA** Fri 6 Feb, hmv Empire, Coventry

**GLASS HOUSE MUSEUM, DHAMPYRES + HEY BUDAPEST!** Fri 6 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE** Fri 6 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**BIFFY MCCLYRO** Fri 6 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**REMI HARRIS - MAN OF THE WORLD - THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN** Fri 6 Feb, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**A TRIBUTE TO THE CARPENTERS** Fri 6 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**DYLAN AND MITCHELL BIG YELLOW TAMBOURINE MAN BAND** Fri 6 Feb, Halesowen Town Hall

**BLONDISH** Fri 6 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE JAKE LEG JUG BAND** Fri 6 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**DEFINITELY OASIS** Fri 6 Feb, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN** Fri 6 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**ROD STEWART SONGBOOK** Fri 6 Feb, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

**QUESTIONS OF ANGELS** Fri 6

Feb, The Station, Cannock

**NEW SOUNDS** Fri 6 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**PEASHOOTER** Fri 6 Feb, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**SHEF LEPPARD + DRESSED TO KILL** Fri 6 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**BIG BAND OF BOOM** Fri 6 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**AN EVENING OF RADIOHEAD** Fri 6 - Sat 7 Feb, Lichfield Cathedral

**IAN PROWSE & THE FIDDLE OF FIRE** Sat 7 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham



**FILMSTAR** Sat 7 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, B'ham

**THE REVERTERS + CAPTAIN WILBERFORCE + GILL + DARKMATERIAL + CARIAD** Sat 7 Feb, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

**COMBUST + SPEEDWAY + SORCERER + IMPOSTER + NO RELIEF** Sat 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MILES KANE** Sat 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**BIG BAND OF BOOM** Sat 7 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**PREACHER STONE + REVENANT** Sat 7 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

**ALSO EDEN** Sat 7 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**ELKIE BROOKS** Sat 7 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**MICHAEL STARRING BEN** Sat 7 Feb, The Alexandra, B'ham

**FOO FIGHTERS GB + QUEENS OF THE STONED AGE** Sat 7 Feb, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**THE QUAD ROX** Sat 7 Feb, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**OAS-IS + RE:VERVE** Sat 7 Feb, hmv Empire, Coventry

**NORTHERN LIVE DO I LOVE YOU** Sat 7 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DARK SIDE OF THE WALL** Sat 7 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**TOOL SHED** Sat 7 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**MASTERS OF THE SCENE - ABBA THE SHOW** Sat 7 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE REAL QUEENS OF BOLLYWOOD** Sat 7 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**REWIND - THE JOURNEY OF SOUL, R&B AND UK GARAGE** Sat 7 Feb, The Halls Wolverhampton

**LEGEND - THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY** Sat 7 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**BLACK PARADE + MANTRA** Sat 7 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**SABBOTAGE** Sat 7 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**SLEEP BROKEN** Sat 7 Feb, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

**MARTYN JOSEPH** Sat 7 Feb, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

**KERR DONNELLY BAND + THE CENTAURS** Sat 7 Feb, Top Of The World, Stafford

**ALICIA GARDENER-TREJO QUARTET** Sat 7 Feb, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**MAN OF THE WORLD - THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN** Sat 7 Feb, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**THE GREY GOOSE BLUES BAND** Sun 8 Feb, The Brasshouse, Birmingham

**AL-BARAKAH - MOHAMED TAREK FEAT. AASHIQ AL RASUL** Sun 8 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**FLORENCE + THE MACHINE** Sun 8 Feb, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham



**THE BEST OF TUBULAR BELLS I, II & III** Sun 8 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**SCOTT LAVENE** Sun 8 Feb, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**ARTHUR COATES & KERRAN COTTERELL** Sun 8 Feb, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**ELO AGAIN** Sun 8 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**NICOLA CIPRIANI AND BRAD MYRICK** Sun 8 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**WALK RIGHT BACK - TALE OF THE EVERLY BROTHERS** Sun 8 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



## Classical Music

**CBSO: BACH & BEETHOVEN** Featuring François Leleux (oboe/conductor) & Lisa Batiashvili (violin). Programme also includes M Lindberg's Violin Concerto No.1, Sun 1 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

### ARMONICO: A MOMENT OF CALM

Featuring Eloise Irving (soprano & harp) & Christopher Monks (director). Programme includes works by Gjeilo, Whitacre, Britten & more..., Sun 1 Feb, Festival Theatre, Malvern

**RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC** Featuring Haoen Li (piano). Programme comprises JS Bach's Partita No.2, Mon 2 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### OVER THE RIDGE OF THE WORLD

Featuring Joanne Roughton-Arnold (soprano) & Nigel Foster (piano). Programme includes works by R Clarke, C McDowall, M Dring & Dame Gillian Whitehead, Tues 3 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

### ANNETTE RICHARDS ORGAN RECITAL

Programme includes works by Buxtehude, Byrd, JS Bach & more..., Tues 3 Feb, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**APOLLO'S JUKEBOX** Tues 3 Feb, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**FREE PRE-CONCERT PERFORMANCE: RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** Featuring Tess Jackson (conductor). Programme includes works by Vaughan Williams, J Williams, Walton & Carwithen, Wed 4 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO: BRAHMS' FOURTH SYMPHONY** Featuring Eduardo Strausser (conductor) & Natalya Romaniw (soprano). Programme also includes works by N Shekhar & Strauss, Wed 4 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL** Programme includes works by JS Bach, Alain, Elgar & more..., Thurs 5 Feb, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

**KIRSTEN JENSEN (CELLO) & JOHN THWAITES (PIANO)** Programme includes works by Shostakovich, Brahms & Beethoven, Thurs 5 Feb, The Gateway, Shropshire

**RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: SHOSTAKOVICH 5** Featuring Tess Jackson (conductor). Programme also includes works by Vaughan Williams, Walton, Addinsell & more..., Fri 6 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**THE AYOUB SISTERS** Featuring Sarah Ayoub (cello) & Laura Ayoub (violin). An evening of transformative music blending western classical, Arabic and Celtic traditions, Fri 6 Feb, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**CONCERTS IN THE ROUND** Featuring Mark Tocknell (clarinet), Hilary Summers (cello), Gill Styles (piano),

Fri 6 Feb, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**BBC PHILHARMONIC - TCHAIKOVSKY'S FIFTH SYMPHONY** Featuring Adam Hickox (conductor) & Elisabeth Brauss (soloist). Programme also includes works by Rossini & Ravel, Fri 6 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

### CBSO NOTELETS: ADVENTURES IN SPACE

Featuring Helen Edgar (presenter). Space-themed music, playful audience interaction and lots of chances to explore and join in, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Feb, CBSO Centre, B'ham

### CBSO: THE STORIES OF MOVIE MUSIC WITH MARK KERMODE

Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) & Mark Kermode (presenter). Concert celebrating the emotional connection that audiences form with film music, Sat 7 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

### SOUTH BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Featuring Sabrina Ko (conductor), James Hamilton (leader) & Leo Penny (soloist). Programme includes works by Ravel, Strauss & Shostakovich, Sat 7 Feb, St Francis Church, Bournville, Birmingham

### EDGE CHAMBER CHOIR - NORTHERN LIGHTS: MUSIC FROM SCANDINAVIA

Programme includes works by Sibelius, Greig, Gjeilo & more..., Sat 7 Feb, St John's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

### BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: SHOSTAKOVICH 10

Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme also includes Elgar's Falstaff, Sun 8 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

### ECHO RISING STARS: ÁLFHEIÐUR ERLA GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR (SOPRANO)

Also featuring Kunal Lahiry (piano). Programme includes works by Barber, Sibelius, Maria Huld Markan & more..., Sun 8 Feb, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SWAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA** Featuring Rebecca Miller (conductor) & Chris Allan (cello). Programme includes works by Elgar, Powell, Smyth & Tchaikovsky, Sun 8 Feb, Warwick Hall

## Comedy

**RICHARD BLACKWOOD** Sun 1 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**GARY DELANEY & ANDY ROBINSON** Sun 1 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**HAL CRUTTENDEN & WAYNE BEESE** Sun 1 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**BARBARA NICE & WAYNE BEESE** Sun 1 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**PHIL NICHOL** Wed 4 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PAUL SINHA, HAYLEY ELLIS, RICK WILSON & FREDDIE QUINN** Wed 4 Feb, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

**JUSTIN MOORHOUSE** Wed 4 Feb,

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**MILTON JONES, MICK FERRY, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE & WAYNE BEESE** Wed 4 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**CHRIS MCCAUSLAND** Wed 4 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**BASKETMOUTH** Thurs 5 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ANDY ROBINSON, LINDSEY SANTORO, EMMANUEL SONUBI & ELI MATTHEWSON** Thurs 5 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

**CHRIS STOKES, HOWARD ANSTOCK, ROGER SWIFT & DAN SMITH** Thurs 5 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**MATT REED, LINDSEY SANTORO, EMMANUEL SONUBI, MICKY P KERR & TOM ALBAN** Fri 6 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JANINE HAROUNI** Fri 6 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**HAL CRUTTENDEN** Fri 6 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD** Fri 6 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**PATRICK MONAHAN** Fri 6 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**KAZEEM JAMAL, JACK MILLER, PETER FLANAGAN & ADAM BEARDSMORE** Sat 7 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**PREET SINGH** Sat 7 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MATT REED, LINDSEY SANTORO, EMMANUEL SONUBI & MICKY P KERR** Sat 7 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

**SHALAKA KURUP, SAMIRA BANKS, ESTHER MANITO, OLA LABIB & MAUREEN YOUNGER** Sat 7 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**RORY BREMNER & SPECIAL GUESTS** Sat 7 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**LOUISE LEIGH, ROGER MONKHOUSE & JACK CAMPBELL** Sat 7 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**TEJ DHUTIA, NOREEN KHAN, ESTHER MANITO, ANNETTE FAGON & SHALAKA KURUP** Sat 7 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**MO GILLIGAN** Sat 7 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**GLENN MOORE** Sat 7 Feb, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**OMID DJALILI** Sun 8 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

## Theatre

**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

**JACK & THE BEANSTALK** Presented by Startime Variety, Thurs 29 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, Halesowen Town Hall

**DARE TO DREAM JR** Get Your Wigle On

present a Disney musical revue featuring numbers from Encanto, Frozen II, The Princess And The Frog, Coco and many more, Sat 31 Jan - Sun 1 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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

**ALL IS BUT FANTASY: LADY MACBETH, EMILIA A** 'theatrical event' in which Shakespeare characters are revisited across two high-energy gig-style performances, until Sat 21 Feb, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

**ALL IS BUT FANTASY: JULIET, RICHARD III** A 'theatrical event' in which Shakespeare characters are revisited across two high-energy gig-style performances, until Sat 21 Feb, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

**ODE TO JOYCE** Celebration of Joyce Grenfell, one of the greatest female entertainers of the 20th century, Sun 1 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**AGATHA APPLETON AND THE PERIL OF THE PYRAMIDS** Rain Or Shine Theatre Company present an archaeological adventure full of 'side-splitting spills and thrills for all the family', Sun 1 Feb, Fairfield Village Hall, Worcs

**WIFI WARS** Interactive comedy game show in which the whole audience competes. Expect classic TV game shows, zen-like word puzzles, retro video games and modern first-person shooters, Sun 1 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**REVISION ON TOUR: MACBETH** Dickens Theatre Company present Shakespeare's bloodiest tragedy, Mon 2 - Tues 3 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**MURDER, SHE DIDN'T WRITE** Get ready for some improvised comedy sleuthing where you, the audience, create your very own Agatha Christie-inspired drama live on stage, Tues 3 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**ONTROEREND GOED: HANDLE WITH CARE** Theatre stripped down to its essence - no actors, no technicians, just a box and the audience... Tues 3 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**TEACHERS** John Godber's comic masterpiece - a funny and fast-moving account of life at Whitewall Academy, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**MACBETH** Amateur version of Shakespeare's bloodiest play, Tues 3 - Sun 8 Feb, Oldbury Theatre

**AGATHA APPLETON AND THE PERIL OF THE PYRAMIDS** Rain Or Shine Theatre Company present an archaeological adventure full of 'side-splitting spills and thrills for all the family', Thurs 5 Feb, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire



## ENGLAND'S TALES OF THE COUNCIL

**HOUSE KID** New theatre show taking a 'powerful and nostalgic journey back to the heart of working-class Britain in the 1960s and 70s', Thurs 5 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**MADE IN THE MIDLANDS** Scratch night featuring three work-in-progress pieces by local artists/companies, each selected via open call, Thurs 5 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ETERNAL LOVE THE MUSICAL** Journey into 'a fantastical dark world' in which the love-struck Vampire Baron - played by Steve Steinman - searches for eternal love against a backdrop of original rock anthems, Thurs 5 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE BBC'S FIRST HOMOSEXUAL** New dramatisation based on the BBC's 1954 documentary about male homosexuality, which was banned following airing, Fri 6 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**CARMEN** Ukrainian National Opera present Bizet's tale of passion and jealousy. Sung in French with English subtitles, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**THE FRESHWATER FIVE** 'Powerful play' concerning five fishermen, £53million-worth of cocaine and an ongoing fight for justice, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**MATT MILLER: FIXING** Drag mechanic Natalie Spanner presents a show about family breakups, learning car maintenance and choosing the right shade of lipstick to do it in, Sat 7 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

**LILIN** Warwick Malaysian Students Association present a journey of self-discovery during which a young girl named Yasmin learns that there's more to her grandmother than she thought, Sat 7 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD** Jonathan Goodwin stars as Charles Dickens in a one-man production that brings to life the author's famous unfinished story, Sat 7 Feb, Worcester Script Haven

## Kids Theatre

**RUBY'S WORRY** Musical adventure for younger audiences, told through live music, song, puppetry and physical theatre. Suitable for children aged between three and seven, Sun 1 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ANANSI THE SPIDER** Family-friendly West African & Caribbean folk tales about a loveable spider, Mon 2 Feb, Lichfield Street Hub Library; Tues 3 Feb, Darlaston Library; Wed 4 Feb, Streetly Community Library, Sutton Coldfield; Thurs 5 Feb, Bloxwich Library Community Library; Fri 6 Feb, Willenhall Community Library & Sat 7 Feb, Bilston Library

## Dance

**LA PROBABILITÉ DU NÉANT** Ebnflöh Dance Company present a performance that 'reminds us of our luminous capacity for resistance and resilience', Thurs 5 Feb, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

**DANCE CONSORTIUM: MÁM** Twelve dancers 'summon a whirlwind of myth and magic' as they take audiences on 'an otherworldly journey steeped in the landscape and culture of West Kerry in Ireland', Fri 6 - Sat 7 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Light Entertainment

**THE NIGHT SKY SHOW** Astronomer & author Adrian West (aka VirtualAstro) presents a visual and thought-provoking experience for everyone who looks up and wonders, Sun 1 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JANET STREET PORTER IS OFF THE LEASH** Expect an evening of comedy, tragedy and gossip in a 'tour de force rant against growing old gracefully', Mon 2 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR** Featuring a 'brand-new collection of short films filled with extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography', Tues 3 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ANY OBJECTIONS - A LIVE LOOPING HARP COMEDY** Electroacoustic harpist and comedian Scarlett Smith presents 'a playful celebration of creativity and harp innovation', Wed 4 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE PARODY OF THE RINGS** Expect comedy, chaos and utter nonsense as a team of hapless ushers attempt to create an epic tale of hobbits, elves and orcs, Wed 4 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**QUEENZ - DRAG ME TO THE DISCO!** Live vocal extravaganza celebrating pop royalty through the decades, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**DITA VON TEESE: NOCTURNELLE** New show from the Queen of Burlesque - a blend of old-Hollywood allure, theatrical magic and high-art 'stripscapes', Wed 4 - Fri 6 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**AN EVENING WITH PSYCHIC SALLY** 'The nation's favourite psychic' is back on tour... Thurs 5 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**CABARET EXTREME** Featuring a bizarre blend of burlesque, daring drag, extreme stunts and contemporary circus, Thurs 5 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**QUEENZ - DRAG ME TO THE DISCO!** Live vocal extravaganza celebrating pop royalty through the decades, Fri 6 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE BOLLYWOOD BRATPACK FEATURING CHIRAG RAO** A musical experience blending timeless melodies from the likes of Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and Dean Martin with the hits of Bollywood icons Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Udit Narayan and Sonu Nigam, Fri 6 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**TEASE** Lady Lust and Miss Temptation host 'the ultimate burlesque and cabaret experience', Fri 6 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**CSSA CHINESE NEW YEAR GALA** Celebrating Chinese culture through live performances and interactive activities, Fri 6 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**LINE DANCING WITH THE DOUBLE DOLLYS** Character comedy with live Dolly Parton songs and line dancing, Sat 7 Feb, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE REAL QUEENS OF BOLLYWOOD A** 'vibrant and moving celebration' of the women whose voices 'shaped the sound and soul of Indian cinema', Sat 7 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**STUART MICHAEL: THE PSYCHIC MEDIUM** Direct from London's West End, Sat 7 Feb, Walsall Arena

**TOMMY J** 'Magic, mayhem and non-stop laughs' with the Shrewsbury pantomime favourite, Sat 7 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**K-POP SUPERSTARS** Sun 8 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

## Talks & Spoken Word

**AN EVENING WITH ASTON VILLA LEGENDS** Join Andy Townsend, Lee Hendrie and Ian Taylor as they share stories and anecdotes from their careers in football, Wed 4 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**SIMON YATES: TOUCHING THE VOID** Join the acclaimed mountaineer as he shares the drama and excitement of his journeys around the world, Thurs 5 Feb, Walsall Arena

**HAMZA YASSIN: MY LIFE BEHIND THE LENS** Join the cameraman and presenter as he shares precious memories - both in life and nature, Thurs 5 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**AN AUDIENCE WITH FRANK BRUNO** An evening with the boxing legend, Fri 6 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**DAVID ROWNTREE: NO ONE YOU KNOW A** Wolverhampton Literature Festival event in which the founder member of Blur gives a unique insight into the first few years of one of Britain's most

successful bands, Fri 6 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**HAUNTINGS** Gerard Logan presents three tales of the supernatural: Naboth's Vineyard and The Hanging Of Alfred Wadham by EF Benson, and MR James' Oh, Whistle And I'll Come To You, My Lad, Fri 6 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**STUART MACONIE: WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THEIR FRIENDS** Bestselling writer & broadcaster Stuart Maconie tells the epic story of The Beatles, Sun 8 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

## Events

**SUPER LEAGUE BASKETBALL TROPHY FINALS 2026** An action-packed day of top-tier basketball from the elite men's and women's team, Sun 1 Feb, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**MILITARIA** Featuring 350-plus exhibitor stands, Sun 1 Feb, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

**HIDDEN SPACES TOURS** A rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Thurs 5 Feb, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**DISCOVERY TOUR AT BLAKESLEY HALL** Experience a guided tour of the fascinating Tudor building, Thurs 5 - Fri 6 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

**QUEEN HEAVEN** Combining classic music videos, immersive solar system visuals and archive footage, Fri 6 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**THE HAUNTED HALL: A CANDLELIT GHOST TOUR** Hear tales of the ghosts at Aston Hall, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Feb, Aston Hall, Birmingham

**WOLVERHAMPTON LITERATURE FESTIVAL** Celebrating the voices of authors, poets, writers, storytellers and publishers from across the UK, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Feb, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**HIDDEN SPACES TOURS** A rare opportunity to explore areas of the building that are usually closed to the public, Sat 7 Feb, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

**WOMEN AND GIRLS IN STEM DAY** Bringing together inspiring women from diverse STEM fields to showcase their work, Sat 7 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**THE YORKSHIRE CARD SHOW - NEC TAKEOVER** The home of all things cards, featuring passionate collectors, top-tier vendors and rare finds, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**WORCESTER BRICK FESTIVAL A** celebration of all things LEGO, Sun 8 Feb, University of Worcester Arena



## Gigs

**LORNA SHORE + WHITECHAPEL + SHADOW OF INTENT + HUMANITY'S LAST BREATH** Mon 9 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ROBBIE WILLIAMS** Mon 9 Feb, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

**BELL WITCH + AERIAL RUIN + 40 WATT SUN** Tues 10 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**HENRY'S BLUESHOUSE** Tues 10 Feb, Snobs, Birmingham

**JAMES ARTHUR** Tues 10 Feb, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**EDGAR MACÍAS QUINTET PLAYS BUENA VISTA** Wed 11 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**BEAUX** Wed 11 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SLEEP THEORY + THE PRETTY WILD** Wed 11 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**CLEMENTINE MARCH + EXOTIC PETS** Wed 11 Feb, Centrala, B'ham

**SMALL CHANGES** Wed 11 Feb, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**NASHVILLE IN CONCERT: THE ENCORE TOUR** Wed 11 Feb, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**THE SWAPS + THOMAS HEPPELL + SAINT SENARA** Wed 11 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**FAETOOTH + COLTAINE** Wed 11 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**XLOV** Wed 11 Feb, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

**BLUEBYRD + GARY LYNCH-WOOD** Wed 11 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**JAKE LEGG JUG BAND** Wed 11 Feb, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

**THE MUSIC OF ADELE** Wed 11 Feb, Lichfield Cathedral

**DANIEL KIMBRO** Thurs 12 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE JAZZ ROOM: THE HEART OF NEW ORLEANS** Thurs 12 Feb, The Jam

House, Birmingham  
**MUMFORD & SONS** Thurs 12 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**GRAVE ALTAR + MARTYS SAINT + SKULLDUGGERY** Thurs 12 Feb, Subside Bar, Birmingham

**CHRIS POTTER WITH THE PABLO HELD TRIO** Thurs 12 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**DEFTONES + DENZEL CURRY + DRUG CHURCH** Thurs 12 Feb, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**JULIA DISNEY AND CHRISTOPHER CROMPTON** Thurs 12 Feb, Catshill Social Club, Bromsgrove

**A HEAD FULL OF COLDPLAY** Thurs 12 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**BALLADESTE** Thurs 12 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ANKORA** Thurs 12 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**LUKE COMBS UK** Thurs 12 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**SLIM JIM BLUES** Thurs 12 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**WOMEN IN ROCK** Thurs 12 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**AND FINALLY... PHIL COLLINS** Thurs 12 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THE MUSIC OF WHITNEY** Thurs 12 Feb, Lichfield Cathedral

**TRIBUTE TO MOTOWN LEGENDS** Thurs 12 Feb, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**SORRY** Fri 13 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**UMARELLS** Fri 13 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE LILACS + THE ROSADOCS + CRUZ** Fri 13 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MAXIMO PARK** Fri 13 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BUDDY HOLLY EXPERIENCE** Fri 13 Feb, Jo Jo Jims, B'ham

**NERVOUS TWITCH & THE BOO TIKI'S** Fri 13 Feb, Tower of Song, B'ham

**STRANGE MEETING** Fri 13

Feb, 1000 Trades, Birmingham  
**WYLDST** Fri 13 Feb, The Victoria, B'ham

**MARDI GRAS + HEAVY BEAT BRASS BAND** Fri 13 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**AURUM TRIO** Fri 13 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**OLIE BRICE QUARTET** Fri 13 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**BBC BIG BAND** Fri 13 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**MICHAEL MARCAGI + EVAN HONER** Fri 13 Feb, XOYO, Digbeth, B'ham

**THE BRACKNALL** Fri 13 Feb, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

**ECLIPSE - THE PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE** Fri 13 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**ABSOLUTE BOWIE** Fri 13 Feb, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**BEAUTIFUL TRAUMA** Fri 13 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**SWEET LIKE SABRINA** Fri 13 Feb, Kidderminster Town Hall

**THE ELO SHOW** Fri 13 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**ULTIMATE COLDPLAY** Fri 13 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**SHEF LEPPARD + MAIDEN ANGLIA** Fri 13 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE COST** Fri 13 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**BROOKE COMBE** Fri 13 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**ROBBIE WILLIAMS PLAYED BY DAN BUDD** Fri 13 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**ED TUDOR POLE + XTRO GHOST** Fri 13 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**TOM MCCONVILLE** Fri 13 Feb, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**OPIUM LORD + GODS OF HELLFIRE + SPACE WITCH** Fri 13 Feb, The Rigger, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

**GREG RUSSELL** Fri 13 Feb, Burton Folk Club,

Burton upon Trent

**THE BILLY JOEL COLLECTION** Fri 13 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**RADIO GAGA - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Fri 13 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**A TRIBUTE TO ELTON JOHN** Fri 13 Feb, Lichfield Cathedral

**TWO TONE REVOLUTION** Fri 13 Feb, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

**CILLA & THE SWINGING 60S** Fri 13 Feb, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**LOS PACAMINOS FEATURING PAUL YOUNG** Fri 13 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**SIERRA VIEW + MOONSHINE + CALL OF THE KRAKEN** Fri 13 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**THE RIGMAROLLERS** Fri 13 Feb, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**RED SKY JULY** Sat 14 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE BESNARD LAKES + THE THORN** Sat 14 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**MIDRIFT + TURN OF PHRASE** Sat 14 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**GRAVE PALMS + NOTION OF FORTUNE + MADDOX** Sat 14 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**THE ACADEMIC** Sat 14 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**FREDDIE HALKON** Sat 14 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MOGWAI + FOREST SWORDS** Sat 14 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ARM'S LENGTH + BEN QUAD + SHORELINE + KOYO** Sat 14 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**LOVE DISTRACTION** Sat 14 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**SOUTHERN BEAUTY FT. ALISON WHEELER** Sat 14 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**MONKEY BUSINESS** Sat 14 Feb, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

**THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW**



*XLOV - The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton*

Sat 14 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**PLUG IN MAYBE** Sat 14 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**THE WONDER OF STEVIE** Sat 14 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**ABBA - SWEDE DREAMZ** Sat 14 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**THE FRATELLIS** Sat 14 Feb, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

**ASH** Sat 14 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE ILLEGAL EAGLES** Sat 14 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**CHINA CRISIS** Sat 14 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**SOUL LEGEND - TRIBUTE TO MARVIN GAYE** Sat 14 Feb, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

**SPACE** Sat 14 Feb, The Station, Cannock

**TAYLORMANIA** Sat 14 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**WILD CANDY** Sat 14 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**MARK HARRISON BAND** Sat 14 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**LOS SERPENTOS** Sun 15 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**OMAR PERRY & ERM BAND** Sun 15 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NIALL MCCABE** Sun 15 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE BEACHES** Sun 15 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THIRSTY WORK** Sun 15 Feb, The Brasshouse, Birmingham

**LAURENCE JONES** Sun 15 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**TAYLORMANIA** Sun 15 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE JANIS JOPLIN EXPERIENCE** Sun 15 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**ALL FOR THE JOLLY** Sun 15 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**THE COVASETTES** Sun 15 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**RANT** Sun 15 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**THE SOUNDS OF PHILADELPHIA & MOTOWN** Sun 15 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE CRAWLING + SAARKOTH + OMEGATHRONE** Sun 15 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

*Mumford & Sons - O2 Institute, Birmingham*





## Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by D Buxtehude, M Festing, E Elgar & more..., Mon 9 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**LUNCHTIME CONCERT** Featuring Lucy Irving (clarinet), Tues 10 Feb, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

**DARRAGH MORGAN (VIOLIN) AND MARY DULLEA (PIANO)** Performing new works written by RBC's MMus composers, Wed 11 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CBSO X BCMG: AN EXPLORATION OF KURTÁG AT 100** Featuring Paul Griffiths (presenter), Colette Overdijk & Georgia Hannant (violins), Chris Yates (viola), Arthur Boutilier (cello) & John Reid (piano/celesta). Programme includes works by György Kurtág & Bach, Thurs 12 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**CZECH JANÁČEK PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Daniel Raiskin (conductor) & Jennifer Pike (violin). Programme includes works by Janáček, Bruch & Shostakovich, Thurs 12 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**BALLADESTE** Featuring Tara Franks (cello) & Preetha Narayanan (violin). Programme features a selection of contemporary minimalism, Indian classical and folk, Thurs 12 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**HENSCHER QUARTET** Featuring Christoph Henschel & Hannah Perowne (violins), Monika Henschel (viola) & Mathias Beyer-Karlshøj (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, F Swain & Mendelssohn, Fri 13 Feb, Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa

**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: LIGHT AND SHADOW** An atmospheric evening of music from film and television, Fri 13 Feb, Number 8, Pershore

**THE AYOUB SISTERS** Featuring Sarah Ayoub (cello) & Laura Ayoub (violin). An evening of transformative music which blends Western classical, Arabic and Celtic traditions, Fri 13 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**VIVALDI' FOUR SEASONS BY CANDLELIGHT** Featuring Piccadilly Sinfonietta & Henry Chandler (violin), Sat 14 Feb, Worcester Cathedral

**BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: SHOSTAKOVICH 10** Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme also includes Elgar's Falstaff, Sun 15 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**EX CATHEDRA: THE SUN KING'S FAVOURITE** Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme includes works by Lalande & Corelli, Sun 15 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

## Comedy

**CHLOE PETTS** Wed 11 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**GEARÓID FARRELLY** Wed 11 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DESIREE BURCH** Thurs 12 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & SANDRO FORD & BETHANY BLACK** Thurs 12 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JAIN EDWARDS** Thurs 12 Feb, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

**PAUL MCCAFFREY** Thurs 12 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD** Thurs 12 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**BRIDGET CHRISTIE** Fri 13 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**GEORGIE JONES** Fri 13 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SANDRO FORD, BETHANY BLACK, JOE BINGHAM & MO MAGALEO** Fri 13 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**CALLY BEATON** Fri 13 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

**MATT STELLINGWERF, SAMANTHA DAY, TREVOR BICKLES & PAUL REVILL** Fri 13 Feb, Bedworth Civic Hall

**DESIREE BURCH** Fri 13 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**OMID DJALILI** Fri 13 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THOR STENHAUG** Sat 14 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham



**MILTON JONES, ROMAN HARRIS, JESSIE NIXON & DAVE LONGLEY** Sat 14 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**SANDRO FORD, BETHANY BLACK, ROB THOMAS & COMIC TBC** Sat 14 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RIA LINA** Sat 14 Feb, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**BRIDGET CHRISTIE** Sat 14 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**ROB AUTON** Sat 14 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**JUSTIN MOORHOUSE** Sat 14 Feb, Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton

**DANI JOHNS, JON WAGSTAFFE, COMEDIAN MAD RON & WILL DUGGAN** Sat 14 Feb, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**MILO EDWARDS** Sun 15 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SCOTT BENNETT** Sun 15 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**THE UNFRIEND** Amateur version of the Stephen Moffat farce exploring middle-class England's perennial struggle to keep up appearances, Mon 9 - Sat 14 Feb, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

**THE OLD MAID AND THE THIEF** Gossip, desire and deception are at the forefront of this amateur version of Gian Carlo Menotti's radio opera. Presented by RBC students, Tues 10 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**MEET FRED** Hijinx Theatre's 'darkly hilarious' production follows a cloth puppet (Fred) as he tries to live an ordinary life by getting a job, finding love and becoming part of society, Tues 10 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**EVITA** Amateur version of Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical, Tues 10 - Thurs 12 Feb, Macready Theatre, Rugby

**DIAL M FOR MURDER** Stoke Rep Players present an amateur version of Frederick Knott's classic story of betrayal, intrigue and murder, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Feb, Stoke Rep Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**AGATHA CHRISTIE'S DEATH ON THE NILE** Mark Hadfield stars as Hercule Poirot in a new version of the Agatha Christie classic. Glynis Barber and Bob Barrett also star, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**FAWLTY TOWERS - THE PLAY** Join Basil, the Major and Polly as they bring to life all your favourite moments from the show's unforgettable 12 episodes. Danny Bayne, Paul Nicholas and Joanne Clifton star, Tues 10 - Sat 21 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND** New musical telling the true story of William Kamkwamba - a boy who hopes 'to produce the gift of power and give hope for tomorrow', Tues 10 Feb - Sat 28 March, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon



**THE FULSTOW BOYS** The Lichfield Players present an amateur version of Gordon Steel's play, which is based on the stories of 10 young men who made the ultimate sacrifice in World War One, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**SHAKESPEARE ON LOVE** Second Thoughts Drama Group take a look at a selection of lovers from Shakespeare's work and the modern musicals inspired by them, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Feb, The Bear Pitt Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**CROWN OF BLOOD** New Yoruba adaptation of Macbeth, featuring storytelling, music and movement, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK** The Mary Stevens Hospice Pantomime Company present a giant panto featuring X Factor star Chico, Wed 11 - Wed 18 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**THE BATTLE** A 'wickedly funny' dive into one of the greatest rivalries in rock history: Blur vs Oasis. Mathew Horne stars, Wed 11 Feb - Sat 7 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

**LIVING THE LIFE OF RILEY** Feelgood family comedy featuring Cheryl Fergison, Leah Bell, Paul Dunn and Alison Stanley, Thurs 12 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**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 12 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**NINE SIXTEENTHS** A show that looks at the fallout from the infamous Janet Jackson/Justin Timberlake 'wardrobe malfunction' incident at the 2004 Superbowl, Thurs 12 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JULIET & ROMEO** Lying Lips Theatre Company showcase Shakespeare's classic love story by presenting the tragic play as a circus, Thurs 12 - Fri 13 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

**NINE SIXTEENTHS** A show that looks at the fallout from the infamous Janet Jackson/Justin Timberlake 'wardrobe malfunction' incident at the 2004 Superbowl, Fri 13 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**ENCOUNTER** Warwick Gospel Choir combine music, dance and drama in a production that explores what it means to be 'called, set apart and sent out as a royal priesthood', Fri 13 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**MIDLAND OPERA: ORPHEUS & EURYDICE** Programme comprises Orpheus & Eurydice by Gluck, adapted by Berlioz, Fri 13 Feb, Plantsbrook School, Sutton Coldfield

**ROBIN HOOD AND THE GREAT CREME EGG HEIST** A folk legend and a magic



chicken come together in this unique panto, presented by the Castle Players, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Feb, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

**CLEMENTINE** Rosalie Minnitt stars in a comic story about sickly sisters, self-love and Sylanian families, Sat 14 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**MY LIFE WITH KENNETH WILLIAMS** David Benson revisits his classic portrait of the much-missed Carry On star in a new version of the show, Sat 14 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JACK OFF THE BEANSTALK: GRAB YOUR CHOPPER** Adult pantomime filled with outrageous innuendos and 'bean-tickling' antics, Sat 14 Feb, The Wulfrun at The Halls, Wolverhampton

**OUR LITTLE HOUR** New musical drama that tells the story of Walter Tull, the orphaned grandson of a Barbadian slave, who became the first black footballer to play at the highest level of the domestic game, Sat 14 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**JANE EYRE** Amateur version of Charlotte Brontë's gothic masterpiece, Sat 14 - Sat 21 Feb, Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

**THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** Acclaimed reinvention of Sir Arthur

Conan Doyle's most famous Sherlock Holmes story - 'a fast-paced comedy caper that promises to leave you howling', Sat 14 Feb - Sat 14 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**LA TRAVIATA** Ellen Kent Opera present Verdi's tragic tale, Sun 15 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**MIDLAND OPERA: ORPHEUS & EURYDICE** Programme comprises Orpheus & Eurydice by Gluck, adapted by Berlioz, Sun 15 Feb, Plantsbrook School, Sutton Coldfield

## Kids Theatre

**PEPPA PIG'S BIG FAMILY SHOW** Featuring music, adventure and surprises, Wed 11 - Thurs 12 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**MERMARELLA (CINDERELLA OF THE SEA)** An Indigo Moon production for younger audiences, fusing puppetry, shadow theatre and music, Thurs 12 Feb, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

**BLUEY'S BIG PLAY** Theatrical adaptation of the award-winning children's TV series, featuring puppetry, music, 'and an abundance

of family fun', Fri 13 - Sun 15 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



**BRAVE BETTIE** A 'powerful and playful' production for younger audiences that explores resilience, self-belief, activism and our bond with nature. Suitable for children aged between three and eight, Sat 14 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham & Sun 15 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**PETER AND THE WOLF FAMILY CONCERT** The University of Warwick Chamber Orchestra present a 'fun-packed and interactive adventure'... Sun 15 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE MAGIC OF SCIENCE: HIGH VOLTAGE** A fast-moving, colourful and family-friendly show filled with 'mystery, suspense, and lots and lots of mess!' Sun 15 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

## Dance

**DIVERSITY - SOUL 2026** New tour based around the technological advancements of AI - questioning what the future holds, and what it truly means to be human in the digital age, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: DON QUIXOTE** Comedy and dance combine in Carlos Acosta's highly acclaimed 'explosion of Spanish sunshine', Thurs 12 - Sat 21 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

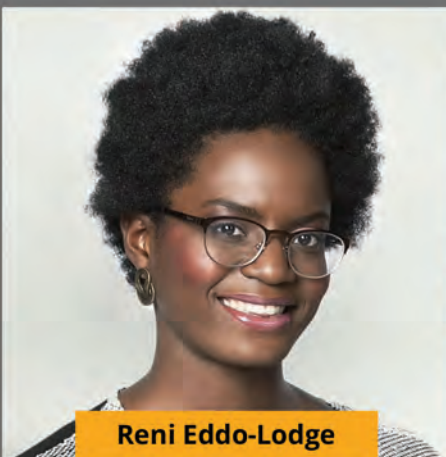
**VINCENT SIMONE: TANGO PASSIONS** Take a journey to Buenos Aires for a tale of love, passion and lust, accompanied by classic and modern Argentine tango music from the likes of Astor Piazzolla and Gotan Project, Sun 15 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

## Light Entertainment

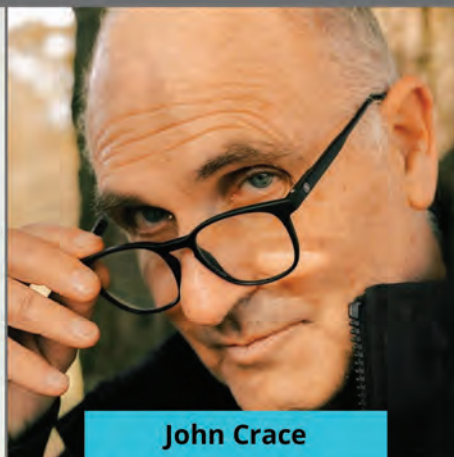
**TAP FACTORY** Fast-paced production in which eight male performers deliver 'a sensational blend' of dance, acrobatics, music and



Michael Rosen



Reni Eddo-Lodge



John Crace

## MALVERN FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

### SOCIAL CHANGE

Exploring the theme through talks, discussion and activities with leading voices in social change

Includes sessions for young people and families

Friday 13 - Sunday 15 March 2026

Malvern St James School

[malvernfestivalofideas.org.uk](http://malvernfestivalofideas.org.uk)

01684 565708



# Monday 9 - Sunday 15 February

comedy, Tues 10 Feb, Lichfield Garrick



**THE MUSIC OF PRINCE BY CANDLELIGHT** Wed 11 Feb, Worcester Cathedral

**JACK RHODES: PART TIME WIZARD, FULL TIME MORON** An evening of tricks and giggles from the Britain's Got Talent runner-up, Thurs 12 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**MASSAOKE - SING THE MUSICALS** Featuring hits from some of the greatest musicals of all time, performed by a live band and character singers. A giant screen displaying lyrics also features, to enable audiences to sing along, Thurs 12 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**STRANGE, BUT TRUE CRIME** Join ex-forensics lecturer Jennifer Rees as she explores the world's most shocking and unbelievable cases, Thurs 12 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**GAME SHOW SHOW** An evening of games, satire and social history, featuring trivia, poetry and parody 'about the place you call home', Thurs 12 Feb, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**THE PARODY OF THE RINGS** Expect comedy, chaos and utter nonsense as a team of hapless ushers attempt to create an epic tale of hobbits, elves and orcs, Thurs 12 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**THE GREATEST SHOWMAN SINGALONG VERSION** Screening of the much-loved film, with lyrics provided to enable audiences to sing along, Fri 13 Feb, Holy Trinity Church, Cradley Heath

**MATT PARKER: GETTING TRIGGY WITH IT** Unique show fusing comedy and maths, Fri 13 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**GAME SHOW SHOW** An evening of games, satire and social history, featuring trivia, poetry and parody 'about the place you call home', Fri 13 Feb, Goodrich Village Hall, Herefordshire

**THE DOLLY SHOW** Kelly O'Brien stars in a celebration of the life and music of Dolly Parton, Fri 13 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**KPOP FANTASY** High-energy theatrical celebration of K-pop, Fri 13 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TAP FACTORY** Fast-paced production in which eight male performers deliver 'a sensational blend of dance, acrobatics, music and comedy', Fri 13 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**MURDER TRIAL TONIGHT IV: DEATH OF A LANDLORD** Return of 'the UK's most talked-about courtroom experience', in which the audience is the jury, Sat 14 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DAZZLING DIAMONDS - COMEDY DRAG SHOW** 'Smash-hit comedy variety drag show', Sat 14 Feb, The Palace Theatre, Redditch

**IMPROVESARIOS** A group of classically trained musicians improvise a brand-new opera, Sat 14 Feb, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

**THE PARODY OF THE RINGS** Expect comedy, chaos and utter nonsense as a team of hapless ushers attempt to create an epic tale of hobbits, elves and orcs, Sat 14 Feb, The Regal, Tenbury

**THE MUSIC OF ED SHEERAN BY CANDLELIGHT** Sat 14 Feb, Lichfield Cathedral

**LOVE CHANGES EVERYTHING - MUSICAL THEATRE NIGHT** Featuring memorable love songs from the West End, Sat 14 Feb, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

**ALL HANDS TOGETHER** Three Idle Women present an evening of songs, stories and harmony that 'carry audiences through time and along the waterways of the UK', Sun 15 Feb, Dorothy Parkes Centre, Smethwick

**SOMETHING ABOUT GEORGE: THE GEORGE HARRISON STORY** Daniel Taylor stars as the 'quiet' Beatle in a celebration of one of music's most understated icons, Sun 15 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**ANYTHING GOES - SONGS FROM THE SHOWS** Featuring Broadway hits and musical theatre classics, Sun 15 Feb, Rugeley Rose Theatre

## Talks & Spoken Word

**LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS WITH GORDON BUCHANAN** Join the wildlife cameraman as he recalls encounters with pandas, grizzlies, tigers, jaguars and other animals... Mon 9 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**STAND-UP POET** Gavin Robertson's alter-ego, Greg Byron, performs a selection of verses and sporadic comic anecdotes... Thurs 12 Feb, Tipton Library

**EXPLORING SHAKESPEARE, 1599 - 1600: AS YOU LIKE IT** Local Shakespeare

specialist Clare Smout hosts a 'friendly, interactive session' featuring an introductory talk, a group discussion on characters, themes, language and staging, and video clips illustrating a variety of interpretations, Sat 14 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS WITH GORDON BUCHANAN** Join the wildlife cameraman as he recalls encounters with pandas, grizzlies, tigers, jaguars and other animals... Sun 15 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER: THE UNDERCOVER DETECTIVE** Peter Blesksley - a founding member of Scotland Yard's undercover unit and a former star of Channel Four's Hunted - lifts the lid on the most dangerous and hidden aspects of murder investigations, Sun 15 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**DARWIN MEMORIAL LECTURE** Professor Robert Foley FBA presents Charles Darwin - The Scientific Gift That Keeps On Giving, Sun 15 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Events

**CRIME & DINE** Join author & crime historian Adam Wood and local chef Sarah Jenkins for an exclusive evening of fine dining, Tues 10 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**BEHIND THE SCENES COLLECTIONS TOUR** Join the Collections Officer on a special tour, Wed 11 Feb, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**THE BACK TO BACKS BY CANDLELIGHT** Explore the Birmingham Back to Backs by the atmospheric glow of candlelight, Thurs 12 Feb, Birmingham Back to Backs

**DISCOVERY TOUR AT BLAKESLEY HALL** Experience a guided tour of the fascinating Tudor building, Thurs 12 - Fri 13 Feb, Blakesley Hall, B'ham

**WALKING FOOD TOUR OF LUDLOW** Discover local delicacies and food producers on this three-hour walking tour, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Feb, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**BIRMINGHAM LIGHT FESTIVAL** Returning event which sees city-centre locations transformed into spectacular galleries of illuminated artworks, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 Feb, Birmingham City Centre

**CBSO & BIRMINGHAM LIGHT FESTIVAL: BRINGING THE LIGHT LANTERN WALK** Featuring CBSO Youth Musicians & artwork by Sophie Handy. An afternoon of live music, light art and a lantern walk, Fri 13 Feb, The Roundhouse, Birmingham

**BOOGIE LIGHTS EXPRESS** Enjoy a spectacular sound & light show on board a steam train, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Feb, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

**THE GREAT BRITISH SHOOTING SHOW** The UK's leading event for shooting sports and outdoor pursuits, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**NOVUNA UK ATHLETICS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS BIRMINGHAM 2026** Event bringing together the nation's finest athletes for two days of high-energy competition, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Feb, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM ANIME & GAMING CON** The largest anime convention in the Midlands, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Feb, Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham

**THE 2026 BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TATTOO** Event bringing together massed marching bands, pipes and drums, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Feb, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**LEGO WEDO WORKSHOP** Create your own invention using specialist Lego kits, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**SMETHWICK PUPPETRY FESTIVAL** Featuring puppet shows for families, performances for adults, puppetry workshops, exhibitions and more, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, venues across Smethwick

**FOLK ART ANIMAL TRAIL** Can you spot the animals hidden around the grounds? Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS** Celebrate the year of the horse with fun activities and performers, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Trentham Estate, Staffs

**LEGO FEB HALF TERM** Get building and bring your most amazing ideas to life, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**BIG BLUE BLOCKS** Build, stack, channel and connect larger-than-life play blocks, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

**LAMBING FESTIVAL** Visit the lambs in the indoor barn - you might even catch a live birth, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, North Shrops

**FEBRUARY HALF TERM FUN** Step back in time to the golden age of travel with both steam and diesel-hauled trains, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Feb, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster



**CASTLE QUEST: IMAGINATION PLAYGROUND** 'A magical hands-on experience for children where creativity reigns supreme', Sat 14 Feb - Sat 11 April, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery





Jessie Reid - Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

## Gigs

**PETER CASE AND SID GRIFFIN** Mon 16 Feb, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

**GOOD NEIGHBOURS + MASTER PEACE** Mon 16 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MØL + TAYNE + COLD NIGHT FOR ALLIGATORS** Mon 16 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LIVE FOREVER - THE RISE OF BRITAIN'S GREATEST ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND** Mon 16 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**SUEDE** Mon 16 Feb, hmv Empire, Coventry

**THE DEARS** Tues 17 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**PLANTOID + FUZZ COUNCIL** Tues 17 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**FILKIN'S DRIFT** Tues 17 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**ALEX SPENCER + THE CASES + LEAH WILCOX** Tues 17 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**HENRY'S BLUESHOUSE** Tues 17 Feb, Snobs, Birmingham

**COACH PARTY + LIZZIE ESAU** Tues 17 Feb, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**PETER ANDRE IN THE VERY BEST OF FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS** Tues 17 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**L'NKN PARK** Tues 17 Feb, Marris Bar, Worcester

**SMITH / KOTZEN + KRIS BARRAS BAND** Tues 17 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**WHITELANDS** Wed 18 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BLACK HONEY** Wed 18 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BLACKBEARD'S TEA PARTY** Wed 18 Feb, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**BEAUTIFUL CRAZY - THE LUKE COMBS COLLECTION** Wed 18 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**ROARING TWENTIES** Wed 18 Feb, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

**THE IRISH HOUSE PARTY** Wed 18 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE GENESIS SHOW** Wed 18 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**FLAT MOON** Wed 18 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**RONNIE SCOTT'S JAZZ CLUB** Wed 18 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**COURTNEY HADWIN** Thurs 19 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**MERMAID CHUNKY** Thurs 19 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**KIM RICHEY** Thurs 19 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**SOUND OF THE LIONESS** Thurs 19 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**LACROSS CLUB** Thurs 19 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SHAWN JAMES** Thurs 19 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ASH** Thurs 19 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TOM ROWLEY** Thurs 19 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE ACES + ALEKSIAH** Thurs 19 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**DETROITWICH FUNK MACHINE** Thurs 19 Feb, Tower of Song, B'ham

**SANGUISUGABOGG + FULCI + GATES TO HELL + CELESTIAL SANCTUARY** Thurs 19 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

**THE WONDER OF STEVIE** Thurs 19 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**KEELEY + ATALHOS** Thurs 19 Feb, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**SOLSTICE** Thurs 19 Feb, Kidderminster Town Hall

**CHANTEL MCGREGOR** Thurs 19 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**JULIAN JOSEPH** Thurs 19 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? A TRIBUTE TO TINA TURNER** Thurs 19 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**KING OF FOXES + FORTY FATHOMS DOWN** Thurs 19 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**THIS IS THE POLICE** Thurs 19 Feb, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**JESS TUTHILL** Thurs 19 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

**MARIA SOMERVILLE** Fri 20 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LOS FASTIDIOS** Fri 20 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**THE COVASETTES** Fri 20 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**COUNTERPARTS + GOD COMPLEX + ONE STEP CLOSER + SUNAMI** Fri 20 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DARTS** Fri 20 Feb, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME** Fri 20 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

**FIAT LUX + THE MOONS OF JUPITER** Fri 20 Feb, The Victoria, B'ham

**UNDER THE BRIDGE +**

**FAKE HASTE + NEW EFFECT + ALTERATION + BLISS** Fri 20 Feb, The Rainbow, Birmingham

**HOMETOWN GLORY - A TRIBUTE TO ADELE** Fri 20 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**JOSH HINDLE** Fri 20 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**IZZY DERRY + SOPHIE HADLUM + CROISSANT + BRASS HIP FLASK** Fri 20 Feb, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**THE ENEMY** Fri 20 Feb, hmv Empire, Coventry

**BLACK AUTUMN + METHODEMIC + SCULPTURES + CONCUSSION** Fri 20 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

**MICHAEL GRAVES + HOUSE OF DAWN + KID KLUMSY** Fri 20 Feb, Marris Bar, Worcester

**STING AND THE POLICE STARRING THE ROZZERS** Fri 20 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ROY ORBISON & THE TRAVELING WILBURYS EXPERIENCE** Fri 20 Feb, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**LUTHER LIVE** Fri 20 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**DEFINITELY MIGHT + ADORED** Fri 20 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**WHITESNAKE UK & VAN HALEN UK** Fri 20 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**KATAKLYSM + VADER + BLOOD RED THRONE** Fri 20 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**SPECIAL KINDA MADNESS** Fri 20 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**PET SHOP BOYS, ACTUALLY.** Fri 20 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**JERSEY BEATS** Fri 20 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**MIDNITE CITY** Fri 20 Feb, The Station, Cannock

**VOODOO ROOM: A NIGHT OF HENDRIX, CLAPTON & CREAM** Fri 20 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**ROGER PARKES - PIANO MAN** Fri 20 Feb, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**THESE SMITHS** Fri 20 Feb, The Buttermarket,

Shrewsbury

**WEEKEND DAD + DRAVE** Fri 20 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**SMALL CHANGES** Fri 20 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

**THE NORTHERN SOULTRAIN** Sat 21 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**BEACH BONES** Sat 21 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**RATTUS INHERITUS** Sat 21 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**BIG SPECIAL + GANS + GOOD HEALTH GOOD WEALTH** Sat 21 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE ENTITLED SONS** Sat 21 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PUNK ROCK FACTORY + THE BOTTOM LINE** Sat 21 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE MILK MEN** Sat 21 Feb, Jo Jo Jims, B'ham

**CORY HANSON** Sat 21 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**WE ARE THE CATALYST** Sat 21 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**MOTHERSHIP - LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE** Sat 21 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE VIOLET HOURS** Sat 21 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE KILLERZ** Sat 21 Feb, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**SHAPE OF YOU** Sat 21 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE UPBEAT BEATLES** Sat 21 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**THE ROCK OF AGES EXPERIENCE** Sat 21 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**FOZZY + TAILGUNNER + MARISA AND THE MOTHS** Sat 21 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**THE MUSIC OF FRANK ZAPPA** Sat 21 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**WHOS NEXT** Sat 21 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**DIRTY RUBY** Sat 21 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**JIMI BOSWELL + RECOLTE** Sat 21 Feb,

The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**METAL MILITIA** Sat 21 Feb, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE DAVID BARRON BAND + THE CENTAURS + THE ILLUSION + STEP OUT** Sat 21 Feb, Top Of The World, Stafford

**DAFT PUNKZ** Sat 21 Feb, The Station, Cannock

**THE STORY OF SOUL** Sat 21 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**DAN OWEN** Sun 21 Feb, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

**SKABURST** Sat 21 Feb, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

**JD CLIFFE** Sun 22 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**MOMENTS OF PLEASURE: THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO KATE BUSH** Sun 22 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**JESSIE REID** Sun 22 Feb, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

**CHASING ABBEY** Sun 22 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**RICH DICKINSON'S DRIVING FORCE** Sun 22 Feb, The Brasshouse, Birmingham

**CORPUS DELICTI** Sun 22 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**DEVIN KENNEDY** Sun 22 Feb, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**SHOWADDYWADDY** Sun 22 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**BON JOVI FOREVER** Sun 22 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**STEVIE WATTS AND THE WHIRLYBIRDS** Sun 22 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**FINDING WAYS FT SEBASTIAN ROCHFORD** Sun 22 Feb, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**THE BEST OF TUBULAR BELLS I, II & III** Sun 22 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CHARM OF FINCHES** Sun 22 Feb, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**THE DR HOOK SONGBOOK - STARRING BILLY SHANNON** Sun 22 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury



## Classical Music

**BIRMINGHAM GAME MUSIC ENSEMBLE: SPRING** Featuring Tommaso Nista (conductor). Programme includes music from the Legend of Zelda, Minecraft, Animal Crossing & more..., Thurs 19 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**JULIAN JOSEPH PIANO CONCERT** Thurs 19 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**CBSO: HAYDN'S NELSON MASS & BEETHOVEN** Featuring Omer Meir Wellber (conductor), Sir Stephen Hough (piano), Luis Gomes (tenor), Stefan Cerny (bass), Georgia Mae Ellis (mezzo soprano), Lauren Urquhart (soprano) & CBSO Chorus, Thurs 19 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PLAYS MOZART AND BEETHOVEN** Featuring Alison Lambert (clarinet). Programme includes works by Mozart, Hans Gal & Beethoven, Thurs 19 Feb, Festival Theatre, Malvern

**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN SESSIONS: SHIFTING LIGHT** Featuring David Le Page (director). Programme includes works by Vivaldi, Tchaikovsky, Bridge & more..., Thurs 19 Feb, St Nicholas Church, Warwick

**CBSO: BEST OF BOND** Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor), Matt Ford & Alison Jear (vocalists). Programme includes soundtracks that have accompanied Britain's best-loved secret agent..., Fri 20 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**GOŠKA ISPHORDING (HARPSICHORD AND ELECTRONICS)** Goška collaborates with BEAST to present works combining harpsichord and electronic music, featuring world premieres of works by Birmingham composers Holly Gowland and Scott Wilson, Fri 20 Feb, Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham

**ANTHONY PINEL ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 20 Feb, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**MYSTERY ENSEMBLE - RECOMPOSED: THE FOUR SEASONS** Programme includes works and recompositions by Max Richter, Sat 21 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE & PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor) & Elizabeth Cragg (voice). Programme includes works by Berio, J Walshe, Dallapiccola & more..., Sat 21 Feb, Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham

**MARTYN RAWLES ORGAN RECITAL** Programme includes works by C McDowall, J Ireland, P Whitlock & more..., Sat 21 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**CBSO FAMILY CONCERT: TUNES & TALES** Featuring Chloe Rooke (conductor), Tom Redmond (presenter) & the CBSO Children's Chorus.

Programme includes works by Prokofiev, Bernstein, Grieg & more..., Sun 22 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**BAROQUE-CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA** Featuring Andrew Kirkman (conductor). Programme includes works by Haydn, Sun 22 Feb, Elgar Concert Hall, University of B'ham

**MALVERN CONCERT CLUB** Featuring Dame Sarah Connolly (mezzo soprano) & Malcolm Martineau (piano). Programme includes works by Barber, Debussy, Duparc & more..., Sun 22 Feb, Festival Theatre, Malvern

**BOGLARKA GYORGY (VIOLIN) & AMY BUTLER (PIANO) IN CONCERT** Programme includes works by Mozart, Debussy, L Boulanger & Saint-Saëns, Sun 22 Feb, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

## Comedy

**EMMANUEL SONUBI** Tues 17 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



**IAN SMITH** Wed 18 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MIKE RICE** Thurs 19 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JEN NOLAN & TOM HOUGHTON** Thurs 19 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROB COPLAND** Thurs 19 Feb, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

**SCOTT BENNETT** Thurs 19 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**BARBARA NICE** Thurs 19 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**JIMEOIN** Thurs 19 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**ANIA MAGLIAN** Thurs 19 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CHRIS RAMSEY** Thurs 19 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JACK CARROLL** Fri 20 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**TOUSSAINT DOUGLASS, JEN NOLAN, TOM HOUGHTON, RYAN KENNY & COMIC TBC** Fri 20 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

**CLINTON BAPTISTE** Fri 20 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**MRS SMITH** Fri 20 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**HANNAH EAST** Fri 20 Feb, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**SAM NICORESTI** Fri 20 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE COMEDY STORE ON THE ROAD** Fri 20 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DARREN HARRIOTT, HARRY JENKINS, RICKY BALSHAW & JON PEARSON** Sat 21 Feb, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

**BRENNAN REECE, TOUSSAINT DOUGLASS, JEN NOLAN & TOM HOUGHTON** Sat 21 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**JIMMY CRICKET** Sat 21 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING** Sat 21 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CALLY BEATON** Sat 21 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CONNOR BURNS** Sat 21 - Sun 22 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**RUSSELL KANE, STEPHEN BAILEY, JO ENRIGHT & WAYNE BEESE** Sun 22 Feb, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**PAUL F TAYLOR, MICHAEL MCKENZIE, ERIC RUSHTON & ALEXANDER BENNETT** Sun 22 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Theatre

**CONSTELLATIONS** The Highbury Players present an amateur version of Nick Payne's thought-provoking play about the choices we make in life, Mon 16 - Sat 21 Feb, Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

**FRIENDS! THE MUSICAL PARODY** Hit show featuring much-loved moments from all 10 seasons of the iconic TV series. An original musical score also features, Mon 16 - Sat 21 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE WIZARD OF OZ** Amateur version presented by Sutton Coldfield Musical Youth Theatre, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Feb, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

**OAKHEART AND THE WONDER SCROLLS** Storyteller Bronia Evers weaves together strands of an ancient ballad, a visual poem and an original fairytale with spoken word and hand-cranked scrolling illustrations, Wed 18 Feb, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

**RAPUNZEL** Brand-new musical version of the classic fairytale, Wed 18 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE LIBRARIAN** A 'comical slapstick children's puppet show' celebrating stories, libraries and a love of books. The performance is followed by a 30-minute workshop, Wed 18 Feb, Bearwood Community Hub, Bearwood Baptist Church

**INTO THE WOODS JR** Youth Vision present an amateur version of Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine's fairytale musical, Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**THE BORROWERS** Stratford Youth Theatre present an amateur version of Mary Norton's classic story, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Feb, The Bear Pitt

Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**SEASONS GREETINGS** STAC present an amateur version of Alan Ayckbourn's festive farce, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**CINDERELLA - P\*SSSED UP PANTO** Adults-only production featuring pyrotechnic effects, strong language, stroboscopic lighting and adult themes, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Feb, The Crescent, Birmingham

**CALAMITY JANE** Amateur version presented by Starcross Theatre Company, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**'I SHALL NOT HATE'** A play about reconciliation, followed by a panel discussion, Fri 20 Feb, Coventry Cathedral

**SMETHWICK PUPPETRY FESTIVAL SCRATCH NIGHT** A showcase of new work from the world of puppetry, Fri 20 Feb, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: ADULT PANTO** Expect saucy jokes and outrageous antics in this alternative version of 'a tale as old as time', Sat 21 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**SNOW WHITE AND THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN - ADULT PANTO** An evening of slick, fast-moving, farcical fun and bawdy sexual innuendo. Strictly over-18s only, Sat 21 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**IT'S ALL GREEK** Dame Siân Phillips and Alex Jennings give voice to stories, scenes and poems from Ancient Greece, Sat 21 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**HOLMES & WATSON: THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE MASKED MAGICIAN** Edwardian magic and suspense, featuring The Great Baldini and Peter Clifford, Sat 21 Feb, Macready Theatre, Rugby

**I'M MUSLAMIC DON'T PANIK** 'Hilarious and heartfelt story' of one man's journey to Iran to discover his cultural heritage, Sat 21 Feb, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

**TRULY JACK THE RIPPER** Step into the shadowy streets of Victorian London for an evening of drama and mystery. Written and performed by Jonathan Goodwin and Gary Archer, Sat 21 Feb, St Dominic's Social Centre, Stone

## Kids Theatre

**AFTER THE RAIN** Sabotage Theatre fuse puppetry, original music and playful storytelling in a show for younger audiences, Mon 16 Feb, St Hilda's Church Community Hall, Sandwell

**TOM GATES EPIC STAGE SHOW** New stage show based on the bestselling books and TV series by Liz Pichon, Mon 16 Feb, Kidderminster Town Hall

**CARTOON CIRCUS LIVE** Production



fusing 'the comedy of pantomime with the thrill of the circus', Mon 16 Feb, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**CIRCUS SPECTACULAR** Family show featuring 'international circus acts, magic and laughs aplenty', Mon 16 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE THREE LITTLE PIGS: THE MUSICAL** Wise Owl Theatre Company present a family-friendly musical 'that promises to have audiences laughing from start to finish', Mon 16 - Tues 17 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

**AFTER THE RAIN** Sabotage Theatre fuse puppetry, original music and playful storytelling in a show for younger audiences, Tues 17 Feb, Midland Metropolitan University Hospital Arts Space, Sandwell

**GABBY GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** Indigo Moon present a shadow theatre show that follows the adventures of an eight-year-old as she's sent on an errand into the woods... Tues 17 Feb, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

**A THREAD FALLS FROM MY HAND** 'A woman and a puppet inhabit the urban space, reconstructing the symbolic gestures of other women who have inhabited it before them', Tues 17 Feb, Hurst Road Community Centre, Smethwick

**RUDE SCIENCE** Expect enormous bottoms, fart machines, snot cocktails, vast whoopee cushions, pee-powered fireworks and ear-wax-oozing mannequins, Tues 17 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**FUN FOR LITTLE ONES - LIVE TRIBUTE TO 'MS RACHEL'** Featuring singalongs, puppets, characters, colourful on-screen animations and plenty of audience participation, Tues 17 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS** Presented by Base Panto, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Feb, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**THERE'S A MONSTER IN YOUR SHOW** Musical show for younger audiences based on Tom Fletcher's 'interactive adventures for big imaginations', Tues 17 - Sat 21 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE LIVE** Education and fun collide in a show that looks at how science shapes the modern world we live in. Expect a few loud bangs along the way, Wed 18 Feb, Kidderminster Town Hall

**UTTERLY REVOLTING SCIENCE SHOW** A high-tech, highly explosive show packed with burp biology, fart physics and revolting edible chemistry, Wed 18 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE THREE BILLY PIGS** Noisy Oyster blend two classic fairytales in a production fusing puppetry, storytelling, live music and a little bit of eco awareness... Wed 18 Feb,

Lightwoods House, Smethwick

**ADVENTURES IN SCIENCE** The Magical Mr West - aided by his corvid companion Crowbert - presents a show for younger audiences featuring magic, science and tomfoolery, Wed 18 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE STARS IN THE SKY** Luminous Tales present an 'adventurous romp amongst the wild beasts of the stars', Thurs 19 Feb, Brasshouse Community Centre, Smethwick

**CARTOON CIRCUS LIVE** Production fusing 'the comedy of pantomime with the thrill of the circus', Thurs 19 Feb, Halesowen Town Hall

**THE MCDUGALLS: PIRATE ADVENTURE** Join Auntie Aggie, Max and Morag the Rabbit as they set sail on a musical treasure hunt filled with songs and sea shanties, Thurs 19 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE DINOSAUR THAT POOPED: A ROCK SHOW!** New musical adventure for younger audiences based on Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter's best-selling books, Thurs 19 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**MARK THOMPSON'S SPECTACULAR SCIENCE SHOW** Award-winning show featuring exploding elephant's toothpaste, vortex-generating dustbins and howling jelly babies, Thurs 19 Feb, The Regal, Tenbury

**TALES FROM ACORN WOOD** Theatre show for younger audiences based on much-loved stories by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THE TALE OF NOBODY NOSE** 'Wordless storytelling, skilful puppetry and classic clowning' combine in a production that sees three clowns go in search of their own red nose... Fri 20 Feb, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone



**UNICORN LIVE!** Show for younger audiences, featuring favourite pop and musical theatre songs, 'dazzling' costumes, and a real unicorn called Sparkle, Fri 20 Feb, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**FAMILY MAGIC: THE GREAT BALDINI** A show packed with magic, puppetry, escapology - and lots of sweets! Fri 20 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THE GROOVY UV SHOW** An award-winning, fun-filled hour of puppetry, mayhem, and silliness, Fri 20 Feb, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE ADVENTURES OF BARON**

**MUNCHHAUSEN** Family-friendly show featuring improvised storytelling, pirates and princesses, unicorns and dragons, and spacemen and swordfights, Fri 20 Feb, Willenhall Chart Centre

**CIRCUS SPECTACULAR** Featuring international circus acts, magic 'and lots of laughs', Fri 20 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**FOUR GO WILD IN WELLIES** 'Whimsical' family theatre show that looks at the joy of inventiveness and curiosity, and how friendships are built, broken and mended, Fri 20 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**HORRIBLE HISTORIES - THE CONCERT**

Featuring hit songs and cast members from the CBBC TV series, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**TREASURE ISLAND** Swashbuckling family adventure featuring songs, shanties and pirate fun, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Feb, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD** Tall Stories' acclaimed production, based on Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved picture book, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Feb, The Rep, Birmingham

**THE 3 LITTLE PIG TAILS** A 'funny, warm-hearted and interactive rustic tale' featuring puppetry, live music and lots of audiences participation, Sat 21 Feb, The Market Theatre, Ledbury

**UP JUMPED THE CRAB: A STORY OF CROMER NOW & THEN** Crooked Timber Theatre present 'a charming puppet story in miniature, showing a day at sea with the real Cromer crab fishermen of North Norfolk', Sat 21 Feb, Midland Metropolitan University Hospital Arts Space, Sandwell

**DINO TALES: JURASSIC RESCUE** 'A raptor-ous adventure featuring a captivating story and a herd of pre-historic beasts', Sat 21 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**WONDERLAND** Join the Hatter as he brings Alice's adventure to life with charming puppets, vibrant scenery, lively music... and of course, hats! Sat 21 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**THE PRISON PUPPET SHOW** Tat Vision present a fast, silly and absurd puppet show 'full of laughs and mischief', Sat 21 Feb, 1000 Trades On The Park, Bearwood

**JUSTIN TIME TO ROCK** Family show that sees CBeebies favourite Justin Fletcher and his friends form a rock band and invite audiences to help choose the best songs to sing, Sun 22 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE 3 LITTLE PIG TAILS** A 'funny, warm-hearted and interactive rustic tale' featuring puppetry, live music and lots of audiences participation, Sun 22 Feb, Belmont Community Hall, Wellington, South Shropshire

## Light Entertainment

**TALKING SOPRANOS** Ninety-minute live show featuring two of The Sopranos' iconic cast members - Steve Schirripa (Bobby Bacala) and Emmy Award winner Michael Imperioli (Christopher Moltisanti), Mon 16 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**TWO MR P'S IN A PODCAST LIVE: LET THAT BE A LESSON...** Award-winning podcast featuring classroom experiences and 'hilarious' tales from educators across the UK, Tues 17 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**K-POP LIVE** The 'ultimate tribute to the global K-Pop phenomenon', Tues 17 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**SHEN YUN** A theatrical journey through 5,000 years of Chinese culture, featuring classical dance, live orchestral music, authentic costumes and interactive backdrops, Tues 17 - Wed 18 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**LOOKING FOR ME FRIEND: THE MUSIC OF VICTORIA WOOD** Wed 18 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**BOYBAND IN THE BUFF STARRING GARETH GATES** Celebration of pop, passion and pecs, Thurs 19 Feb, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**AN EVENING OF FILM, WORDS AND MUSIC IN APPRECIATION OF THE APPLE** The title of this show says it all! Thurs 19 Feb, SpARc, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

**THE MUSIC OF LUTHER VANDROS BY CANDLELIGHT** Thurs 19 Feb, The Abbey Church, Shrewsbury

**FC BULLARD** Jimmy Bullard and John Fendley hit the road with a show that features football chaos, wild stories and mystery guests, Fri 20 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**JAMES PHELAN: THE MAN WHO WAS MAGIC** New production from the award-winning magician, Fri 20 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**JOSH HINDLE: KING OF THE ROAD TOUR** Expect unforgettable renditions of classics by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bobby Darin, Tony Bennett, Michael Bubl  and many more... Fri 20 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR** Featuring 'a brand-new collection of short films filled with extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography', Fri 20 Feb, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**THE USELESS HOTLINE: NOW HIRING** 'The internet's favourite advice show' sees Max Balegde and George Clarke offer 'half-serious advice wrapped in full-blown comedic chaos', Sat 21 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall



# Monday 16 - Sunday 22 February

## PAUL MERTON & SUKI WEBSTER'S

**IMPROV SHOW** Expect a show full of 'fast, fabulously funny improvised games, scenes, stories and laugh-out-loud surrealism', Sat 21 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CALIFORNIA DREAMING** Featuring classic American songs from across the decades, Sat 21 Feb, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**TRÉS TRÉS CABARET** 'A saucy and silly night to remember', Sat 21 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**TAP FACTORY** Fast-paced production in which eight male performers deliver 'a sensational blend of dance, acrobatics, music and comedy', Sun 22 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE BEST OF FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS** Peter Andre stars in a high-pitched celebration of timeless music from one of the biggest-selling groups of all time, Sun 22 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**K-POP PARTY** The 'ultimate live celebration of Korea's global music phenomenon', Sun 22 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Dance

### VINCENT SIMONE: TANGO PASSIONS

Take a journey to Buenos Aires for a tale of love, passion and lust, accompanied by classic and modern Argentine tango music from the likes of Astor Piazzolla and Gotan Project, Tues 17 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

### THE NEXT STEP: LEGACY WORLD TOUR

Brand-new dance show celebrating 10 seasons of The Next Step, dance and friendship, Fri 20 Feb, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

### ME DANCE: THE CHRYSALIS - MOMENTS

**BETWEEN MOVEMENTS** Performance of new work in collaboration with De Montfort Dance Students and ME Dance Company Artistic Director Marcia Edwards, Sat 21 Feb, Wednesbury Library

### VINCENT SIMONE: TANGO PASSIONS

Take a journey to Buenos Aires for a tale of love, passion and lust, accompanied by classic and modern Argentine tango music from the likes of Astor Piazzolla and Gotan Project, Sat 21 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

## Talks & Spoken Word

**LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS WITH GORDON BUCHANAN** Join the wildlife cameraman as he recounts encounters with pandas, grizzlies, tigers, jaguars and other animals... Wed 18 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

## SLÁINE: THE HORNED GOD

Join professional storyteller Jason Buck for a tale of ancient Celtic heroes and villains, monsters and magic, dragons and demons, and goddesses and gods, Sat 21 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

## Events

**CHINESE NEW YEAR** Vibrant celebration to welcome in the Year of the Horse, Mon 16 - Fri 20 Feb, Weston Park, Shropshire

**ELECTRIFYING SCIENCE LIVE** Explore the wonders of electricity, from ancient discoveries to modern-day marvels, Mon 16 - Fri 20 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**FEBRUARY HALF TERM: STEM WEEK A** week of exploration, science and innovation, Mon 16 - Sun 20 Feb, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

### FEBRUARY HALF TERM ACTIVITIES

Including arts & crafts, interactive storytelling sessions and outdoor trails, Mon 16 - Fri 20 Feb, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire

**GAMES DESIGN BOOTCAMP** Build your very own platformer. This event has been designed for young people aged 16 to 18, Mon 16 - Fri 20 Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**HEAD JUNK MODELLING** Join Birmingham artist Tat Vision for some papier-mâché junk-modelling, Tues 17 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

### ALL STAR SUPERSLAM WRESTLING

Over-the-top wrestling mayhem, Tues 17 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

### FAMILY MORNINGS: SPECTACULAR

**SPACE** Get hands-on with space-themed activities, Tues 17 - Thurs 19 Feb, The Commandery, Worcester

**PADDINGTON CHARACTER VISIT** Take a heritage train ride out into the countryside to see Paddington™ and listen to tales of his adventures, Tues 17 - Thurs 19 Feb, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

### NATURE'S JOURNEY: FROM DINOSAURS TO BIRDS CHILDREN'S CRAFTS

Featuring nature-inspired creative activities, Tues 17 - Fri 20 Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

### THE CARAVAN, CAMPING AND

**MOTORHOME SHOW** New motorhomes, campervans, caravans, tents and camping accessories - all under one roof, Tues 17 - Sun 22 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026** Featuring top one-year ranking players, Tues 17 - Sun 22 Feb, Telford International Centre

## MUSEUM TAKEOVER DAY: UNIVERSITY OF

**WARWICK** Explore hands-on activities that reveal the wonders of animal evolution and the importance of planet sustainability, Wed 18 Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**HOLIDAY CLUB - KIDS** Hands-on activities for STEM enthusiasts aged between seven and 10, Wed 18 - Fri 20 Feb, Coventry Transport Museum

**SPACE JUNK** Walkabout performance by Hours Theatre Company, Thurs 19 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**CIRCUS WORKSHOPS** Join Circus Berzerkus for some fun activities, Thurs 19 Feb, Wednesbury Library

### WALKING FOOD TOUR OF LUDLOW

Discover local delicacies and food producers on a three-hour walking tour, Thurs 19 Feb, Ludlow, South Shropshire

### GUARDIAN BEASTS: MAKE YOUR OWN

**'ALAN MEASLES' CHARACTER** Inspired by Grayson Perry's Alan Measles, this playful family workshop invites children and parents to design their own guardian beast, Thurs 19 Feb, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**TREE FOLKLORE AND MYTH TOUR** Free walking tour, Thurs 19 Feb, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

### HALF TERM FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Featuring Chinese-inspired stories with hands-on craft activities, Thurs 19 Feb, Museum of Royal Worcester

### ART MASTERCLASS: BRITISH BIRDS

**STILL LIFE OIL PAINTING** Learn traditional oil painting techniques using British bird taxidermy as still life subjects, Thurs 19 Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

### KIDS JEWELLERY WORKSHOP

Have a go at making your own piece of jewellery, Thurs 19 Feb, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

### DISCOVERY TOUR AT BLAKESLEY HALL

Guided tour of the Tudor building, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham



### DEATH MOUNTAIN: A MURDER MYSTERY

Put your detective skills to the test, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Feb, Colwall Village Hall, Herefordshire

**BLAKESLEY HALL BY CANDLELIGHT** Join the storyteller to discover Tudor secrets and superstitions, Fri 20 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

**BOOGIE LIGHTS EXPRESS** Enjoy a sound & light show on board a steam train, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Feb, Severn

Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

**RACE RETRO** Event bringing the entire motorsport community together under one roof, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Feb, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

**LIVE PRINTING DEMONSTRATIONS WITH STIRCHLEY PRINTWORKS** Watch skilled printers create prints by hand using traditional techniques, Sat 21 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**CARDBOARD PUPPET WORKSHOP** Spend an afternoon crafting your own creations with Tat Vision, Sat 21 Feb, 1000 Trades On The Park, Bearwood, Birmingham

### YOUR WORCESTER: GALLERY TOUR

Enjoy a guided tour of permanent display Your Worcester, Sat 21 Feb, Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum

**THE BEEKEEPING SHOW** Sat 21 Feb, Telford International Centre, Shrops

**70S DAY PARTY** Daytime clubbing experience for partygoers aged 25-plus, Sat 21 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**DOZE UNDER DIPPY** Snooze under the feet of a 26-foot Diplodocus, Sat 21 Feb, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

**WAKING UP WITH WASSAILING** Join a traditional Wassail procession, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Feb, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**TRACTOR WORLD SHOW** Celebration of vintage and classic machinery, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Feb, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

**LIVING HISTORY WEEKEND** Come face-to-face with the past at The Commandery's biggest weekend of the year, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Feb, The Commandery, Worcester

**BIRMINGHAM CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL** Special event to welcome the Year of the Horse, Sun 22 Feb, Southside, Birmingham

### ORIGINS OF MIDDLE-EARTH: J.R.R.

**TOLKIEN AND SAREHOLE GUIDED WALK** Join a guided walk introducing the scenery that inspired JRR Tolkien when he lived near Sarehole Mill as a child, Sun 22 Feb, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

**WORCESTERSHIRE CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS 2026** Featuring family-friendly performance and activities, Sun 22 Feb, Museum of Royal Worcester and Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester

**CHINESE NEW YEAR PAINT YOUR OWN POTTERY** Celebrate the Year of Horse, Sun 22 Feb, Museum of Royal Worcester and Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester

**4X4 EXPO** Featuring indoor trade stands and display vehicles, Sun 22 Feb, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford



## Gigs

**POOL KIDS** Mon 23 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**HEAVEN SHALL BURN + THE BLACK DAHLIA MURDER + FROZEN SOUL** Mon 23 Feb, XOYO, Birmingham

**HELIS PATTISON + HOLLIE VEE TRIO + BETH HILL** Mon 23 Feb, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**SPIERS & BODEN** Mon 23 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**RAYE + ABSOLUTELY + AMMA** Mon 23 - Tues 24 Feb, bp pulse LIVE, B'ham

**BOKO YOUT** Tues 24 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**AIRBOURNE + ASOMVEL + AVALANCHE** Tues 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**HENRY'S BLUESHOUSE** Tues 24 Feb, Snobs, B'ham

**B:ATTLE OF THE BANDS** Tues 24 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE CARPENTERS STORY** Tues 24 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**CHARM OF FINCHES** Tues 24 Feb, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**CROWBAR + LEGIONS OF DOOM + SILVERBURN** Tues 24 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**CLASSIC ROCK SHOW** Tues 24 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**COURTNEY MARIE ANDREWS** Wed 25 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CHARM OF FINCHES** Wed 25 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**BADLY DRAWN BOY** Wed 25 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**AND MEN** Wed 25 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**NIGHTINGALES + TERRY EDWARDS** Wed 25 Feb, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**GEOFF SANSOME'S SAUCE CITY JAZZ BAND** Wed 25 Feb, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

**KATHRYN TICKELL & THE DARKENING** Wed 25 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**HEAVENLY** Wed 25 Feb, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**FEAST OF FIDDLES** Wed 25 Feb, Palace Theatre,

Redditch

**MILLCENT CHAPANDA** Wed 25 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**CABLEFEST 4** Wed 25 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

**MONSTER FLORENCE** Thurs 26 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NEVER THE BRIDE** Thurs 26 Feb, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham



**SPITTING TEETH + DEAD HARTS** Thurs 26 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**THE NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE SPECTACULAR** Thurs 26 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**SL** Fri 27 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**STOP MAKING SENSE LIVE** Fri 27 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SEB ROCHFORD** Fri 27 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**ABBA GOLD** Fri 27 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**BRIGHT BLACK + GRUNK + DESTINATION DISEASE** Fri 27 Feb, Arches Venue, Coventry

**THE JERSEY BEATS** Fri 27 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**PINK LIVE STARRING VICKY JACKSON** Fri 27 Feb, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**EMILIO SANTORO AS ELVIS** Fri 27 Feb, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

**BEATLES COMPLETE** Fri 27 Feb, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

**BUCKCHERRY / MICHAEL MONROE + RUBIKON** Fri 27 Feb, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

**JASON DONOVAN** Fri 27 Feb, The Halls, Wolverhampton

**COUNTRY FEST** Fri 27 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**ANTARCTIC MONKEYS** Fri 27 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**LAST RESORT** Fri 27 Feb,

The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

**GREG MURRAY AND THE SEVEN WONDERS** Fri 27 Feb, The Rigger, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

**THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW** Fri 27 Feb, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**NANCY KERR & JAMES FAGAN** Fri 27 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**COLDPLACE** Fri 27 Feb, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

**BIRDBROTHER** Fri 27 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**ELLE-J WALTERS BAND** Fri 27 - Sat 28 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**NEW STREET ADVENTURE** Sat 28 Feb, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**GRANDSON + PINKSHIFT** Sat 28 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE ANSELLS** Sat 28 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LESS THAN JAKE + THE BOUNCING SOULS + THE AQUABATS! + THE BAR STOOL PREACHERS** Sat 28 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

**THE SMITHS LTD** Sat 28 Feb, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**THE EARTH, WIND AND FIRE EXPERIENCE BY AL MCKAY** Sat 28 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**ANTARCTIC MONKEYS** Sat 28 Feb, hmv Empire, Coventry

**WRECKLESS ERIC** Sat 28 Feb, Just Dropped In, Coventry

**STEVIE MAC (STEVIE NICKS FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE)** Sat 28 Feb, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**ULTIMATE BOYBANDS** Sat 28 Feb, Dudley Town Hall

**A NIGHT OF MOTOWN & NORTHERN SOUL** Sat 28 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**KAISER CHIEFS** Sat 28 Feb, The Halls, Wolverhampton

**PEARL SCAM + KINGS OF THE STONE AGE** Sat 28 Feb, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE JAM'D** Sat 28 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE BOHEMIANS - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Sat 28 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

## Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by Holst, B Matter, Mendelssohn & more..., Mon 23 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC** Featuring Jiayue Wang (flute), Wenhui Cao (violin), Joanne Sealey, Hing Yan Leung & Rufus Westley (piano). Programme includes works by Boulanger, Debussy, Rzewski & more..., Mon 23 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**SIETZE DE VRIES ORGAN RECITAL** Tues 24 Feb, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CÉLIA MARGALEF PIANO CONCERT** Tues 24 Feb, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

**CBSO: KORNGOLD & PROKOFIEV** Featuring Tianyi Lu (conductor) & Carolin Widmann (violin). Programme also includes Zhiân by Iman Habibi, Wed 25 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**MELA GUITAR QUARTET CONCERT** Programme includes works by Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Holst & more..., Wed 25 Feb, Westminster Theatre, Keele University

**TOM BORROW PIANO CONCERT** Programme includes works by Bach, Rachmaninoff & R Schumann, Thurs 26 Feb, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**SIMON HÖFELE (TRUMPET) & ELIZABETH BRAUB (PIANO) IN CONCERT** Programme includes works by R Strauss, Liszt, K Pliss & more..., Thurs 26 Feb, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**CBSO: SCHOOLS' CONCERT** Featuring Bryony Morrison & Charlotte Skinner (presenters). Programme includes works by Stravinsky & Shostakovich, Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**RBC BAROQUE ORCHESTRA** Featuring Lucy Russell (director & violin) & William Sherratt (baroque oboe). Programme includes works by Bach, Vivaldi & Haydn, Fri 27 Feb, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

**ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Kevin John Edusei (conductor) & Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha (soprano). Programme includes works by Moussa, Strauss & Sibelius, Fri 27 Feb, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN - THE**

**SHEEP STREET SESSIONS:**

**BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY** Programme includes works by Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček & Martinů, Fri 27 Feb, Stratford Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon

**CONCERTS IN THE ROUND**

Featuring musicians from Concord College, Acton Burnell, Fri 27 Feb, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**HALLE - TCHAIKOVSKY'S PIANO MASTERPIECE** Featuring Euan Shields (conductor) & Tom Borrow (piano). Programme also includes works by Strauss & Brahms, Fri 27 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**ST DAVID'S DAY CONCERT**

Featuring Dilwyn Morgan (compere), the Penybontfawr Male Voice Choir & Meibion Goronwy Male Voice Choir, Sat 28 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Comedy

**SAANIYA ABBAS** Wed 25 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**PHIL ELLIS** Thurs 26 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MATT BRAGG & COMIC TBC** Thurs 26 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**SEANN WALSH** Thurs 26 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**NOISE NEXT DOOR** Thurs 26 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**ROSS NOBLE** Thurs 26 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**FAT THEO, DANNY STRACHAN, KATIE SLATER & SUZANNE LANE** Thurs 26 Feb, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**VITTORIO ANGELONE** Fri 27 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**CLINTON BAPTISTE** Fri 27 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DALISO CHAPONDA** Fri 27 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MATT BRAGG, LOUISE ATKINSON, RYAN CULLEN & COMIC TBC** Fri 27 - Sat 28 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**AL MURRAY** Sat 28 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**ERIC RUSHTON** Sat 28 Feb, Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

**RAYMOND AND MR TIMPKINS** Sat 28 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**GARY DELANEY** Sat 28 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**CHRISTIAN REILLY, DON BISWAS, MANDY MUDEN & TONY VINO** Sat 28 Feb, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire



## Theatre

**DI AND VIV AND ROSE** Here To There Productions present Amelia Bullmore's 'joyous romp through life's highs, lows and challenges', Mon 23 - Sat 28 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**THE BALLAD OF MARIA MARTEN** The Nonentities present an amateur version of Beth Flintoff's haunting tale about the infamous murder in the red barn, Mon 23 - Sat 28 Feb, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**I'M MUSLIM DON'T PANIC** A 'hilarious and heartfelt story' of one man's journey to Iran to discover his cultural heritage, Tues 24 Feb, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

**QUENTIN CRISP: NAKED HOPE** Mark Farrelly's hugely acclaimed solo play about the man who became known as The Naked Civil Servant, Tues 24 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**BURN** Stoke Youth Musical Theatre Academy present an amateur version of Deborah Gearing's story about Birdman - a 15-year-old with no family, no friends and nothing to lose, Tues 24 Feb, Stoke Rep Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**MURDER, SHE DIDN'T WRITE** Get ready for some improvised comedy sleuthing where you, the audience, create your very own Agatha Christie-inspired drama live on stage, Tues 24 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE LIGHTNING THIEF: THE PERCY JACKSON MUSICAL** 'The perfect adventure for gods and mortals of all ages'. RuPaul's Drag Race UK champion Danny Beard stars, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**INSPECTOR MORSE: HOUSE OF GHOSTS** Tom Chambers stars in an original story that brings the iconic detective to the stage, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Feb, Malvern Theatres

**FAWLTY TOWERS - THE PLAY** Join Basil, Major and Polly as they bring to life all your favourite moments from the show's unforgettable 12 episodes. Danny Bayne, Paul Nicholas and Joanne Clifton star, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**DEAR EVAN HANSEN** Big 3 Productions present an amateur version of the award-winning musical, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Feb, Rugeley Rose Theatre

**THE BOY AT THE BACK OF THE CLASS** Widely acclaimed show that celebrates friendship, kindness and compassion, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Feb, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS** Celebrating 45 years of 'blues, brass and unholy fun', Thurs 26 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST - ADULT PANTO** Featuring Drag Race stars Elle Vosque, Cheryl, Paige Three and

Icesis Couture, Thurs 26 Feb, The Civic, Shropshire

**MY CAR PLAYS TAPES** John Osborne's play about getting older, driving a car that's about to be scrapped, and being unexpectedly reunited with your old cassette collection from the 1990s, Thurs 26 Feb, Church Stretton Library, South Shropshire

**THE BALLAD OF MULAN** A 'powerful exploration' of gender, war and identity, Fri 27 Feb, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**MY CAR PLAYS TAPES** John Osborne's play about getting older, driving a car that's about to be scrapped, and being unexpectedly reunited with your old cassette collection from the 1990s, Fri 27 Feb, Farlow and Oretton Village Hall, Oretton, Shropshire

**OUR LITTLE HOUR** New musical drama that tells the story of Walter Tull, the orphaned grandson of a Barbadian slave, who became the first black footballer to play at the highest level of the domestic game, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Feb, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

**THE BALLAD OF MULAN** A 'powerful exploration' of gender, war and identity, Sat 28 Feb, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

## Kids Theatre

**THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR** Eric Carle's colourful characters come to life in an interactive show featuring puppetry, storytelling and original music, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE PRINCESS PROMS** Concert filled with epic, heartwarming, and nostalgic songs from magical animations, Sat 28 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**TALES FROM ACORN WOOD** Theatre for younger audiences based on much-loved stories by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 March, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Dance

**HIDDEN** Motionhouse present their critically acclaimed exploration of how, in an increasingly divided world, light can come out of the darkness in times of crisis, Wed 25 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

## Light Entertainment

**MATT FORD PRESENTS BROADWAY TO HOLLYWOOD: THE COLE PORTER SONGBOOK** Step back in time to a world of wit, romance and timeless

sophistication, Mon 23 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**A TICKET TO RIDE** Take a trip down memory lane with a hit parade of timeless classics from The Beatles, The Hollies, The Searchers, The Kinks and more... Thurs 26 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**MASSAOKE - SING THE MUSICALS** Featuring hits from some of the greatest musicals of all time, performed by a live band and character singers. A giant screen displaying lyrics also features, to enable audiences to sing along, Fri 27 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**FLAT & THE CURVES** The award-winning cabaret girl band fuse 'outrageous comedy and ferocious vocals' while taking a look at life's disasters and absurdities, Fri 27 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE JERSEY BEATS 'OH WHAT A NITE'** The story of Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons - from their formation through to the dizzy heights of fame, Fri 27 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**PAUL MERTON & SUKI WEBSTER'S IMPROV SHOW** Expect a show full of 'fast, fabulously funny improvised games, scenes, stories and laugh-out-loud surrealism', Fri 27 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR** Featuring a 'brand-new collection of short films filled with extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography', Sat 28 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**SOMETHING ABOUT GEORGE: THE GEORGE HARRISON STORY** Daniel Taylor stars as the 'quiet' Beatle in a celebration of one of music's most understated icons, Sat 28 Feb, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

## Talks & Spoken Word

**IOLA WILLIAMS** The Springwatch star talks about his childhood and career in conservation. Presented by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Mon 23 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER: THE UNDERCOVER DETECTIVE** Peter Bleksley - a founding member of Scotland Yard's undercover unit and a former

star of Channel Four's Hunted - lifts the lid on the most dangerous and hidden aspects of murder investigations, Mon 23 Feb, The Alexandra, Birmingham

**LEO HOULDING: EXPOSED** The legendary climber presents an evening of 'storytelling, film and stunning visuals', Tues 24 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**BEN FOGLE: WILD** Ben presents an evening of 'inspiring and uplifting tales', Wed 25 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**AN EVENING WITH WOLVES LEGENDS** Featuring Molineux favourites Steve Bull, Steve Daley and Andy Mutch. VIP experience also available, Thurs 26 Feb, Walsall Arena

**DAVID ROWNTREE: NO ONE YOU KNOW** A Wolverhampton Literature Festival event in which the founder member of Blur gives a unique insight into the first few years of one of Britain's most successful bands, Thurs 26 Feb, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

**AN EVENING WITH NIGEL OWENS MBE** One of the world's top rugby referees recalls stories from his life and career, Fri 27 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

## Events

**WALKING FOOD TOUR OF LUDLOW** Discover local delicacies and food producers on a three-hour walking tour, Wed 25 - Fri 27 Feb, Ludlow, South Shropshire

**BOOGIE LIGHTS EXPRESS** Enjoy a sound & light show on board a steam train, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Feb, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

**CINEMA UNDER THE STARS** Unwind and enjoy a specially selected space-themed film, Sat 28 Feb, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

**THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW** Featuring hundreds of top wedding suppliers, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 March, NEC, Birmingham

**THE NATIONAL EQUINE SHOW** Featuring hundreds of equestrian brands, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 March, NEC, B'ham

**BRANCHLINE WEEKEND** Event celebrating 35 years since the arrival of the first DMU on the Severn Valley Railway, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 March, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

**GO DIVING** Featuring interactive displays and demonstrations, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 March, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

**MIDLANDS GARDEN RAIL SHOW** Event offering visitors the chance to see layouts in the larger gauges and scales, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 March, Warwickshire Event Centre, Leamington Spa

Enter now at [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk) to be in with a chance of bagging one of these fabulous prizes!



**Win! Four tickets to see Horrible Histories - The Concert!**

Fancy enjoying some concert fun with the Horrible Histories crew? For the very first time, the hit show's much-loved actors are appearing live on stage with a live band - and led by the Horrible Histories song master Richie Webb!... What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win four tickets to see Horrible Histories - The Concert at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra on Friday 20 February.

**Competition closes Friday 13 February**



**Win! A pair of tickets to see hit musical Top Hat!**

Based on the classic 1935 film starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Top Hat is a sparkling romantic cocktail laced with witty comedy, stunning choreography and tap-dancing brilliance. The hit musical visits Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 3 to Saturday 7 March... What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win a pair of tickets to see the show on Tuesday the 3rd.

**Competition closes Monday 23 February**



**Win! Two weekend camping tickets to this summer's Shrewsbury Folk Festival!**

Shrewsbury Folk Festival returns to the West Mid Showground from Friday 28 to Monday 31 August, with Lucinda Williams, 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! A pair of tickets to The Creative Craft Show!**

The Creative Craft Show returns to Birmingham's NEC next month. Explore hundreds of stalls packed with everything from knitting and stitching supplies to card making, felting and more - covering every corner of the crafting world. What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win two tickets to the event from Thursday 12 to Sunday 15 March.

**Competition closes Monday 2 March**

For your chance to WIN! with What's On, visit:  
**[whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)**





Paul Young



Steve Craddock



John Power - Lead Singer of CAST



Danny McNamara from Embrace



John Lydon (Sex Pistols/PIL)

# WHAT'S ON: Live Music & Events 2026

## FEBRUARY ▼

Fri 6 Feb:  
**Shep Leppard & Dressed To Kill**

Sat 7 Feb:  
**Miss Rachel Experience Live**

Sat 7 Feb:  
**Martin Kemp - Back to the 80s**

Sun 8 Feb:  
**K Pop Superstars**

Sun 8 Feb:  
**Ash Roan Drum Clinic**

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:  
**Bongo's Bingo**

**MARCH ▼**

Thurs 5 March:  
**Rob Lamberti**

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**

Fri 3 April:  
**Bongo's Bingo**

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:  
**Dirty Rockin' Scoundrels**

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**

Sat 25 April:  
**Bongo's Bingo**

## MAY ▼

Fri 8 May:  
**Don't Stop Queen Now ft Mickey Callisto**

Sat 9 May:  
**Disco Bliss**

Sat 9 May:  
**Fleeting Rumours**

Fri 15 May:  
**Airtight 80s**

Sat 16 May:  
**Erasured**

Fri 22 May:  
**Northern Live**

Sun 25 May:  
**K Pop Superstars**

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 PINK Show**

Thurs 18 June:  
**The History of Soul**

Fri 19 June:  
**Motorheadache UK**

Sun 21 June:  
**School of Rock**

Sat 27 June:  
**HipHop Fest**

Sun 28 June:  
**Gordon Hendricks as ELVIS - The King's Voice**

## 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**

Sun 26 July:  
**Heart 'n' Soul of Nashville - Ryan Evans**

**ALSO ON SALE: ▼**

Fri 7 August:  
**The Fooz**

Sun 9 August:  
**Taylor Swift by Xenna**

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:  
**The Devout**

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)**

Sat 7 Nov:  
**Darts - 50th Year**

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**

**PLUS LOTS MORE GIGS & EVENTS BEING ADDED!**

Check out our website for the latest gigs!

THE BUTTERMARKET  
SHREWSBURY

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SHROPSHIRE'S BIGGEST LIVE MUSIC & EVENTS VENUE



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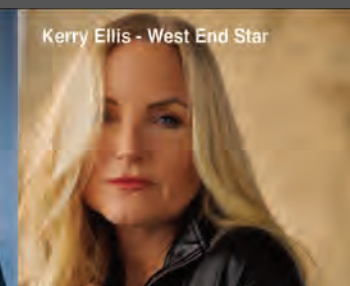
Ben Forster



Peter Cox lead singer of Go West



Martin Kemp



Kerry Ellis - West End Star





Artists include:

Lucinda Williams  
Talisk x Gardiner  
Brothers: Unleashed  
Andy Fairweather  
Low & The Low Riders  
Ferocious Dog ft The  
Celtic Folk Orchestra  
Cara Dillon

✿ The Seeger Sessions Revival  
✿ Steve Knightley & The  
Winter Yards Band  
✿ Slambovian Circus of Dreams  
✿ Dustbowl Revival ✿ Jess Silk  
✿ Man the Lifeboats & many more!

SHREWSBURY

# FOLK FESTIVAL

28-29-30-31 AUG 2026

Four music stages

- ★ Family & dog friendly
- ★ Camping & glamping
- ★ Shopping village
- ★ Fabulous food
- ★ Dance
- ★ Real ale, wine & cocktail bars

P@ndemonium!  
Children's Festival

refolkus  
Youth Festival

West Mid Showground

Day & weekend tickets

Photo: Steve Lacey

[shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk](http://shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk)

