

Birmingham

ISSUE 470 MARCH 2026

What's On

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

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THE SOLD OUT WEST END SMASH HIT COMEDY
JOHN CLEESE'S
FAWLTY TOWERS
THE PLAY

JOANNE CLIFTON
DANNY BAYNE
PAUL NICHOLAS

IS POLLY
IS BASIL
IS THE MAJOR

DIRECTED BY CAROLINE JAY RANGER

'FAWLTLESS'

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ALL THAT DAZZLES	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ MAIL ON SUNDAY	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ARTS DESK
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ DAILY EXPRESS	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ SUNDAY TIMES	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ INews
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ CHORTLE	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ DAILY MAIL	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ THE TIMES
	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ THE TIMES	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ BROADWAY WORLD

BASED ON THE TV SERIES FAWLTY TOWERS BY JOHN CLEESE & CONNIE BOOTH

THE ALEXANDRA
AN ATO ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

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inside:

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Priscilla Queen Of The Desert returns to the Hippodrome



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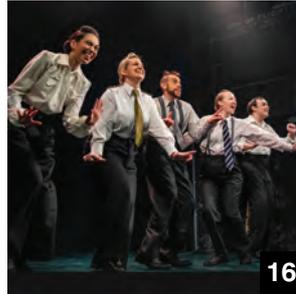
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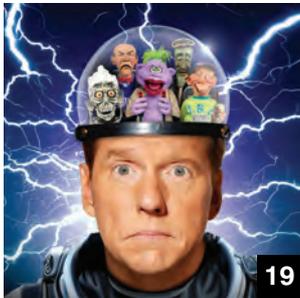
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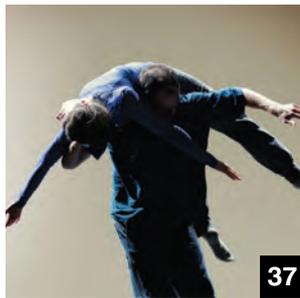
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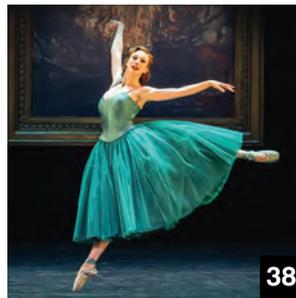
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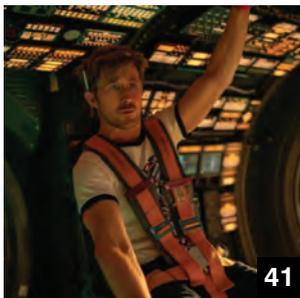
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What's On

MEDIA GROUP

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

Managing Director: **Davina Evans** davina@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281708

Sales & Marketing: hello@whatsonlive.co.uk

Editorial: **Lauren Foster** lauren@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281707 : **Brian O'Faolain**

brian@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281701 : **Abi Whitehouse** abi@whatsonlive.co.uk :

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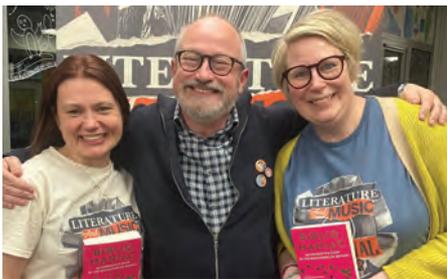


Hit Burlesque musical heading for the Midlands

Hit West End musical Burlesque is heading out on a UK tour, during which it will visit three Midlands venues - Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre (25 to 29 August), Birmingham's The Alexandra (6 to 17 October) and Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre (6 to 10 April, 2027). Executive-produced by and featuring the music of Christina Aguilera - who co-starred with Cher in the Golden Globe-nominated film on which the musical is based - the show follows the central character of Ali, whose New York City search for her mother leads her into 'a dazzling underground world of music and dance that will change her life forever'. For tickets visit burlesqueonstage.com

Kings Heath literature and music festival returns

Tickets are now on sale for The Heath Bookshop Literature & Music Festival, which runs from Wednesday 15 to Sunday 19 April in spaces and places across Kings Heath. This year's festival will feature solo acts, author events, specially commissioned performances, children's activities and music gigs. For a detailed run-down of what's happening and where, and to purchase tickets, visit theheathbookshop.co.uk



West End star set to play Sweeney Todd at The Rep

Birmingham Repertory Theatre will this summer present a production of Stephen Sondheim's musical masterpiece Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street. The show, which stars musical theatre favourite Ramin Karimloo in the title role, runs at The Rep from Saturday 4 July to Sunday 9 August. Further information and tickets are available at birmingham-rep.co.uk



Ex Cathedra announces its next artistic director

Birmingham early-music ensemble Ex Cathedra has announced the appointment of internationally renowned conductor James Burton as its next artistic director. Joining the organisation this year as artistic director designate, James will take over from Ex Cathedra founder Jeffrey Skidmore in Autumn 2027.



The Great Birmingham Run to return in early May

The 2026 AJ Bell Great Birmingham Run event - including a 10k and half-marathon, as well as junior and mini runs - will take place across the first weekend in May (Saturday the 2nd & Sunday the 3rd). To find out more and sign up to take part, visit greatrun.org



Live music venue to host St Patrick's celebrations

Independent Birmingham bar & grassroots music venue Nortons Digbeth has announced

that its annual St Patrick's programme will this year take place from Wednesday 11 to Wednesday 18 March. To check out what's happening across the week of entertainment, visit the website at nortons.bar/stpats



Symphony Hall stop-off for Dirty Dancing event

Fans of Dirty Dancing are set to have the time of their lives when the hit 1980s movie is shown in Birmingham this summer, complete with a live band and vocalists performing the film's songs in sync with the screening. Dirty Dancing In Concert visits the city's Symphony Hall on Monday 1 June. For further information and to book tickets, visit the website dirtydancinginconcert.com

Exploring opportunities for women in art & tech

Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre is hosting an event exploring opportunities for women in art and technology late this month. Girls That Geek takes place at the venue on Wednesday 25 March. For more information, visit the website at macbirmingham.co.uk

Tori Amos to play Symphony Hall

Tori Amos is performing at Birmingham's Symphony Hall next month (Friday 10 April) in support of her latest album, *In Times Of Dragons*.

For further information and tickets, visit toriamos.com

Birmingham date for John Bishop

John Bishop will make a Midlands stop-off in spring next year as part of a brand-new tour.

The Liverpool comedian is bringing his *Let's Go Round Again* show to Birmingham's Utilita Arena on Saturday 1 May 2027. For further information and to book tickets, visit johnbishoponline.com



A city farewell for Saint Etienne

Saint Etienne will perform at Birmingham Institute in the autumn as part of their last-ever UK & Ireland tour.

The London-based band visit the venue on Saturday 12 September. To make sure you're part of what promises to be a momentous occasion, book your place at the gig by visiting ticketmaster.co.uk



Birmingham Royal Ballet to reimagine controversial classic

The world premiere of Birmingham Royal Ballet Director Carlos Acosta's *The Maiden Of Venice* - a groundbreaking reimagining of controversial 19th-century classic *La Bayadère* - is among the many highlights of the company's 2026/27 season.

Commenting on his new ballet and *La Bayadère* - which has often been criticised for its depiction of Indian culture - Carlos said: "Since arriving at BRB five years ago, I have had a vision of re-

making *La Bayadère*. It is such an important ballet - to me personally, but also to the sector and to audiences. I understand why it has become problematic, but I feel passionate about not allowing it to be buried or to be, in effect, cancelled... I am so happy that my company of amazing dancers will have the opportunity to perform this new version."

To find out more about the 2026/27 programme of productions, visit brb.org.uk



Lucy Beaumont takes to the road

Comedian Lucy Beaumont will make multiple Midlands stop-offs when she hits the road with a brand-new tour in the autumn.

To find out where and when the Hull-born comic will be performing, visit her website at lucybeaumont.co.uk

Everybody's Talking About Jamie to return to the Midlands early next year

The 10th anniversary production of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* will visit three West Midlands venues during a spring and summer tour of the UK in the first half of next year.

The hit show runs at Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury from Monday 1 to Saturday 6 February 2027, the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 February and Birmingham's The Alexandra from Tuesday 18 to Saturday 22 May... To find out more and book tickets, visit everybodystalkingaboutjamie.co.uk



Tom & Nile to perform at Chester Racecourse

Music icons Tom Jones and Nile Rodgers & CHIC have announced an outdoor show at Chester Racecourse this summer. Tickets for the Friday 14 August event can be purchased by visiting livenation.co.uk

Walk for a Dementia cure

Alzheimer's Research UK's Walk For A Cure fundraising event makes a return in the summer, taking place in Birmingham's Sutton Park on Saturday 4 July. To find out more, visit walk.alzheimersresearchuk.org

Doctors in the house!

The European Doctors Orchestra is returning to Birmingham next month to present an afternoon of orchestral and choral music in support of Birmingham Children's Hospital (Town Hall, Sunday 19 April). Performing a programme featuring Handel's Zadok The Priest, Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances and Elgar's The Music Makers, the orchestra will be joined for the afternoon concert by the Midlands Hospitals' Choir and guest singers from the Worcester Festival Choral Society. To find out more, visit bmusic.co.uk

UK debut for DreamHack

Birmingham's NEC is hosting one of the world's largest gaming and esports festivals at this month. Taking place at the venue from Friday 27 to Sunday 29 March, DreamHack features 24/7 gaming, professional tournaments, cosplay, creator meetups and indie-game showcases. To find out more and book tickets, visit the official website at dreamhack.com

Celebrating 30 years of Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Cheltenham Jazz Festival is this year celebrating its 30th anniversary.

The popular event, which brings internationally

acclaimed artists and breakthrough talent to venues across the town, runs from Wednesday 29 April to Monday 4 May. This year's mega line-up includes Van Morrison, Jessie J, Nigel Kennedy, Mica Paris, Joss Stone, Earth Wind And Fire, Corinne Bailey Rae and Jack Savoretti (pictured). For further information and to book tickets, visit cheltenhamfestivals.org



RSC to stage Game Of Thrones world premiere

The Royal Shakespeare Company is bringing Game Of Thrones to the stage in Stratford-upon-Avon this summer. Brand-new play The Mad King is a prequel to the original books and HBO's long-running television series. Described as 'a sweeping new stage epic', the production spans the final years before the events of the original novels, which were written by George RR Martin, who is serving as executive producer on the show. Commenting on the news, George said: "When I first wrote Game Of Thrones, I never

imagined that it would be anything other than a book... For me, the RSC was the obvious choice when thinking about putting a Game Of Thrones story on the stage. Shakespeare is the greatest name in English literature, and his plays have been a constant source of inspiration to me and my writing." Priority booking will go on sale from Tuesday 14 April, with public booking to be announced next month. For early access, visit rsc.org.uk/join to become an RSC member.

Dame Denise becomes hospital charity's patron

Dame Denise Lewis has become Birmingham Women's & Children's Hospital and Charity's newest Patron. Commenting on the news, the Olympic gold-winning heptathlete - who was born in West Bromwich and raised in Wolverhampton - said: "I'm so honoured to accept this patronage. I've had the privilege of visiting the hospitals, meeting with staff and learning about their incredible work, as well as hearing from patients and families about their experiences and what makes it such a special place. It's always truly inspiring."

Young creatives invited to apply for latest grants

A trust which provides grants to musicians, dancers, singers and performers aged between 16 and 30 has opened its 2026 round of funding. The Alan Surtees Trust is inviting interested parties to apply for one of four grants of up to £2,000. Applicants must show exceptional skill, talent and promise in their

field, with their output 'influenced by folk or traditional music & arts from any culture'. The closing date for grant applications is Thursday 30 April... To find out more about the qualifying criteria, visit the website at alansurteestrust.org.uk

Glee Club date for retro-glam Puppini Sisters

Much-loved vocal trio The Puppini Sisters are visiting Birmingham's Glee Club in the late spring as part of a UK tour. The retro-glam favourites stop off at the venue on Sunday 10 May. Tickets can be purchased via glee.co.uk/birmingham



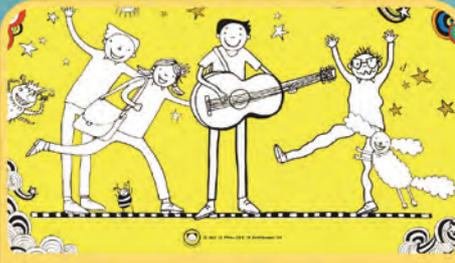
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Ocean in Concert, narrated on film by David Attenborough
01 March | Symphony Hall



Tom Gates: The Show
01 March | Town Hall



Samantha Fish: Paper Doll
03 March | Town Hall



Lucy Rose
05 March | Town Hall



Fastlove: The Tribute to George Michael
06 March | Symphony Hall



Man in the Mirror
13 March | Symphony Hall



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11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show



Northern Soul Orchestrated
15 March | Symphony Hall



Kenny Thomas
26 March | Symphony Hall



Aynur Doğan
28 March | Town Hall



Tan Dun & the London Philharmonic Orchestra
29 March | Symphony Hall

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BOA to launch new Level 4 Professional Diploma

Birmingham's BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy has launched a Level 4 Professional Diploma in Make Up, Hair & Special Effects. Starting in September, the full-time, one-year programme will include industry-led teaching, hands-on practical projects, and real on-set experience working alongside professional partners. For more information, visit boa-stageandscreen.co.uk

O2 Academy date for synth pioneer Thomas

Synth pioneer & singer-songwriter Thomas Dolby will perform in Birmingham in the late spring as part of a UK tour. Thomas brings his brand-new show, *Iconic 80s Recollections*, to the city's O2 Academy on Wednesday 20 May. Tickets can be purchased by visiting thomasdolby.com

Birmingham choir to play Tewkesbury Abbey

The City of Birmingham Choir will be paying a visit to Tewkesbury Abbey this summer to perform a choral concert with brass and organ accompaniment. Featuring a programme including music by, among others, John Rutter, William Walton and Henry Purcell, *Blaze Of Glory* takes place at the Abbey on Saturday 6 June. For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at citychoir.org.uk

Dippy the dinosaur to stay in Coventry till 2027

The nation's favourite dinosaur is extending its Coventry residency, three years after arriving in the city. The Natural History Museum's iconic *Diplodocus* cast - better known as Dippy - will remain on show at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum for another year, until Friday 19 February 2027. For more information, visit theherbert.org



A Midsummer Night's Dream - Brummie style!

Regional talent is set to take centre stage in a decidedly Brummie version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* next month. Set between the forest and 'Birmingham', Joe Murphy's contemporary production will feature Adam Carver (aka Fatt Butcher - pictured) as Puck. The play runs at the city's Repertory Theatre from Saturday 25 April to Sunday 24 May. To find out more and book your ticket, visit the venue's website at birmingham-rep.co.uk

A day and night of fun as Godskitchen returns

One of dance music's seminal brands, Godskitchen, is returning to Birmingham on Sunday 24 May with a full-scale day & night event. Spanning outdoor and indoor spaces across the city's Digbeth Triangle, the get-together will feature classic trance, house, hard house, progressive house and techno. Tickets can be purchased at skiddle.com

It's Curtains Up for fast-paced comedy in Oldbury

Oldbury Repertory Players' 2026 season of shows continues in late spring with a production of Peter Quilter's *Curtain Up*. A fast-paced comedy about five women who inherit equal shares in a dilapidated theatre and plan to bring it back to life, the show will run at Oldbury Rep from Saturday 9 to Saturday 16 May. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at oldburyrep.org

Solo recital to explore gender issues in opera

A late-month solo recital by a fourth-year soprano studying at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) will explore the issue of gender representation in opera and opera performance. Sydney Suffield's *Both Sides Of The Line* takes place in RBC's Recital Hall on Friday 27 March. To find out more, visit the website at bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire

Historic building set to become heritage centre

Bournville Village Trust has been awarded funding by Arts Council England - through Museum Development Midlands - to turn a historic building into a heritage centre. The Rest House on Bournville Green was

gifted to George and Elizabeth Cadbury by Cadbury workers to mark their silver wedding anniversary. To find out more about the new project, visit the website at bvt.org.uk

Vintage jazz evenings...

Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre is hosting an evening of hot jazz and vintage swing on the first Saturday of both this month and next (7th of March and 4th of April). Featuring performances by talented local musicians, MAC's Vintage Jazz Jam takes place in the venue's Kiln restaurant and lasts for three hours on each occasion. To find out more, visit macbirmingham.co.uk



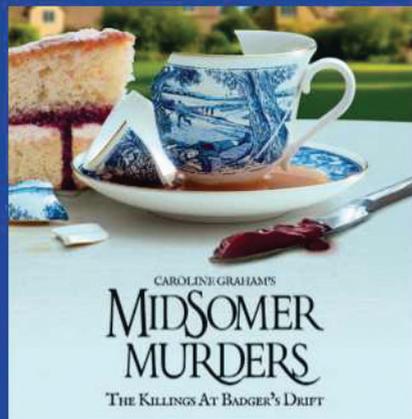
Former Bake Off judge at Stratford Literary Festival

Former Great British Bake Off judge & cook Prue Leith, actor & writer Mark Gatiss, BBC broadcaster Sophie Raworth and writer & presenter Reverend Richard Coles are among the well-known names appearing at the Stratford Literary Festival in May. The spring edition of the event takes place at various venues within the town, but mainly the Crowne Plaza Hotel, from Thursday the 7th to Sunday the 10th. More information and tickets are available by visiting the event's official website at stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk

A SPARKLING SEASON AWAITS



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



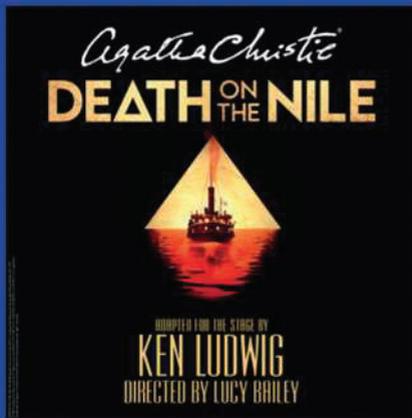
Tue 10 – Sat 14 Mar



Mon 23 Mar



Sun 29 Mar



Tue 7 – Sat 11 Apr



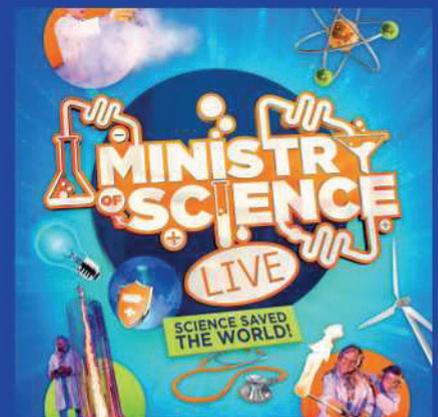
Tue 21 – Sat 25 Apr



Tue 5 – Sat 9 May



Mon 11 - Sat 16 May
 CAP Thu 14 May 7.30pm
 AD Sat 16 May 2.30pm



Mon 25 May

THE ALEXANDRA BIRMINGHAM
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ARTS ALIVE IN KINGS HEATH

The Heath Bookshop Literature & Music Festival
promises events and entertainment for all...



The Heath Bookshop Literature & Music Festival returns in Birmingham next month, complete with a packed programme of more than 30 events for all the family to enjoy.

The festival features contributions from numerous top-name writers and performers, including award-winning author Max Porter, writer & presenter Robin Ince, Birmingham favourite Joe Lycett, local novelists Mike Gayle and Catherine O'Flynn, musician Helen O'Hara, journalist Pete Paphides and former Smiths drummer Mike Joyce - to name but a few!

Run by The Heath Bookshop in partnership with fellow Kings Heath-located venues How Brave Is The Wren and the Hare & Hounds, the five-day festival aims to include activities and entertainment for everyone.

Organisers Catherine Gale and Claire Dawes, who opened The Heath Bookshop in September 2022, say the inaugural festival in 2024 was so successful they wanted to ensure this year's programme was bigger and better.

"This year we've expanded the festival, and there should be something for everyone," says Catherine. "We're excited to have new commissions, and we're also working with a lot of local writers who we've got to know well since opening the bookshop."

One of the key events sees the performance of new dance work *Grief Is The Thing With Feathers* (Saturday 18 April), which has been adapted by Birmingham-based Beyond Words Dance Theatre from Max Porter's bestselling book. Choreographed by local artist Helen Calcutt, the event will also feature a conversation with Max, chaired by Birmingham-born writer Caleb Klaces.

"Helen came to the bookshop with her poetry book three years ago and we had a discussion about Max Porter and how much we all love his work," Catherine recalls. "She told us she was already working on a dance adaptation of *Grief Is The Thing With Feathers*, and she invited us to an early scratch performance.

"We're really excited to now be able to include that work in the festival and bring Max to see the performance and discuss his book. It's great to be able to feature that in this year's programme."

The team have also commissioned *Voices In The Making: Stories That Shape Us*, an event with Birmingham Poet Laureate Ayan Aden which aims to encourage young people to create their own work. Taking place on Sunday 19 April, the event includes creative workshops in which students will explore identity and heritage. The final performance will feature poetry, storytelling and guest performers.

The festival also boasts a host of music events in partnership with the Hare & Hounds pub.

"I'm a music fan and I love the Hare & Hounds," says Catherine. "It's a really famous music venue, so working with them is really great. The music side of the festival is really important, as it's so much a part of our culture. People who love books are often fans of music and go to gigs, so the two things go together really well.

"We can create so many crossovers. We have a gig in the bookshop with local musician Sol Guest, who will be doing a gorgeous acoustic set. And then there are gigs and literature events in the Hare & Hounds which are connected to music. So, for example, Helen O'Hara, who was a member of Dexys Midnight Runners and played the violin on the band's *Come On Eileen*, is talking about her memoir *What's She Like* with Pete Paphides at the Hare & Hounds on Sunday the 19th.

"And we have Mike Joyce from The Smiths talking with Catherine O'Flynn about his memoir *The Drums* and then doing a DJ set, both at the Hare & Hounds on the 18th.

"I met Mike last year when I was bookselling for him at The Glee Club, and I'm a mega Smiths fan. I was delighted to meet him. I asked him to come to the festival and he said yes. *The Drums* is a really great memoir, and then he's doing the alternative 80s DJ set afterwards. The Hare & Hounds were really excited about having Mike, so we've worked out this great programme between us."

Children's bookshop and festival partner How Brave Is The Wren has created an exciting programme for families.

"We wanted the children's programme to be fully integrated into the festival, and How Brave Is The Wren have put together some great events," says Claire. "There's a special event with music and narration of Michael Morpurgo's *Carnival Of The Animals* poems. There's a pre-festival workshop to create costumes and actions on Sunday the 12th and then a drop-in on Saturday the 18th to make masks, so it really is a big family event for all ages."

The performance features Sennet Brass Quintet - in which Claire plays French horn - playing Saint-Saëns' *Carnival Of The Animals*, joined by children in their costumes, with musical instruments which they've made.

For Catherine and Claire, the community element is key to the festival - both through supporting local artists and by bringing writers and performers to Birmingham - so the programme also includes local schools

and Kings Heath Library.

"It's so important to be working with local authors such as Catherine O'Flynn, Mike Gayle and Robin Ince, who have all written wonderful books," says Claire. "As a bookshop we sell new books, but we also believe the library is so important. We always want to push the fact that we need to save our libraries, so we're delighted to have the event Libraries Give Us Power with Liz Berry and Catherine O'Flynn. It's a family and free event because we're not trying to replace the library, we're trying to add to the community."

And to support the local community, Catherine and Claire are inviting people to join online for the sold-out *Paint-a-long With Joe Lycett*, profits from which will be split between Kings Heath Community Centre and Queens Heath Pride.

The team have received National Lottery Projects Grants funding through Arts Council England, which has helped them keep prices as low as possible, while many events are BSL-interpreted, with the aim of making the festival accessible to all.

"Price is very important," says Claire. "We try to have as many free or low-price events as we can. Tickets went on sale at the end of January and we've had a really good response. It seems like people are really excited about it. They're coming into the shop and talking about all the different events."

Catherine and Claire won Independent Bookshop of the Year at the 2025 British Book Awards last May. They believe the increased national profile has encouraged people from further afield to visit the shop and the festival.

"There are a lot of local people who come to the festival, but we're also finding that people are coming from further afield now," Claire says. "And if you're not local, we have so many events crammed in that you could stay in Birmingham, come to a whole load of events and discover Kings Heath and all the other great things here."

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The Heath Bookshop Literature & Music Festival runs at various venues in Kings Heath and Birmingham City Centre from Wednesday 15 to Sunday 19 April. To check out the full programme and book tickets, visit theheathbookshop.co.uk For any queries, make contact via email at hello@theheathbookshop.co.uk

Spring Festival



7th - 10th May 2026

Mark Gattiss
Sophie Raworth
Philippa Perry
Rev Richard Coles
Natalie Haynes
Gordon Buchanan
Mark Kermode
Antony Beevor
Dr Sian Williams

Prue Leith
Tim Spector
Matthew Rice
Marina Wheeler
Adam Rutherford
Ardal O'Hanlon
Samira Ahmed
Andrew Graham-Dixon
Larry Lamb

SJ Parris
Matt Chorley
Patrick Gale
Tony Juniper
James Holland
Nicholas Crane
Sajid Javid
Scummy Mummies
AND MUCH MORE



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Live music from across the city...

Kyle Hume

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Sun 8 March

Memorable melodies and accessible lyrics combine to excellent effect in the music of Kyle Hume, whose mainstream-pop output incorporates elements of R&B and hip-hop. Hailing from Louisville in Kentucky - and having grown up banging on drums while somewhat reluctantly taking piano lessons - Kyle enjoyed a breakthrough recording success with the song *If I Would Have Known*, an emotionally charged ballad about loss, grief and regret. Originally written in response to a fan's comment on TikTok, it went on to become a viral hit.



Lucy Rose

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 5 March

Touring with Counting Crows and providing backing vocals for Bombay Bicycle Club are among the career highlights of Surrey-born singer-songwriter Lucy Rose. A well-established voice on the folk-music scene, with five albums under her belt, Lucy is continuing her comeback after being diagnosed with a rare form of pregnancy-related osteoporosis that led to her breaking her back in eight places.



Franz Ferdinand

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Fri 6 March

Come next year, Franz Ferdinand will have been delighting fans with the skewed charms of their art-punk/dance-rock sound for a quarter of a century.

The Scottish indie favourites shot to stardom on the back of a post-punk revival, setting out their stall in no uncertain terms by bagging the 2004 Mercury Prize for their self-titled debut album.

The following year, they successfully sidestepped the curse of the 'difficult' second album, scoring a major hit with *You Could Have It So Much Better*.

A further four records have followed, including last year's *The Human Fear*. The album garnered a good amount of praise from fans and critics alike, without ever really threatening to set the world on fire.

Gorillaz

bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham, Sun 22 March

Created by Blur's Damon Albarn and artist Jamie Hewlett, Gorillaz are a virtual band who burst onto the music scene at the start of the millennium. Creating a splash with their eponymous debut album, they then made an even bigger impression with sophomore offering *Demon Days*. The 2005 release was certified six times platinum in the UK and double platinum Stateside... The boys visit Birmingham having recently released ninth studio album *The Mountain*.

Bella Hardy

Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham, Thurs 12 March

Bella Hardy has certainly crammed in a lot of living since debuting as a self-taught 'fiddle singer' - aged 13 - at Cambridge and Sidmouth music festivals. In the 29 years which have followed, her critically acclaimed songwriting has been informed by a wide range of experiences. These include working as a Tennessee ranch-hand, and learning the songs of Chinese farmers during her time as the British Council's musician-in-residence in Yunnan Province. Bella visits Birmingham ahead of the release of her eagerly anticipated new album.

Beans On Toast

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Wed 11 March

Self-confessed drunkard Beans On Toast selected his name because he wanted to be called something basic and simple - to reflect his music!

"I'm not the greatest guitarist in the world," he once admitted to *Listen Up Manchester*. "I play simple three-chord folk songs, but if I see something that interests me, something that intrigues or angers me, I pick up my guitar and I write a song." Emerging from the London folk scene over a decade ago and mainly singing about sex, drugs and politics, Beans On Toast is a surefire bet for an entertaining evening out.



MIDSOMER PROMOTION

Actor Daniel Casey returns to Midsomer Murders, and he's been promoted to the role of DCI Barnaby!



Set in the fictional English county of Midsomer (which surely must have the highest death toll per village green in the country), Midsomer Murders is one of ITV's biggest crime-drama hits. Fans will recall its very first episode - The Killings At Badger's Drift, broadcast in 1997 - which starred John Nettles as DCI Tom Barnaby and Daniel Casey as his trusty sidekick, DS Gavin Troy... With a stage adaptation of the same case now travelling to theatres around the country, Daniel has taken on the role of his one-time boss. Here, he explains to What's On what it's like to step into Barnaby's shoes...

Daniel Casey has been promoted.

After playing DS Gavin Troy in ITV's Midsomer Murders, he's now back in the UK's most dangerous county (fictionally speaking, at least), appearing as DCI Tom Barnaby in a stage adaptation of The Killings At Badger's Drift.

"It's a massive promotion, going from a detective sergeant to a chief inspector," says Daniel. "I've certainly earned my spurs!" The dedicated and methodical Barnaby was played on TV for 13 series by John Nettles, accompanied for the first seven by Daniel as his trusty DS.

"Barnaby and Troy had an almost father/son, mentor/pupil relationship," says Daniel, "and that's very much like my relationship with John. When he learned I was taking on the role in this stage version, he said, 'Well, he's learned at the feet of the master!' That's certainly true... John's advice to me has always been 'Be true to yourself,' so that's how I've approached playing Barnaby."

The pair starred together in the hugely successful murder-mystery show from the pilot episode, which aired in March 1997, through to Daniel's departure in 2003.

"I spent all those years standing next to John, watching and listening, so hopefully I've absorbed a bit of his magic. It's a bit daunting, because his are big shoes to fill, but I'm really excited about doing it. I think it's important not to do an impression, so I will be bringing my own ideas to the role."

Published in 1987, The Killings At Badger's Drift was the first of Caroline Graham's Chief Inspector Barnaby books and formed the basis of the very first TV episode of Midsomer Murders. Adapted for the stage and directed by Guy Unsworth, the play revolves around the death of well-loved spinster Emily Simpson. Her friend Lucy Bellringer refuses to accept that Emily's death was an accident, so DCI Barnaby and DS Troy are called in to investigate. In so doing, they uncover a world of hidden passions, long-buried secrets and

deadly rivalries.

The play, Daniel promises, offers "a night of murder and mystery, full of theatricality and intrigue, with the central partnership of Barnaby and Troy, a whole host of English eccentrics, and this really dark undercurrent of secrets and lies going on."

"I had such a happy time playing Troy from when I was 24 to when I was 31," Daniel adds. "It was a fantastic time in my career, but when I made the decision to leave to pursue other things, I thought that was that."

A guest appearance in the 11th series in 2008 aside, that was indeed that - but when Unsworth called Daniel to say that he was adapting The Killings At Badger's Drift, everything fell into place.

"Sitting down and reading Barnaby out loud, it just felt right. I'm about the same age as John was when we made that original episode, and it brought back so many memories from a really lovely part of my career."

Like millions of TV viewers, Daniel is also a fan of the Barnaby character: "He's a very straight-up-and-down family man with a good moral compass. He's a good cop, he's watchful and he's thoughtful... Family is so important to me too, and I think I've got a pretty good moral compass. I'm the fourth of five children. As a kid I couldn't get a word in, so I've always been watchful."

One of ITV's most popular shows, Midsomer Murders is syndicated in over 200 territories worldwide. Daniel has a theory about the show's enduring success: "It's set in the modern day yet it has a kind of 1940s or 1950s feel to it. It's a wonderful form of escapism. Apparently a lot of clerics like it because it's like a modern-day morality tale - it's good versus evil, right versus wrong. And it has such cross-generational appeal, where kids watch it with their grandparents. The beautiful countryside is another part of its appeal, and it's full of eccentrics, which British actors play so well."

Daniel was born in Stockton-on-Tees. At the age of 14, he went along to the local youth theatre, walked into the room and knew immediately that acting was the path he wanted to take. He soon landed the lead in Bugsy Malone.

"It was amazing! The week after we finished, I was walking through town with my mate when a girl walking towards us screamed and went, 'Oh my God, it's him!' I knew there and then that this was the job for me!"

Daniel has plenty of TV credits under his belt, but he's also no stranger to the stage, having toured in Abigail's Party in 2019 and Cluedo in 2022.

"I love being part of a company of actors. When touring, the challenge is to keep something fresh, real and immediate every night, and I like that challenge. There are different entrances and exits, different sizes of venue, so you've got to be nimble and you've got to be on your toes."

When the Badger's Drift tour calls at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra, Daniel will no doubt be recalling a particularly memorable previous job in the city.

"I was at Birmingham Rep when my son Rafferty was born. He started to arrive on press night. I did the show, then went straight home. He was a long time coming - he was supposed to come during rehearsals! - and was born in the middle of the night. I was there to greet him, then dashed back for the next day's show."

Hopefully, during this month's Birmingham visit, the dramatic scenes will be confined to the stage...

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Midsomer Murders: The Killings At Badger's Drift shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March



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Classical music from across the region...



Tan Dun & the London Philharmonic Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 29 March

It's no exaggeration to say that this is a concert which no self-respecting classical music enthusiast would want to miss. The London Philharmonic are here performing to the baton of Tan Dun (pictured), whose CV includes the Academy Award-winning soundtrack to Ang Lee's year-2000 martial-arts film, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*...

And the concert programme makes this late-afternoon event an even more mouthwatering prospect. Alongside Beethoven's visionary Ninth Symphony, the orchestra will also perform Tan Dun's

brand-new choral concerto, *Nine*. A tribute to Beethoven, the work combines ancient poetry from China and Europe, creating an 'ode to peace' which has been described as 'worthy of Beethoven's Ode To Joy' (the fourth and final movement of the Ninth Symphony).

The London Philharmonic Choir and London Chinese Philharmonic Choir also make telling contributions to the concert, as do four talented soloists: Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Hongni Wu (mezzo-soprano), John Findon (tenor) and Dingle Yandell (bass).

Richard Strauss Spectacular

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 22 March

Now here's a concert with a difference, featuring, as it does, original choreography designed to bring a visual dimension to the music.

The Birmingham-based Kimichi Symphony Orchestra - which last spring enjoyed a major Symphony Hall hit with Igor Stravinsky's Diaghilev ballets - here returns to the venue to present an afternoon concert featuring three Richard Strauss masterpieces: *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Tod und Verklärung*, and *Ein Heldenleben*. The first two of the three compositions will be re-imagined through a cultural-fusion collaboration with the Sujata Banerjee Dance Company.

Birmingham Bach Choir

St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, Sat 14 March

In the run-up to Holy Week, one of the city's oldest musical groups here gets its teeth into the challenge of performing a trio of larger-scale works by three leading 16th-century composers: Carlo Gesualdo (*Tenebrae Responsories for Holy Saturday*), Dominique Phinot (*Incipit oratio Jeremiae prophetae*) and Thomas Tallis (*Lamentations of Jeremiah*).

The concert also features complementary readings by the Archbishop of Birmingham - Bernard Longleyand - and a series of shorter choral works.

Martyn Rawles is the organist whilst Paul Spicer conducts.

Thomas Trotter and Gloucester Cathedral Choir

Birmingham Town Hall, Mon 23 March

Organist Thomas Trotter has performed with a host of revered conductors and appeared alongside many of the world's leading orchestras. Thomas was appointed Birmingham City Organist in 1983, and remains one of the country's most acclaimed musicians. He is here joined by Gloucester Cathedral Choir to perform Fauré's Requiem, in a concert to mark Easter Week.

Mela Guitar Quartet

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Thurs 19 March

Mela Guitar Quartet recently celebrated a decade of musicmaking together, during which time they've garnered plenty of plaudits and gained an international reputation for their highly imaginative programming. This mid-month concert sees them showcasing arrangements of works for full orchestra - from Glinka's *Overture Ruslan & Ludmilla* and Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, to smaller-scale pieces like Debussy's *Arabesques for solo piano*.



Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra

St Paul's Church, Birmingham, Sat 28 March

Bringing together musicians from across the Midlands, the well-established Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra here takes its audience on 'a sweeping journey from Beethoven's *Ruins Of Athens Overture* to Sibelius' glorious *Symphony No.2*'. Sandwiched in-between these much-admired works is a performance of Ney Rosauro's *Marimba Concerto No.1*. The composition will be performed by soloist Andrew Woolcock, a former BBC Young Musician of the Year winner.



MAKING MINCEMEAT

**Hit musical Operation Mincemeat
is set to cause a splash in the Midlands...**

One of the strangest military operations of the Second World War saw MI5 disguise the British invasion of Sicily by employing deception, forged documents, love letters... and a mystery corpse! Now, Operation Mincemeat, a madcap, musical retelling of the tale, is heading to the Midlands as part of a national tour, having garnered rave reviews in the West End. During the show's rehearsal period, What's On spoke to lead actors Christian Andrews and Jamie-Rose Monk - who each appear as multiple characters in the fast-paced production - to find out more...

Hit musical Operation Mincemeat tells the strange-but-true story of a brilliant deception co-ordinated by British intelligence in the Second World War. Now on a national tour, the show features 50 characters but only five lead actors, who swap roles, genders and costumes - notably hats - before the audience's very eyes.

The cast includes Christian Andrews - who plays MI5 employee Hester Leggatt, among other characters - and Jamie-Rose Monk, whose lead role is Colonel Johnny Bevan. "Operation Mincemeat was a British World War Two deception plan to fool the Nazis into thinking that British forces were going to invade Sardinia instead of Sicily," explains Christian. "They came up with a plan to dress up a corpse as a British pilot, plant fake documents on his person, dump him into the sea, and *hope* that his body and these documents ended up in the hands of German intelligence. And it worked! It's a madcap story of how a crazy plan helped to, well, eventually, win the war, but also diminish the chance of conflict on the British and German sides. The death toll was so much lower because of this plan."

Both Christian and Jamie-Rose saw the production in its previous incarnations, and were immediately keen to join the company. "I saw the show initially at Riverside Studios in Hammersmith," says Christian. "That was after a number of runs that the show had had at Southwark Playhouse. I loved it. I thought the show was so brilliant, and then got an audition to join the company as an understudy when they were transferring to the West End."

"I saw the production in the West End," says Jamie-Rose. "I wasn't quick enough to get tickets when it was at Southwark Playhouse... I just thought it was really refreshing and entertaining and funny - all the good words that you want something to be!"

Rehearsals for the show are akin to a military operation themselves, with the cast having to get to grips with the challenges of hat-swapping - literally...

"I'm new to it, it's very exciting and very, very satisfying when you get it right," says Jamie-Rose. "It can be overwhelming - there's a lot to do, but I'm really excited about it. For me, the hat-swapping sometimes happens mid-number, which is really fun - lots of tie swapping, lots of hats..."

"It's a bit like learning a language," says Christian. "You practise, you practise, you

practise, and then, once that all makes sense, it just falls out of you. The way that you know your left hand has to go into your left pocket because that's where *that* tie is, and your right hand has to go behind your back because you're hiding something else. It's completely mechanical when you're learning it. Then, when you're able to live it and play upwards of 30 characters, it's a totally new skill."

The show's cast features a number of historical characters, some of whom might be familiar even to those who don't know the story.

"We're only halfway through rehearsals," says Jamie-Rose, "so there's some I haven't touched yet that I think will be a new favourite. At the moment, I like playing James Bond author Ian Fleming. It's just a bit mad, isn't it, that I get to do that!"

"I love playing Spillsbury - the coroner that provides the corpse..." adds Christian. Christian began his time with the production understudying two roles - covering lead characters Hester Leggatt and Charles Cholmondeley - which meant he had to get to grips with twice as many characters.

"I've played two of the 'tracks', but I feel like I've played 40 of them - even though there's only five! I've seen the show every which way, and I was dance captain in the West End as well, so I know the show inside out. It feels very nice to be back with some returning cast members from the West End and with some amazing new cast members as well."

As a musical, Operation Mincemeat features toe-tapping tunes - and a few surprises...

"The music feels very modern in certain moments, and very 'poppy' and super fun," says Jamie-Rose, "but it also has an old-school cabaret feel to it. It's a really nice blend of all those things. It feels like an old-school musical with an injection of pop."

"We play cross-gender and we play sort of cross-class, but also cross-age as well," adds Christian. "The younger characters have that 'poppy' feel in the music, and the older characters have this Big Band, brass, 1940s Glenn Miller vibe - it's really varied."

The production has accumulated a host of awards since hitting the stage, including Best New Musical at the Olivier Awards in 2024. The show's success comes not only from its music, writing and performances, but also the unique live atmosphere that it conjures up.

"It's five people on stage, creating hundreds of different characters and loads of different places," Jamie-Rose says. "There's a real sense of fun and creativity. It feels like 'a night at the theatre' that you couldn't do anywhere else. You couldn't watch that on screen; it wouldn't really work. It's about being there with everybody. It also appeals to a lot of different people. It has great music, lots of comedy, high stakes, and is really moving in parts. It just ticks all your boxes." "There's so much heart in this show," adds Christian. "I think even though it's madcap and we all play upwards of 30 characters, there's a story that the audience follows which is really heartfelt and really emotional. The writers have done such a great job to blend all of that. The two go hand in hand - the more you can make them laugh, the more you can make them cry as well, because you fall in love with who these people are."

The musical has no connection to the 2021 film of the same name - although the play's website proudly proclaims that Colin Firth, who starred in the cinematic version, 'has seen our show, and he's a fan!'. But the true events which inspired both productions have certainly caught the imaginations of people around the world.

In Christian's opinion, this zany recreation of an unconventional wartime tale is the latest in a long tradition of storytelling which keeps British history alive - whether in the classroom, through family anecdotes, or on stage and screen: "People of our generation, we remember stories told by our family members about World War Two, though they may not be with us any longer. I think that those stories are still within us. World War Two wasn't *that* long ago, really. It's fairly recent history. Especially in this country, everybody knows about it, and I think everybody has some sort of story they could tell."

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Operation Mincemeat shows at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 March. The production returns to the region next month, showing at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 27 April to Saturday 2 May. It then visits The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Monday 11 until Saturday 16 May

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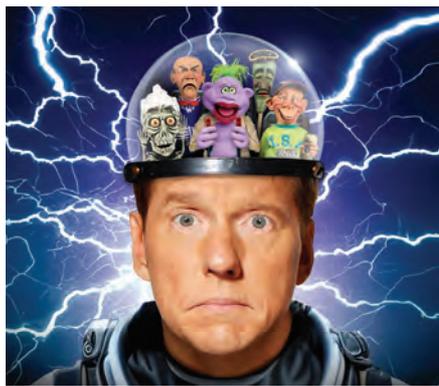
Comedy previews from across the region...

Jeff Dunham

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sun 29 March

Walter the grumpy retiree, Bubba J the beer-fuelled redneck, and José Jalapeño, the spicy pepper from south of the border, are just some of the characters brought to life by American ventriloquist and stand-up comedian Jeff Dunham.

Then there's the skeletal fantasist Achmed the dead terrorist, the creation which propelled him to stardom 20 years ago. Sixtysomething Jeff is certainly a talented guy - and he's very much at ease making fun of the British, too. "When they say drink responsibly," he gets his sidekick, Walter, to opine, "all they mean is, don't spill it on the ****ing steering wheel."



Andy Parsons

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 21 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 26 March; The Brewhouse, Burton-upon-Trent, Thurs 30 April

With complimentary reviews including such observations as 'what he lacks in hair, he more than makes up for in originality,' Andy Parsons is a sharp and topical comedian who's well known from TV shows such as Mock The Week and Live At The Apollo. Jokes include: "If you've been affected by any of the issues raised in tonight's episode of EastEnders, they must have been acting better than they usually do."



Joel Dommett

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 13 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 15 April

"I absolutely love performing in small, intimate spaces," says The Masked Singer presenter Joel Dommett, a man who was once the face of MTV - until he was sacked at the age of 27 for being 'too old'. "I'd far rather do a small gig in front of 50 people, but be doing new stuff, than do old stuff in front of 5,000 people."

Joel is extremely committed to the business of keeping his act fresh. "I'm working on material pretty much all the time," explains the one-time Justin Bieber warm-up act. "In fact, I try to put in something new every time I go on stage. If there's something new in there, it brightens up the whole set and gives it more energy and excitement."

Henning Wehn

Lichfield Garrick, Sun 15 March; Bedworth Civic Hall, Sat 28 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 29 March; Walsall Arena, Fri 9 October

Presenting a style of humour that's been described as 'Teutonic jolliness at its best', self-appointed German comedy ambassador Henning Wehn tours to the Midlands this month with his new climate-change-focused show, Acid Wehn.

Samples of his comedy include: "With stand-up in Britain, what you have to do is bloody swearing. In Germany, we don't have to swear. Reason being, things work." There's also "World War Two was a painful time for my family. My grandfather died in a concentration camp. He got drunk one night and fell out of his guard tower..."



Geoff Norcott

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sun 1 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 8 March; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 19 March; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 26 March

One of the sharpest tools in the comedy shed, Geoff Norcott is visiting the Midlands this month with Basic Bloke 2: There's No Bloke Without Fire, the follow-up offering to, er, Basic Bloke 1, a show described by its official publicity as 'a kindly and funny stock-take of both Geoff and his fellow man'. And, as with that previous, critically acclaimed Basic Bloke offering, the London-born comedian will be taking a deep-dive into the business of being a fella, to try and find out what makes them tick. Along the way, he's also promising to tell you what he really thinks, including how much he judges people: bad parents, people who eat too much, anyone who's still wearing a dressing gown beyond 9am...



LAUGHING & LEARNING

Comedy and science combine in Lieven Scheire's
deep dive into Artificial Intelligence...



Lieven Scheire has sold out venues across Belgium and the Netherlands with his sharp mix of science and comedy. International audiences may know him from BBC's QI, the hit podcast No Such Thing As A Fish, or from his viral science explainers online. Now, he's bringing his acclaimed show, Artificial Intelligence, to the UK. What's On caught up with him to talk about what's really going on under the bonnet of AI, why humour is the perfect tool to explain tough ideas, and how he sees the future of this rapidly evolving technology...

So, what actually is AI, Lieven?

Well, turns out there is no real definition of that. You could say that the term 'artificial intelligence' is mostly clever marketing. It sounds like we're talking about consciousness. In reality, it's simply a new kind of software that's exceptionally good at recognising patterns.

What will your show be about?

I'll be talking about the possibilities of AI, both now and in the future. But I also want to give the audience a better understanding of what's going on 'under the bonnet' of AI. Research into AI actually began back in 1956, making this field almost 70 years old now. For a long time, artificial intelligence was built on rule-based programming: the typical 'if this, then that' rules that you see in programming languages. But today's wave of AI simulates a neural network in software: it is roughly based on the way a network of brain cells send signals to one another. About 10 years ago, that suddenly started working remarkably well. Tasks that old software and robotics couldn't automate - like picking fruit or recognising faces - are now being automated by AI.

This technology moves so fast. Has your show changed since you first wrote it?

Absolutely. I follow the newest developments and adapt the show when needed. Every few months, there's a new breakthrough in AI that changes the conversation.

Your career also seems to stretch far beyond just this show on AI. Can you tell us a bit more?

In Belgium, I develop and host TV shows on science and comedy for national television, and I've toured theatres with shows about special relativity, human genetics, and now AI. The concept for all of them is the same: making intriguing but complex topics accessible to a general audience. I also host Nerdland, Belgium's biggest science podcast, as well as the Nerdland Festival, our yearly science festival that attracts 25,000 visitors. I've also worked abroad a bit, doing TV in the Netherlands, and some research as a QI Elf for BBC's QI. We've had international guests on the podcast, such as Dara Ó Briain, Neil deGrasse Tyson, XKCD cartoonist Randall

Munroe, and Walter Isaacson. I've also taken my shows from the Edinburgh Fringe to San Francisco, and even to CERN in Geneva. Another highlight for me was when former US president Barack Obama visited Belgium two years ago - my AI talk was the opening act before him. Quite an honour.

How important is comedy in your shows?

I started out as a stand-up comedian, which I often describe as the altitude training of public speaking. On a stand-up stage, there are no excuses. You've got nowhere to hide: either the crowd laughs or it doesn't, and the buck stops with you. That kind of training makes you very aware of an audience's attention, and makes you aim for the joke when you can. When you're explaining complicated stuff, it certainly helps to add some lightness.

Chat GPT is also an example of this new kind of automation, this time in the field of creative and intellectual professions...

AI is the 'loom' of knowledge work. When weaving machines took over manual labour, they brought efficiency gains and sparked massive protests. And yet manual labour clearly hasn't disappeared. So now the big question is: what happens when we automate brainwork? If AI really creates huge efficiency gains, we could, for example, evolve toward a four-day work week.

Will everyone soon have a robot at home?

At the moment, language models are still the main revolution within AI. Image recognition and other forms of AI are developing as well. But the ultimate goal is the creation of artificial general intelligence (AGI): an AI system that doesn't just perform one specific task, but can do everything. Many researchers believe we're getting closer, while others still dismiss it as a pipedream. Still, one thing seems certain: if more computing power becomes available through more efficient methods, it will almost certainly be funnelled into the race toward AGI.

In your show, you quote Yuval Harari: "I'm not afraid of artificial intelligence, but of human stupidity." I just asked an AI system whether we should fear AI - it quickly turned very dark!

We sometimes forget that these language

models are trained on everything that's out there on the internet. Their answers echo what the average internet user writes. These language models have no consciousness. We are not even sure if that will ever be possible with this technology. We don't even know what causes human consciousness. People today also completely misjudge the real risks of AI.

In what way?

We're fixated on the Terminator idea. As long as we don't see glowing red eyes, we feel reassured. Meanwhile, AI systems are already being trained to play the stock market, and military drones with facial recognition are already being sold. The real danger probably lies in corners we can't see yet. The million-dollar question is: where's the black swan we don't see coming? The seemingly trivial glitch that ends up having massive consequences? In short: AI is software. It's not a conscious, evil mastermind secretly plotting its next move. The drive to dominate, to be in control, that's human. It's part of our evolution. Software doesn't have that instinctive aggression. Your PC is not angry when you turn it off.

What does the future look like?

Nobody knows! The newest large language models, like GPT-5, aren't much better than the previous ones. Is the period of rapid progress over? Or is AGI around the corner, like some tech entrepreneurs believe? We'll see. But AI is not a fad. Even in its current state, this is a valuable new kind of software with completely new capabilities that will not disappear from our lives and work places anytime soon.

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Lieven Scheire brings his new show to the Swan Theatre, Worcester, on Thursday 12 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Saturday 14 March; Stafford Gatehouse on Wednesday 18 March; Lichfield Garrick Theatre on Saturday 21 March; and The Brewhouse, Burton upon Trent, on Tuesday 24 March

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Thursday 19 March



SIR GEOFF HURST

Last Man Standing Farewell Tour with England's 1966 hat-trick hero
Friday 20 March



ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Join us down the rabbit hole for this exciting and fun-filled family panto
Thursday 2 April



THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

A trip-trapping musical adventure with catchy songs and funky dances
Saturday 4 April



THE WEST END TENORS

A night celebrating the greatest triumphs of musical theatre and film
Saturday 4 April



RAPUNZEL

Get tangled in this brand new musical adaptation of the classic fairy tale
Saturday 11 April



JAKE QUICKENDEN

The X Factor icon with a sensational Wham! and George Michael tribute
Saturday 11 April



MICHAEL STARRING BEN

Hit theatre show starring the UK's ultimate Michael Jackson tribute star
Saturday 18 April



THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

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Sunday 19 April



WEST BROM LEGENDS

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Comedy previews from across the region...

John Kearns

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 5 March; Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 6 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 7 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 14 May

“When I visit your town, dogs will start barking, as will clergy,” warns Taskmaster alumni and double Edinburgh Comedy Award winner John Kearns. “Your microwave will go haywire. The lights in your vestibule will flicker, and the Bank of England will nervously look at interest rates!...” John is visiting numerous Midlands venues this month with his brand-new show, *Tilting At Windmills*.



Daniel O'Reilly

Walsall Arena, Sat 21 March; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 2 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 26 September

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

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

The years which followed saw him battling a drug and alcohol addiction - and fighting hard to reestablish himself on the UK comedy scene.

Now he's out on the road again, performing his latest stand-up show, *Let's Have It*, under his own name - and joking that he hopes he gets cancelled, as he could do with a bit of a break.



Tom Davis

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 21 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Sun 10 May

“I've always thought of myself as an underdog,” reveals funnyman Tom Davis to *beyondthejoke.com*, “though not necessarily in a negative way. I think that's what's made me. The bulk of my humour comes from constantly feeling like someone who's had a little bit of a kicking.”

Having left school with no qualifications, Tom's road to comedy success proved to be a long and winding one: “I'd been working on building sites for 20-odd years. I just wanted to do something for myself. I tried stand-up, and straight away I just thought 'Wow! I feel like I'm actually quite good at something: making other people laugh!’”

Tom visits the Midlands with his current touring show, *Spudgun*.



Jonny Cole

Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, Tues 3 - Thurs 5 March; Halesowen Town Hall, Sat 14 & Sun 15 March; Rugeley Rose Theatre, Fri 20 - Sun 22 March; Burton-upon-Trent Town Hall, Fri 27 March; Walsall Arena, Fri 10 & Sat 11 April; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Tues 14 - Wed 15 April; The Civic, Stourport, Thurs 23 - Fri 24 April

“It's difficult for me to put my brand of comedy into an industry-standard soundbite,” says local comedian Jonny Cole.

“There are a lot of people who love Black Country humour and who'd love to go into a rough & ready Black Country pub just to listen to the banter - and that's exactly what I do. I've absorbed Black Country humour the whole of my life. I take it out of that pub - where people wouldn't dare go, in case they got their teeth knocked out - and I put it into a safe, controlled environment where they can enjoy it.”



Alfie Moore

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Thurs 19 March; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 26 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 12 June; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Fri 3 July; Royal Spa Centre, Sat 26 September; Lichfield Garrick, Fri 23 October

Staunch Sheffield socialist Alfie Moore is a master raconteur and a very funny man. He also used to be a police officer... Indeed, back in the days when he was both a comedian *and* a cop, his website advised that if you wanted to see Alfie 'live', you had two options: either catch him at one of his

comedy gigs, or drive to Scunthorpe and park on a double yellow line!

With his gag-bag including “I'm in a same-sex marriage... the sex is always the same”, he stops off in Newcastle-under-Lyme this month with latest show *Acopolypse Now*.



Angela Barnes

The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Thurs 5 March; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 6 March

When Angela Barnes' inspirational father died, it proved to be the catalyst for her to follow his advice - *finally* - and hurl herself into the rough, tough world of stand-up comedy...

And her success since then has proved that she definitely made the right decision. A BBC New Comedy Awards winner, Angela is this month visiting the region with *Angst*, a show that 'mostly features stories of unmitigated failure, a distinct lack of wisdom, a little bit of German and loads of jokes'.





BACK OF THE NET

The Beautiful Game comes under the spotlight
at Birmingham Hippodrome this month...

The National Theatre's Olivier Award-winning Dear England transfers the high drama of football management from the touchline to the stage - telling the story of Sir Gareth Southgate's tenure as England boss. Capturing the palpable excitement of the sport - and with more than a few recognisable caricatures thrown into the mix - it also highlights the pressures faced by players when the eyes of the nation are fixed upon them... What's On sat down with David Sturzaker - who plays Sir Gareth in the show - and fellow cast members Samantha Womack and Jayden Hanley to find out more...

James Graham's Olivier Award-winning play, *Dear England*, explores ex-Aston Villa captain Sir Gareth Southgate's time as manager of the England football team, an eight-year period during which he broke the mould set by previous managers and brought his focus to the squad's mental wellbeing - replacing conflict with camaraderie.

The show references the weight of responsibility and disappointment Southgate felt as a player following his infamous penalty miss against Germany in the 1996 Euros semi-final. When he steps into the breach as England's manager some 20 years later, he strives to remove that pressure from his squad and bring back the joy of the game. Sir Gareth is played by David Sturzaker in the currently touring National Theatre production. So how has David approached the challenge of portraying such a well-known contemporary figure?

"I was having a preliminary chat with the director," he says, "and she gave me a bit of advice - to think of it as if I'm playing the character as written by James Graham in the play, not the real Gareth Southgate. That sounds like it's splitting hairs, but for me it's been so important... And of course, with that, there's all the very helpful resources that you can draw on - endless interviews, press conferences, images of Gareth at the touchline, during matches or training..."

In contrast to David's carefully choreographed character study, former *EastEnders* favourite Samantha Womack brings life to a figure who is central to the story but, unlike many of the people on stage, not a household name.

"I play Pippa Grange," she says, "who was brought on board by Gareth Southgate to be a performance psychologist for the players. She says she's more of a 'culture coach', and she helps the players overcome issues to do with fear and shame, finding joy in the game."

With a well-known cast of characters and a subject that has a broad appeal (England!) it's no surprise that the play has scored a hit with audiences.

"It's already had these very successful runs at the National Theatre and in the West End," says David. "Yes, it uses football as a framework, but it's actually about far more universal things than that. It's about overcoming adversity, it's about mental health, it's about racism, it's about national identity. I think it's about people surprising themselves and surprising others - how,

working as a team, you can achieve so much."

The production has also found an appreciative audience with a younger demographic.

"I'm very moved by the fact that the young adults who are watching it are fiercely attentive," says Samantha. "It's what theatre is designed for, I suppose - to provoke thought, to challenge what's going on, but to do it in a way that unites rather than divides. I look at these youngsters, with James Graham's writing, and they are the future of theatre goers. They are so involved in what we're doing and saying. To bring new theatre, particularly straight drama, to visiting theatres around the country - I'm more passionate about that than anything else."

"We've heard from quite a few places that there are people [coming to see the show] who have never stepped into the theatre before," adds David. "And if those people can leave thinking that they might come back to see something else, for us that would be magic."

The powerful message of the play - that the young men in the England team benefit from being supported emotionally, as well as from a disciplined approach and being pushed to their physical limits - has also extended to camaraderie among the cast.

"Most of them are my son's age," says Samantha. "I have a real pride in their performances, but also the way that they carry themselves as young men. They're an incredibly supportive cast towards each other. We've done workshops about trust and vulnerability, and it's been really interesting to see them explore those themes. I think that's part of the success of the play - we've united ourselves as a team."

One of that 'team' will be making a triumphant return to Birmingham when the production visits the Hippodrome this month. Brummie born-and-bred Jayden Hanley appears as Manchester United player Marcus Rashford. For Jayden and his cast-mates, *Dear England* is no walk in the park - they fill the stage with finely tuned training exercises and pre-match warm-ups worthy of Wembley.

"It's such a physically demanding play," says Jayden. "It's a lot, but everyone's supporting each other and helping... The movement director has been brilliant and really got it out of us. I didn't think I could do it - I didn't think I could remember all the counts, but he

was so patient with us all, getting us all on the same wavelength. Everyone's so patient with each other."

Rashford has made a name for himself not only on the pitch but through charity work - using his platform to combat food poverty, in the face of prejudice.

"A lot of the time with Black footballers, you get negative publicity, negative press," says Jayden. "But despite all that, he's managed to be an icon to a lot of people. He's been able to make a difference in the world, which is something that's hard to do, not only as a young Black man but just as a person of interest - being a good role model."

Jayden grew up in Birmingham's Yardley Wood, and while he's familiar with the Hippodrome, he's never appeared on its stage before.

"This will be my first time, which I'm really excited for. I'm a big musical theatre fan, so whenever the musicals go on tour, I see them there. The fondest memory I've got of the Hippodrome is my sister being in *Les Miserables* when it toured there. She played Little Cosette, and she had a little solo on stage. I went and sat with my mum and watched it - it was the proudest day of my life. But I'm so excited to get to perform in Birmingham, at the Hippodrome and on that stage - it makes it so much more special.

"Also, I'm a huge Birmingham City fan," adds Jayden. "I've got a season ticket. Every time I'm home, I make sure I can go to the games. I've supported Birmingham for as long as I can remember. Football is my escape; it's where I go to forget about everything."

While it might be a strain for a Blues fan to play the part of a footballer who spent a few months at Villa Park - Rashford was on loan there last season - Jayden's passion for the sport, combined with his passion for the theatre, is what *Dear England* is all about.

"It's weird! Obviously Rashford had a little stint at the club down the road... I won't mention names! But it's so good to be able to perform in Birmingham. I know who I am, and I know what the team in Birmingham is - Blues is the club!"

.....
Dear England shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 10 to Saturday 14 March



Legally Blonde The Musical

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 31 March - Sat 4 April; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 13 - Sat 17 October; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 17 - Sat 21 November

Based on the hit movie starring Reese Witherspoon, this critically acclaimed musical follows the story of college sweetheart and homecoming queen Elle Woods, a girl who just doesn't take no for an answer. So when her boyfriend, Warner, announces that he's dumping her for someone more serious, Elle puts down the credit card, hits the books and heads for Harvard Law School. Amber Davies (Pretty Woman, 9 to 5 The Musical) takes the lead role

in a production directed by Nikolai Foster, the artistic director at Curve, Leicester. Commenting on the show, Nikolai and Curve's chief executive, Chris Stafford, said: "Legally Blonde is firmly established in the musical theatre repertoire as a contemporary classic. Laurence O'Keefe, Nell Benjamin & Heather Hach's electrifying musical about empowerment, equality and the folly of judging a book by its cover remains pitch-perfect and as relevant as ever."

Priscilla Queen Of The Desert

Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 23 - Sat 28 March

Based on the movie of the same name, Priscilla the stage show has wowed both West End and Broadway audiences, picking up a coveted Olivier Award and an equally prestigious Tony Award along its accolade-strewn way. At its heartland is an uplifting story of the friendship shared between three pals, who hop aboard a battered old bus and head off in search of love and romance.



The show originally opened in Australia in 2006 - running there for two years before arriving on the West End stage - and comes complete with a dazzling array of costumes and a glorious selection of dancefloor favourites, including It's Raining Men, Say A Little Prayer, Go West, Hot Stuff and Always On My Mind... Fascinating Aïda's Adèle Anderson and Kevin Clifton of Strictly Come Dancing fame take top billing.

Here & Now: The Steps Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 10 - Sun 15 March

Iconic songs from pop group Steps' repertoire provide the backdrop for this critically acclaimed musical. A celebration of love and friendship, Here & Now is helmed by former Birmingham Rep Artistic Director Rachel Kavanaugh. The show focuses on four friends - Caz, Vel, Neeta and Robbie - as they steer their way through a summer filled with happiness, heartache, hurt and humour. "Here & Now is a completely original story with new characters," says Rachel. "It's not about Steps, but we use their songs to tell the story. It's brilliant for people who love Steps, but I think that even if you don't know the songs, you'll still enjoy it."



The Olivier Award-winning National Theatre production

DEAR ENGLAND

a new play by James Graham directed by Rupert Goold set design by Eli Devlin

Tue 10 - Sat 14 Mar

CAP

NEW ADVENTURES

MATTHEW BOURNE'S

The Red Shoes

DOUBLE OLIVIER AWARD-WINNING SENSATION

'ENTHRALLING' 'ENCHANTING' 'COMPELLING'

Tue 17 - Sat 21 Mar

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STORY BY KEVIN CLIFTON ADAPTATION BY ADELE ANDERSON MUSIC BY NICK HAYES

PRISCILLA

QUEEN OF THE DESERT THE MUSICAL

BOOK NOW

Mon 23 - Sat 28 Mar

CAP

Tales from Acorn Wood

Based on the favourite stories by JULIA DONALDSON and AXEL SCHEFFLER

Thu 26 - Sun 29 Mar

R

KERRY ELLIS LOUISE DEARMAN RACHEL TUCKER

GRAVITY

LONDON'S ICONIC LEADING LADIES

Sun 12 Apr

HARPER LEE'S

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

A new play by AARON SORKIN Directed by BARTLETT SHER

Tue 14 - Sat 18 Apr

CAP

Out with At Home with

The Buckleys

TO THE STAGE

UK TOUR 2026

Sun 19 Apr

LEE MEAD STARRING AS THE WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWMAN

BARNUM

THE CIRCUS MUSICAL

MUSIC BY CY COLEMAN LYRICS BY MICHAEL STEWART BOOK BY MARK DRAMPLE

Tue 21 - Sat 25 Apr

CAP

New Musical

Wish List

A MUSICAL BY CHARLI EGLINTON IN DEVELOPMENT WITH THEATRE COMPANY

Thu 23 Apr - Sat 2 May

WAITRESS

EST. 10TH 2015 ANNIVERSARY

WITH CARRIE HOPE FLETCHER AS JENNA

Tue 28 Apr - Sat 2 May

CAP

Judi Love: All About the Love

Sun 3 May

JOHN LEWIS PARTNER

JOSH WIDDICOMBE

'NOT MY CUP OF TEA'

Tue 5 May



Top Hat The Musical

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 3 - Sat 7 March

Based on the 1935 film of the same name starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, this Olivier Award-winning stage musical enjoyed a Chichester Festival Theatre revival last year and visits Birmingham this month as part of a UK tour.

When famous American headliner Jerry Travers arrives in London to appear in his first West End show, it isn't long before he meets the irresistible Dale Tremont. Quickly realising that she's the girl of his dreams, Jerry determines to follow her across Europe in a desperate attempt to win her heart with his breathtaking song & dance routines... Irving Berlin's celebrated score features such classics numbers as Cheek To Cheek, Let's Face The Music And Dance, Isn't This A Lovely Day? and Top Hat, White Tie And Tails.

Midsomer Murders: The Killings At Badger's Drift

The Alexandra, Birmingham,
Tues 10 - Sat 14 March

ITV's Midsomer Murders has been running for so long now that it's a wonder there's anybody left in the county to kill!



With the hugely popular television series not too far away from celebrating its 30th anniversary, the lead character of DCI Barnaby is here being brought to life by Daniel Casey, the actor who played Barnaby's original assistant, Sargeant Gavin Troy, from 1997 to 2003.

The new theatrical production is based on the original same-named 1987 novel by Caroline Graham and the first-ever episode of the television series.

Noughts & Crosses

The Rep, Birmingham, Tues 24 - Sat 28 March

This Pilot Theatre adaptation (in association with Northern Stage) of Malorie Blackman's novel explores what happens when two people living in a world of terrorist violence - and separated by prejudice and distrust - find themselves falling in love.



Sephy is a Cross - a member of the dark-

skinned ruling class. Callum is a Nought - a 'colourless' member of the underclass, who were once slaves to the Crosses. Friends since childhood they may have been, but when romance blossoms, they suddenly find themselves exposed to a terrible danger...

Sisters 360

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 28 March; The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 22 - Thurs 23 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 23 May

Stepsisters Fatima and Salima are cool, close, and share a burning ambition - to win the Tiny Is Mighty skateboarding contest. But when they start hearing whispers about their parents planning to live apart - meaning that they too, as stepsisters, will be separated - they realise that their chances of winning competition gold are set to take a turn for the worse...



Bradford writer Asif Khan is the creative talent behind this inspirational story about 'family, friendship and the importance of following your dreams'.

The War Of The Worlds

The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Wed 18 - Sat 21 March

According to legend, Orson Welles' 1938 radio adaptation of HG Wells' classic sci-fi novel, The War Of The Worlds, caused mass hysteria when it was broadcast, with

listening Americans being duped by the play into believing that Martians had actually invaded the planet.

Exactly how many people in reality fell for the stunt remains a matter of conjecture. What certainly cannot be denied, however, is the impact which media such as radio and, latterly, social media, can have on the way in which people process the stories that they hear. Talented theatre ensemble Imitating The Dog here make use of miniature environments, model worlds, camera tricks, and projection to create what they're promising will be an audacious, thrilling and timely retelling of Wells' 1898 novel.



Image credit: Ed Waring

The Father

Oldbury Rep, Sat 7 - Sat 14 March

Oldbury Repertory Players turn to Christopher Hampton's translation of Florian Zeller's emotionally challenging and thought-provoking play for their next amateur production.

Telling the story of a once-proud old man's mental degeneration - and his daughter's attempts to keep him safe as he loses his mind - The Father won the Molière Award for 'best new play' in 2015. It was adapted for the cinema five years later, with Anthony Hopkins and Olivia Colman taking the lead roles and Hopkins picking up an Academy Award for his mesmerising performance.

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What will you see next?



FRI 3 APR '26
SWEET CAROLINE



SAT 4 APR '26
THE BILLY JOEL
SONGBOOK



SUN 5 APR '26
THE SHOOP
SHOOP SHOW



THU 9 APR '26
VAMPIRES ROCK
ETERNAL LOVE -
THE MUSICAL



SAT 11 APR '26
QUEEN OF THE NIGHT -
A TRIBUTE TO WHITNEY
HOUSTON



SUN 12 APR '26
THE SENSATIONAL
60'S EXPERIENCE



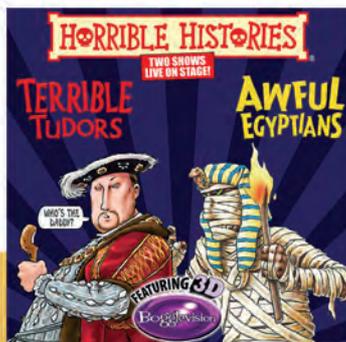
**MON 13 - SAT 18
APR '26**
THE ROCKY
HORROR SHOW



SUN 19 APR '26
MAN IN THE MIRROR



**MON 18 - SAT 23
MAY '26**
2:22 A GHOST STORY



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Theatre previews from around the region



Ellen Kent: The Farewell Tour - Madama Butterfly

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 1 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 7 March

The story of a young geisha girl who marries an American naval officer, only to find that he soon returns home and marries another, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is among the most popular operas of all time. This particular version, presented by Ukraine's Opera International Kyiv, is one of three productions visiting venues across the country as part of Ellen Kent's farewell tour. Ellen has been presenting extravagant opera and ballet productions to appreciative audiences around the UK for more than 30 years, in the process showcasing the talents of some of Europe's major opera companies. "It's the most popular opera in the whole world," says Ellen, in talking about *Madama Butterfly*. "We've got a very good cast. We've got a Korean girl, Elena Dee, who's a class act, playing Cio-Cio-San. A good cast and a slick, beautiful production... For some reason, it seems to be the British favourite."

Six The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 25 - Sat 28 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 31 March - Sat 11 April

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



A colourful show that sits somewhere between a *Girls Aloud* gig and a traditional musical, the one-act production - premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017, where it was performed by a group of Cambridge University students - is a loud and proud 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power. The show sees the cast being ably supported by all-female band *The Ladies In Waiting*.

Andrew Doherty: Sad Gay Aids Play

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Fri 6 March

Andrew Doherty returns to the region with another Edinburgh Fringe winner, having previously made a significant impact when

debuting with folk/horror pastiche *Gay Witch Sex Cult*.

His latest offering finds him both chronicling the HIV pandemic and railing against Arts Council England for being tricky customers when it comes to the business of accessing funding...



Doherty is an undoubted talent, but *Sad Gay Aids Play* has fared less well with the critics than his previous effort. That said, there's nevertheless plenty to appreciate here - so if you caught and enjoyed him last time around, this latest show will undoubtedly be well worth an hour of your time.

The Invisible Man

Malvern Theatres, Mon 30 March - Wed 1 April; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 9 April; The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Fri 10 April; The Regal Theatre, Tenbury Wells, Thurs 16 April; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 27 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 30 May; The Henrician, Evesham, Thurs 4 June

An evening of tongue-in-cheek fun is being promised by the producers of this stage adaptation of HG Wells' famous story... But will the title character put in an appearance, we wonder?!... Expect quick and silly costume changes, prop manipulations and whacky imaginings, as

three energetic actors from *Our Star Theatre Company* take on the challenge of playing 15 characters... The show enjoyed a sell-out run at the Edinburgh Fringe a couple of years back.

The Hound Of The Baskervilles

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, until 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...





IN THE PINK

Legally Blonde: The Musical visits the Midlands

Originally a book, then a film starring Reese Witherspoon, *Legally Blonde* tells the story of plucky, positive and pink-obsessed Elle Woods as she turns from sorority sister to Harvard Law School star - and busts plenty of stereotypes along the way. The stage adaptation of the story, *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, is now touring the nation, with ex-Love Islander Amber Davies in the lead role. Amber - and cast-mates George Crawford and Karen Mavundukure - here explain to What's On what it takes to bring Elle's uplifting story to the stage...

Legally Blonde: The Musical has taken audiences by storm since first hitting the stage in 2007. This month sees a brand-new touring production making its way to Birmingham's *The Alexandra*, with Amber Davies, George Crawford and Karen Mavundukure taking on the roles of Elle, Emmett and Paulette respectively.

Amber, who was born and raised in Denbigh, North Wales, and moved to London at the age of 16, would sing along to the *Legally Blonde: The Musical* cast album any chance she got. Now, she's stepping into the fashionable shoes of Elle Woods...

"I feel like the role has come into my life at a good time," she says. "You need stamina and life knowledge for a part like this, so now is the perfect time for me to play her. If it had come any earlier, I would have been too young."

Now 29, the former *Love Island* star-turned-actress and *Strictly Come Dancing* contestant is thrilled to be taking on what she calls 'one of the biggest female roles in musical theatre'. She's adding Elle to an acting roster that includes Judy Bernly in *9 To 5: The Musical*, Vivian Ward in *Pretty Woman: The Musical* and Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby*.

"[Elle is] a force to be reckoned with," says Amber. "She's beautiful, but she's also intelligent - and women can be both things at the same time. She's a firecracker."

Like Amanda Brown's novel of the same name, and the iconic 2001 film adaptation starring Reese Witherspoon, the show follows Elle's transformation from 'It Girl' fashionista to legal ace at Harvard Law School.

Asked if it's daunting following in the footsteps of Witherspoon in the movie, and the likes of Sheridan Smith in the musical, Amber sees it as more of an honour and a challenge: "It's inspiring to follow in their footsteps, but while I've seen so many different versions of Elle and loved every single one, I'm thinking, 'What can I do differently to put my own stamp on it?'"

Legally Blonde is the ultimate feelgood show, but Amber says there's a strong, powerful message amidst all the fun: "It's as simple as 'Don't judge a book by its cover.' It's such a

funny story, but it's got heart too, and I really want audiences to feel for Elle when they come to see it."

At Harvard, Elle meets third-year student & teaching assistant Emmett, who is as helpful towards her as most of her classmates are dismissive. George Crawford plays Emmett in the show

"He sees that there's so much more to her than meets the eye," says George. "He sees the strength in her honesty and bubblyness, and eventually a relationship blossoms... He's a lot more laid-back and introverted than the pink energy that surrounds him.

"Emmett has always been played as written - which is quirky and a nice guy - but he sings about having grown up in the Roxbury slums, which is one of the most crime-heavy and rundown parts of America. He's worked so hard - from having nothing, to being at the most prestigious law school in the country. He's put in the graft, and it's interesting to explore that side of him. For Emmett, it's about pushing through class barriers. For Elle, it's about pushing through prejudice. They really help one another."

The production puts a new spin on *Legally Blonde*, by setting it in the present day rather than in the early 2000s when the film came out.

"It's still the *Legally Blonde* that everyone knows and expects," George says, "but it has a more contemporary feel to it. That's done through the fantastic sets and costumes, as well as little touches like Elle using Apple Pay instead of cash."

George played Mr McKee and covered for Nick in *The Great Gatsby* - so *Legally Blonde* marks a reunion for him and Amber.

"We've already got good chemistry from working together in that show," he says, "so working opposite each other again just feels natural. That really helps with the story arc that both of these characters go through together. It feels organic."

On the other hand, for Karen Mavundukure, *Legally Blonde* is a sharp pivot from her recent stint in the *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* stage play. She plays Paulette, the hair-salon owner who supports Elle when she contemplates switching from being a

blonde to a brunette. Sassy and straight-talking, Paulette encourages Elle to be her authentic self.

"I've gone from darkness to a world of pink," Karen says, in talking about taking on the part famously played in the film by Jennifer Coolidge. "It's an honour, because it really is one of the best and most captivating of musicals... Paulette's the comedy relief whenever things get a bit serious - but she also mirrors Elle's journey towards self-confidence. There's a commonality to their struggles. Paulette has just come out of a toxic relationship, but she's still pushing ahead with her dreams. She encourages Elle to keep going because she believes Elle can achieve her dreams, too."

"This is nothing like I've ever done before. With Paulette, the challenge is that she's such a well-known character from the movie and previous stage versions, so I want to bring out the elements of her that you don't really see at first glance. In this production, as in a few before, she's an African American, and she has a history that's informed the way she now attacks life head on."

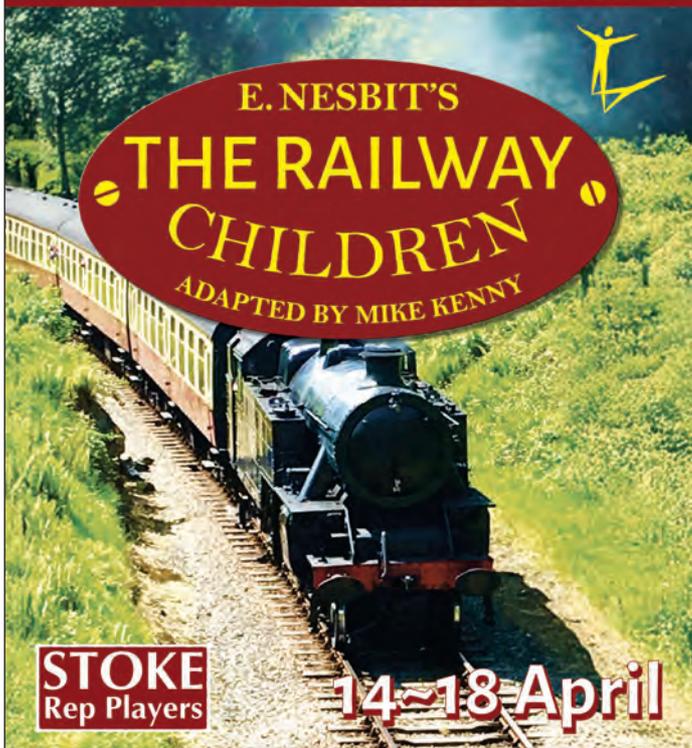
Karen's time in the role would be incomplete without the addition of the legendary and flirtatious move that Elle teaches Paulette: Bend... and Snap! Given that this is a musical, the move not surprisingly gets its very own number...

"It's so much fun!" Karen beams. "When we first rehearsed it, we spent the whole day in fits of laughter. I'm a bend-and-snap professional now!"

.....

***Legally Blonde: The Musical* visits Birmingham's *The Alexandra* from Tuesday 31 March to Saturday 4 April. The production then returns to the Midlands in the autumn, showing at the *Wolverhampton Grand Theatre* from Tuesday 13 to Saturday 17 October, and the *Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent*, from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 November**

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Theatre previews from around the region



Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story

Lichfield Garrick, Mon 2 - Sat 7 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 23 & Tues 24 March

Thirty-seven years old and seen by over 23 million people across the globe, Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story is an enormously enduring and touchingly affectionate portrayal of one of rock & roll's earliest and brightest stars. Charting the Texas-born singer's meteoric rise to fame and fortune, and following his career through to his very last performance - given in the hours before the plane crash that claimed his life at the age of just 22 - the show features timeless classics such as That'll Be The Day, Peggy Sue, Oh Boy, Rave On and Everyday.

The Signalman

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Thurs 26 - Sat 28 March

Middle Ground Theatre Company is the hugely talented ensemble behind this stage adaptation of Charles Dickens'

atmospheric ghost story. Written in 1866, it focuses on the character of a Victorian-age signalman who's haunted by visions of impending disaster on his isolated stretch of line.



The Spy Who Came In From The Cold

Malvern Theatres, Wed 18 - Sat 21 March;
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 30 June - Sat 4 July

The recently screened second-series television adaptation of *The Night Manager* has once again brought to the fore the name of the original novel's author: John le Carré. Thirty years before he wrote *The Night Manager*, le Carré penned *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*. His third book, it became an international bestseller and established the former MI5 and MI6 employee as a major name in the spy-novel genre. Not only written but also set during the Cold War era, its story focuses on the character of British intelligence officer Alec Leamas, who is persuaded to undertake one final, dangerous, deceptive and deeply personal mission...

This acclaimed stage production visits the Midlands this month direct from the West End



and following a sold-out run at Chichester Festival Theatre. Ralf Little (pictured) takes the title role.

The Battle

The Rep, Birmingham, until 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.



The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare (abridged)

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Tues 10 March; The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 13 & Sat 14 March; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 8 - Sat 11 April

Now, if you feel that you really should pay attention to the works of the world's greatest-ever playwright, but don't fancy hour upon hour of serious-sounding thespians thee-ing

and thou-ing in your general direction, then this is the show for you!

All of Shakespeare's 37 plays are here covered in the blink of an eye, allowing you not only to become very learned very quickly, but also to get down the pub well before last orders!

The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind

The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,
until Sat 28 March

As extraordinary true-life stories go, the tale of William Kamkwamba takes some beating. Born to a family of farmers in the village of Wimbe in Malawi, he single-handedly saved his community from starvation by building a windmill to power the village's broken water pump. The budding inventor used scrap materials from the local junkyard and parts from the family bicycle - the only one in the village, and their only real asset - which he convinced his relatives he needed to dismantle. And all at the age of just 13! Based on Kamkwamba's bestselling memoir and a movie adaptation written & directed by well-known actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind* is the Royal Shakespeare Company's first musical since Daniel Evans and Tamara Harvey took over as co-artistic directors.





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The Wiggles: Tree Of Wisdom Spectacular!

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 30 March

This year celebrating their 35th anniversary, Australian children's music group The Wiggles are eagerly anticipating their Birmingham stop-off at the end of the month. "We love touring the UK," says founding Wiggle Anthony Field. "We're all looking forward to seeing our old friends, as well as meeting some new ones." Expect to get wiggling to classic hits such as Rock-A-Bye Your Bear, Fruit Salad Yummy Yummy and Hot Potato.

Brainiac Live!

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 31 March; The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 20 June

First visiting theatres in 2008, Brainiac Live! provides plenty of family fun - with a few bangs, wallops and flashes thrown in for good measure!



"When we're developing the show," explains the production's creative director, Andy Joyce, "what we're looking for is a 'Wow!' moment; something that either makes a noise, has a huge effect, or creates a bang. It needs to have that pay-off, but it also has to be interesting."

"We learn about something from the scientists and then put our little spin on it. So my role has been about being in laboratories, watching things go whizz bang bok, and then asking the scientists: how big can we go on stage with this in a way that's safe?"

Tales From Acorn Wood

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 March

Stage adaptations of children's books by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler invariably offer oodles of theatrical magic, 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.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

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 75 handcrafted puppets, has a running time of one hour, and shows twice on each day, once in the morning and then again in the afternoon.



Exciting Science

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Tues 31 March; Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Wed 8 April

Designed to enlighten, educate and entertain children aged four and older, Exciting Science promises plenty of 'wiz, bang, pop and splurt', as the show's scientists carry out all manner of fun and



fact-filled live experiments. So if you think your kids would enjoy seeing some boffins create a volcanic eruption, turn a vacuum cleaner into a missile launcher, and take careful aim with a smoke blaster, then this is definitely the show to check out.

The Gruffalo's Child

Lichfield Garrick, Mon 9 & Tues 10 March; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 28 November - Sun 27 December

Tall Stories' delightful adaptation of the same-named and much-loved Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler book



finds the Gruffalo and his youngster caught up in an exciting adventure... Despite her dad's warning to stay away from the deep, dark wood, the Gruffalo's Child decides it's time to go and explore, unworried by the legend of The Big Bad Mouse...

Rude Science

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 30 March

BBC Gastronomer Stefan Gates is pretty darned certain that his Rude Science production is the most revolting



show of its kind in the whole wide world. And he could well be right, given that it involves enormous bottoms, pee-powered fireworks, fabulous fart machines and vast whoopee cushions! Science stunts and spectacular experiments abound in a show that promises to be both entertaining and educational. Suitable for children aged five and older.

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Light entertainment from around the region



Lieven Scheire

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Thurs 12 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 14 March; Stafford Gatehouse, Wed 18 March; Lichfield Garrick Theatre, Sat 21 March; The Brewhouse, Burton upon Trent, Tues 24 March

“Brits, I’m coming your way!” So exclaims talented science communicator & comedian Lieven Scheire - ‘the secret Belgian love child of Stephen Fry and Dara Ó Briain’, according to his website. “This month I’ll be touring my science comedy show on artificial intelligence in the UK. This is the show I’ve been touring in Belgium and the Netherlands for the past two years. Over 175,000 people have already seen it, so it’s time to take it abroad!” “Everybody talks about artificial intelligence, but few people really understand what’s going on under the bonnet. Come join me on one of these nights for an entertaining and accessible introduction to the world of AI!”

Game Of Cronos

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 7 March; Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 26 March

Abigail Dooley and Emma Joy Edwards - otherwise known as A&E Comedy - are the talented creatives behind this ‘riotous celebration of women in their prime’.



The show is a follow-up to their 2018 offering, Enter The Dragons, in which the Brighton-based pair ‘slayed the beast of midlife with fearless buffoonery’. Now, eight years later, they’re marching into the perilous lands of the ‘third age’, determined to prove that they remain ‘warriors who will not go gentle into the bingo night’... The production is suitable for audience members aged 18-plus and has a running time of 70 minutes.

Eyes Down

SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, Shropshire, Thurs 12 March; Dawley Town Hall, Telford, Fri 13 March; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Sat 14 March; Thimblemill Library, Sandwell, Sun 15 March; Wednesbury Library, Thurs 19 March; Tibberton Village Hall, Droitwich, Sat 21 March; Feckenham Village Hall, Redditch, Sun 22 March

Eyes down for a full house... Manchester-based Just Some Theatre’s brand-new interactive comedy thriller comes complete with an additional attraction: a chance for the audience to play actual games of bingo



and win actual prizes! Oh, and there are murderous goings-on too, as ‘Mr Razzle Dazzle’ himself, Bertie Bingo, ‘hosts an evening of dabbers, Droopy Drawers... and death...’ Great fun seems a guarantee...

Queenz: Drag Me To The Disco

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 March; Lichfield Garrick, Sun 8 March; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 28 March

Loved and adored by celebrities including Gary Barlow and Dawn French, Queenz is described as ‘a trailblazing, life-affirming drag extravaganza that’s currently taking the UK by storm’.

This latest show sees a selection of dazzling divas performing the biggest disco hits of all time. And if their previous production is anything to go by, there won’t be a lip-sync in sight!

Shoot From The Hip

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 22 March & Saturday 30 May

An evening of ‘chaotic games, epic scenes, and ever-so-slightly unhinged performances’. That’s the promise being made to Midlands theatre-goers by Shoot From The Hip, an award-winning, TikTok-viral, all-male improv quartet whose shows have been described as ‘unscripted, unpredictable and unforgettable’. If improvised comedy is your thing, check these fellas out - they picked up plenty of plaudits and five-star reviews in Edinburgh last summer.

Dead Ringers

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 23 March

Topical satire show Dead Ringers has been delighting BBC Radio Four audiences for the last quarter century with its veritable smorgasbord of uncannily accurate and routinely amusing comedy impressions. To celebrate the show’s 25th anniversary, longstanding cast members Jon Culshaw, Jan Ravens, Lewis MacLeod and Duncan Wisbey have hit the road with a first-ever UK tour.



Foil Arms & Hog: Skittish

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 28 March

Irish funsters Foil Arms & Hog (Sean ‘Foil’ Finegan, Conor ‘Arms’ McKenna and Sean ‘Hog’ Flanagan) arrive in the Midlands boasting numerous celebrity fans - Woody Harrelson and Emma Thompson included - and upwards of one billion views online. Cleverly combining sketch comedy and humorous songs with improvisation and audience participation, the trio have been peddling their laughter-worthy wares since 2008, having bonded over a shared love of Channel Four sitcom Father Ted while studying at University College Dublin.



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Dance showing in the region

Sampad: Asian Spring

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire,
Sun 22 March

Sampad South Asian Arts & Heritage make a welcome return with the 2026 edition of Asian Spring, an annual showcase for talented performers from across the region. Running for two hours, the event is being publicised as having something for everyone, from the intricate footwork and expressive storytelling of Kathak, to the lively, high-energy moves of Bhangra.

Ascension Dance: Early Weaves

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 29 March

Ascension Dance's latest show, Early Weaves - a non-verbal introduction to dance theatre for early-years children - is a 'heartwarming tale of friendship, curiosity and play'. Running for 35 minutes, it tells the story of two friends as they embark on a journey of connection and companionship. The show is followed by a 15-minute stay & play session.

2Faced Dance: Tomorrow

Malvern Theatres, Tues 10 March

As part of the journey towards its stated aim of becoming 'a worldwide leader in the production of breathtaking, physical and inspirational dance', the Herefordshire-based and all-male 2Faced Dance Company here presents Tomorrow, a production exploring the subject of 'the future'. Choreographed by Tamsin Fitzgerald, the show features a newly commissioned score by Ivor Novello-nominated composer Thomas Haines.

English Youth Ballet

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
Fri 20 & Sat 21 March

Founded in 1998, the award-winning English Youth Ballet offers young people who're interested in dance the opportunity to perform classical ballet alongside professional dancers and tutors.

This month sees the company returning to the region to present Coppelia, a show that brings together Leo Delibes' dazzling score with some impressive choreography...

When Dr Coppelius's mannequin, Coppelia, is left on the workshop balcony, she causes quite a stir - not only in the heart of the red-blooded Franz but also in the mind of his jealous fiancée, Swanilda, who foolishly mistakes her for a flesh-and-blood rival...

**James Wilton Dance** Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 17 March

The award-winning James Wilton's choreography is always distinctive, his productions powered by an energy the audience can almost reach out and touch. James' in-demand ensemble here make a welcome return with Bach Reimagined, a work which explores everything from JS

Bach's means of composition as a form of divine worship, to the scientific advancements achieved by the composer's contemporary, Sir Isaac Newton. The production sees the company teaming up with acclaimed Canadian cellist Raphael Weinroth Browne.

Motionhouse: Hidden

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 March

"Our show 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."

**Tribhangi Dance Theatre: Ubuntu**

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Tues 24 March;
The Rep, Birmingham, Sat 28 March

The strong physicality of African dance is combined with the grace of classical Indian Bharatanatyam whenever Tribhangi Dance Theatre take to the stage.

Incorporating colourful Afro-fusion and contemporary styles, the Johannesburg-based award winners are visiting the region with Ubuntu (Humanity Towards Others), a high-energy celebration of global cultures.



IF THE SHOE FITS...

**Sir Matthew Bourne's sumptuous adaptation of
The Red Shoes visits Birmingham this month...**



A Hans Christian Andersen fairytale, The Red Shoes revolves around a pair of alluring shoes which, once worn, force their wearer to keep dancing forever... Sir Matthew Bourne's hit ballet version of the story - which is also based on the same-named 1948 film - is a love letter to golden-age entertainment and comes complete with a visually stunning theatrical setting. In preparation for The Red Shoes' mid-month visit to Birmingham - its only Midlands stop-off - What's On sat down with two of the show's performers, Isabella Chandler and Andy Monaghan, to find out more...

The Red Shoes - a story of love and ambition - has been recreated on stage and screen many times since the original fairytale was penned by Hans Christian Andersen in 1845.

Sir Matthew Bourne's acclaimed ballet adaptation - also based on the 1948 film, and produced by his company, New Adventures - explores stories hidden within stories and features a stage within a stage...

Set around 1950, it concerns a production created by ballet impresario Boris Lermontov and his young stars - ballerina Vicky Page and composer Julian Craster. Lermontov commissions a new ballet version of The Red Shoes tale, in which a magical pair of shoes force the wearer to dance until they die.

But then life starts to imitate art, as love and obsession cause a rift between the trio...

Andy Monaghan has danced with the production since its premiere a decade ago. On this occasion he's taking the role of Lermontov. The production also features New Adventures' emerging artist Isabella (Bella) Chandler, making her professional debut.

"We first did the show in 2016, and I was lucky to be part of the original cast," says Andy. "It's really nice coming back to it for a third time. I think there's something about this one that is so cinematic, that really hooks people in. Even if it's not between dance and love, everyone can relate to being torn between two different things."

The production alludes to the golden age of Hollywood and classical ballet, with an opulent visual style to match. One of the most striking elements of the set is a huge theatrical curtain, which physically moves around the stage - changing the perspective of the audience, making hidden moments visible, and hinting at the tension between the characters, both on- and off-stage.

"The curtain is kind of like another character," Andy explains. "That really helps to make you feel swept up in it. All of the scene changes are so quick. It's so pacy, but it's also so well focused."

"We actually had the curtain in rehearsal with us, for our last week of rehearsals," adds Bella. "We would all sit in the auditorium and just watch the curtain move around. Like Andy said, it's kind of like another character in the show. It's quite exciting! This is my first job, and I've never been in anything that involves something

that's so big - it adds something else for us, as well as for the audience."

"Logistically, we rehearse a lot," Andy continues. "When we had the curtain for that final week, we did those big scenes - where it moves a lot - over and over again, just to make sure everyone felt confident. Especially when you add in the light - sometimes you can't see, but you know it's moving. You've just got to get into that muscle memory, but also keep your wits about you."

As many of the New Adventures ensemble also play ballet dancers on stage - and as the production revolves around a pair of irresistible red ballet shoes - this is a show which has a particular resonance for its cast, considering what dancers might need to sacrifice for their art.

"As a dancer, you definitely have to give up a lot of things," says Bella. "It's an art form that you have to fully commit to. You can't really half-commit if you want to go down that path. So I think it's quite relatable in that sense. [For instance] I was away from home from a young age, so I didn't really see my family that much. You definitely have to make some sacrifices."

"It's not as intense for us as it is for Vicky in the show," adds Andy, "but if you're trying to navigate finding a partner, all of that - trying to get someone who understands this schedule, or is willing to understand this schedule - it's really hard. You see it over the years, when it works and when it doesn't. It's a real thing. In this show, that's something which is brought into focus, I suppose. But Matt [Matthew Bourne] isn't as intense as Lermontov is, so that helps!"

Boris Lermontov, played by Andy, is the ballet-company owner of the story, who becomes jealous and obsessive as Vicky and Julian become closer. But Vicky herself is drawn back to the success and glamour of Lermontov and his company.

"This is quite a different part for me," says Andy. "I've been lucky to do a lot of romantic roles in Matt's shows before - a lot of the duets - but this is very different. I have to find those connections with people, but I couldn't lean on stuff that I knew. So trying to navigate that was interesting - and being cross for a really long time feels really intense!"

The show's visit to Birmingham will see both

dancers making a fond return to the region - and to the Hippodrome...

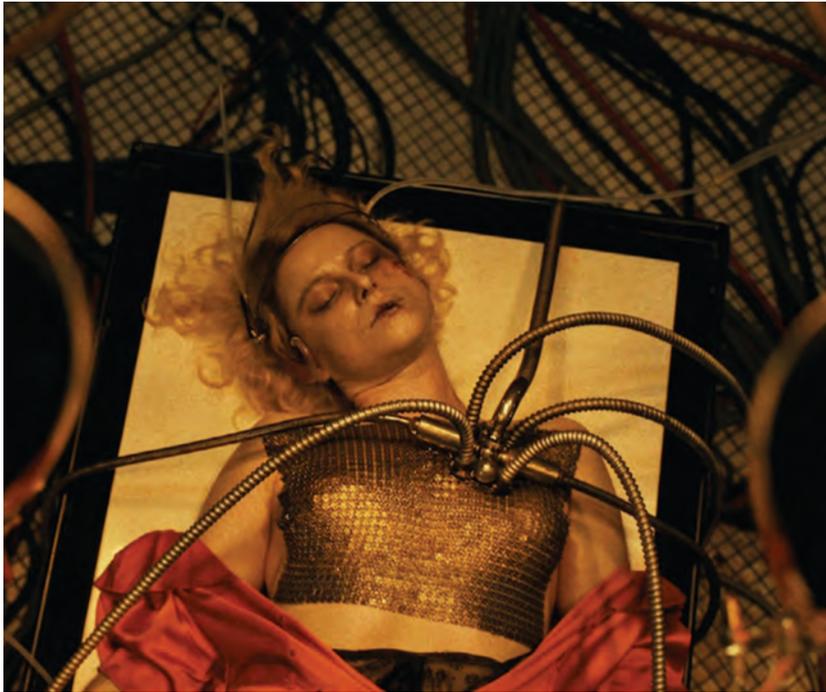
"I grew up in Coventry," says Andy, "and then we moved to South Yardley when I was 16. I've had many, many trips to the Hippodrome. It's so nice to go back there, and I love that the venue is always on our tour schedule. The audiences are always fantastic, because they're so used to dance - Birmingham Royal Ballet [BRB] obviously cultivates that. When we go to the Hippodrome, it's so nice, and the crew there are fantastic. I've been with New Adventures for 13 years now, and it's so nice to be able to keep touring around and doing these incredible shows. It feels really nice to come back to something that's so established. The team is so good, and everyone's at the top of their game."

"I trained at Elmhurst Ballet School in Birmingham for six years, from when I was 11 until I was 17," explains Bella. "We always used to go, as a school, to watch the productions at the Hippodrome. So I actually watched New Adventures' Swan Lake at the Hippodrome. We went as a school, because [Elmhurst graduate] James Lovell was in it, so we all went to watch him when he first joined. I've kind of grown up in Birmingham and seen a lot of BRB. And I worked with BRB, too, and briefly performed at the Hippodrome: I was in the company's Cinderella when I was 11. I don't really know the theatre, but I'm excited to go back and see it as an adult now."

Bella has been spotlighted as New Adventures' Emerging Artist of the 2025/26 season.

"The Emerging Artists programme has really helped my journey from being a student to the professional world," she says. "I had so much support from the New Adventures team and learned a bit of the material before we started. It definitely felt a lot smoother than it would have if I hadn't had that - it was really nice. It feels like a big family, this company - it's definitely been very exciting."

.....
New Adventures' The Red Shoes shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 March



The Bride! CERT 15 (126 mins)

Starring **Jessie Buckley, Christian Bale, Jake Gyllenhaal, Peter Sarsgaard, Penélope Cruz, Julianne Hough, Annette Bening**
Directed by **Maggie Gyllenhaal**

Maggie Gyllenhaal here takes the helm - for the first time since making her directorial debut with 2021's Oscar-nominated *The Lost Daughter* - to present what *The Bride!*'s publicity describes as 'a bold, iconoclastic take on one of the world's most compelling stories.' Frankenstein's undead creature (Christian Bale) travels to 1930s Chicago to ask groundbreaking scientist Dr Euphronious (Annette Bening) to save him from his loneliness by creating a companion for him. The two revive a murdered young woman, *The Bride* (Jessie Buckley), and in so doing set the scene for what proves to be a wild and combustible romance. "It's like Bonnie and Clyde," says Buckley, in talking about her character's relationship with Frankenstein's creature, "but ours has petrol in its skin and we're holding a match to it!"

Released Fri 6 March



How To Make A Killing

CERT 12a (105 mins)

Starring **Glen Powell, Margaret Qualley, Ed Harris, Topher Grace, Jessica Henwick, Zach Woods** Directed by **John Patton Ford**

A 'raucously entertaining revenge thriller', the inspiration for which comes from Ealing Studio's 1949 British crime classic, *Kind Hearts And Coronets*, *How To Make A Killing* is centred around the character of the blue-collar Becket Redfellow.

Disowned at birth by his obscenely wealthy family, Becket will stop at nothing to reclaim his inheritance, no matter how many relatives stand in his way. Matters are complicated for him by the need to navigate his relationship with girlfriend Ruth - a woman who has no interest in money - and the increasing attentions of Julia - a flirtatious old flame who most definitely does...

Released Fri 13 March



Hoppers CERT U (105 mins)

With the voices of **Piper Curda, Bobby Moynihan, Jon Hamm, Dave Franco, Meryl Streep, Nichole Sakura**
Directed by **Daniel Chong**

"We have assembled a legendary cast for *Hoppers*," say the movie's director, Daniel Chong, and producer, Nicole Paradis Grindle, "and the voice talent really gave the film all they had. Be it uproarious humour, heartfelt emotion or crazy animal noises, they delivered beyond our expectations!" With no less a luminary than the legendary Meryl Streep providing her services in the role of Insect Queen, *Hoppers* follows the fortunes of lead character Mabel, a young student who uses new technology to transfer her consciousness into a lifelike robotic beaver and thwart a construction company's plot to destroy the local animal habitat.

Released Fri 6 March



The Land Of Sometimes

CERT U (93 mins)

With the voices of **Helena Bonham Carter, Mel Brooks, Ewan McGregor, Asa Butterfield, Jessica Henwick, Alisha Weir**
Directed by **Leon Joosen**

On Christmas Eve, twins Alfie and Elise wish for things beyond their reach. Their father is missing at war, and the twins seek their own ways to avoid the harshness of life: Elise wants to escape from the world; Alfie wants to hide away from it. Just before bedtime, their mother presents them with a watch. Left by their father as a Christmas gift, the watch is a very special watch: a Wish Watch. The twins are then visited by The Wish Collector, an enigmatic character who transports them to a strange and magical world called The Land Of Sometimes. It's there, in a place populated by unusual and charismatic characters, that Alfie and Elise's adventure really begins...

Released Fri 20 March

The Magic Faraway Tree

CERT U (110 mins)

Starring **Andrew Garfield, Claire Foy, Nicola Coughlan, Jessica Gunning, Rebecca Ferguson, Nonso Anozie**
Directed by **Ben Gregor**

Based on Enid Blyton's bestselling children's classic, *The Magic Faraway Tree* follows the story of Polly and Tim and their children, Beth, Joe and Fran - a modern family who find themselves forced to relocate to the remote English countryside.

Soon after their arrival in their new home, the children come across a magical tree. The discovery leads to them meeting a host of extraordinary and eccentric characters - including Moonface, Silky, Dame Washalot and Saucepan Man - and experiencing exciting adventures in strange and magical lands...

Featuring Andrew Garfield (*Spider-Man*) and Claire Foy (*The Crown*) as Polly and Tim, this long-anticipated film adaptation of Blyton's novel also features star turns from, among others, Lenny Henry, Michael Palin, Simon Russell Beale and Jennifer Saunders.

Released Fri 27 March



Midwinter Break

CERT 12a (90 mins)

Starring **Lesley Manville, Ciarán Hinds, Julie Lambertson, Ed Sayer, Niamh Cusack, Leila Laaraj** Directed by **Polly Findlay**

Based on the 2017 novel of the same name by Northern Irish writer Bernard MacLaverty - and described by its publicity as a stirring meditation on faith, commitment, and the enduring power of love - *Midwinter Break* finds retired couple Stella (Lesley Manville) and Gerry (Ciarán Hinds) flying to Amsterdam for what they hope will be a refreshing and relaxing holiday. Instead, they find their relationship unravelling, as painful memories from their past re-emerge...

Commenting on the film, Dave Bishop, CEO of Protagonist Pictures, the company handling *Midwinter Break*, told *The Hollywood Reporter*: "Lesley and Ciarán are [among] the top talents of their generation and the perfect pair to bring this emotionally intricate exploration of universal relationship dynamics to life."

Released Fri 20 March



Ready Or Not 2: Here I Come

CERT tbc (108 mins)

Starring **Shawn Hatosy, Nestor Carbonell, Elijah Wood, Samara Weaving, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Kevin Durand**
Directed by **Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett**

With 2019's *Ready Or Not* having earned \$57 million on just a \$6million budget, a sequel movie was always on the cards - and seven years later, here it is...

The original comedy/horror saw young bride Grace MacCaullay finding herself involved in a Devil-worshipping wedding-night ritual in which she was hunted by her eccentric new in-laws. Now, the sole survivor, Grace discovers that she's reached the next level of the nightmarish 'game' - and that this time she must battle to keep her estranged sister Faith alive...

Released Fri 20 March

Project Hail Mary

CERT 12a (156 mins)

Starring **Ryan Gosling, Ken Leung, Milana Vayntrub, Sandra Hüller, Liz Kingsman, Lionel Boyce** Directed by **Phil Lord and Christopher Miller**

Andy Weir's novel *Project Hail Mary* became an instant bestseller when it was released in 2021, so it's little wonder that his story has now been given the cinematic treatment. When science teacher Ryland Grace (Ryan Gosling) wakes up on a spaceship light years from home, he initially has no recollection of who he is or how he got there. As his memory returns, he begins to uncover his mission: to solve the riddle of a mysterious substance causing the sun to die out. To do so, he must call on both his scientific knowledge and unorthodox ideas to save everything on Earth from extinction. But an unexpected friendship means that he may not have to face the seemingly impossible challenge alone...

Released Fri 20 March



HEADING DOWN UNDER...

Kevin Clifton stars as Tick and Mitzi in a new touring
production of Priscilla Queen Of The Desert



Best known for his years as a professional dancer on BBC's Strictly Come Dancing, Kevin Clifton grew up as a competitive ballroom and Latin dancer. Post-Strictly, he's been crossing off his dream roles in musicals, like Cosmo Brown in Singin' In The Rain, and delighting his goth-era younger self by performing in Rock Of Ages. Most recently, he's been touring with 2:22 A Ghost Story with his partner and Strictly co-champion, Stacey Dooley. Now, he's taking on the role of Tick, and drag alter-ego Mitzi, for the 30th anniversary tour of Priscilla Queen Of The Desert. What's On recently caught up with him to chat about his time in musical theatre and his latest role...

Were musicals a big part of your life growing up, Kevin?

Yeah, massively. I remember early on, when me and my sister were kids, we went on a trip from Grimsby to London when Mum and Dad took us to see Cats. It felt like this massive thing. Apart from pantos, I think that was the first big musical theatre show I'd seen. My mind was blown. I couldn't believe what was happening. The flamboyance of it all, with the cats coming through the audience. I wanted the book of all the lyrics to the songs and the soundtrack. I just wanted more of it. The next one was Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. It felt like the whole country was talking about it, and I remember falling in love with it.

What did you love about musicals?

For me, everything was about ballroom and Latin competitions. My mum and dad were dancers, so they were training us when we were kids. My dad would talk a lot about the technique and stuff you have to practise, but he would always drill into us that the most important thing is that you have to affect people emotionally. That's the whole point of what we do. It's not just a display of technique. You've got to go out and make people excited, or make them want to cry, inspire them or entertain them. His way of demonstrating that to us was to take us to musicals. He'd say 'How do you feel when you're watching this, when you're carried away with a character and a story or a dance?' So that's always been how I approached my dancing.

How did that translate to Strictly?

I used to say to my celebrity partners, I'll take any technical mistakes, it's not going to be perfect. But we've got to tell a story. We've got to create a piece that's going to affect people in some way. So we'd always dive into every number like it was a musical, thinking about our characters and the story we were telling. And then 'musicals' week, honestly, that was

always my favourite week.

You've been stacking up musicals over the last few years, with Singin' In The Rain, Cabaret and Everybody's Talking About Jamie. What's the best thing about performing in them?

I love being part of a team. In a competition, you're against each other; you have to be as good as you can be, and you have to be better than the person next to you. What I love about musicals and theatre is that you go out as a team to do something together, and you're helping each other out, playing off each other.

What's the trick to keeping up momentum and stamina when you're on tour?

I've sort of been on tour my whole life. Once Minnie was born, it got harder. I really miss her and Stacey. But you hear stories about people living rock & roll lifestyles on tour. That's not me! I'm very nerdy about looking after my voice and my energy, so I'm a bit of a hermit. Tea and honey, all that stuff.

What drew you to Priscilla?

When my agent first asked if I was interested in auditioning, I didn't know whether I was the right person for it. But then they sent me the scene where my character, Tick, is talking to his son and he doesn't know how he's going to be received. He's worried about how he's gonna be judged by his own son. I think that scene they have together is really beautiful, because kids are not jaded by divisiveness or politics. They just see what's in front of them. And I thought, I'd love to play this part.

Then we did the photo shoot, in the whole drag get-up as Mitzi, and I showed a picture to my daughter, who's two. The picture was the three of us, me, Nick [Hayes] and Adèle [Anderson], and Minnie pointed straight to me and went, 'That's you, Dad!' I thought I looked completely different in this costume and makeup. But I said 'That's right, yeah,

what do you think?' and she went, 'You look brilliant, Dad.' No judgement, just, 'I like your hair.'

Priscilla is a story of resilience against transphobia and homophobia. Why are you proud to be a part of the show?

I think we need it more than ever. There's so much divisiveness now. I can't open Instagram without some politician having a go at some minority, whether it's trans people or immigrants. It does my head in. On a more personal level, my uncle, who's no longer with us, was gay, and I think it's something he always struggled with and had demons about. I can't relate to what it's like to be judged for your sexuality, but we can all relate to being an outsider. I grew up in Grimsby and my thing was ballroom dancing. I had to wear bottled fake tan for competitions, and I'd come into school with an orange neck. Everyone knew that while they were all hanging out and playing footie on the weekend, I was doing ballroom dancing with my sister. She was a bit taller than me, so I had to have a perm to make myself look taller. I was that kid! It was that feeling of being different and being laughed at.

I've never been the most confident person. Being on stage is the safe bit. So I relate to Tick when he, as his drag character Mitzi, can be anything he wants to be, whereas he's got all this conflict when he's just himself. I've always felt for people who feel they're on the outside. I hate the attack on the trans community. Priscilla is not my story, but if I can play any part in this story, then yeah, I'm proud of that.

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Priscilla Queen Of The Desert shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 March



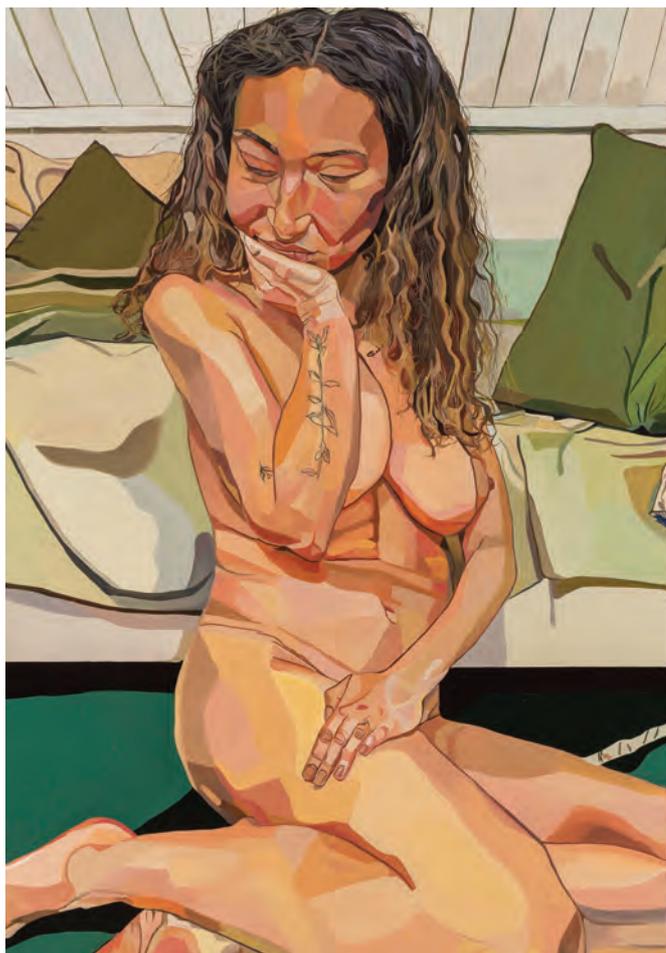
Troublemakers And Prophets

Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
Sat 28 March - Mon 31 August

Described as an exploration of 'art, isolation and extraordinary vision', *Troublemakers And Prophets* is primarily a celebration of the output of Elizabeth Allen, a seamstress who lived in a small corrugated-iron shack in a wood in Kent for many a year (until her death in 1967).

Known by her childhood nickname of 'Queen', Elizabeth created colourful, symbolic and made-from-fabric artworks which focused on a wide variety of subject matter, from biblical prophecies concerning the end of the world, to quirky comments on aspects of modern life.

Alongside Elizabeth's absurd, darkly funny and strikingly prophetic creations, the exhibition also features artworks produced by numerous other 'visionary artists'.



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.

Joy Labinjo, Untitled, 2025, courtesy the artist

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Jaskirt Dhaliwal-Boora: Fractured Landscapes And How We Heal

New Art Gallery, Walsall, Sat 28 March - Sun 21 June

New photographic work by Jaskirt Dhaliwal-Boora lies at the heart of this thought-provoking exhibition. A senior lecturer and researcher at Birmingham City University, Jaskirt is a visual artist with a socially engaged practice, working with local communities on a variety of global issues. The exhibition focuses on the role that

nature and creativity can play in healing from trauma, particularly in the context of domestic violence and abuse against women and girls. Featured alongside Jaskirt's photographs are works created by women from four refuges across the country, each of whom collaborated with a lead artist during the creative process.

David Birtwhistle: A Retrospective

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, until Sun 31 May

One of Worcester's most respected artists, David Birtwhistle produces paintings which explore historic buildings and the landscapes around them. In the process, he captures the character, beauty and gradual change of familiar places... David will be at the venue on Saturday 14 March to give a special talk, during which he will provide an insight into his artistic practice.



Joy Labinjo: A Place Of Our Own

Wolverhampton Arts Gallery, until 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.

I Photograph Comedians!

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until 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.



Craftspace: 40 Objects for 40 Years

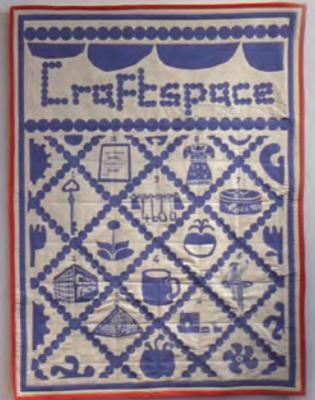
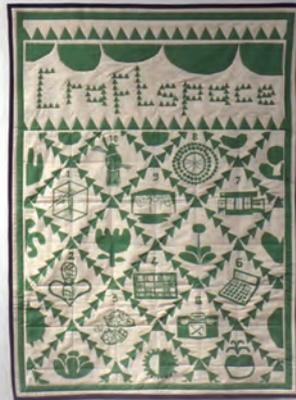
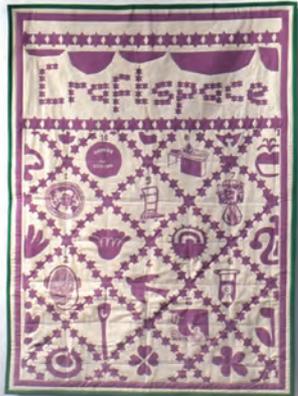
Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, until Sun 12 April

Graphic storyteller Stewart Francis Easton's new textile mural invites viewers to explore Craftspace's 40-year story through 40 objects.

The exhibit links in to MAC's Made In The Middle presentation, which showcases contemporary crafts created across the Midlands region.

The current exhibition draws together ceramics, textiles, jewellery, metalwork and sculptural works by 37 artists, ranging in age from 22 to 82.





CREATING & CRAFTING

Craftspace celebrates 40 years...



For four decades, Birmingham-based Craftspace has provided a platform for artists to showcase their work. Along the way, the organisation has curated more than 500 exhibitions and inspired hundreds of thousands of people to become involved in creating and crafting. This year sees the charity celebrating its 40th birthday with the launch of a new artwork and an exhibition featuring leading contemporary makers from across the Midlands. What's On recently caught up with Craftspace Director Deirdre Figueiredo to find out more...

Craftspace - a charity which aims to create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to see and make contemporary crafts - has commissioned a textile mural by Stewart Francis Easton to tell its four-decade story.

Now on display at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), 40 Objects For 40 Years features illustrations of objects which have been significant in the organisation's journey.

Showing alongside the mural is Made In The Middle, an exhibition featuring 37 craft artists working in a vast array of media.

40 Objects For 40 Years is made up of four quilted wall hangings displaying images of, among other items, a biscuit tin, calculator, jewellery, cutlery and ceramics. All the images have a close connection to the charity's projects with artists and communities.

Over the decades, Craftspace has commissioned and curated work by more than 2,500 artists in over 500 exhibitions seen by 2.8 million people. In terms of promoting community activities, the organisation has brought 265,000 people into making and engaging in crafting.

For Craftspace Director Deirdre Figueiredo, 40 Objects For 40 Years is a way of bringing all those achievements into a single artwork which can be enjoyed by everyone.

"There was a round-table discussion amongst my colleagues about what we could do to celebrate 40 years that would be both symbolic and also exemplify our values," she says. "By visualising our story, we hope our values shine through and reflect the diversity of people we reach, and the things we need to make it happen. A beautiful hand-made object embodies the essence of what Craftspace, craft and making is about."

Once the idea of the textile mural was cemented, the team then had to condense 40 years of work into 40 objects.

"My colleagues decided it's not necessarily just about a crafted object, it's about any object that tells the story of Craftspace. That's why we've included things like a big calculator. Behind the scenes we spend a lot of time fundraising, and our operations manager has a running joke about getting her 'big calculator' out for funding applications and budget discussions. We also have a gazebo, as that is symbolic of the way we take our offer out to people wherever they are and provide a safe space for them to be

creative."

Alongside items fundamental to the organisation, 40 Objects For 40 Years also features illustrations of pieces by artists who have taken part in Craftspace exhibitions in the past. These include Claire's Coming Out Dress by Grayson Perry. The brightly coloured outfit - co-commissioned by Craftspace and Nottingham Castle Museum for the national touring exhibition A Sense Of Occasion in 2000 - was about much more than simply making a fashion item: "A Sense Of Occasion was trying to highlight and make objects to celebrate occasions that were marginalised by society, where people may be celebrating in hiding or amongst themselves or within a sub-culture. In those days, you couldn't buy a coming-out card, and coming out could be a very fearful thing that was very hidden. You couldn't buy Eid or Diwali cards. You couldn't easily buy an outfit with the LGBTQ+ flag to celebrate Pride, so you had to make your own."

Grayson collaborated with a digital embroidery company to create a coming-out dress for his alter-ego Claire, which she wore at a coming-out party attended by a small group of friends and family. The exhibition featured both the dress and a film of the party.

"This was before Perry won the Turner Prize. The style of party dress he created then has since become an iconic feature of his transvestite alter-ego Claire's image. The context created by the exhibition theme gave artists permission, an opportunity and a platform for self-expression.

"Craftspace had a role to play in making that happen, and we've always worked to spot the gaps and elevate those marginalised voices of artists, artforms and types of making that are underrepresented in our culture."

Once people have seen 40 Objects For 40 Years, they can explore more examples of the work promoted by Craftspace by checking out the Made In The Middle exhibition.

"With Stewart Easton's quilt downstairs and Made In The Middle upstairs, there's something for everyone. Each of the 37 artists featured in Made In The Middle has an individual story to tell. You will see a wide range of crafts, materials, a lot of different stories, and imaginative, innovative and inventive ways of exploring ideas.

"We have a handling trolley so that people can get a tactile experience. If you're curious, you can pick it up to understand more about

how it was made. We've tried to make it as accessible as possible by providing an audio tour for visually impaired people and a BSL tour for deaf people."

Visitors are also being encouraged to have a go at crafting and making during a special 'celebration weekend' at MAC (Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 March). The event features drop-in textile activity, which is free to attend, and artist-led workshops.

For Deirdre, the combination of 40 Objects For 40 Years, Made In The Middle and Celebration Weekend is an opportunity not just for Craftspace to share its work but also to motivate everyone to find and develop their own creativity.

"There are so many life experiences to connect with in the artworks in Made In The Middle, and I think people will feel some comfort and joy as well as a sparking of the imagination. The array of unusual techniques will inspire people to have a go or pick up something they've done before. We hope it will inspire people to take up making and explore it for themselves.

"A lot has changed in the world over 40 years, but the value of craft has continued. It's unifying because everyone has an association with craft in all cultures. You might remember your grandmother or your mother making things. Every culture has to make things to subsist; it's one of those art forms that is so connected to human existence and activity."

Looking forward, Craftspace is continuing to grow and develop, with a recent move to the Argent Centre in the Jewellery Quarter giving the charity a new opportunity to support artists and engage communities of interest in creative activities on their premises.

"We have the ambition of having a more fluid, flexible space that we can welcome people into and create a community with an ongoing connection. People will be able to come together to access and share resources and activate the space for social making and conversations."

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Craftspace's 40 Objects For 40 Years and Made In The Middle are free to visit at MAC until Sunday 12 April, with Celebration Weekend taking place at the venue on Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 March. See macbirmingham.co.uk for details. For more on Craftspace, visit craftspace.co.uk

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Events previews from around the region



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National Homebuilding & Renovating Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 March

Renovation experts, leading brands, and self-build & property specialists are this month coming together at the National Homebuilding & Renovating Show. From small plots to big builds, visitors can discover the latest products, understand

how to maximise budgets, go through planning successfully, or seek an architect's opinion. Impartial one-to-one advice, courtesy of a free 15-minute consultation, is also available.



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Creative Craft Show NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 March

Explore hundreds of stalls, packed with everything from knitting and stitching supplies to card making and felting, at this month's Creative Craft Show. Alongside an 'unbeatable' shopping experience, visitors can also take part in fun hands-on workshops designed to spark inspiration and help them master new skills.

The show also features live demonstrations and exclusive discounts. To make the experience even more appealing, a ticket to the event also provides access to sister shows Sewing For Pleasure and Fashion & Embroidery, both of which will be taking place at the NEC across the same weekend.

AGBO Rally

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sun 22 March

Owen Motoring Club's flagship event, the AGBO Rally zooms back into Weston Park late this month. Eighty rally cars from all vintages and eras will be taking on the stages around Weston, one of which is the iconic and much-loved watersplash.



YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Tues 3 - Sun 8 March

The long-established YONEX Championships return with six days of high-octane, world-class badminton for fans of the sport to enjoy. Across the week, there will be action on four courts, from early in the morning to late into the evening. The tournament reaches its climax on Sunday the 8th, when finals across all five disciplines will be contested on one show court.

Bluey Character Visit

Severn Valley Railway, Worcestershire, Sat 28 & Sun 29 March

Wackadoo! Take a heritage train ride out into the countryside to see children's favourite Bluey at The Engine House Visitor Centre in Highley. Once there, you can enjoy listening to tales of her adventures during special storytime sessions. Additional family-focused activities take place throughout the day, all of which are included in the ticket price. There's also the chance for youngsters to get hands-on with interactive exhibits and take advantage of an outdoor play area.



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Events previews from around the region



Spitfire Weekend Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Sat 7 & Sun 8 March

Celebrate Birmingham's iconic aviation history with a weekend of interactive activities suitable for all ages. Visitors can step back in time with World War Two reenactors Up An' At 'Em! History, who will be bringing stories of the Spitfire to life through uniform, equipment and

demonstrations. There are hands-on creative junk-modelling workshops to enjoy too, during which families can design and build their very own aircraft-inspired creations. The weekend also features special guided tours exploring the city's unique role in Spitfire production and aviation innovation.



Photography & Video Show NEC, Birmingham, Sat 14 - Tues 17 March

If visual storytelling is your thing, then this month's Photography & Video Show at the NEC is a must-attend event. The four-day get-together 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.

Peaky Blinders Night

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 14 March

Journey into the gritty industrial landscape of the 1920s, where shadowy gangs once ruled the cobblestone streets, as the ever-popular Peaky Blinders Night makes a welcome return at the Black Country Living Museum. Dress to impress in your finest threads and frocks, walk in the footsteps of the show's much-loved stars, and explore Charlie's Yard and other historic streets that made up one of the series' most important sets.



The Gruffalo Visits!

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, Sat 28 & Sun 29 March

Departing from Llanfair Caereinion Station, take a five-mile steam-train journey through the scenic Mid Wales countryside, then head back to where The Gruffalo and Gruffalo's Child will be waiting to meet families and pose for photos. Plus, every child will receive a complimentary storybook, activity sheet, crayon, biscuit and juice to enjoy during the journey.

Lichfield Literature Festival

Various venues across Lichfield, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 March

Celebrating its 20th year in 2026, Lichfield Literature Festival features a star-studded line-up of award-winning writers from the worlds of history, politics, science, the arts, current affairs and fiction. Festival favourites Tracy Borman and Alison Weir return, while broadcaster John Suchet and comedians Rob Newman and Pierre Novellie all make their debut at the event.

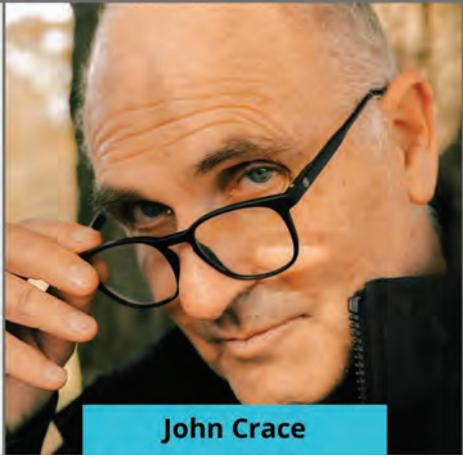




Michael Rosen



Reni Eddo-Lodge



John Crace

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Tipton Rd, Dudley, DY1 4SQ.
 Adults £27.95, Children (aged three - 15) £15.50 (pre-booked online)

Get stuck into some good old-fashioned fun at this award-winning venue, as you experience the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the Black Country through rebuilt, replica or recreated shops, houses and industrial workshops.

**British Motor Museum**

Banbury Rd, Gaydon, CV35 0BJ.
 Adults £18, Children £9 (pre-booked online)

The museum features the world's greatest collection of classic, vintage and veteran British cars, with over 400 vehicles on display. Free tours and hands-on family activities provide an opportunity to learn about the stories behind the collection.

British Ironwork Centre

Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4JH.
 Adult & 1 free child (under 12s) £14.
 Additional child (under 12) £5

This award-winning, family-run destination is the UK's leading metal sculpture park and home to the nation's largest collection of decorative metalwork. Visitors can enjoy shopping, national projects, dining, inspiring sculptures and art from around the world.

The Commandery

Sidbury, Worcester, WR1 2HU. Adults £10, Children (aged five - 16) £5, Under-fives free.

The past comes to life in The Commandery, a beautiful building boasting an 800-year-long history. Located in the heart of historic Worcester, The Commandery is most famous for being the Royalist headquarters during the deciding battle of the English Civil War: the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

**Coventry Transport Museum**

Millennium Place, Hales Street, CV1 1JD.
 Adults £15, Children £8 (pre-booked online)

This popular museum not only houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles on the planet, it also tells the story of a city which changed the world through transport. There are 14 fully accessible galleries to enjoy at the venue, featuring - among other attractions - pioneering bicycles, transport champions, innovative, memorable and luxurious vehicles from the last 200 years, and the world's fastest cars.

Exotic Zoo Telford

Hinkshay Rd, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3GZ.
 Adults £12, Children (aged two - 15) £9.96 (pre-booked online)

Nestled in the heart of Telford Town Park, Exotic Zoo Telford is a small zoo that provides visitors with the chance to enjoy close-up animal interactions. Explore the rainforest, desert, nocturnal and farmyard zones, then step back in time in the Natural History Museum, home to real dinosaur skeletons, a T-rex skull, a sabre-tooth tiger skull, an ichthyosaur, and even an elephant bird egg.

**National Forest Adventure Farm**

Tatenhill, Burton Upon Trent, DE13 9SJ. £12.50 per person, Under-tuos go free

This family-run attraction provides 40 acres of outdoor space and comes complete with a nine-acre maze. Year-round attractions include tractor rides, a giant jumping pillow, and indoor play areas. An animal barn filled with goats, chickens, pigs, horses, cows, rabbits and guinea pigs also features.

Severn Valley Railway

Station Dr, Kidderminster, DY10 1QX;
 Hollybush Rd, Bridgnorth, WV16 4AX.
 Freedom of the Line ticket - Adults £26 - £33,
 Children (aged four - 17) £17.50 - £22

Operating mainly steam-hauled passenger trains between Bridgnorth, Bewdley and Kidderminster, this much-loved heritage railway transports visitors on a route of about 16 miles along the beautiful Severn Valley.

Sudeley Castle

Winchcombe, Cheltenham, GL54 5JD.
 Adults £24, Children (aged three - 15) £10.50

Walk in the footsteps of notable characters from the mists of time at Sudeley Castle. Boasting a fascinating history stretching back over 1,000 years, the castle is surrounded by 10 award-winning gardens. There's also an adventure playground and a fun fort for younger visitors to enjoy.

**Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum**

Millennium Point, Curzon St, Birmingham, B4 7XG. Adults £15.50 - £21.50, Children (aged three - 15) £7.50 - £13.50

From steam engines and talking robots to gurgling guts and a chocolate-wrapping machine, Thinktank features more than 200 hands-on science & technology displays.

West Midlands Police Museum

Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, B4 6BJ.
 Adults £10, Children (aged three - 15) £6

Located in a Victorian lock-up, the West Midlands Police Museum showcases an unrivalled collection of police artefacts, explores more than 200 years of policing history, and offers visitors the chance to enjoy a selection of hands-on activities.

**Weston Park**

Weston-under-Lizard, Shifnal, TF11 8LE.
 Adults £11.70, Children £6.30 (pre-booked online)

Weston Park house is set in 1,000 acres of beautiful Capability Brown-landscaped parkland. The venue is home to a nationally important art collection, with other attractions including a restaurant, a woodland adventure playground, a miniature railway, a deer park and holiday cottages.



Homebuilding & Renovating Show

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*Offer expires 3pm the day before the show. Saving based on one day ticket door price. Admission to the show is £18 when purchased on the door. Children 16 and under go free.

Your week-
by-week
listings guide
March 2026

thelist



Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes* at Birmingham Hippodrome - Tues 17 - Sat 21 March

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

What's On

Sun 1 - Sun 8 March



The Battle -
The Rep, Birmingham
until Sat 7 March

Mon 9 - Sun 15 March



Pierre Novellie -
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry
Sun 15 March

Mon 16 - Sun 22 March



Out Of The Box -
Lichfield Garrick
Sat 21 March

Mon 23 - Tues 31 March



Mean Girls -
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
Mon 30 March - Sat 4 April

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.

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

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 September

BRUEGEL TO REMBRANDT: DRAWING LIFE, SKETCHING WONDER Explore the wonders of Dutch and Flemish drawing in an exhibition featuring 60 works from the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, many never before seen in the UK, Sat 14 March - Sun 28 June

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.

BEING HAZEL Showcasing rare memorabilia from Hazel O'Connor's Breaking Glass era alongside displays and clips celebrating the Coventry-born artist.

The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

HELIOS BY LUKE JERRAM Stunning illuminated sculpture by acclaimed British artist Luke Jerram. An immersive and rare opportunity to gaze at our closest star, Sat 21 March - Sun 1 November

Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

CASE: COVENTRY ART SOCIETIES EXHIBITION A 'diverse and inspiring' collection of artworks created by members of art societies and art groups across Coventry & Warwickshire, until Sun 19 April

STORIES THAT MADE US: ROOTS, RESILIENCE, REPRESENTATION Dynamic new exhibition showcasing the lived experiences of a South Asian family in Coventry from 1968 to 2010, drawing on Coventry Archives' Virk Collection and curator & artist Hardish Virk's Stories That Made Us collection, until Mon 25 May

SATURDAY TOWN Award-winning photographic project featuring a pop-up portrait studio and celebrating youth style, fashion and self-expression, Sat 7 March - Mon 4 May

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

ANGELA DE LA CRUZ: UPRIGHT Major exhibition of rarely seen works, including key sculptures, installations and paintings that explore de la Cruz's deep concern with the human body, vulnerability and the physical realities of everyday survival, Wed 25 March - Sun 6 September

BREAK THE MOULD Final exhibition in a trilogy exploring craft, art school pedagogies and contemporary art practice, Wed 25 March - Sun 6 September

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

LEAMINGTON OPEN 2026 Exhibition of shortlisted works by West Midlands artists, until 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, until 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

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

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

RBSA PRINT PRIZE 2026 Show celebrating the diversity of printmaking whilst also introducing the public to a myriad of modern-day printing techniques, until 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, until Sat 28 March

SOLO EXHIBITION: ED ISAACS, PRBSA A A survey of highly representational recent sketch works, Tues 31 March - Sat 11 April

Rugby Art Gallery

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

UNVEILED: THE RUGBY ART COLLECTION IN FULL Every artwork from the extensive Rugby Collection is brought together, presenting over 250 works spanning eight decades of modern and contemporary British art, until Sat 6 June

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

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

Elsewhere:

IAN MOOD: FROM STAGE TO CANVAS Collection of work by award-winning local artist Ian Mood, who joined last year's The Little Mermaid company as the New Vic's artist-in-residence, until Sat 14 March, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE LIGHT BETWEEN Exhibition featuring landscape paintings by Stephanie Eufemia, created over the past year and exploring moments of transition, stillness and presence, until Thurs 26 March, The Rose Paterson Art Gallery, Weston Park

THE ART OF JOHN BLUNDALL Exhibition highlighting the creative legacy of Birmingham-born puppeteer John Blundall, whose innovative blend of international influences transformed British puppet theatre, until Sun 19 April, Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton

WHAT ARE THE ODDS? IKON CREATIVE HEALTH Exhibition exploring the role of art in supporting health and care systems, bringing together into an immersive display three years of Ikon Gallery's collaborative research, until Sat 27 June, Library of Birmingham

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH FUTURE WRITERS TRAIL Eighteen beautiful poems from the winners of Birmingham City University's 2025 Benjamin Zephaniah Future Writers competition will be nestled within the Gardens, Tues 3 March - Sun 17 May, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

THE CITY THAT SHAPED US Photography exhibition showcasing the best of Birmingham, combined on Saturday 21 March with a concert of newly composed music, Wed 11 Mar - Sat 28 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 March



Sofie Anné - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Gigs

NAPALM DEATH + WHIPLASH + VARUKER + DOPELORD Sun 1 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

ASH SHEEHAN Sun 1 Mar, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

THE GARRY ALLCOCK TRIO Sun 1 Mar, Tower of Song, B'ham

PETE HYDE & THE VIEILLARDS Sun 1 Mar, The Brasshouse, Birmingham

DECREPIT YOUTHS Sun 1 Mar, Subside Bar, Birmingham

SKA TRAIN Sun 1 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

THE BLUETONES ACOUSTIC Sun 1 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CABLEFEST 4 Sun 1 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF RAY CHARLES & STEVIE WONDER Sun 1 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

RICH PARSONS Sun 1 Mar, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

LINDISFARNE Sun 1 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JORDAN DAVIS + AVERY ANNA + SOLON HOLT Sun 1 - Mon 2 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

RBC JAZZ ORCHESTRA Mon 2 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EILEEN ALISTER + JOLINA LOUISE Tues 3 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FREYA SKYE Tues 3 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THEO VANDENHOFF Tues 3 Mar, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

SAMANTHA FISH Tues 3 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

CAITLIN Tues 3 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

NEON FIELDS Wed 4 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, B'ham

TVAM PLUS + THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE Wed 4 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CONGRATULATIONS Wed 4 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

IAGO BANET Wed 4 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

HARRIET ROSE Wed 4 Mar, Dead Wax, Digbeth, B'ham

VO FLETCHER + LOZ KINGSLEY + ANDY BROWNLIE Wed 4 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

RICH BENNETT'S HOT TAMALES Wed 4 Mar, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

VONA VELLA Wed 4 Mar, Just Dropped In, Coventry

FEAST OF FIDDLES Wed 4 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

HUEY MORGAN Wed 4 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BEXBLU + PAUL STEPHAN Thurs 5 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KID CONGO & THE PINK MONKEY BIRDS + BLACK MEKON Thurs 5 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TAFF RAPIDS Thurs 5 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

BIG SHIP ALLIANCE Thurs 5 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

KEO Thurs 5 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE ALARM Thurs 5 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

BUZZSAW RADIO + THE CAROLINE BOMB Thurs 5 Mar, The Victoria, Birmingham

LILY ALLEN Thurs 5 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUCY ROSE Thurs 5 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

PAUL DUNMALL INVITES TOM CHALLENGER, GEORGE CROWLEY, OLIE BRICE AND WILL GLASER Thurs 5 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CHOP SUEY + SLIP-NOT Thurs 5 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ZACKARY LUCKY Thurs 5 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

MADLINE BELL & IAN SHAW Thurs 5 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK, JOHN MCCUSKER & JOHN DOYLE Thurs 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROB LAMBERTI PRESENTS PERFECTLY GEORGE MICHAEL Thurs 5 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SABRINA FUNG + TONI + THEA REGAN Fri 6 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ALI GILBERT Fri 6 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, B'ham

FRANZ FERDINAND + HOME COUNTIES Fri 6 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

INKIBUS SUKKUBUS Fri 6 Mar, Dead Wax, Digbeth, B'ham

FASTLOVE: THE TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Fri 6 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BEATLEMANIA Fri 6 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

OPAL OCEAN Fri 6 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

FRONT ROW Fri 6 Mar, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

VIRGINIAS WOLVES + LE HEV HEV + INFERNO Fri 6 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY Fri 6 Mar, hmv Empire, Coventry

MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK, JOHN MCCUSKER & JOHN DOYLE Fri 6 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BREAKER + CRUCIBLE + BRAZEN Fri 6 Mar, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE SOUNDS OF SIMON Fri 6 Mar, The Benn Hall, Rugby

GIVE ME MOORE - GARY MOORE TRIBUTE Fri 6 Mar, Marris Bar, Worcester

THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE Fri 6 Mar, Swan Theatre, Worcester

OASIS Fri 6 Mar, Walsall

Arena & Arts Centre

ROB LAMBERTI PRESENTS PERFECTLY GEORGE Fri 6 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

HIGHWAY Fri 6 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

RAJ MAHAL & THE BEATROOTS + ANNE-MARIE ALLEN Fri 6 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

JESSES DIVIDE + OLD GLORY & THE BLACK RIVIERA + ATHENAS REVENGE + OUT OF THE ASHES Fri 6 Mar, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

ERASURED Fri 6 Mar, The Station, Cannock

THE BAR-STEWARD SONS OF VAL DOONICAN Fri 6 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall

QUO CONNECTION Fri 6 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

HIGH FADE Fri 6 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

LUKE JACKSON Fri 6 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

CHRISTINA ALDEN AND ALEX PATTERSON Fri 6 Mar, Bill's Kitchen, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

CALUM BOWIE Sat 7 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE VACCINES Sat 7 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

EVIL BLIZZARD Sat 7 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

A'BEAR + SUNNK + CRIES FROM THE LTN Sat 7 Mar, Centrala, Birmingham

THE GRUNGE ADDICTION Sat 7 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham

NATIONAL YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA: MASADA Sat 7 Mar, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NEARLY DAN - THE SOUND OF STEELY DAN Sat 7 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

BOOTLEG ABBA Sat 7 Mar, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

FLESHLICHER + DEAN LLOYD ROBINSON Sat 7 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

TOPKY + PAWEŁ STASIAK Sat 7 Mar, hmv Empire, Coventry

CONSTANT SMILES Sat 7 Mar, Just Dropped In, Coventry

THE MUMFORD & SONS STORY Sat 7 Mar, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

NOT RADIOHEAD Sat 7 Mar, Marris Bar, Worcester

THE JULIE JULY BAND Sat 7 Mar, Huntingdon Hall,

Worcester

THE LEGEND OF MEAT LOAF Sat 7 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

CELINE EXPERIENCE Sat 7 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Sat 7 Mar, Halesowen Town Hall

AIRLIGHT 80S Sat 7 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

NICK PARKER Sat 7 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

BAZ WARNE Sat 7 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

RAT HOLE + BROKEN 3 WAYS Sat 7 Mar, Dive, W'hampton

SOFIE ANNÉ Sat 7 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE Sat 7 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

KINGS OF HONG KONG + TITS UP + THE TWO STEP GOODBYES Sat 7 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

SEA FEVER Sat 7 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

SOUNDS OF SEATTLE Sat 7 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE ALEX VOYSEY BLUES BAND Sat 7 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

MAMAS GUN Sun 8 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TRAPPIST AFTERLAND + THE GENTLE GOOD + HENRY PARKER Sun 8 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

POPPY + OCEAN GROVE + FOX LAKE Sun 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KYLE HUME Sun 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

REGGAE FEST BIRMINGHAM Sun 8 Mar, Tower of Song, Birmingham

KAMIL BEDNAREK Sun 8 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS Sun 8 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

KAVIRAJ SINGH Sun 8 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SPECIAL FRIEND + HUM DRUM + MT MYSTERY Sun 8 Mar, Just Dropped In, Coventry

AMY LOU Sun 8 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic

BOYZLIFE Sun 8 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BLAZIN' FIDDLES Sun 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BAYLISS & SEAL Sun 8 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

OLIVER MATTHEWS PIANO RECITAL Sun 1 Mar, Wyldre Green United Reform Church, Sutton Coldfield

LEAMINGTON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Featuring Anita D'Attellis (piano) & Richard Laing (conductor). Programme includes works by Dvořák, Carwithen & Beethoven, Sun 1 Mar, Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa

CLAVICHORD RECITAL FEAT. STEVEN DEVINE Programme includes works by Haydn, Sun 1 Mar, Pitchford Hall, Shropshire

RBC LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Matthew Pandya (baritone) & Bianca Vancea (piano), Mon 2 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: AMERICAN COUNTERPOINT Featuring Helen Benson (piccolo), Oliver Janes (clarinet) & Adrian Spillett (percussion). Programme includes works by Reich, Muczynski & Harrison, Tues 3 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: FOUR NOTES AND THE TRUTH Featuring Sterling Elliott (cello). Programme includes works by Holst, Elgar, PM Davies & Beethoven, Tues 3 Mar, Warwick Hall

CBSO BENEVOLENT FUND CONCERT Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Steven Osborne (piano). Programme includes works by Berlioz, Mozart & Rimsky-Korsakov, Wed 4 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

JAMES MORLEY CELLO RECITAL Programme includes works by Sciarrino, Colombi, Ligeti & more..., Wed 4 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

TETZLAFF QUARTET Programme includes works by Dvořák & Schubert, Wed 4 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: TCHAIKOVSKY & MUSSORGSKY Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Bruce Liu (piano), Thurs 5 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SPRING LUNCHTIME RECITAL Featuring Alexis Hutchinson (alto), Thurs 5 Mar, Worcester Cathedral

JILL CROSSLAND PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Bach, Beethoven & Chopin, Thurs 5 Mar, The Gateway, Shropshire

RBC SPRING OPERA: OFFENBACH'S ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD Featuring Paul Wingfield (conductor) & Rebecca Meltzer (director), Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Mar, Gas Street Central, Birmingham

BEN BLOOR ORGAN RECITAL Fri 6 Mar, St Mary's Church, Warwick

CONCERTS IN THE ROUND Featuring Students from Chetham's School of Music, Fri 6 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET Featuring Matthew Denton & Michelle Fleming (violins), Eoin Schmidt-Martin (viola) & Emma Denton (cello). Programme includes works by Mozart, Glass & Shostakovich, Fri 6 Mar, Shrewsbury School

OTIUM SAXOPHONE QUARTET Featuring Florence Ryan (soprano sax), Hannah Kermode (alto sax), Evie Cooper (tenor sax) & Tom Winter (baritone sax), Sat 7 Mar, Library of Birmingham

SOLIHULL SCHOOL CHAMBER CONCERT Programme includes works by Haydn, Moszkowski, Neruda & Schubert, Sat 7 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PAUL CARR ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Handel, JS Bach, Holst & more..., Sat 7 Mar, St Benedict Biscop Church, Wombourne

MIDLAND SINFONIA Programme includes works by Bach, Grieg, J Denver & Rutter, Sat 7 Mar, Feckenham Village Hall, Redditch

CHORAL SCHOLARS OF ALL SAINTS Sun 8 Mar, All Saints Church, Leamington Spa

ENSEMBLE 360: THE STORM WHALE Featuring John Webb (narrator), Sun 8 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

ENSEMBLE 360 Featuring Robert Plane (clarinet), Naomi Atherton (horn), Benjamin Nabarro (violin), Rachel Roberts (viola), Gemma Rosefield (cello) & Tim Horton (piano). Programme includes works by Suk, Tate, Martinů & Dohnányi, Sun 8 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

CHANDOS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Sabrina Ko (conductor), Shulah Oliver-Smith (violin) & Tim Stidwill (horn). Programme includes works by R Gipsy, E Smyth & Prokofiev, Sun 8 Mar, York Hall, Malvern

NIKITA LUKINOV PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Liadov, Stanchinsky & more..., Sun 8 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire

WILLIAM POON PIANO RECITAL Sun 8 Mar, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

Comedy

RUSSELL HICKS Sun 1 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BARBARA NICE Sun 1 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ROSIE JONES Sun 1 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SHAPARAK KHORSANDI Sun 1 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GEOFF NORCOTT Sun 1 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

CHLOE PETTS Sun 1 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MARK SIMMONS Mon 2 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

BEN HARRINGTON, ANDREW BIRD, ED ACZEL, EMILY MCDERMOTT, MATT RICHARDSON & MYCHELLE COLLEARY Mon 2 Mar, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

STEVIE MARTIN Tues 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Tues 3 - Thurs 5 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

RANDY FELTFACE Wed 4 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall



ALI WOODS & HAMISH SHEPHERD Wed 4 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANIEL FOX Wed 4 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BOB MILLS, BRENNAN REECE, TAL DAVIES & FREDDY QUINNE Wed 4 Mar, Herberts Yard, Birmingham

THOMAS GREEN Thurs 5 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, PAUL MCCAFFREY & ELEANOR TIERNAN Thurs 5 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVID EAGLE & COMICS TBC Thurs 5 Mar, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

JACK GLEADOW, PHIL WALKER, DAWN BAILEY, CHRIS RICHMOND & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 5 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

ANGELA BARNES Thurs 5 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

CHRIS MCCAUSLAND Thurs 5 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MATT PARKER Thurs 5 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

JOHN KEARNS Thurs 5 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

RAY O'LEARY Fri 6 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOHN KEARNS Fri 6 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

DAMIAN CLARK, TOM TOWELLING, PAUL MCCAFFREY, ELEANOR TIERNAN & SAM SEE Fri 6 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

MO GILLIGAN Fri 6 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

TADIWA MAHLUNGE, DAVE TWENTYMAN & ALEX HYLTON Fri 6 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

ANGELA BARNES Fri 6 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Fri 6 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

CHRIS RAMSEY Sat 7 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SEAN PERCIVAL, DOM MCGOVERN, RICKY BALSHAW & BARRY DODDS Sat 7 Mar, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

DAMIAN CLARK, TOM TOWELLING, PAUL MCCAFFREY & ELEANOR TIERNAN Sat 7 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOHN TOTHILL Sat 7 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JIMEOIN Sat 7 Mar, The Halls Wolverhampton

SCOTT BENNETT Sat 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JOHN KEARNS Sat 7 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

JAMES ACASTER Sat 7 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RIONA O'CONNOR & OLGA THOMPSON Sun 8 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

TAL DAVIES, JO ENRIGHT & DESIREE BURCH Sun 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAN TIERNAN Sun 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEOFF NORCOTT Sun 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE T*TS COMEDY Sun 8 Mar, Rother Street Arts House, Stratford-Upon-Avon

ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING Sun 8 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Theatre

THE BATTLE A 'wickedly funny' dive into one of the greatest rivalries in rock history: Blur vs Oasis. Mathew Horne stars, until Sat 7 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham



DOUBT: A PARABLE Amateur version of John Patrick Shanley's provocative drama, set in a convent in New York's Bronx, until Sat 7 Mar, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

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', until Sat 14 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND New musical telling the true story of William Kamkwamba - a boy who

Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 March

hopes 'to produce the gift of power and give hope for tomorrow', until Sat 28 Mar, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

ELLEN KENT: THE FAREWELL TOUR - MADAMA BUTTERFLY A new production of Puccini's heart-breaking story of a young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant - with dramatic consequences, Sun 1 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

ALICE Centrestage School of Speech & Drama's new show follows Alice as she escapes her bedroom to find adventure in a topsy-turvy world, Sun 1 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT A clubland coming-of-age story, Mon 2 - Tues 3 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

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, Mon 2 - Tues 3 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY Award-winning West End show charting Buddy's rise to international stardom and his legendary final performance at the age of just 22, Mon 2 - Sat 7 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

COUGAR Rose Lewenstein's play about love, lust, hypocrisy, pride, 'and what might happen if we fail to care of the people and things we love', Tues 3 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE SIGN OF FOUR One-man show in which Jonathan Goodwin plays various larger-than-life characters, Tues 3 Mar, The Pavillion Club, Wolverhampton

THE ANIMALS Worcester Theatre Performance Hub present Sean Buckley's new play, taking a look at education within the youth-custody system, Tues 3 Mar, Swan Theatre, Worcester

TOP HAT THE MUSICAL Romantic musical packed with iconic Irving Berlin songs, including Cheek to Cheek, Let's Face The Music And Dance, Top Hat White Tie And Tails and Puttin' On The Ritz, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

MURDER AT MIDNIGHT Torben Betts' gripping murder-mystery, starring Jason Durr, Susie Blake, Max Bowden and Katie McGlynn, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

SUNNY AFTERNOON Award-winning musical telling a story of friendship, fame and rock history, Tues 3 - Sat 7 Mar, Malvern Theatres

DORIAN GRAY Jonathan Goodwin plays Oscar Wilde in a one-man performance, Sat 7 Mar, Oscars, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOOL FESTIVAL 2026

Evening of live theatre featuring a series of abridged Shakespeare productions by local schools, Wed 4 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THAT'S NOT MY NAME Stand-up, spoken word and schizophasia combine in a 75-minute show that calls out the insanity of psychiatry and the personality disorder diagnosis, Wed 4 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

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, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

NELL GWYNNE Stafford Players present an amateur version of Jessica Swale's play concerning one of the 'most celebrated female performers in Restoration England', Wed 4 - Sat 7 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BONNIE & CLYDE THE MUSICAL Aspire Theatre makes its debut with a real-life tale of crime, passion and rebellion, Wed 4 - Sat 7 Mar, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

WATSON: THE FINAL PROBLEM A journey through one man's memories, regrets and revelations, Thurs 5 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

VOICES IN THE DARKNESS Shakespeare Young Company present an immersive experience that draws on Elizabethan and Jacobean texts, Thurs 5 Mar, The Crypt of St Mary's Church, Warwick

WHEN WE SEE OURSELVES Altered Skin tell the story of Vanessa and Aravindan, who reflect on an unexpected romance beset by cultural differences, Thurs 5 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON Don't Go Into The Cellar present an original adaptation of the HG Wells classic, Thurs 5 Mar, Script Haven, Worcester

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD Offenbach's enduring opera concerning an ill-fitting couple who traverse heaven and hell in the company of gods. Sung in French with English surtitles, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Mar, Gas Street Central, Birmingham

RUDDIGORE The Birmingham Savoyards present Gilbert & Sullivan's satire of Victorian gothic melodrama, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

INTO THE WOODS Musical Theatre Warwick present an amateur version of Stephen Sondheim's fairytale musical, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ANDREW DOHERTY: SAD GAY AIDS PLAY 'A wickedly funny satire that throws the book at Aids and asks the Arts Council to pick it up', Fri 6 Mar,

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

FOR THEIR SAFETY Abhishek Passi's short play, blending social drama with dark humour, Sat 7 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

I'LL BE BACK An 'action-packed 60 minutes of apocalyptic devastation, robotic transformation, emotional reunion, and how a plan formed in the Brierley Hill Blockbusters came to save the world', Sat 7 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE DEATH AND LIFE A 'wryly humorous' one-man tale of murder, mystery and the occult, Sat 7 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ELLEN KENT: THE FAREWELL TOUR - MADAMA BUTTERFLY A new production of Puccini's heart-breaking story about a young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant - with dramatic consequences, Sat 7 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FATHER Amateur version of Florian Zeller's award-winning psychological drama, Sat 7 - Sat 14 Mar, Oldbury Rep

THE STRANGER Amateur version of Agatha Christie's psychological thriller, Sat 7 - Sat 14 Mar, Rugby Theatre

Kids Theatre

TALES FROM ACORN WOOD Theatre for younger audiences based on much-loved stories by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

TOM GATES: THE SHOW New stage show bringing Liz Pichon's bestselling book to life via performance, illustrations and music, Sun 1 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

DEAR ZOO Rod Campbell's children's classic is brought to life using puppetry, music and audience participation, Sun 1 Mar, Malvern Theatres

RAPUNZEL Wronsemble Theatre fuse 'music, magic and madcap scenes' in a new version of the classic fairytale, Sun 1 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BLUEY'S BIG PLAY Puppetry, music, laughter and family fun combine in a live stage show based on the award-winning children's television series, Wed 4 - Sun 8 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

MISS RACHEL - FUN FOR LITTLE ONES - TRIBUTE TOUR Singing, dancing, giggles and non-stop fun are promised in a high-energy interactive performance for younger audiences, Thurs 5 Mar, The Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

ELEANOR THE ADVENTURER The story of a brave explorer and her plucky

sidekick, who attempt to prevent all-out war in a strange and distant land. Presented by KRYPT Junior Company, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

Dance

THE NUTCRACKER Varna International Ballet present 'the most famous of fantasy ballets', Mon 3 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SWAN LAKE Presented by Varna International Ballet and featuring Tchaikovsky's haunting score, Tues 4 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ODYSSEY The graduate year at Elmhurst Ballet present a mixed programme of classical and contemporary dance, Fri 6 & Sat 7 Mar, Elmhurst Ballet School, B'ham



ALICE IN WONDERLAND A Midland Youth Ballet performance based on Lewis Carroll's classic story, Sat 7 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

NRITHYAM'S ARUVI Choreographed performance using a blend of Indian dance forms to showcase the transition through different phases of life and the diverse experiences of women, Sun 8 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

Light Entertainment

UNCANNY: FEAR OF THE DARK Danny Robins' paranormal stage show, featuring 'new and terrifying real-life stories and witness accounts that promise to have audiences utterly gripped', Sun 1 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

TEENAGER IN LOVE SHOW Nostalgia, romance and laughter combine in a show featuring melodies from a bygone era, Sun 1 Mar, Halesowen Town Hall

OCEANS LIVE IN CONCERT Experience a live screening of the stunning nature documentary, featuring narration by David Attenborough, while a full

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symphony orchestra gives a live performance of Oscar-winning composer Steven Price's evocative score, Sun 1 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring the Keltic Storm band and the world champion Gael Force Irish dancers, Tues 3 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AN EVENING WITH THE TELE The Hospital Show present 'an evening of fun and laughter that takes a sideways look at the television', Wed 4 Mar, Stoke Repertory Theatre

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS 'Ultimate feelgood Irish show', Wed 4 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

BIFF TO THE FUTURE Joseph Maudsley's one-man parody, in which Biff, the iconic villain of hit 80s movie *Back To The Future*, takes centre stage, Wed 4 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

AN EVENING WITH THE TAP CHAPS A 'high-octane celebration' of rhythm, style and fast footwork, Wed 4 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove



QUEEN BY CANDLELIGHT Thurs 5 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring the Keltic Storm band and the world champion Gael Force Irish dancers, Thurs 5 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MATT PARKER: GETTING TRIGGY WITH IT Unique show fusing comedy and maths, Thurs 5 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE MUSIC OF LUTHER VANDROS BY CANDLELIGHT Thurs 5 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL Experience 'thrilling adventure on the big screen', Thurs 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RAVE ON - THE ULTIMATE 50S & 60S EXPERIENCE Nostalgic show charting the meteoric rise of rock & roll, Fri 6 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AN EVENING WITH GUY CHAMBERS An evening of stories and songs with one of the UK's most successful living songwriters, Fri 6 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring the Keltic Storm band and the world champion Gael Force Irish dancers, Fri 6 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

100 YEARS OF LAUREL & HARDY Expert Neil Brand provides a unique insight into Laurel & Hardy and the birth of

the cinema industry, Fri 6 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COUNTRY BY CANDLELIGHT Direct from London's West End, Fri 6 Mar, Worcester Cathedral

BAZ WARNE: CONVIVIAL TOUR Intimate evening of music and storytelling in celebration of Baz's new memoir, No Grass Grows On A Busy Street, Sat 7 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Showcasing the best of Broadway and the West End, with hits from *The Phantom Of The Opera*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *West Side Story*, *The Lion King* and more..., Sat 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GAME OF CRONES A 'riotous' celebration of women in their prime. A show described as 'funny, feral, and gloriously unapologetic', Sat 7 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring the Keltic Storm band and the world champion Gael Force Irish dancers, Sat 7 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

ATTENTION ALL SHIPPING: A CELEBRATION OF THE SHIPPING

FORECAST Charlie Connelly brings the shipping forecast vividly to life, Sat 7 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

IBIZA IN SYMPHONY 'The ultimate Ibiza party live on stage', Sat 7 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Ultimate feelgood Irish show, Sun 8 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

QUEENZ: DRAG ME TO THE DISCO A live vocal drag-extravaganza celebrating pop royalty through the decades, Sun 8 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

CELTIC ILLUSION Tradition meets contemporary in a fusion of Irish dance and 'mind-blowing' magic, Sun 8 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH PROFESSOR ALICE ROBERTS Join the author as she attempts to establish who spread christianity, how and why, Sun 1 Mar, Malvern Theatres

WEST BROM LEGENDS Jonas Olsson, Chris Brunt, Zoltan Gera and Jonathan Greening share stories and anecdotes from their football careers, Mon 2 Mar, The Alexandra, B'ham

LEO HOULding - EXPOSED Join the legendary mountaineer for stories, visuals and film from the world's wildest places, Tues 3 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

WHAT NOT TO WEAR Evening talk

about personal adornment and grooming in the prehistory and Roman periods, Thurs 5 Mar, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

POETRY JAM LIVE! A showcase for poets who are starting out, seasoned veterans, and anyone else with a story to tell, Thurs 5 Mar, Justham Family Room & Jane How Room, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

STRATFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL WITH ROBERT MACFARLANE Join the celebrated nature writer, academic & performer as he asks a perspective-shifting question: is a river alive?, Fri 6 Mar, Rother Streets Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

AN EVENING WITH SIR DAVID JASON David will be joined by BBC Breakfast presenter Mike Bushall for an evening of 'fun, laughter, and never-before-heard stories', Sun 8 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

Events

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Showcasing hundreds of top wedding suppliers, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

THE NATIONAL EQUINE SHOW Featuring hundreds of equestrian brands, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

BRANCHLINE WEEKEND Event celebrating 35 years since the arrival of the first DMU on the Severn Valley Railway, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

GO DIVING Featuring interactive displays and demonstrations, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

MIDLANDS GARDEN RAIL SHOW Event offering visitors the chance to see layouts in the larger gauges and scales, including Gauge 1, O Gauge, G Scale and more, Sat 28 Feb - Sun 1 Mar, Warwickshire Event Centre, Leamington Spa

MUSEUM DETECTIVES FAMILY TRAIL Help find the missing eight items in the museum, until Fri 27 Mar, Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum

CASTLE QUEST: IMAGINATION PLAYGROUND 'A magical hands-on experience for children, where creativity reigns supreme', until Sat 11 Apr, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

DRAWING COMEDIANS WITH MILAN TOPALOVIC Practise portraiture by drawing your favourite comedian, Sun 1 Mar, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

NATIONAL BRICK EVENTS Featuring Lego stalls, activities and displays, Sun 1 Mar, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

WOMEN IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Discover the powerful stories of women who played vital roles during the Second World War, from the factory floor to the cockpit, Wed 4 - Sun 8 Mar, RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford

WORLD BOOK DAY: MINI MUSEUM ENGINEERS ON TOUR AT THE HERBERT Experiment with a variety of building materials and have a go at various construction challenges, Thurs 5 Mar, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

WORLD BOOK DAY: THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA Immersive sensory experience exploring colour, sound and song, Thurs 5 Mar, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

TUDOR WOMEN GUIDED TOUR Learn about Tudor Women to mark International Women's Day, Thurs 5 Mar, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

CRUFTS The ultimate day out for dog lovers of all ages, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM'S VICTORIAN MURDER MILE Join crime & policing historian Adam Wood for a walking tour and hear gruesome tales of Birmingham's Victorian past, Fri 6 Mar, West Midlands Police Museum, B'ham

BOOGIE LIGHTS EXPRESS A 'one of a kind' experience, blending 'dazzling lights, pulse-pounding music and nonstop energy', Fri 6 - Sat 7 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster



CINEMA UNDER THE STARS Step into the planetarium for a cinema-style screening, Sat 7 Mar, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

LOMBARD RALLY Featuring full-throttle on-track action and 'nostalgia in the air', Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, Weston Park, Shropshire

SPITFIRE WEEKEND Celebrate Birmingham's iconic aviation history with interactive activities for all ages, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS Discover the untold stories of women who've shaped the world, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

SPECTACLE OF STEAM Featuring one of the largest collections of rare, unique and historic locomotives, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Mar, Statfold Country Park, Tamworth

Gigs

RUSTAGE + SHWABADI + CONNOR QUEST! + THE STUPENDIUM! Tues 10 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HOLLY CLARKE Tues 10 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

CONSTANT SMILES + BRNSWCK + JESS SAADE Tues 10 Mar, The Victoria, Birmingham

MGK + JULIA WOLF Tues 10 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Tues 10 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW Tues 10 & Wed 11 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BEANS ON TOAST Wed 11 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE EGYPTIAN LOVER Wed 11 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE BROTHERS GILLESPIE Wed 11 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

ALABAMA 3 Wed 11 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

MOULD Wed 11 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

HOT MULLIGAN + DELTA SLEEP + OVERSIZE Wed 11 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LAUREN ASH Wed 11 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

49TH & MAIN Wed 11 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

VONA VELLA Wed 11 Mar, Dead Wax, B'ham

REMEMBER SPORTS Wed 11 Mar, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

SPECIAL FRIEND Wed 11 Mar, The Victoria, Birmingham

PHIL BEER Wed 11 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THE SWAPS + C BONE + ED BLUNT Wed 11 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

EAST STREET SPANKERS Wed 11 Mar, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

STEVE KNIGHTLEY Wed 11 Mar, Huntingdon

Hall, Worcester

ANTONY SZMIEREK Wed 11 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

NORTHERN SOUL ORCHESTRATED Wed 11 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SCUSTIN Thurs 12 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

KILLOWEN Thurs 12 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

BELLA HARDY Thurs 12 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

THE HEART OF NEW ORLEANS Thurs 12 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

FROGLORD Thurs 12 Mar, Dead Wax, B'ham

ALEX JAMES' BRITPOP CLASSICAL Thurs 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TUNDE Thurs 12 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

ROOTS AND REELS - RBC MUSICIANS Thurs 12 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

MICE IN A MATCHBOX Thurs 12 Mar, Catshill Club, Bromsgrove

THE SONGS OF TOM WAITS Thurs 12 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

ROSA ANSCHÜTZ + MOONYA Thurs 12 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

SUNGRASS Thurs 12 Mar, Marrs Bar, Worcester

TRANSMISSION - THE SOUND OF JOY DIVISION Thurs 12 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

PRIMAL FEAR + RONNIE ROMERO Thurs 12 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE GUILTY MEN Thurs 12 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

HOPE & SOCIAL Thurs 12 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ARTHUR COATES & KERRAN COTTERELL Thurs 12 Mar, The Antise, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

SAMBROSO ALLSTARS PERFORM THE BUENA VISTA Fri 13 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PHOEBE KATIS Fri 13 Mar, The Sunflower

Lounge, Birmingham

THE TERRYS Fri 13 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

SOMBR + CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE Fri 13 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND Fri 13 Mar, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

TONY BRAZIER SEXTET Fri 13 Mar, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

SANCTUM SANCTORIUM Fri 13 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

SAVAGE GASP + KAMAARA + GRIM SALVO Fri 13 Mar, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

BODYSNATCHER + INGESTED + BIG ASS TRUCK Fri 13 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

IGLU + HARTLY Fri 13 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

THE PAINTING Fri 13 Mar, The Victoria, B'ham

ALINA BZHEZHINSKA Fri 13 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MAN IN THE MIRROR Fri 13 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DAVE Fri 13 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

INTRUSIVE + THE N.S.O + LOST + THE ALTERNATIVES Fri 13 Mar, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

DECLAN NERNEY Fri 13 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE SPECIALS LTD Fri 13 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

LEAMINGTON BLUES Fri 13 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

JUST RADIOHEAD Fri 13 Mar, hmv Empire, Coventry

HAEMA + FERRUX + KHARMA + FACE OF A STRANGER Fri 13 Mar, Arches Venue, Coventry

THE TAKE THAT EXPERIENCE Fri 13 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

KEROZENE + THE FLANEURS + OLE COUGHIN DODGERZ + GENERAL JACK Fri 13 Mar, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

KOZMIC PEARL Fri 13 Mar, Marrs Bar, Worcester

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW Fri 13 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

ROB LAMBERTI PRESENTS PERFECTLY GEORGE Fri 13 Mar, Malvern Theatres

THE BARRY MANILOW SHOW Fri 13 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE PIANO MAN ONE NIGHT OF BILLY JOEL Fri 13 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

MOSH TALGIA Fri 13 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

VOODOO ROOM Fri 13 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

TAYLOR MORE SWIFTLY + BOOM BOOM WOMB + FIGHTS AND FIRES Fri 13 Mar, Dive, W'hampton

SEX PISTOLS EXPOSE + STUNTFACE Fri 13 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SNUTS Fri 13 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MARA LIDDLE + ANGEL B VALENTINE + EMIDORA Fri 13 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

BATHED IN SIN + LIGHTS OUT + SMOTHER + PROZPEKT + INVASION Fri 13 Mar, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

DAVE BOULTON & THE BARMY PENGUINS Fri 13 Mar, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

UK BJORN Fri 13 Mar, Rugeley Rose Theatre

CHASING MUMFORD Fri 13 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

COLLIDER SKIES + CHASING AUGUST Fri 13 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

JOSIENNE CLARKE SINGS THE SONGS OF SANDY DENNY Fri 13 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

THOMAS ATLAS X BONNYLOU Sat 14 Mar, The Jam House, B'ham

BLEED FROM WITHIN + DISEMBODIED TYRANT + BAEST Sat 14 Mar, O2

Institute, Birmingham

AUDREY HOBERT Sat 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SCOUTING FOR GIRLS Sat 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KILLERSTREAM Sat 14 Mar, Jo Jo Jims, B'ham

JIM BOB + INTERROBANG Sat 14 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

FALLING AND LAUGHING + SUNSET CINEMA CLUB + WIINCE + HEY ALAMO Sat 14 Mar, Centrala, Birmingham

METAL TO THE MASSES HEAT 4 Sat 14 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

NATHAN CARTER Sat 14 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NU-CASTLE Sat 14 Mar, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

ELIZA CARTHAY Sat 14 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

JIMMY REGAL AND THE ROYALS Sat 14 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

GO YOUR OWN WAY - THE FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY Sat 14 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

CHARLES DEXTER WARD & THE IMAGINEERS + TELLEMAHOOKAH + WHAT ABOUT ERIC? Sat 14 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

ASTORIA Sat 14 Mar, FarGo Village, Coventry

GRIMM GRIMM Sat 14 Mar, Just Dropped In, Coventry

FLINT FIRE + PRETENDULUM Sat 14 Mar, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

BRAIN OF J Sat 14 Mar, Marrs Bar, Worcester

TUBULAR BELLS LIVE Sat 14 Mar, Malvern Theatres

A TRIBUTE TO STING & THE POLICE Sat 14 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

WATERLOO A TRIBUTE TO ABBA Sat 14 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic

NORTHERN SOUL ORCHESTRATED Sat 14 Mar, The Halls Wolverhampton

THE CLONE ROSES +

OAS-IS + THE SMITHS LTD Sat 14 Mar, The Halls Wolverhampton

THE AMY EXPERIENCE Sat 14 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE JOHN STREET REVIVAL Sat 14 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

ALL THE YOUNG Sat 14 Mar, The Rigger, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

DISCHARGE + RETSU Sat 14 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

MARK LOCKHEART SHAPESHIFTER TRIO Sat 14 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

DEVIL IN THE WHISKEY Sat 14 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

LOS PACAMINOS FT. PAUL YOUNG Sun 15 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

GEORGE BOOMSMA Sun 15 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

SAM SCHERDEL Sun 15 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DEL WATER GAP Sun 15 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham



TAXI FOR JESUS Sun 15 Mar, The Brasshouse, Birmingham

NORTHERN SOUL ORCHESTRATED Sun 15 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BENSON BOONE Sun 15 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

MERRY HELL Sun 15 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN Sun 15 Mar, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

STEVE CRADOCK Sun 15 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS Sun 15 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Price, Marsh, Leach & more..., Mon 9 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

SHOSTAKOVICH CHAMBER MUSIC Featuring Oliver Heath, Jemima Soper & Erin Lawson-Smith (violins), Erin Vinter (viola), Joachim Lim (piano), Emily Hill & Jiaowen Liu (cellos), Tues 10 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

MATTHIAS HAVINGA ORGAN RECITAL Tues 10 Mar, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THE CHOIR OF ROYAL HOLLOWAY: THE KING, THE ARCHBISHOP, A SPY, AND THE ENGLISH EXILES Featuring Rupert Gough (director). Programme includes works by Byrd, Bull, Dering & Philips, Tues 10 Mar, St Mary's Church, Warwick

LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Enhao Zhang (violin) & Fei Pu (cello), Tues 10 Mar, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

RED BRICK BRASS QUINTET Featuring Samuel Jones & Alex Godridge (trumpets), Eleanor Dierckx (french horn), Nathan Tempest (trombone) & Jack Woodhouse (tuba), Wed 11 Mar, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

SPRING CHAMBER CHOIR CONCERT Featuring Julian Wilkins (conductor) & George Moloney (organ). Programme includes works by Britten, Byrd, I Holst & More..., Thurs 12 Mar, St Alban the Martyr, Highgate, Birmingham

KNIBBS & HOWARD PRESENT: ETHEL SMYTH, THE STORMY PETREL Featuring Melissa Morris (piano), Margarida Vaz Neto (soprano), Mikolaj Piszczorowicz (cello), Teresa Howard (libretto & narration), Chloe Knibbs & Ethel Smyth (composers), Thurs 12 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

LONDON CHAMBER ENSEMBLE TRIO Featuring Madeleine Mitchell (violin), Kirsten Jenson (cello) & Julian Milford (piano). Programme includes works by Ireland, C Schumann & Brahms, Thurs 12 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

ASHLEY WAGNER ORGAN RECITAL Fri 13 Mar, St Philip's Cathedral, B'ham

EILIDH HARRIS ORGAN RECITAL Fri 13 Mar, St Hilda's Parish Church, Smethwick

SIMONE DAMIANI PIANO RECITAL Fri 13 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

BAND OF THE WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE Featuring Hannah Hill (clarinet), Fri 13 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CANTORAS UPPER VOICES CHAMBER

CHOIR: STABAT MATER Programme includes works by Kim Andre Arnesen & Sarah Quartel, Fri 13 Mar, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

BACH'S MAGNIFICAT Featuring University of Warwick Chamber Choir and Orchestra, Suzzie Vango & Nat Morley (conductors), Fri 13 Mar, All Saints Church, Leamington Spa

PHILIP RUSHFORTH ORGAN RECITAL Fri 13 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

CHORUS AT THE CBSO CENTRE Featuring Simon Halsey CBE (conductor), CBSO Chorus & CBSO Youth Chorus. Programme includes works by Britten, Brahms & Barber, Sat 14 Mar, CBSO Centre, B'ham

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: SACRED MUSIC Programme includes works by Byrd, Gesualdo, Gibbons & more..., Sat 14 Mar, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

MIDLAND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: VIVALDI'S GLORIA Programme also includes Haydn's 'Surprise' symphony, Sat 14 Mar, St George's Church, Birmingham

WARWICKSHIRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Richard Jenkinson (conductor) & Callum Smart (violin). Programme includes works by Copland, Rimsky-Korsakov, Brahms & Beethoven, Sat 14 Mar, All Saints' Church, Leamington Spa

WORCESTER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Suzie Purkis (mezzo-soprano), Dan Watson (conductor) & Graham Longfils (leader). Programme includes works by Grieg, Elgar & Dvořák, Sat 14 Mar, Pershore Abbey

WOMBOURNE & DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY: COME & SING! Sing Fauré's Requiem with WDCS singers, Sat 14 Mar, Springdale Methodist Church, Wolverhampton

WYRE FOREST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Gill & Jonathan Pendrous (soloists). Programme includes works by Mozart & Beethoven, Sat 14 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND STRING ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina, Barnaby Eddy & Evie Ghauri (conductors). Programme includes works by Grieg, Sibelius, Mozart & Fauré, Sun 15 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & CHORUS: TITANS Programme includes works by Mahler & Katy Lavinia Cooper, Sun 15 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DORIC STRING QUARTET Featuring Maia Cabeza & Ying Xue (violins), Emma Wernig (viola) & John Myerscough (cello). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Janáček, & Beethoven, Sun 15 Mar, Malvern Theatres



Pierre Novellie - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Comedy

ZOLTAN KASZAS Thurs 12 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MICHAEL AKADIRI & COMIC TBC Thurs 12 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DANNY CLIVES & PAUL HILLEARD Thurs 12 Mar, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

JO ENRIGHT, SCOTT CAPURRO, MICHAEL AKADIRI, LOU TAYLOR & ALEX EGAN Fri 13 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JORDAN GRAY Fri 13 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL HOWARD Fri 13 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

JOEL DOMMETT Fri 13 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MATT PRICE, BENNY SHAKES, EDDY BRIMSON & JON PEARSON Sat 14 Mar, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

JO ENRIGHT, SCOTT CAPURRO, MICHAEL AKADIRI & COMIC TBC Sat 14 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY ZALTZMAN Sat 14 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SUE PERKINS Sat 14 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JONNY COLE Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Halesowen Town Hall

CHRIS MCCAUSLAND Sun 15 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Sun 15 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

PIERRE NOVELLIE Sun 15 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ED PATRICK Sun 15 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Theatre

BLOOD AND DESIRE Warwick Chinese Society present a double-bill exploring the boundaries of sacrifice

and self-discovery, Tues 10 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SCOTLAND YARD INVESTIGATIONS Don't Go Into The Cellar present stage adaptations of infamous true-life 19th-century crimes - including the Thames Torso Murders and The Lambeth Poisoner, Tues 10 Mar, Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED) The Reduced Shakespeare Company take a rollercoaster ride through all 37 of the Bard's plays, Tues 10 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

MONA LOSER New musical inspired by Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and set to a high-energy pop score, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

DEAR ENGLAND National Theatre production of James Graham's award-winning play, telling the uplifting story of Gareth Southgate's tenure as England manager, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

MIDSOMER MURDERS: THE KILLINGS OF BADGER'S DRIFT Inspector Tom Barnaby investigates a murder in England's deadliest county. Daniel Casey stars, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF MUSICAL North Staffs Operatic Society present an amateur version of the hit musical comedy based on the much-loved TV show, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Mar, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HERE & NOW - THE STEPS MUSICAL New musical based on the songs of pop favourites Steps, Tues 10 - Sun 15 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

NOISES OFF Highbury Players present an amateur version of Michael Frayn's classic farce, Tues 10 - Sat 12 Mar, Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

NIGHT AT THE OPERA RBC musicians celebrate opera in all its 'drama,

emotion and fun', Wed 11 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

FRANKENSTEIN A new staging of Mary Shelley's Gothic tale, performed by The Albany's in-house theatre company, Wed 11, Thurs 12 & Sat 14 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

YEOMAN OF THE GUARD Atswood Bank Operatic Society present an amateur version of the Gilbert & Sullivan opera, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Mar, The Norbury Theatre, Droitwich

WE WILL ROCK YOU Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur version of Ben Elton's smash-hit musical, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MY FAIR LADY Cabaret Theatre Company present an amateur version of a musical theatre favourite, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

BEHOLD YE RAMBLERS Neil Gore's one-hander takes a lighthearted look at an important piece of social history, Thurs 12 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

EYES DOWN Interactive comedy thriller where the audience play actual games of bingo - with real prizes!

Thurs 12 Mar, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

THE RAVEN RBC Actors present an original production inspired by the life and work of Edgar Allen Poe, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE WIZARD OF OZ ADULT PANTO Starring Jimmy Burton-Iles in the lead role of Dorothy, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

CONSENT Law, love and loyalty collide in Nina Raine's 'powerful, painful and funny' play. Performed by RBC actors, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF MUSICAL Comic Theatre Company present an amateur version of the musical comedy based on the much-loved TV show of the same name, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE RAVEN RBC actors present an original production inspired by the life and work of Edgar Allen Poe, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

TRULY, JACK THE RIPPER Award-winning actor Jonathan Goodwin plays different characters in an exploration of the murders and

myths surrounding the infamous Victorian serial killer, Fri 13 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

EYES DOWN Interactive comedy thriller during which the audience play actual games of bingo - with real prizes! Fri 13 Mar, Dawley Town Hall

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE High-stakes survival thriller performed by the Gatehouse Youth Theatre, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED) The Reduced Shakespeare Company take a rollercoaster ride through all 37 of the Bard's plays, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

WHITE LIARS/BLACK COMEDY Two Peter Shaffer one-act plays exploring deception, Fri 13 - Sat 21 Mar, The Bear Pitt Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE IMPROVISED SHAKESPEARE SHOW Watch as a brand-new Shakespeare play is developed live on stage, Sat 14 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

EYES DOWN Interactive comedy thriller during which the audience play actual games of bingo - with real

prizes! Sat 14 Mar, Wem Town Hall, South Shropshire

THE PANDEMONIUM OF POE Jonathan Goodwin hosts a show in which the audience gets to choose which Edgar Allan Poe tales are performed, Sat 14 Mar, The Theatre of Small Convenience, Malvern

HENRY V Alfred Enoch takes the title role, Sat 14 Mar - Sat 25 Apr, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

MYRA'S STORY Acclaimed one-hander telling the story of Myra, who, having fallen on hard times, ends up homeless and living on the streets of Dublin. Fionna Hewitt-Twamley plays 15 'larger than life' characters, Sun 15 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

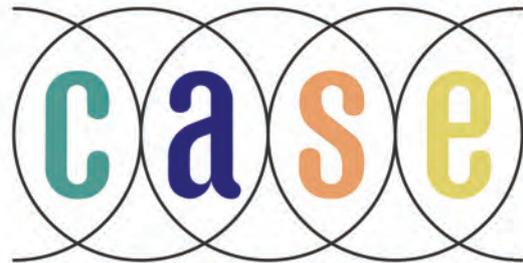
EYES DOWN Interactive comedy thriller during which the audience play actual games of bingo - with real prizes! Sun 15 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

Kids Theatre

THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD Stage version of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's award-winning story, Mon 9 - Tues 10 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Herbert

Art Gallery & Museum



coventry art societies exhibition

Friday 20 February – Sunday 19 April 2026

A diverse and inspiring collection of artworks created by members of art societies and art groups across Coventry and Warwickshire.

Find out more theherbert.org

Museum admission fees apply.
Image: Enchanting Venice,
Uthaya Swoboda



Monday 9 - Sunday 15 March

THE GRUFALLO, THE WITCH AND THE WARTHOG WITH JULIA DONALDSON Julia Donaldson and four actors bring six of her stories to life, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall



HAY! Puppetry, music, clowning, song and dance combine in an 'inclusive and uplifting' tale for younger audiences, Sun 15 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

Dance

2FACED DANCE: TOMORROW New work from Tamsin Fitzgerald offering a physical response to 'the things we struggle to say with words', Tues 10 Mar, Malvern Theatres

Light Entertainment

BOX OF FROGS Birmingham's premiere improv group present an evening of high-octane improvised comedy nonsense, based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 11 Mar, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

INSIDE VOICES PLS! An International Women's Month event showcasing female-identifying experiences around the theme of resilience, Wed 11 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Musical theatre concert featuring iconic scores from The Phantom Of The Opera, Jesus Christ Superstar, West Side Story, The Lion King, Blood Brothers, Miss Saigon, Hamilton and more... Wed 11 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Ultimate feelgood Irish show, Wed 11 - Thurs 12 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

LIEVEN SCHEIRE SCIENCE AND SIDE SPLITTING COMEDY 'Mind-expanding insights' and comedy combine in 'a unique show that makes the mysteries of science entertaining and

accessible', Thurs 12 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

THE DAZZLING DIAMONDS - COMEDY DRAG VARIETY SHOW Thurs 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE MOZART GROUP An evening of classical compositions and comedy, Thurs 12 Mar, Malvern Theatres

JAWDANCE X UNISLAM Apples And Snakes present a showcase of 'performance poetry, rhythm and truth', Fri 13 Mar, The Rep, B'ham

PETE FIRMAN: TRICKS & GIGGLES Brand-new show from 'one of magic's most exciting performers', Fri 13 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DOMINIC FRISBY: AN EVENING OF COMEDY, SONGS AND SATIRE Fri 13 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING Musical tribute to hit TV series Buffy The Vampire Slayer, Fri 13 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE ALLURE SPEAKEASY 'Steamy striptease and daring drag' feature in a show combining 'jaw-dropping entertainment, chaotic comedy and utter fabulousness', Sat 14 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

LIEVEN SCHEIRE SCIENCE AND SIDE SPLITTING COMEDY 'Mind-expanding insights' and comedy combine in 'a unique show that makes the mysteries of science entertaining and accessible', Sat 14 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SING-A-LONG THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Fancy dress is strongly encouraged and full audience participation essential! Sat 14 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

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 Mar, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon



Talks & Spoken Word

POETRY SLAM 2026 Hosted by former Birmingham Poet Laureate SPOZ, Wed 11 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

SIR GEOFF HURST: LAST MAN STANDING FAREWELL TOUR Join the West Ham & England icon as he shares stories

from his illustrious career, Wed 11 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

HARRY BAKER: TENDER WORLD POETRY Slam Champion Harry Baker 'brings wit and wonder to new parenthood', Fri 13 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

JOHN POWER - THE CAST, THE LA'S, AND ME 'An intimate show that mixes John's best-loved songs with wild, funny and tender stories', Fri 13 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

GARTH MARENGHI - THIS BUSTED EARTH BOOK TOUR Sat 14 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY INTO MIDDLE EARTH Join Ash Bayliss as he explores the links between Birmingham and Tolkien's Middle Earth, Sat 14 Mar, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

Events

CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW Explore hundreds of stalls packed with everything from knitting and stitching supplies to card making and felting, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

SEWING FOR PLEASURE / FASHION & EMBROIDERY Browse inspiring stands, discover the latest tools and machines, and pick up expert tips from industry professionals, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

COMEDY IN FOCUS: BEAN Combined exhibition & film celebration of British comedy, Fri 13 Mar, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

CASTLE CEILIDH Evening of music and dance with a live Ceilidh band, Fri 13 Mar, Warwick Castle

BOOGIE LIGHTS EXPRESS A 'one of a kind' experience, blending 'dazzling lights, pulse-pounding music and nonstop energy', Fri 13 - Sat 14 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

ARTISAN AND REENACTORS MARKET Event combining a love of history and traditional skills & crafts, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Mar, Warwickshire Event Centre, Coventry

ASK ME ANYTHING: MEET THE EXPERTS AT THINKTANK Relaxed, family-friendly event 'where no question is too big, too small, or too strange', Sat 14 Mar, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

BONGO'S BINGO - ST PATRICK'S DAY SPECIAL The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 14 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

DEMYSTIFYING AI: THINKTANK LATE Adults-only event showing how AI works, exploring its ethics and imagining its future, Sat 14 Mar, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

THEATRE TOUR A unique insight into

one of the most historic theatres in the West Midlands, Sat 14 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Journey into the gritty industrial landscape of the 1920s, Sat 14 Mar, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE SPRING COLLECTION VINTAGE FAIR Vintage shopping experience, with genuine originals from the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s, Sat 14 Mar, Himley Hall and Park, Dudley

00S SILENT DISCO Sat 14 Mar, Coventry Cathedral

MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL 2026 Action-packed day of top-tier racing and entertainment, Sat 14 Mar, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

THE FAMILY HISTORY SHOW Put your research questions to an expert, enjoy a free talk, and make contact with a local society, archive or genealogical supplier, Sat 14 Mar, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

CORBET RE-ENACTMENT GROUP The medieval reenactment group 'bring their energy and enthusiasm for history to the museum', Sat 14 Mar, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

THE MURDER OF THE GROOM Immersive murder-mystery evening, Sat 14 Mar, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

ALTON AFTER DARK Experience the twists and turns of the venue's rollercoasters at night, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire

WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS Discover the untold stories of women who've shaped the world, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND Enjoy blossom-filled garden walks and hear inspiring short talks about 'ultimate mother figure' Katherine Parr, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

MARCH MADNESS Meet the friendly engines, ride the themed attractions, and experience the magical world of Thomas the Tank Engine, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Drayton Manor Resort, Staffordshire

DREAM EXTREME ALLSTAR CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS Featuring 'high-flying stunts, flipping tumbles, and incredible dances on three different competition floors', Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

SPRING GIFT FAYRE Featuring a whole host of suppliers selling local and hand-made goods, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring traders from across the UK selling a wide range of items from yesteryear, Sun 15 Mar, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley



Ashley Campbell - St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

Gigs

BRIGHT LIGHT BRIGHT LIGHT + ARIANA & THE ROSE Mon 16 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WINTER MOUNTAIN Mon 16 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

SIGRID + ETTA MARCUS Mon 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

VITAMIN STRING QUARTET Mon 16 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

GREEN GARDENS Tues 17 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WATERPARKS Tues 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

DIRT ROAD BAND Wed 18 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

THRICE + LYSISTRATA Wed 18 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BOOM SLANG Wed 18 Mar, Dead Wax, B'ham

STONETHROW + GEOFF FROST & ANDY CLAPHAM Wed 18 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

DAOIRI FARRELL Wed 18 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

CYGNET QUARTET Wed 18 Mar, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

THE CHER COLLECTION Wed 18 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

DAME AREA Thurs 19 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JONNY MORGAN & THE MORAL SUPPORT Thurs 19 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ODYSSEY Thurs 19 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

HYPERREAL + MISERY KIDS + HOLLYWOOD BROWN Thurs 19 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ARI ABDUL Thurs 19 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

POLITE BUREAUX Thurs 19 Mar, The Victoria, Birmingham

MELA GUITAR QUARTET Thurs 19 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

MOTHER HEROIC: A CELEBRATION OF BJÖRK'S MUSIC Thurs 19 Mar, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THE TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE Thurs 19 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ERIC BIBB Thurs 19 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DAOIRI FARRELL Thurs 19 Mar, Regal, Tenbury Wells

ESSENTIALLY CHER Thurs 19 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic

ZIGGY POP & CULT FICTION Thurs 19 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

KESHA Thurs 19 Mar, The Halls, Wolverhampton

THE OGRETONES Thurs 19 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

WILLE & THE BANDITS Thurs 19 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE ATLANTIC PLAYERS + SWAMPMEAT FAMILY BAND Fri 20 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

RAY HEART Fri 20 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SAMM HENSHAW Fri 20 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CHESNEY HAWKES + LAURA ASTON Fri 20 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Fri 20 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE SCHEMERS Fri 20 Mar, Jo Jo Jims, B'ham

MARK LOCKHEART Fri 20 Mar, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

WITCH FEVER Fri 20 Mar, Dead Wax, B'ham

THE OGRETONES Fri 20 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

METAL TO THE MASSES HEAT 5 Fri 20 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

10CC Fri 20 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

FLEETWOOD UNCHAINED Fri 20 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

OASISH Fri 20 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

SAINT SENARA + YOUNG MARTYRS Fri 20 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

PROMISES AND LIES - THE UB40 YEARS Fri 20 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE QUAD ROX Fri 20 Mar, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

BANOFFEE + PERMANENT DAYLIGHT + REISS PINDER + THE ILLUSION Fri 20 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

JILTED GENERATION Fri 20 Mar, hmv Empire, Coventry

RADIO GAGA Fri 20 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

ELLES BAILEY Fri 20 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE JAM UK Fri 20 Mar, Marris Bar, Worcester

MOMENTS OF PLEASURE - A TRIBUTE TO KATE BUSH Fri 20 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

THE MERSEY BEATLES Fri 20 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

UNDER THE COVERS Fri

20 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge
THE MACC LADS Fri 20 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

DAN OWEN Fri 20 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

MASON HILL + DEFENCES Fri 20 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE BLACK CHARADE Fri 20 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

ZIPSTYLE + THE DIRT + UNCLE DAD Fri 20 Mar, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MOUSE OUTFIT Fri 20 Mar, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ANT HILL MOB Fri 20 Mar, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

MACBUSTED Fri 20 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

TV PINS + IF THE DRESS DON'T FIT Fri 20 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

DAMIEN DEMPSEY Sat 21 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LUNA MARBLE + BELTANE MOON Sat 21 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE FEELING Sat 21 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

ASH XO + SUPA D + COLDSTEPS + TERMINAL 4 Sat 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

EKOH Sat 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PAUL DRAPER Sat 21 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE ROLLIN' STONED Sat 21 Mar, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

STEVE IGNORANT BAND PERFORMING CRASS + CLUB BRAT Sat 21 Mar, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

QUEENERGY Sat 21 Mar, The Dovehouse, Solihull

SMALL CHANGES Sat 21 Mar, Bromsgrove Arts @ Fairfield Village Hall, Fairfield

FEARLESSLY TAYLOR Sat 21 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

CHASING MUMFORD Sat 21 Mar, The Assembly,

Leamington Spa
ERROL LINTON BAND Sat 21 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

AC30S Sat 21 Mar, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

R&B ORCHESTRA Sat 21 Mar, hmv Empire, Coventry

SHANGHAI HOSTAGE + THE GENES + ALFRESCO LOVE SOUNDS + THOSE FINE STRANGERS Sat 21 Mar, FarGo Village, Coventry

MIDDING + RY-GUY Sat 21 Mar, Just Dropped In, Coventry

THE SKALECTRICS Sat 21 Mar, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE BLUETONES Sat 21 Mar, Marris Bar, Worcester

CODA - A TRIBUTE TO LED ZEPPELIN Sat 21 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

LINKWELLS Sat 21 Mar, West Malvern Social Club

MADE IN TENNESSEE Sat 21 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic

NORTHERN LIVE Sat 21 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

ALEX HART Sat 21 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

MAET LIVE & THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS Sat 21 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

NICK HARPER Sat 21 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DAN BYRNE + MUDDIBROOKE + KIT TRIGG Sat 21 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

SKYE CONSORT & EMMA BJÖRLING Sat 21 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

SCOPYONS + TWIN LIZZY Sat 21 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Sat 21 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ONE NIGHT IN NASHVILLE FT MARIA JORDAN Sat 21 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SLEEP BROKEN Sat 21 Mar, The Station, Cannock

KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS Sat 21 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall

AUDIO JUNKIES Sat 21 Mar, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

ELKIE BROOKS Sat 21 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ASHLEY CAMPBELL Sat 21 Mar, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

MARK HARRISON BAND Sat 21 Mar, Eaton Constantine Village Hall, Shropshire

DON'T STOP - FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE Sun 22 Mar, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE Sun 22 Mar, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

REMY BOND Sun 22 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

CRYSTAL TIDES + LUNA BAY + THE PUBLICS Sun 22 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE CRIBS + COURTING Sun 22 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CRYSTAL LAKE + MISS MAY I + GREAT AMERICAN GHOST + DIESECT Sun 22 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAZ MITRENKO BAND Sun 22 Mar, The Brasshouse, B'ham

GORILLAZ + OMAR SOULEYMAN Sun 22 Mar, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

TAYLORMANIA Sun 22 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

CAITLIN KRISKO AND THE BROADCAST Sun 22 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

MALIN LEWIS Sun 22 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

BOYZLIFE Sun 22 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JOHN POWER Sun 22 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

HONEY BOX Sun 22 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

EVE GOODMAN + SERA Sun 22 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

FEROCIOUS DOG Sun 22 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

RBC LUNCHTIME MUSIC Featuring Lucy Kerby (flute), Joanne Sealey (piano) & Phoebe Curcher (soprano). Programme includes works by Karg-Elert, Mon 16 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EX CATHEDRA: THE GARDEN OF LOVE Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor) & Ex Cathedra Scholars Ensemble. Programme includes works by Daniel-Lesur, Le Jeune, Palestrina & Whitacre, Tues 17 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Dominic Downs (piano), Tues 17 Mar, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

KIDDERMINSTER MALE CHOIR Tues 17 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

PEI-YU CHU PIANO RECITAL Wed 18 Mar, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

MELA GUITAR QUARTET Featuring Matthew Robinson, George Tarlton, Michael Butten & Zahrah Hutton (guitars). Programme includes new works by RBC composers, Thurs 19 Mar, The Lab, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PETER KING ORGAN RECITAL Thurs 19 Mar, Worcester Cathedral

RBC WIND ORCHESTRA Featuring Dougie Mitchell (conductor), Ella Michell (flute) & Matthew Osborne (trumpet). Programme includes works by Arrieu & Böhme, Fri 20 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

OLIVER HANCOCK ORGAN RECITAL Fri 20 Mar, St Mary's Church, Warwick

DUDOK STRING QUARTET Featuring Judith Van Driel & Marleen Wester (violins), Marie-Louise de Jong (viola), David Faber & Pieter Wispelwey (cello). Programme includes works by Dowland, Mozart & Schubert, Fri 20 Mar, Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa

THE SHREWSBURY BAROQUE ORCHESTRA Featuring Conor Gricmanis. Programme comprises Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Fri 20 Mar, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

KELL WIND TRIO Fri 20 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, A SEA SYMPHONY Featuring David Wynne (conductor), Kevin Gill (piano & organ), Jamie Hall (baritone), Carrie-Anne Williams (soprano) & Leamington Chamber Orchestra, Sat 21 Mar, All Saints Church, Leamington Spa

WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: MENDELSSOHN'S ELIJAH Featuring Meridian Sinfonia, Sarah Fox (soprano), Jeanette Ager (mezzo soprano), Dominic Lee (tenor) & Edward Grint (bass baritone), Sat 21

Mar, Worcester Cathedral

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY

ORCHESTRA Featuring Peter Morris (conductor) & Ros Rayner (leader). Programme includes works by Arnold, Prokofiev & Elgar, Sat 21 Mar, Wolverhampton Grammar School

JS BACH: ST JOHN PASSION Featuring The Phoenix Singers of Shrewsbury, Noxwode Baroque, Conor Gricmanis (leader) & David Thomas (conductor), Sat 21 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

CANTORAS UPPER VOICES CHAMBER CHOIR: STABAT MATER Programme includes works by Kim Andre Arnesen & Sarah Quartel, Sat 21 Mar, St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

KARL JENKINS' THE ARMED MAN: A MASS FOR PEACE Featuring Gig Caritas Chorus & Orchestra, Keith Horsfall (conductor) & Alex Lindsay (baritone). Programme also includes Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs, Sat 21 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

GERMAN ROMANCE Featuring Juan Ortuño (conductor) & Sophia Rosa (soloist). Programme includes works by Weber, Mendelssohn & Bruckner, Sat 21 Mar, St John Fisher Catholic College, Newcastle-under-Lyme

STAFFORD SINFONIA Featuring Jack Lovell-Huckle (musical director) & Dr Richard Jenkinson (cello). Programme includes works by Fauré, Tchaikovsky & Beethoven, Sat 21 Mar, Rising Brook Community Church, Stafford

RICHARD STRAUSS SPECTACULAR Featuring Keith Slade (conductor) & Kimichi Symphony Orchestra, Sun 22 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

UNIVERSITY PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor). Programme includes works by R Bennett, Ravel, R Latimer & Stravinsky, Sun 22 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: CHERRY BLOSSOM 2026 Programme includes works by Reich, Lewis & Loevendie, Sun 22 Mar, Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Dan Watson (conductor), Tim Bugg (leader) & Alexander Boukikov (horn). Programme includes works by Brahms, Dvořák, Mozart & Glazunov, Sun 22 Mar, Grieg Hall, Alcester

ANIMALTASTIC FAMILY CONCERT Featuring Halesowen Orchestra, Lee Armstrong (conductor) & Claire Thompson (leader). Programme includes works by Rossini, Saint-Saëns, Stravinsky & more..., Sun 22 Mar, The Salvation Army Church & Community Hub, Cradley Heath

Comedy

RADU ISAC Tues 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CHRIS KENT, ELEANOR TIERNAN, FREDDY QUINNE & COMIC TBC Wed 18 Mar, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

SHANE TODD Wed 18 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LIEVEN SCHEIRE Wed 18 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ROSS NOBLE Thurs 19 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

IAN STONE Thurs 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JIN HAO LI & DANA ALEXANDER Thurs 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GREG WINFIELD Thurs 19 Mar, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

ALFIE MOORE Thurs 19 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

MARCUS BRIGSTOCKE Thurs 19 Mar, Bretforton Grange Theatre-barn, Worcester

GEOFF NORCOTT Thurs 19 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

WILL DUGGAN, ASHISH SURI, JIN HAO LI, DANA ALEXANDER & LUKE NIXON Fri 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DARREN WALSH Fri 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY AWSUM, JACK CAMPBELL, ALEX CAHILL & PAUL RICKETTS Fri 20 Mar, Bedworth Civic Hall

RAY BRADSHAW Fri 20 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ANGELOS EPITHEMIOU, OLIVIA LEE, BEN TRELOAR & ANDY ROACH Sat 21 Mar, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

WILL DUGGAN, ASHISH SURI, JIN HAO LI & DANA ALEXANDER Sat 21 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL MCCAFFREY Sat 21 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ED BYRNE Sat 21 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

ANDY PARSONS Sat 21 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

DANIEL O'REILLY Sat 21 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

TOM ROSENTHAL Sat 21 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SCOTT BENNETT Sat 21 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

TOM DAVIS Sat 21 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JEN BRISTER Sun 22 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

AURIE STYLA Sun 22 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE WITCHES Scarlet Theatre present

an amateur version of Roald Dahl's much-loved story, Mon 16 - Wed 18 Mar, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

FAWLTY TOWERS - THE PLAY Join Basil, the Major and Polly as they bring to life favourite moments from the hit 1970s sitcom. Danny Bayne, Paul Nicholas and Joanne Clifton star, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

OPERATION MINGCEMAT Olivier Award-winning musical, described as 'Singin' In The Rain meets Strangers On A Train', Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

WE WILL ROCK YOU Rooftop Studios present an amateur version of the hit Ben Elton musical, featuring Queen's greatest hits, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

ME AND MY GIRL Knowle Musical Society present an amateur version of the rags-to-riches story of Bill Snibson, a cheeky cockney who suddenly discovers he's the long-lost heir to an aristocratic fortune, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS New version of HG Wells' apocalyptic tale, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THIRD CLASS One-man theatre show based on the life of Titanic survivor Edward Dorking, Thurs 19 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

EYES DOWN Interactive comedy thriller during which the audience play actual games of bingo - with real prizes! Thurs 19 Mar, Wednesbury Library

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Amateur version presented by Curtain Call Studios, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BRIEF ENCOUNTER Amateur version of Emma Rice's adaptation of Noel Coward's classic drama, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Mar, Dudley Little Theatre

PIXIEMATOSIS Sqwonky puppets, odd-automata and a slew of charity-shop rejects feature in this story of 'greed and the existential madness of it all', Fri 20 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

LITTLE WOMEN - THE BROADWAY MUSICAL Louisa May Alcott's classic tale of love, family and resistance, brought to life in a production set to music. Performed by RBC actors, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

1984 Box Tale Soup present a new version of George Orwell's dystopian classic, Sat 21 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE IMMORTAL SAGA OF THE WARRIORS OF SWARAJYA 'An emotional experience where history speaks through words, and powerful thoughts are brought to life through

voice', Sat 21 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

WILDE ABOUT OSCAR Jonathan Goodwin plays Oscar Wilde in a 'sparkling and sprightly' one-man show, Sat 21 Mar, Earlsdon Carnegie Library, Coventry

THE UNFRIEND Amateur version of the Stephen Moffat farce exploring middle-class England's perennial struggle to keep up appearances, Sat 21 - Sat 28 Mar, Criterion Theatre, Coventry

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Ukraine's Dnipro Opera present Puccini's tale of innocent love crushed between two cultures, Sun 22 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Kids Theatre

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW Puppetry, music and storytelling combine to bring four of Eric Carle's magical stories to life, Tues 17 - Wed 18 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

OUT OF THE BOX A family-friendly circus comedy show featuring non-verbal clowning, Sat 21 Mar, Lichfield Garrick



Light Entertainment

LIEVEN SCHEIRE SCIENCE AND SIDE SPLITTING COMEDY 'Mind-expanding insights' and comedy combine in 'a unique show that makes the mysteries of science entertaining and accessible', Wed 18 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MOTHER HEROIC: A CELEBRATION OF BJÖRK'S MUSIC A journey through Björk's ever-changing and critically acclaimed discography, Thurs 19 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

WEST END CROONERS Step back in time to the golden age of swing in a show featuring hits from Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr, Thurs 19 Mar, Halesowen Town Hall

BEN FOGLE: WILD Join the broadcaster & adventurer for an evening of stories about his encounters with the natural world, Thurs 19 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

LOOKING FOR ME FRIEND: THE MUSIC OF VICTORIA WOOD Paulus The Cabaret

Geek pays homage to the comedy icon. Accompanied by Michael Roulston (Fascinating Aida) on piano, Thurs 19 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

BIFF TO THE FUTURE Joseph Maudsley's one-man parody in which Biff, the iconic villain from hit 80s movie Back To The Future, takes centre stage, Thurs 19 Mar, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

TOO MUCH TOO YOUNG - THE STORY OF 2TONE & BEYOND! Theatrical experience exploring the birth of ska in Jamaica and its British revival in the late 1970s and 80s, Thurs 19 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch & Fri 20 Mar, Walsall Arena

PROF. BRIAN COX: EMERGENCE Preview show ahead of a new world tour, Fri 20 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DREAMCOAT STARS Musical theatre's greatest hits, performed by stars of Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Fri 20 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

BOTTOMS UP: BURLESQUE & CABARET The 'creme de la creme of the cabaret world' take to the stage to surprise and delight with 'sultry striptease, witty wisecracks and saucy songs', Sat 21 Mar, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Sat 21 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

NORTHERN LIVE: DO I LOVE YOU Featuring original sounds from the underground movement that started on dancefloors in the north and eventually swept the nation, Sat 21 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

TAYLOR SWIFT TRIBUTE BY MYSTERY ENSEMBLE Sat 21 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THE 80S SHOW 'Authentic, high-energy performance capturing the true essence of the era', Sat 21 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

LIEVEN SCHEIRE SCIENCE AND SIDE SPLITTING COMEDY 'Mind-expanding insights' and comedy combine in 'a unique show that makes the mysteries of science entertaining and accessible', Sat 21 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

TIM KEY: LOGANBERRY Brand-new show (with poems), Sun 22 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham



BEN FOGLE: WILD Join the broadcaster & adventurer for an evening of stories about his encounters with the natural

world, Sun 22 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

BACH REIMAGINED A co-production between James Wilton Dance and Canadian cellist Raphael Weinroth-Browne that explores Bach's means of composition as a form of divine worship, and the scientific advancements of his contemporary Sir Isaac Newton, Tues 17 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE RED SHOES Sir Matthew Bourne's award-winning production, telling a powerful tale of obsession, possession and one girl's dream to be the greatest dancer in the world, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

ME DANCE COMPANY: FURNACE CONTEMPORARY DANCE PERFORMANCE Triple bill of new work created by Marcia Edwards, Emily Cox and former De Montfort University students, Wed 18 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

MOTIONHOUSE: HIDDEN Dance-circus production that explores how, in an increasingly divided world, light can come out of darkness in times of crisis, Fri 20 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COPPELIA English Youth Ballet tell the story of inventor Dr Coppelius and his creation - a lifelike mechanical doll, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

IV BY SERAFINE 1369 Four dancers engage in a detailed, meditative and expansive practice of 'constant movement, energetic tuning and impossible stillness', Sat 21 Mar, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

ASIAN SPRING Annual celebration of South Asian dance, showcasing talented performers from across the region, Sun 22 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Talks & Spoken Word

MONTY DON: A JOURNEY THROUGH BRITISH GARDENS Britain's best-loved gardener hosts a brand-new show celebrating his landmark book and BBC Two series, British Gardens, Sun 15 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

AN EVENING WITH BIRMINGHAM CITY LEGENDS Join Clinton Morrison and Michael Johnson for first-hand accounts of all things Birmingham City, Wed 18 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

SIR GEOFF HURST: LAST MAN STANDING FAREWELL TOUR Join the West Ham &

England icon as he shares stories from his illustrious career, Fri 20 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE Fri 20 Mar, Kidderminster Town Hall

UNDERCOVER DETECTIVE: THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER A true-crime event. Peter Bleksley reveals the harrowing reality behind solving murders and battling the criminal underworld, Sat 21 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

UNDERCOVER DETECTIVE: THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER A true-crime event. Peter Bleksley reveals the harrowing reality behind solving murders and battling the criminal underworld, Sun 22 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Events

LICHFIELD LITERATURE FESTIVAL Celebration of the written word, with a plethora of leading authors addressing a wide range of topics, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Mar, venues across Lichfield

NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING SHOW Access expert advice, discover innovative products, and benefit from hands-on guidance, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Mar, NEC, Birmingham



BIRMINGHAM'S VICTORIAN MURDER MILE Join crime & policing historian Adam Wood for a walking tour and hear gruesome tales of Birmingham's Victorian past, Fri 20 Mar, West Midlands Police Museum, B'ham

PRACTICAL CLASSICS CLASSIC CAR & RESTORATION SHOW Featuring more than 1,300 classics, 160-plus car clubs and 250-plus exhibitors, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

CRAFTSPACE'S 40TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION Craft a birthday gift to take away, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

VINTAGE TRACTOR RUN Vintage tractors will be on show in and around the Bridgnorth area, Sun 22 Mar, Apley Farm Shop, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

AGBO RALLY Eighty rally cars from all vintages and eras take on the stages around Weston, including the iconic watersplash, Sun 22 Mar, Weston Park, Shropshire

Gigs

MADRA SALACH Mon 23 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY Mon 23 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

MARK HUMMEL AND BOB HALL Mon 23 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

MAN Tues 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MAN AT SEA Tues 24 Mar, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

ODEAL Tues 24 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HOLLY HUMBERSTONE Tues 24 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HELL HOTEL + THE THROWAWAY SCENE Tues 24 Mar, Subside Bar, Birmingham

CHLOE JESSICA + ISSY & REEE + INSIDE PEOPLE + BETH BAYLISS Tues 24 Mar, The Rainbow, Birmingham

BEN HOLDER & JAMIE BROWNFIELD PRESENT Tues 24 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

GONG Wed 25 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JOAN SHELLEY Wed 25 Mar, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

KINGS HEATHENS + DEBORAH ROSE Wed 25 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND Wed 25 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

A TRIBUTE TO THE CARPENTERS Wed 25 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

RONNIE SCOTT'S JAZZ CLUB Wed 25 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JACK GOODALL + HANNAH BROWN Thurs 26 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE SONGS OF JONI MITCHELL Thurs 26 Mar, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

ASTON MERRYGOLD Thurs 26 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LEON THOMAS Thurs 26 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

KOFI STONE Thurs 26 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KENNY THOMAS Thurs 26 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

URBAN FOLK QUARTET Thurs 26 Mar, Catshill Club, Bromsgrove

ROMARNA CAMPBELL TRIO Thurs 26 Mar, Marrs Bar, Worcester

EMPLOYED TO SERVE + CAGE FIGHT Thurs 26 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

LEGEND: THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY Thurs 26 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

DALE STORR Thurs 26 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

DOM MARTIN Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

POPCENE - BLUR! TRIBUTE Fri 27 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CON JOVI Fri 27 Mar, Actress & Bishop, B'ham

MOBB DEEP Fri 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

OCTOBER LONDON Fri 27 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

RISKEE AND THE RIDICULE + DEAD WET THINGS Fri 27 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

THE 9075 Fri 27 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

CHOP SUEY + SLIP-NOT Fri 27 Mar, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

WESTLIFE EXPERIENCE Fri 27 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES Fri 27 Mar, The Halls Wolverhampton

THE CHRIS STAPLETON EXPERIENCE Fri 27 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

HOLLIE MCNISH Fri 27 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

TASHA LEAPER AS MADONNA Fri 27 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE WATCH PLAYS GENESIS Fri 27 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

BAND ON THE EDGE & THE ORCHESTRA OF FOLK Fri 27 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

ULTIMATE COLDPLAY Fri 27 - Sat 28 Mar, The Station, Cannock

THE MURDERBURGERS + DEAD BARS + OH THE HUMANITY + BACK TEETH Sat 28 Mar, The Dark Horse, Moseley, B'ham

CALLUM BEATTIE + TOM

SPEIGHT Sat 28 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FEROCIOUS DOG Sat 28 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN Sat 28 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ENJOY THE SILENCE UK Sat 28 Mar, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

AYNUR DOĞAN Sat 28 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

AIRTIGHT 80S Sat 28 Mar, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

KEVIN DEMPSEY + TU-KAY AND RYAN Sat 28 Mar, Temperance, Leamington Spa

SISTER COOKIE Sat 28 Mar, The Embankment, Stratford-Upon-Avon

THE LEAF LIBRARY + SILVER BIANES Sat 28 Mar, Just Dropped In, Coventry

CYDONIA KNIGHTS Sat 28 Mar, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

CHOP SUEY + SLIP-NOT + THE VIOLENT INZIDENT Sat 28 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

MILES HUNT Sat 28 Mar, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT Sat 28 Mar, The Halls Wolverhampton

THE BLOW MONKEYS Sat 28 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

AWEN ENSEMBLE + PEIRIANT Sat 28 Mar, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

THE HOUSE OF LOVE Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

INFECTED RAIN + BUTCHER BABIES + BLACK SPIKES Sun 29 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sun 29 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

LUKE COMBS UK Sun 29 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GUTTERSNIPE Sun 29 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

5 SECONDS OF SUMMER Tues 31 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE VAN MORRISON ALUMNI BAND Tues 31 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

MISHRA Tues 31 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shrops

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER: FAURÉ REQUIEM Featuring Adrian Partington (conductor) & the Gloucester Cathedral Choir. Programme also includes Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs, Mon 23 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

PAINTED TIDES Featuring various chamber ensembles performing works with themes of the sea and waterscapes, Mon 23 Mar, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ARMONICO CONSORT: JS BACH, ST MATTHEW'S PASSION Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Nathan Vale (Evangelist) & Alex Jones (Christus), Tues 24 Mar, Malvern Theatres

ZOE TAN PIANO CONCERT Wed 25 Mar, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

SHREWSBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Galin Ganchev (soloist). Programme includes works by Bacewicz, Dvořák & Shostakovich, Wed 25 Mar, Shrewsbury School

ARMONICO CONSORT: JS BACH, ST MATTHEW'S PASSION Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Nathan Vale (Evangelist) & Alex Jones (Christus), Thurs 26 Mar, St Mary's Church, Warwick

EIRA LYNN JONES HARP RECITAL Fri 27 Mar, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

BBC PHILHARMONIC Featuring Lucie LeGuay (conductor) & Senja Rummukainen (soloist). Programme includes works by Debussy, Dvořák & Mozart, Fri 27 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BIRMINGHAM CHORAL UNION: A SPRING CONCERT Featuring Colin Baines (conductor), Darren Hogg (organ), Ed Harrison (tenor), Hannah Devereux (soprano) & Sonare Wind Ensemble. Programme includes works by Dvořák & Chilcott, Sat 28 Mar, St George's Church, Edgbaston, Birmingham

PHOENIX SINGERS: SPRING SERENADE Sat 28 Mar, St John's and St Peter's Church Ladywood ARC, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM GAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: STONE TO SKY Featuring Neavan Lobban (conductor) & Andrew Woolcock (soloist). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Ney Rosauro & Sibelius, Sat 28 Mar, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

TELFORD ORCHESTRA Programme includes works by Borodin,

Dvořák & Tchaikovsky, Sat 28 Mar, St Michael's Church, Telford, Shropshire

KARL JENKINS' THE ARMED MAN: A MASS FOR PEACE Featuring Barnt Green Choral, Sat 28 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

TAN DUN & THE LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Hongni Wu (mezzo-soprano), John Findon (tenor), Dingle Yandell (bass), London Philharmonic Choir & London Chinese Philharmonic Choir, Sun 29 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

LUMAS WIND QUINTET Programme includes works by Zemlinsky, JS Bach, Bernstein & more..., Sun 29 Mar, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

Comedy

ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING Wed 25 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ESHAAN AKBAR, RACHEL FAIRBURN, IGNACIO LOPEZ & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN Wed 25 Mar, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

GEOFF NORCOTT Wed 25 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

RUSSELL KANE & COMICS TBC Wed 25 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, DAVE LONGLEY & EVA BINDEMAN Thurs 26 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY PARSONS Thurs 26 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALFIE MOORE Thurs 26 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

GEOFF NORCOTT Thurs 26 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

ALISON SPITTLE Fri 27 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MRS SMITH Fri 27 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ASHWYN SINGH Sat 28 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MILTON JONES & COMICS TBC Sat 28 Mar, Malvern Theatres

JEFF DUNHAM Sun 29 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

HENNING WEHN Sun 29 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Theatre

BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY Award-winning West End show charting Buddy's rise to international stardom and his legendary final performance at the age of just 22, Mon 23 - Tues 24 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

A GRAIN OF SAND One-woman show taking an intimate look at

war through the eyes of a child, blending Palestinian folklore with real-life testimonies from children in contemporary Gaza, Mon 23 - Wed 25 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT

Thirtieth anniversary production of the iconic musical that follows three friends on a heartwarming road trip across the Australian outback, Mon 23 - Sat 28 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

REVISION ON TOUR DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE Dickens Theatre Company's staging of Robert Louis Stevenson's Gothic thriller, Tues 24 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SIGN OF FOUR Radio play performed live on stage and starring Colin Baker (Doctor Who/The Brothers) and Terry Molloy (The Archers/Doctor Who), Tues 24 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

AS YOU LIKE IT Amateur version presented by Shropshire Youth Theatre (SYT), Tues 24 - Thurs 26 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NOUGHTS & CROSSES Malorie Blackman's drama about 'love, revolution, and what it means to grow up in a divided world', Tues 24 - Sat 28 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

FAME THE MUSICAL Presented by Lichfield Musical Youth Theatre, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

SIX THE MUSICAL The six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their tales, remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak into an 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

PEPPER AND HONEY Timely play focusing on 'the journey of change, cultural differences, and the conflict between upholding traditions and embracing the new', Thurs 26 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

THE SIGNALMAN Middle Ground Theatre Company present Charles Dickens' 'ghostly short story, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ELLEN KENT: THE FAREWELL TOUR - LA TRAVIATA Verdi's tragic tale, telling the story of the life and loves of consumptive courtesan Violetta, Fri 27 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

OLIVE BRANCH Vanhulle Dance Theatre fuse physical theatre and martial arts to tell a feelgood tale of friendship, Fri 27 Mar, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

JEKYLL AND HYDE One-man version of a Victorian classic, Fri 27 Mar, Anglican Chapel, Coventry

ELLEN KENT: THE FAREWELL TOUR - CARMEN Bizet's tale of passion, sexual jealousy and death, Sat 28 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

ROMEO & JULIET (RUBBISH SHAKESPEARE COMPANY) Sixty minutes of 'ludicrous action featuring clowning, slapstick, and mischievous storytelling', Sat 28 Mar, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

SISTERS 360 Inspirational story about family, friendship, and the importance of following your dreams, Sat 28 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

RAPUNZEL Immersion Theatre present a retelling of the famous fairytale, complete with music, humour and audience interaction, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RIDE OR DIE Florence Espeut-Nickless' fast-paced new play about family, loyalty and risk-taking, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, The Ballroom, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

JUDE SIMPSON: A NOISE ANNOYS 'A poetry show for the senses', featuring rhymes, noises, songs, surprises and audience interaction, Sun 29 Mar, The Wakes, Oakengates, Shropshire

CATS: YOUNG ACTORS EDITION Presented by Get Your Wiggle On juniors, Mon 30 - Tues 31 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MEAN GIRLS Faye Tozer stars alongside Emily Lane and Vivian Panka in a new version of the smash-hit musical comedy, Mon 30 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

LEGALLY BLONDE Strictly runner-up Amber Davies stars as Elle Woods in a new version of the rom-com musical, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 4 Apr, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SIX THE MUSICAL The six wives of Henry VIII take to the mic to tell their tales, remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak into an 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power, Tues 31 Mar - Sat 11 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

Kids Theatre

TALES FROM ACORN WOOD Theatre for younger audiences based on much-loved stories by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler, Tues 26 - Sun 29 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

RUDE SCIENCE Stefan Gates' explosive show, featuring enormous bottoms, fart machines, snot cocktails, vast whoopee cushions and pee-powered fireworks, Mon 30 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE WIGGLES: TREE OF WISDOM SPECTACULAR! 'High-energy family extravaganza featuring timeless hits and singalong moments', Mon 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BRAINIAC LIVE Award-winning family science show packed with explosive experiments that promise to 'blow your mind', Tues 31 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

THE STRICTLY EXPERIENCE Fundraising event in which 20 contestants and their professional dance partners each showcase two dazzling routines, Sat 28 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ASCENSION DANCE: EARLY WEAVES Non-verbal performance telling a heartwarming tale of friendship, curiosity and play. A 'perfect introduction to dance theatre for younger audiences', Sun 29 Mar, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Light Entertainment

DEAD RINGERS; THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Topical satire show featuring Jon Culshaw, Jan Ravens, Lewis MacLeod & Duncan Wisbey, Mon 23 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THAT'LL BE THE DAY: 40TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW A 'unique blend' of rock & roll, pop and comedy, featuring timeless hits from the 1950s through to the 80s, Tues 24 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS - THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Ultimate feelgood Irish show, Wed 25 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

GAME OF CRONES A 'riotous celebration' of women in their prime. A show described as 'funny, feral, and gloriously unapologetic', Thurs 26 Mar, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

ONE NIGHT IN DUBLIN Brand-new production promising laughter, music and mischief. Danny Muldoon stars, Fri 27 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

FEMINEM Tracey Collins (Elvis Lesley, Shell Suit Cher) stars in a one-woman musical comedy 'extravaganza'. Expect Eminem bangers, pop mashups, crisp-fuelled audience games, dance-offs, singalongs and the legendary Rap God Hokey Cokey, Fri 27 Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

A JAMES BOND CONCERT SPECTACULAR Caroline Bliss (Miss Money Penny) comperes, sharing stories about her experiences making the Timothy Dalton James Bond films, Fri 27 Mar, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

BEV BEVAN & DES TONG: THE HISTORY OF BIRMINGHAM ROCK MUSIC Featuring stories and personal memories of 'nightclubs, pubs and places'... Fri 27 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

TOO MUCH TOO YOUNG - THE STORY OF 2TONE & BEYOND! Theatrical experience exploring the birth of ska in Jamaica and its British revival in the late 1970s and 80s, Fri 27 - Sat 28

Mar, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

FOIL ARMS & HOG: SKITTISH An evening of comedy, audience participation and improvisation from the much-loved sketch group, Sat 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

QUEENZ: DRAG ME TO THE DISCO A live vocal drag 'extravaganza' celebrating pop royalty through the decades, Sat 28 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE GLAM ROCK SHOW Celebrating the golden age of glitter, guitars and anthems, Sun 29 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH JASON FOX Join Jason to hear never-before-told stories from some of the most hostile outposts on Earth, Wed 25 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

Events

EASTER EGSPERIENCE Featuring an Easter egg hunt, the chance to meet Easter Rabbit, and an opportunity to learn more about the lifesaving Midlands Air Ambulance service, Sat 28 Mar, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity Airbase, Shifnal

SAUSAGE AND CIDER FESTIVAL RACEDAY Sample a wide range of gourmet sausages and seasonal ciders, available across the racecourse, Sat 28 Mar, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

MEGACON LIVE The ultimate popular culture show, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

BLUEY CHARACTER VISIT Take a heritage train ride out into the countryside to see Bluey, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

EASTER SPRING TRAIL Hunt for hidden treasures, learn fascinating facts and complete fun challenges, Sat 28 Mar - Sat 11 Apr, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

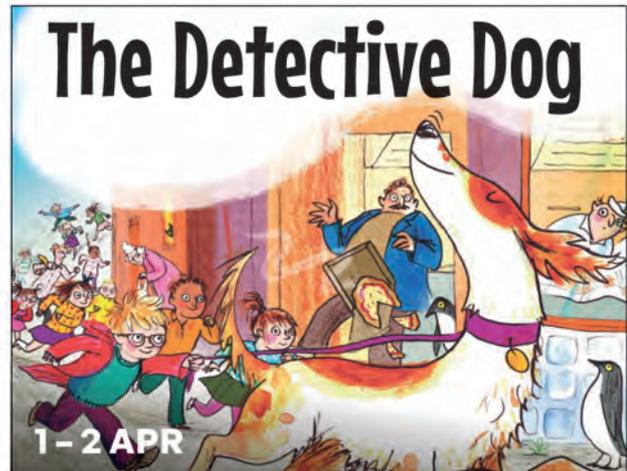
EASTER ADVENTURES Enjoy Easter-themed activities, Sat 28 Mar - Sun 12 Apr, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

EASTER QUEST Follow the Easter trail, hunt for eggs and answer questions along the way, Sat 28 Mar - Sun 19 Apr, Witley Court & Gardens, Worcestershire

EASTER QUEST Follow the Easter trail, hunt for eggs and answer questions along the way, Sat 28 Mar - Sun 19 Apr, Kenilworth Castle

NOISE MAKER MARKET The newest effects and guitar show for independent builders from across the UK, Sun 29 Mar, Centrala, Digbeth, Birmingham

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