

Birmingham

ISSUE 472 MAY 2026

What's On

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

birminghamwhatson.co.uk



LA VOIX
AS MISS HANNIGAN

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ THE TIMES
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ THE TELEGRAPH
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ SUNDAY MIRROR
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ RADIO TIMES

Annie

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THE TIMES

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inside:

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Mamma Mia! returns to Birmingham Hippodrome



THE REUNION TOUR

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JOURNEY TO EGYPT

Tutankhamun immersive exhibition coming to the NEC



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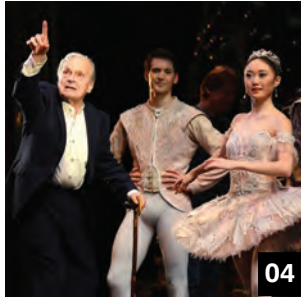
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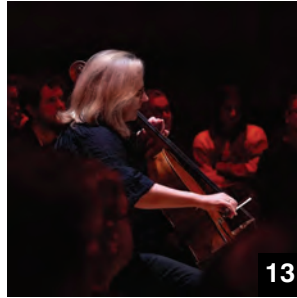
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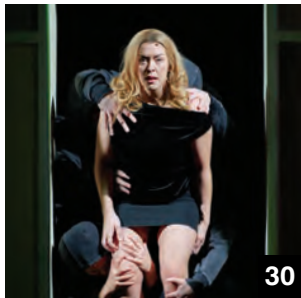
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What's On

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BRB to celebrate Sir Peter Wright's centenary

Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) will next month mark the centenary of its founding director laureate, Sir Peter Wright, with a special gala performance at Birmingham Hippodrome.

Taking place on Thursday 18 June, the show will feature highlights from some of Sir Peter's best-loved works, including Giselle, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty and Coppélia.

The event will also see BRB Director Carlos Acosta dancing the role of Death - for one night only - in one of Sir Peter's favourite works, The Green Table...

The Gala performance is followed on the next two nights (Friday the 19th & Saturday the 20th) by 20th-Century Masterpieces, a triple bill featuring Sir Frederick Ashton's Birthday Offering, George Balanchine's Theme And Variations, and The Green Table.

For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at brb.org.uk

Sounds of the 80s coming to Symphony Hall

Hit-making 80s pop stars Nik Kershaw (pictured), Johnny Hates Jazz and Jaki Graham are teaming up next month to present a Birmingham Symphony Hall show paying tribute to the decade that made them famous.



To find out more about the Thursday 11 June get-together and purchase tickets, visit the website at 80sclassical.co.uk

A festive return for The Big Christmas Assembly

Fans of festive cheer and school assembly nostalgia, rejoice! The nation's favourite primary school teacher-turned-Glastonbury sensation, James B Partridge, is bringing his Big Christmas Assembly show back to Birmingham this December. James stops off at The Alexandra on Saturday the 12th, with tickets for his show now available via his website at jamesbpartridge.com

Cult classic to be shown at Mockingbird Cinema

A charity screening of cult 1987 film Withnail & I will take place at Birmingham's Mockingbird Cinema on Saturday 13 June. Tickets are available via the venue's website

at mockingbirdcinema.com, with all profits being donated to the Refugee & Migrant Centre West Midlands.

Museum launches new AI-powered digital guide

Birmingham science museum Thinktank has launched a new AI-powered digital guide to help visitors explore the venue in a more interactive and personalised way. The guide, Tellme, is available free of charge and can be accessed through a smartphone browser. Visitors can simply point their phones at exhibits to find out facts and stories. They can also ask questions and receive answers in real time by using the guide's chat function.

New all-year-round foodie tours launched in the city

Birmingham Restaurant Festival has launched a new all-year-round series of tours aimed at introducing guests to the city's rich food heritage.



The first tour is A Taste Of Birmingham, a guided four-hour experience which includes stop-offs at six hand-picked eateries in the city centre and Jewellery Quarter. The

initiative runs on Saturday afternoons throughout this month and beyond. For more information and to book a spot on the tour, visit birminghamrestaurantfestival.co.uk

All-star cast to star in High Society at The Alexandra

Birmingham-born Call The Midwife star Helen George will be joined in the touring production of High Society by Freddie Fox (Slow Horses), Julian Ovenden (Bridgerton and Downton Abbey) and Nigel Lindsay (Mobland and The Capture) when the hit Cole Porter musical visits the city in late summer. The show stops off at The Alexandra from Tuesday 18 to Saturday 22 August. For further information and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com



Major grant awarded to Birmingham Museums

Birmingham Museums has been awarded a grant of £183,000 from the DCMS/Wolfson Museums & Galleries Improvement Fund to support a development project at the city's Museum & Art Gallery. The grant funding will enable essential physical improvements in two of the venue's galleries, allowing the spaces to be reopened. The move will increase access to the city's global majority and contemporary arts collections.

Lord Of The Rings birthday concert

A concert celebrating the 25th anniversary of hit film *The Lord Of The Rings: The Fellowship Of The Ring* is coming to Birmingham pre-Christmas. The Saturday 19 December event at the city's bp pulse LIVE venue will see Howard Shore's original scores being performed live to a screening of the Academy Award-winning movie. Tickets for the concert can be purchased by visiting the website bppulselive.co.uk

Uncovering hidden spaces...

Birmingham residents are being invited to explore some of the city's most intriguing spaces this month, courtesy of a brand-new initiative. *City Uncovered*, running from Monday 18 to Sunday 31 May, will feature more than 20 limited-run experiences, 'offering locals access to places, people and stories across Birmingham'. Highlights include the chance to step inside the historic Coffin Works Museum for an after-hours experience, or to go behind the scenes at The School of Jewellery. To find out more, visit yuup.co/city-uncovered

Glee Club date for golf podcast

Hit podcast *Golf Is Ruining My Life* is visiting Birmingham's Glee Club next month. Hosted by Tom Green and Tom Price, and titled *An Evening For Swingers*, the show stops off at the venue on Sunday 21 June. To book tickets, head online to golfisruiningmylife.co.uk



Acclaimed Tutankhamun show heading for Birmingham

Midlanders will get the chance to take a 'breathtaking journey' into ancient Egypt this summer, when *Tutankhamun: The Immersive Exhibition* visits Birmingham's NEC from Friday 19 June to Sunday 13 September.

The award-winning show features 360° projections, a seated virtual reality experience, an interactive metaverse room, and authentic replicas and artefacts from Cairo. To find out more, visit tutankhamunexperience.com



Gabrielle to tour her greatest hits

Gabrielle is heading to Birmingham next year as part of a UK 'greatest hits' tour. The multiple award winner will perform at the city's Symphony Hall on Monday 19 April. For further information and tickets, visit bio.to/Gabrielle

Transport festival set for a September launch in Birmingham city centre

A brand-new free-to-attend event is set to take place in Birmingham in the autumn (Friday 18 - Sunday 20 September). Activating key city-centre public sites, *Brum Transport Fest* is described by its organisers, Birmingham Colmore, as a celebration of the West Midlands' role in the UK's transport story. The festival's full programme of events will be released in due course. To stay up to date with announcements, visit colmorelife.co.uk

Indoor skydiving comes to the NEC

iFLY, 'the global leader in indoor skydiving', has announced the opening of a new venue at Birmingham's NEC. The new site is iFLY's fifth UK location and features a newly upgraded 12-foot circular glass wind tunnel. To find out more about the new attraction, visit the website at iFLYworld.co.uk



Mixed-media exhibition to go on show at MAC

Birmingham arts centre MAC will open a mixed-media exhibition focusing on the human form in the summer.



Showcasing work produced by tutors and participants across the full breadth of MAC's courses, the display will be available to view from Saturday 4 July to Sunday 24 January.

Electropop play explores queer invisibility in tennis

The subject of queer invisibility in tennis comes under the spotlight in an imaginative electropop musical visiting two Midlands venues across the next few weeks.

Titled Fairlight, the production shows at Edgbaston Archery & Lawn Tennis Society on Wednesday 13 May and is being presented as part of the city's annual Flatpack Festival. The musical then returns to the region in the summer to play Leamington Tennis Club on Saturday 11 July. To find out more and book tickets, visit fairlightmusical.co.uk

ELO cello donated to the Conservatoire collection

A one-of-a-kind silver electric cello that toured with ELO in the 1970s has been donated to the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC)

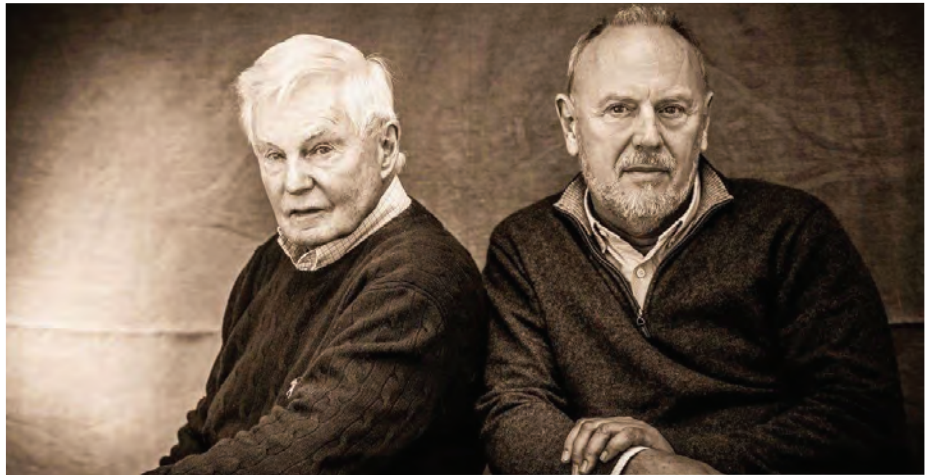


by former band member Mel Gale. The instrument joins the Richard Tandy memorabilia collection, which was given to RBC last year and is now housed in the Richard Tandy Production Suite.

Hot Chip to play Mostly Jazz Festival this summer

Hot Chip have been added to the line-up for Birmingham's Mostly Jazz Funk & Soul Festival (Moseley Park, Friday 10 - Sunday 12 July).

The electronic favourites will perform on Friday the 10th. They will be joined on the bill that night by Fabio & Grooverider & The Outlook Orchestra, R&B pioneers Soul II Soul, Goldie - for a DJ set - and Nightmares On Wax. To check out the complete three-day line-up and book tickets, pay a visit to the event's website at mostlyjazz.co.uk



Sir Derek Jacobi returning to Birmingham theatre

Celebrated veteran actor Sir Derek Jacobi is returning to Birmingham this month for an in-conversation event at the city's Old Rep. The Station Street theatre was the venue in which a critically acclaimed early-1960s performance in Henry VIII led to Sir Derek becoming a founding member of the newly

formed National Theatre.

The 87-year-old actor will be in conversation with his long-term partner, Richard Clifford, on Wednesday 6 May.

For further information and to check ticket availability, visit the venue's website at oldrep.co.uk

Festive season family fun with One Tiny Penguin...

Birmingham Hippodrome's New Musical Theatre department will be hoping to make it a hat-trick of five-star Christmas shows when they stage One Tiny Penguin this festive season.

The production is the third in the department's My First Musical series, with the two previous shows - No Such Thing As Wolves and The Jingleclaw - both proving to be major hits with Christmas family audiences. One Tiny Penguin is suitable for youngsters aged three-plus and will show in the Hippodrome's Patrick Studio from Saturday 5 December to Sunday 3 January. Tickets can be purchased now by visiting the website at birminghamhippodrome.com

Birmingham composer releases his debut disc

A Birmingham-born composer is this month releasing his debut disc.

Twenty-two-year-old Christopher Churcher has quickly established himself as a distinctive emerging voice in British contemporary classical music. His new album, titled Moonrise, features choral music performed by Somerville College Choir, Oxford, and will be released physically and digitally on Friday 8 May.

Cult classics to be shown on Brum's biggest screen

Millennium Point is to host a series of cult classic movies on Birmingham's biggest screen.

The series begins on Friday 15 May with a screening of Christopher Nolan's Inception. Future movies include Nolan's Dark Knight Trilogy (Saturday 8 August), Labyrinth (Friday 30 October) and The Polar Express (Sunday 13 December).

For further information and tickets, visit the website at millenniumpoint.org.uk

Demon Barber cutting it at the Birmingham Rep

Tickets are now available for Birmingham Repertory Theatre's production of Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street.



Stephen Sondheim's musical masterpiece - helmed by The Rep's artistic director, Joe Murphy - runs at the venue from Saturday 4 July to Sunday 9 August. West End and Broadway musical theatre favourite Ramin Karimloo will play the title character, with David Badella (pictured) starring as Judge Turpin. For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at birmingham-rep.co.uk

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Warsaw Philharmonic
17 May | Symphony Hall



**Max Cooper Live: Feeling is
Structure**
18 May | Symphony Hall



**Nashville Sounds in the Round:
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20 May | Symphony Hall

bmusic.co.uk

A SPARKLING SEASON AWAITS



Tue 5 – Sat 9 May



Mon 11 – Sat 16 May

CAP Thu 14 May 7.30pm
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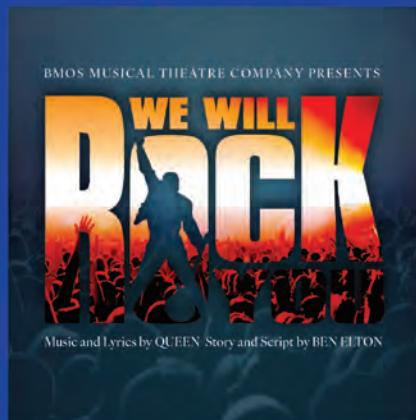
Tue 26 – Sat 30 May

Thu 28 May 7.30pm



Tue 2 – Sat 6 Jun

Thu 4 Jun 7.30pm

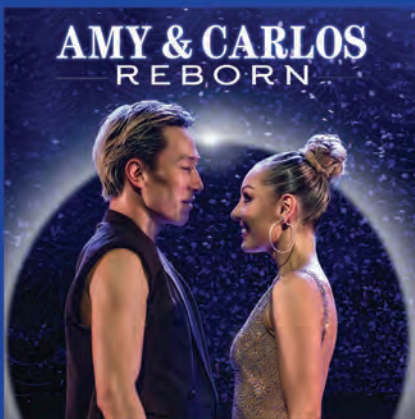


Tue 9 – Sat 13 Jun

Thu 11 Jun 7.30pm



Tue 16 & Wed 17 Jun



Fri 19 Jun



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AN INSIGHT INTO ORIGINS

What's On chats to two of the creatives involved in the new-work festival launching at Birmingham Hippodrome mid-month...

Midlands audiences have the chance to see a host of new works from exciting local artists in the week-long Origins Festival at Birmingham Hippodrome this month.

The festival features drama, comedy, dance and performance created by eight writers who have been part of the theatre's Origins programme for the past 18 months: Zakariye Abdillahi, Grace Barrington, Tina Hofman, Nathan Sebastian Lafayette, Jaz Morrison, Elizabeth O'Connor, Amerah Saleh and Louis Wharton.

Selected from more than 140 applicants, each theatre-maker has received support from the teams at the Hippodrome - and from each other - to create a selection of new pieces which will be showcased during the festival.

Origins has come out of the Hippodrome's New Work & Artist Development Department, which was founded in 2023 to promote and support West Midlands creatives.

The aim of the programme is to give each member of the group an opportunity to develop, learn and create, explains Hippodrome New Work Manager Anna Himali Howard: "For the Origins cohort, the process of making a new piece of work has been supported by space at the Hippodrome, dramaturgical support, and bespoke resources that these artists might need. Every month we all meet up and the artists share what they've been making with each other and get peer support.

"We had a little sharing with close collaborators and supporters in October, and the response to that work was extraordinary. I was just blown away by the quality of it, but also by how much the work of these artists could only be made in Birmingham. Even when it's not explicitly about Birmingham, something about the work has a quality of this city. That makes it distinctive to Birmingham but also relevant to the wider world and landscape because these artists have been so truthful and clear in looking at themselves and the world."

And now these productions will be shared with audiences at the Origins Festival.

"There are eight pieces across four nights of double bills," explains Anna, "and each artist will present a work-in-progress or a rehearsed reading of their work. There's so much variety in how the work will be presented. There will be script-in-hand readings, devised work, dance, solo work. It's a real snapshot of the state of theatre-making in Birmingham, and actually across the country at the moment, which is that it's

deeply diverse and rich and playing around with different forms and disciplines.

"And, as well as the shows, there are going to be workshops and panel talks and other exciting things going on, so I would say come to as much as you can - come and be immersed in the festival through the whole week because it's going to be a wider celebration of new work."

The Hippodrome has a key role in supporting artists and their development, says Anna:

"The Hippodrome wants to invest time and money and resource into the rich ecology of new work because it's good for the city, it's good for the artform and it's good for the Hippodrome as well.

"The festival is for our whole artistic community and the wider community of Birmingham to come and experience the work of these artists, but also to benefit from the ripple effect of what these artists have been doing here for the last 18 months.

"This is our first big presentation as the New Work Department. For us, it's a celebration of these artists' work but also of the Birmingham artistic community and of new work in general. It's an invitation for everyone to join us and celebrate and immerse themselves in the festival."

Birmingham-based writer Elizabeth O'Connor will be presenting *Earth Secrets*, her first play. It was written after her first novel, *Whale Fall*, won a host of prizes, including the Betty Trask Award, and was named one of the Observer's 10 best debut novels of 2024.

Writing for the stage has been a new endeavour for Elizabeth, and she has been grateful for the support she's received from the theatre and her fellow creatives: "What I found, and what I learnt over the course of the programme, is how different it is to write a play from a novel. This was in ways that were difficult and challenging but were also wonderful and which totally transformed how I write novels as well as approach plays. So thinking about the layout of a stage, or the layout of a scene; thinking visually about a novel or a piece of work, as well as the functions of different parts. There's the physicality of the characters on the stage, what they're saying, what they're not saying, how time moves around, choreography, staging. It's been such a wonderful experience to learn what's involved in a play beyond the writing."

As a writer who usually works alone, Elizabeth has also hugely benefited from the



input from Origins' other writers: "One of the things I've found so wonderful is building a community of other creatives. It's a really supportive group that never offers judgement because we are making different things and are all trying to help each other make the piece of work we want to make. It's been a really curious, supportive space to try out new ideas but also to really dig into what you want to do as a writer and who you are."

Earth Secrets, which forms part of a double bill with Jaz Morrison's *MID* on Saturday 16 May, has been influenced by Elizabeth's Birmingham roots.

"I moved house just before I joined Origins. I moved to Kings Norton, by the canals, where it's very wild but very industrial, and I was inspired by how people are living in nature and living in landscape. This is something that's informed all of my work but particularly with this kind of industrial legacy still visible in Birmingham and still a part of the way we live. So my play has a mystery at the centre: why are there birds falling out of the sky in this particular landscape where the characters are living? I wanted to think about folklore and the story of the city, the landscape around us, the canals of Birmingham, and the history and the stories that they hold.

"One of the most valuable things for me in Origins was developing my identity as a Birmingham creative. I think as an artist you get such a unique perspective being from this city."

Elizabeth is confident that audiences will be impressed by all of the shows in the festival: "The work that's being produced is of such an incredible standard. I've been so bowled over by the other artists. Everyone has this really distinctive voice and vision, so I would recommend people coming the whole week."

Origins Festival takes place at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 11 to Saturday 16 May

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 ☆ Slambonian Circus of Dreams ☆ Cut Capers
 ☆ Steve Knightley and The Winter Yards Band
 ☆ Dustbowl Revival ☆ Goitse ☆ Chris Wood
 ☆ Steve Knightley with Daniel Salvatore
 ☆ Katherine Priddy ☆ Natu Camara ☆ The Hunch
 ☆ Man The Lifeboats ☆ Kerr Fagan ☆ Malin Lewis
 ☆ Blowzabella ☆ Edith WeUtonga ☆ Sāwol
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Live music from across the city...

Arkayla

Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham, Sat 30 May

Layered guitar tones and telling lyrics combine to create complex yet dreamlike innovations in the music of Arkayla, a Manchester rock band who burst onto the scene a handful of years ago with a string of singles. Since that breakthrough, they've earned themselves a legion of dedicated fans by virtue of some seriously captivating live performances.

The boys have been likened to The Strokes, The Smiths and The Doors, comparisons which speak volumes for the impact of their style and the quality of their sound.



Emmylou Harris

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 13 May

Half a century into a stellar career - and indisputably one of the most revered voices in American music - folk & country legend Emmylou Harris is waving goodbye to the UK as part of her last-ever European tour. The 14-time Grammy Award winner and Country Music Hall of Fame inductee is using her mid-month Symphony Hall stop-off to say a big thank you to her Midlands-based fans "for all the years of memories, and the support that you've shown me."



Tame Impala

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sat 9 May

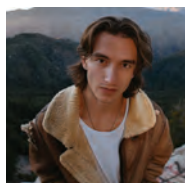
The psychedelic music project of Australian singer & multi-instrumentalist Kevin Parker, Tame Impala formed in 2007 and came to prominence three years later with the release of debut album *Innerspeaker*. Two years afterwards, follow-up effort

Lonerism scored a massive hit with the critics, being hailed one of the best albums of 2012... Making psychedelic hypno-groove melodic rock music, Tame Impala are stopping off in Birmingham in support of fifth and most-recent album *Deadbeat*.

Chance Peña

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Sat 16 May

Texas-born artist, songwriter & producer Chance Peña is heading to Birmingham in support of his most-recent album, *When I Change My Mind I Don't Mean It*. The record is a 14-track collection of soul-searching songs, delivered in his trademark gravelly voice and steeped in the immersive indie-folk for which he's become known.



Submotion Orchestra

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Tues 19 May

Submotion Orchestra are a seven-piece project from Leeds whose influences include jazz, dubstep, soul and ambient electronica. The band have performed across the world, with appearances at The Big Chill, Latitude, Glastonbury, Outlook and Bestival featuring among their career highlights. With five full-length albums and five EPs to their name, they're visiting Birmingham just a few days after the release of their sixth album, *Passed Me By*.

Loose Articles

The Flapper, Birmingham, Fri 15 May

With tongues firmly in their cheeks - and probably pints in their hands - high-energy all-female quartet Loose Articles deliver their discordant, hypnotic and repetitive sound with a fierce, in-your-face, punk-fuelled attitude. They've been making their presence felt since 2019, presenting humorous songs about working-class-relevant subjects. "We have a lot of political messages about what's on our mind," says bassist & vocalist Natalie Wardle. "I just write whatever pisses me off at the time. It touches on subjects like work, being scared of buses, and having social anxiety in big public situations."





BREAKING SWEAT

Ex-Spice Girl Melanie C visits Birmingham to celebrate the launch of her latest solo album...

She might be known as one fifth of the best selling girl group of all time, but for Sporty Spice (also known as Melanie Chisholm and, of course, Melanie C), the Spice Girls were just the beginning... She began a solo career in 1998 and releases her latest album, Sweat, at the start of this month. Ever busy, she visits Birmingham on Thursday 7 May for an album signing, before returning to the city in October to perform as part of a world tour. Here, she reveals that Sweat is custom-made to get the heart pumping - whether at the club or in the gym...

Melanie C, let's talk about Sweat, your new album. It feels like your most liberated record - what changed for you creatively this time around?

So many things have changed. Every album I've ever made, it's really been a reflection of that moment in my life - and over the last eight years I've been DJing. I've been lucky enough to play in so many great festivals all over the world, as well as playing in Ibiza - for the last five years I've been playing at Pacha - and it just really reignited a passion that I have for dance music. I discovered raving when I was about 17... I really got into that scene. It was such an incredible time. I grew up through the 80s, where nightclubs in the UK were, you know, a bit 'cheesy discos', and it was all a little bit 'step touch, step touch' when you were dancing. So to find this incredible movement that was happening with this music that was just so euphoric at times - for people to be dancing all night long, and so many different social backgrounds and communities coming together and socialising together... This kind of felt like 'our movement' as a young person. Then, when I turned 20, I auditioned for the band that became the Spice Girls, and that, of course, took over my life. All of my priorities changed. We were so focused, so determined to succeed. And then, once music was released, our schedule was crazy, so there wasn't much time for going out - I'd almost left that part of me behind. I've just been able to reclaim who I was before I was a Spice Girl. I've had so many influences through my life; I've been so lucky and worked with so many amazing people, and this felt like the time to really put all of those pieces together.

Having rediscovered this teenage version of yourself, then, did you approach producing this album more like a DJ set than a traditional pop album?

I definitely approached things differently. The perspective of a DJ is very different to the perspective of an artist - the way I wanted the music to sound, the way I wanted the music to make you feel. And I was also really conscious that as a live performer I'm very energetic. I've got loads of confidence and quite a lot of attitude, but when I'm in the studio I'm a very different beast. But I

thought I really had to create the music that I wanted to bring to life live on stage. So it was really important for me to find that person when I was in the studio.

I also wanted to have some fun. DJing has brought so much joy into my life in the last few years. I've been out there playing live shows and festivals alongside DJing, and I've just been having the best time. And I really wanted that to translate onto this album. I'm so proud to be a Spice Girl, and to be Sporty Spice, and I completely embrace that. It's such a huge part of who I am. And it's funny - in interviews, often they will ask, "How do you feel that you were called Sporty Spice and you had to live up to this sporty persona?" I don't have to live up to anything - you know, I can't. I've tried to not be her, and it's impossible. I'm very energetic, I'm very sporty, and it was just really fun to look at the album in that way as well, and think about it lyrically. A song like Sweat, to me, felt like the perfect introduction to the album - it has that energy, it's a little bit tongue-in-cheek. It's like a fitness banger, and that was a big part of what I wanted to create in the thread of this album.

When you're making a track, are you imagining how it will land on the dancefloor to all these new listeners?

Yeah, 100%. [With] this album, I think more than anything I wasn't thinking so much about people sitting at home having a listen - it was about them being on the dancefloor. It was about wanting to motivate and inspire people, either on the dancefloor or in the gym... I think it's a good album to listen to with your mates while you're getting ready for going out.

You have fans from all walks of life - fans who knew you as a Spice Girl but also as a solo artist. How do you balance giving fans the biggest hits and introducing them to the new Sweat era?

This is a good question. So, my mind is buzzing right now with tour creative because, like the album, I want to approach this tour differently. I have this whole new perspective, and I'm going to cram in as many hits as I can. I know as a gig-goer I wanna hear the hits, right? I'm not going to leave anybody disappointed. The live shows are a place where I can really

bring this album to life, to celebrate my career to this point. And it's going to be full of everything. It's going to be really energetic, a journey, and when [the audience] leave, I want them to be exhausted but elated - and really sweaty!

You've had one of the most varied careers in British pop history, and you're still changing it now - what keeps you creatively hungry after all these years?

I just love what I do. I love performing. I love that feeling of being on stage, releasing music and having that connection with people. As different as we all are, we share so much; we have so much in common. It's really beautiful to be able to express yourself and to connect with other people. And that really, truly is what keeps me going. And other people's music - to hear other artists and bands, and how music changes and evolves.

How does it feel when you're cited as an influence by the new era of musicians?

It blows my mind. I think all of us Spice Girls, we're so proud. Obviously, we've left this beautiful legacy behind, and we constantly see people who've been affected by it, and so many artists who would mention the Spice Girls. It's very 'full circle' because there are artists that talk about being inspired by the Spice Girls, that inspire me. So that's really beautiful. And it's lovely to meet them as well - I meet so many artists, and they're very excited to meet a Spice Girl. But I think the most surprising to me are the ones that weren't even born when the Spice Girls first came out. And I'm like, how do you know? But, of course, this is music, and a movement that is passed down through generations, whether it was your older sister or your mum. And that's what we see whenever the Spice Girls get back together; we see this whole generational effect that our music has on people.

.....

Melanie C will be meeting fans to sign copies of Sweat on Thursday 7 May at hmv Vault, Birmingham. She returns to the city to perform at O2 Institute on Saturday 24 October



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Classical music from across the city...



Warsaw Philharmonic Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 17 May

Warsaw Philharmonic's last appearance at Birmingham's Symphony Hall was back in the 20th century, so their return this month is indeed a welcome one.

The 125-year-old orchestra have earned a much-deserved reputation for championing the output of Polish composers - something which they're certainly doing in this mid-afternoon concert. Alongside Beethoven's energetic Seventh Symphony, the

Philharmonic will be turning their attention to Chopin's best-known Piano Concerto (No2) - performed by trailblazing pianist Alexandra Dariescu - Witold Lutosławski's Little Suite - a musical snapshot of Polish folk culture - and Grażyna Bacewicz's dancing scherzo for piano.

Krzysztof Urbański (pictured), the orchestra's music & artistic director since 2024, is the concert's conductor.



CBSO: Atlantic Connections

CBSO Centre, Birmingham, Fri 22 May

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's ever-popular Centre Stage season continues this month, giving audiences the chance to experience the artistry of the musicians in an intimate setting.

Curated by CBSO Principal Second Clarinet Jo Patton, this latest concert has a 2pm start time, lasts for an hour, and features Muczynski's Fantasy Trio, Boulanger's Trois Pieces (arr. Needleman), and Gwyneth Van Anden Walker's Craftsbury Trio.

Philip Glass' Double Timpani Concerto

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 28 May

Presenting the audience with a rare chance to see the timpani up front and central, Philip Glass' Concerto is arguably the stand-out offering in this two-hour celebration of dance, performed under the baton of Birmingham Opera Company's music director, Alpesh Chauhan (pictured). Glass' composition shares the programme with two other exceptional works: Carlos Simon's Four Black American Dances - featuring depictions of rituals and traditions from Black communities - and Rachmaninoff's Dances - the composer's final composition...

The concert is preceded by an in-conversation event with conductor Chauhan and timpani players Matthew Hardy and Toby Kearney.

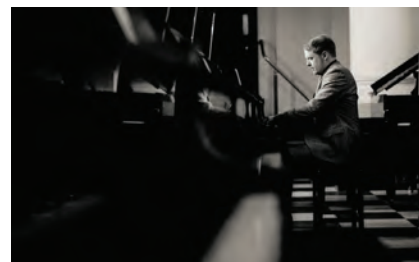


Piccadilly Sinfonietta

Birmingham Cathedral, Sat 9 May

Piccadilly Sinfonietta may be less than a decade old, but the ensemble has already established an impressive reputation for its performances of baroque and classical works for chamber orchestra.

Their latest Birmingham performance - taking place in the city's cathedral, by the tranquil glow of candlelight - sees them presenting a programme comprising three well-known works: Beethoven's Piano Concerto No5 - also known as 'The Emperor' - Grieg's Morning from Peer Gynt and Piano Concerto No2 by Rachmaninov. The concert's pianist is the widely acclaimed Warren Mailley-Smith (pictured).



Manchester Collective: Papillons

Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Sun 3 May

Described by its publicity as a 'disarmingly intimate performance', Papillons sees the boundary-pushing Manchester Collective collaborate with dance-theatre company Thick & Tight and multimedia artist Chaines to contemplate the question: how do we appreciate something in a time of loss?

At the heart of the work is Kaija Saariaho's Sept Papillons (Seven Butterflies), a set of miniatures for solo cello, here performed by Laura van der Heijden (pictured). The performance will be followed by a Q&A with the contributing artists.





TOP OF THE VOIX

RuPaul's Drag Race UK favourite La Voix stars as Miss Hannigan in Annie at The Alexandra next month...

Queen of live vocals La Voix rose to stardom through the power of reality TV - appearing on Britain's Got Talent in 2014, coming second in the sixth series of RuPaul's Drag Race UK, and most recently swapping singing for the salsa in Strictly Come Dancing. Now, she's taking to the stage to star as cruel orphanage mistress Miss Hannigan in the latest touring production of Annie, which visits the Midlands next month. What's On sat down with the renaissance redhead to find out more...

Star of stage and screen La Voix became a household name after appearances on Britain's Got Talent, RuPaul's Drag Race UK and Strictly Come Dancing.

This month, she's making her professional musical theatre debut, taking on the role of Miss Hannigan in Annie. The production will be making a Birmingham stop-off in June.

"It's the first time I've ever done a real 'full book' musical," says La Voix. "I've done shows, but I've never been told to 'stand there, say that, and wear this...' I hope I'm not difficult to work with - you don't think of yourself as a diva until you don't get your own way!

"Miss Hannigan, I think, is possibly the world's most famous drunk. I have amazing memories of Carol Burnett in the original movie. For me, it's up there with Mary Poppins, The Sound Of Music, Oliver!... To get to step into that role and play this iconic part is such an honour and I'm so excited! I had so many things in my diary - this is the next thing 'on the list'. I can now fully engage myself with the world of being cruel, cynical, and probably very often drunk - obviously in an acting sense!"

Callous orphanage keeper Miss Hannigan is a far cry from the quick wit and glamour La Voix normally brings to the stage - but she's relishing the chance to try something new: "I've never played a baddie. I've done 20-odd years in pantomime, and I've never played a baddie! I'm quite looking forward to that! The script is very, very funny. When people think about Annie, you forget how funny the storyline is... There are some great lines. Miss Hannigan is a bonkers character, and I'm really excited to get under her skin - and not be anything like La Voix."

And she's not only facing a major change in character - Miss Hannigan's clothes will be very different from La Voix's usual extensive wardrobe: "I've had to try on the costume and it's like brown polyester. So I'm not very impressed with her choice of clothing from the offset. All my years of slating people's outfits could come back to bite me..."

It's a sacrifice La Voix is willing to make - it is, after all, the hard-knock life of an actor: "You've got to do what the director and the character needs. It's obviously really tempting to be like, 'Oh, could we add some

rhinestones to that? Could we add some diamonds to this bracelet?' The fact is, though, she's got no money. She works in an orphanage, with God knows how many kids, and drinks gin on a daily basis. So the character's got to manifest that. If it means I've got to spend five weeks in polyester, with sparks coming off me from the nylon, then that's what I've got to do. It's all in the name of theatre!"

La Voix tours with the show for six weeks - before handing over the role to musical-theatre veteran Claire Sweeney - and is particularly excited to return to Birmingham: "I cut my teeth on the Birmingham scene - doing all the pubs and clubs for years - so I know I've got a fan base here. Birmingham has a really special place in my heart. They're just a really lovely, friendly community."

And with years of touring experience under her bedazzled belt, La Voix has found a routine which makes her dressing room into a home away from home.

"I adore the theatre and I love touring. I have a set place where I lay things out in my dressing room. I have my towel with my name embroidered on, which is very fancy, and I always have my makeup to my left... Don't ask me why; it's a little bit of a tradition. Everything's laid out in exactly the same place in every theatre. Sometimes I'm only there for one night when I do my own show, and it takes me an hour to set up my dressing room before I've even started, and then I've just got to pack it all up again. So it's a bit of a waste of time, but I always have those rituals."

With credits including singing, acting, reality TV and a decade of live touring, La Voix particularly appreciates the opportunity to engage with larger audiences: "Sometimes people can't travel to the theatre, to live shows, or even don't really have that sort of entertainment where they live, so it's lovely to be able to reach them through TV. My dream would be a 'live audience with La Voix' but on the TV - that way, I could roast the audience, hear the genuine laughter and see the whites of their eyes, but also know that it's reaching people who can't get to the theatres or the TV studio. We've just all gotta laugh. I think the world is a very unfunny place at the moment. If we can't laugh at

ourselves and laugh at each other, there's really no hope. If everyone can forget their problems for two hours with me, then I've done my job."

Being on stage with Annie and her urchin pals also brings that gift of a live audience. So will La Voix be tempted to throw a few asides out to the crowd?

"I think I'll find it very hard not to! I'm working with kids, and there's a real dog in the show. They say never work with children or animals - I've got both in one show! So I might need to turn on the audience to take out the frustration."

At least the songs should be a walk in the park for the seasoned singer and her cast-mates (of all ages). Ready to head into rehearsals, La Voix is glowing with praise for the show's young actors.

"Every single song is such a classic, and to see these kids doing what they do, I don't think I could have done that at their age - it's absolutely mindblowing. I do like Tomorrow, which is awkward because it's obviously not my song. I did think I was going to be cast as Annie when I first got the offer, but apparently I'm too old - I thought that was very offensive! I'll be in the wings when [Annie sings] Tomorrow.

"I've missed my singing. Strictly really threw me into that dancing world, which was not my forte at all, so to get back to doing what I do - singing, comedy and acting - is going to be an absolute joy. I'm quite happy to leave any remnants of a pasodoble and a cha-cha-cha really and truly behind me for this project, and instead enjoy doing my musical theatre choreography and singing the songs on these stages. It'll be nice to go back to what I do best!"

.....

La Voix stars in Annie at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 June. Annie then returns to the region with Claire Sweeney as Miss Hannigan, playing The Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Tuesday 13 to Sunday 18 October and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, from Tuesday 16 to Sunday 21 February

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Comedy previews from across the region...

David Elms

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,
Sat 9 May

A comedian admired by other comedians is a comedian worth checking out - and David Elms is one such comedian. "David builds a comedy 'mind palace' before your very eyes," explains fellow comic Phil Wang, "and you'll want to move in for good!" The mind palace to which Phil refers is a key element of David's currently touring show, which sees him inviting the audience to dream up and describe the room he's occupying... As appreciative Summer 2025 Edinburgh audiences would surely be happy to confirm, the show is a far more enjoyable experience than it sounds...

**Mark Simmons**

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 7 May;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 8 May;
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 17
September; The Glee Club, Birmingham,
Thurs 26 November

Expertly crafted one-liners and off-the-cuff gags based on random suggestions from the audience are a guarantee whenever Mark Simmons hits town.



Alongside touring his critically acclaimed Jest To Impress show, Mark also hosts Jokes With Mark Simmons, a podcast in which he invites fellow comics to discuss gags that they've written but which they couldn't get to work.

Mark Watson

Stourbridge Town Hall, Fri 15 May;
Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 16 May

Well-established on the UK comedy circuit, Mark Watson was born in Bristol to Welsh parents and initially delivered his act with a Welsh accent, claiming he felt "more comfortable talking in a voice that I didn't quite recognise as my own".



Mark's latest visit to the Midlands sees him presenting Before It Overtakes Us, a show in which he's promising to ponder a wide selection of subjects, including the uncertain future facing humanity and the current state of the UK sausage industry.

**Jarlath Regan** Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 8 May

Although beginning his stand-up career in the early days of the new millennium, Kildare-born comic Jarlath Regan really found his place in the sun a handful of years ago via his Instagram and TikTok videos, since which time he's been causing a

significant comedy splash in countries across the world.

His new show, Gas Man, comprises 90 minutes of jokes and stories never before presented on stage or screen.

Kane Brown

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 1 May; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 14 May; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 16 May; The Core Theatre, Solihull, Wed 23 September; Wulfrun Hall at The Halls Wolverhampton, Sun 27 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 9 October

Parenthood, family life, relationships and British culture are among the subjects to which Kane Brown regularly returns during his live shows. The one-time direct-sales executive kickstarted his current career back in 2006 when he enrolled in a two-week course in standup-comedy, since which time he's honed his rib-tickling talents to excellent effect.

Kane visits the region this month with Crowd Work King, a show which is described as 60 minutes of purely unscripted and unplanned comedy, entirely based around audience participation.

**Daliso Chaponda**

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 16 May;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 2 June

Malawian Daliso Chaponda has blended the slick North American style of comedy he learned while working in Canada with a real talent for brevity, ensuring that his gags, although not one-liners, nonetheless come thick and fast. Like all good comedians, he can adapt his act to suit his audience - on a previous trip to the Midlands, he performed a seriously blue set in a Birmingham strip club, and then headed off to the Greenbelt Christian Festival to regale family audiences!

Jokes include "I moved to the UK because of the BNP - they said the immigrants were taking all the best jobs and all the best women, and I thought, 'Wow, that sounds like a good deal to me!'"



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Comedy previews from across the region...

Tom Davis

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 Birmingham this month with his current touring show, Spudgun.



Nick Mohammed

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Fri 22 May

He may have been one of the worst contestants in Taskmaster history, but Nick Mohammed has proved himself a winner in pretty much every other aspect of his showbiz career. His success has been due, in no small measure, to his much-loved alter-ego, Mr Swallow, the attention-seeking man-child who he's been playing for more than a decade now... Nick and Mr S are here making a welcome return in a long-touring show, one which has been described by the latter as "payback for everyone who didn't come to the last tour". Expect magic, music, 'and a whole load of mistakes'.



Seann Walsh

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 16 May;
The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon
Trent, Sat 17 October

With appearances on shows including Mock The Week and Strictly Come Dancing to his name - the latter seeing him hitting the headlines for all the wrong reasons - Seann Walsh has been likened to the legendary Billy Connolly in terms of his gift for storytelling. His jokes aren't bad either. Two examples are as follows... "I don't understand swimming. You don't see fish going for a walk." And "Are city-centre beat officers police who rap?" Fresh from participating in series two of I'm A Celebrity... South Africa - he also featured in the Australian-jungle version of the series back in 2022 - Seann visits the Midlands this month with his latest touring show, This Is Torture.



Mick Miller

Dudley Town Hall, Thurs 28 May; Kings Hall,
Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 15 November

It's a toss-up whether veteran comedian Mick Miller is best known for his comedy or his hair, but the good news for his legion of Midlands fans is that he'll be bringing both along with him to these regional gigs.



Tickling ribs for the better part of half a century, Mick is as committed as he's ever been to keeping his stand-up show fresh and funny. Post-interval in Dudley, he'll be sitting down with close friend and fellow funnyman Ryan Gleeson to chat about his career in comedy. A good night is pretty much a guarantee.

Ivo Graham

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 9 May

Seriously posh and admirably self-deprecating, Ivo Graham won plenty of new fans in 2019 when one of his gags was nominated for the coveted 'best joke of the Edinburgh Fringe' award: "I've got an Eton-themed advent calendar," explained Ivo to his audience, "where all the doors are opened for me by my dad's contacts." The Tokyo-born Oxford alumnus visits the



Midlands with Orange Crush, a show about 'hats, haters and hometown heroes' that also questions whether 'Hare Krishnas are better than Hobnobs'.

Scott Bennett

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 22 May; Huntingdon
Hall, Worcester, Wed 24 June; Theatre Severn,
Shrewsbury, Thurs 25 June; Foxlowe Arts
Centre, Leek, Tues 30 June & Wed 1 July;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 6 February

The next few months see Scott Bennett offering comedy-loving Midlanders plenty of opportunity to find out exactly why he's such a highly rated (albeit relatively low profile) comedian.

Scott has been referred to as live comedy's best-kept secret, with critics praising him for developing a style that comes complete with flashes of Peter Kay, John Bishop and Jason Manford.

Hugely popular on the corporate circuit, Yorkshire-born Scott is using his latest tour to contemplate the way in which people's liking for 'stuff' sits at odds with the looming environmental crisis.





COMIC RELIEF

Paul Hendy's new play, *The Last Laugh*, is a love letter to a golden age in British comedy...

Three of the UK's most revered comedians are brought together in a new play visiting the region next month. Featuring an imaginary conversation between Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe and Bob Monkhouse, *The Last Laugh* has been written and directed by one-time TV presenter Paul Hendy, who explains to *What's On* why the show has been such a labour of love...

"I've been obsessed with comedy, and in particular what I call the golden age of British comedy - the 1970s and 80s - ever since I first saw Morecambe & Wise on television. Tommy Cooper, Les Dawson, Frankie Howerd... that's my era."

Paul Hendy, writer, director & producer of new play *The Last Laugh* is nothing if not effusive about comedians and comedy of a certain vintage.

"I've written a play that imagines Eric Morecambe, Tommy Cooper and Bob Monkhouse sitting in a dressing room discussing life, death, comedy, and what it means to be funny; why some people are funny, and why some people aren't funny."

The TV presenter turned writer/producer arguably has an inside track on the debate, and even has something in common with Monkhouse, having hosted game shows such as *Don't Try This At Home* (with Davina McCall), *Stash The Cash* and *Wheel Of Fortune*. Paul was the kiss of death for the latter - it was cancelled after his single year in the hot seat, having been on air for 23 years prior to that - but the bulk of his work has been rather more successful. CBBC show *Dear Mr Barker*, which he hosted, was nominated for a BAFTA, a 2023 play he directed about child star Lena Zavaroni earned major critical acclaim, and the production company he runs with his wife has won *Pantomime of the Year* at the UK *Pantomime Awards* on four occasions.

The Last Laugh has already earned rave notices in Edinburgh and London, and a short film version, which Paul wrote, directed and produced, scooped several awards. These included *Best Comedy Drama* at the *Los Angeles Independent Film Festival* and *Best Film* at the *Manchester Film Festival*.

"The success was great, but I always thought there was more in it, because that was just a 20-minute film," he recalls of the 2016 movie. "There was so much more to be explored about these three legends of comedy and what they'd talk about."

The film was written with specific actors in mind, to the extent that Steve Royle (Morecambe), Damian Williams (Cooper) and Simon Cartwright (Monkhouse) dictated which three comics would feature, not the other way around.

"They are all brilliant," says Paul of the actors, two of whom (Williams and Cartwright) reprise their roles in the stage version, "and I'm not just saying that. They're not just doing impressions; it's about more than that. It's about the spirit of those comedians, and that's what seems to touch people."

Having developed the film into a play during lockdown ("we all had a bit of time on our hands"), Paul took the show to the Edinburgh Fringe, where it proved a big hit. A West End run followed, and it's also recently been performed, somewhat surprisingly given its quintessentially British content, in New York.

"It's fascinating to see [the reaction of] the Americans, who don't know [the stars] at all. Eric and Tommy appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in the 1960s, but none of the audience would remember. So it plays not quite as a straight play, but they really have to listen to get who each of the characters are, whereas in Britain there's already a love and nostalgic warmth for them.

"What we found in the West End was that people who like that style of comedy really love it because it brings back memories of watching with their mum and dad or grandparents and so on.

"It's funny, but it's also poignant and very nostalgic. I think if anybody remembers and loves these comedians, they'll get a lot from it, because it's my love letter to the golden age of television comedy."

But as much as he thinks it will appeal to people who remember that time ("over-50s is the sweet spot"), Paul believes the show goes beyond being a nostalgia trip and has something for younger audiences too.

"Anybody who likes comedy and has an interest in the history of comedy - or, to be honest, just wants a good laugh - will enjoy this, because ultimately it explores what it means to be funny, even if you don't know these actual comedians. Last year at Edinburgh, we had a lot of comedians come to see it, and they responded so positively because it was all so relevant to them."

Comedy and comedians have always been fertile ground for drama and pathos - from the 'tears of a clown' cliché to a need to be validated, accepted, lauded, or even loved,

that borders on obsessive.

"Bob Monkhouse was originally in a double act in the 1950s and early 60s, and his comedy partner [Denis Goodwin] committed suicide. He also had a son who was severely disabled, so he had quite a life of tragedy. He was also rejected by both his parents.

"In the play, the characters discuss what drives somebody to be funny, and Bob Monkhouse really analyses that. Is it maternal or paternal rejection? Or both, in his case? What makes them continually search for the next laugh?"

Monkhouse's sparring partners in the play also had their crosses to bear. Eric Morecambe was an only child constantly looking for a brother figure - a role eventually filled by Ernie Wise, who he bonded with for nearly 50 years - while Tommy Cooper was a natural clown ultimately burdened by people never taking him seriously.

"In the play, Tommy tells a true story of when he was upset and sitting down on a pavement, crying. A group of people saw him and started laughing at him. So Tommy Cooper crying was actually funny... it was like a curse to him.

"He couldn't help being funny, which I imagine was great 90 per cent of the time but not the other 10, when you want to be taken seriously."

Although *The Last Laugh* is a split between humour and drama, it errs very much on the side of the former - as well as being a celebration of the three much-loved icons featured in the show: "It's in no way an exposé of these comedians' lives - it's a love letter. It's joyous. When we played in the West End, there was so much love and warmth; you could feel it in the theatre, which was great. We live in difficult times, with everything that's going on in the world, and I think we need that at the moment."

.....

The Last Laugh shows at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury from Wed 13 - Sat 16 May and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Wed 9 - Sat 12 September



Mamma Mia! Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 12 - Sat 30 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 27 October - Sat 7 November

This legendary show is of course a nicely contrived vehicle for the chart-topping music of 1970s Super Troupers Abba. Back in the day, the Swedish Fab Four scored mega-hit after mega-hit with catchy numbers including Waterloo, Dancing Queen, The Name Of The Game, The Winner Takes It All and Take A Chance On Me (all of which are present and correct in this blockbuster offering). Set in a Greek-island paradise, Mamma Mia! tells the story of single mum Donna and her 20-year-old daughter, Sophie, who's soon to get married. Formerly the lead singer of a three-piece girl group called

The Dynamos, Donna led something of a crazy, carefree existence when she was a younger woman. As a result, Sophie's never known who her father is... and if truth be told, Donna's not entirely sure either. After stealing a sly glimpse at her mum's old diary, sneaky Sophie identifies three possible candidates. Masquerading as Donna, she sends messages inviting each of the men to attend her wedding. Hijinks, chaos and confusion inevitably ensue, all of which are best experienced to a pulsating Abba soundtrack, of course...

Single White Female

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 5 - Sat 9 May; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 26 - Sat 30 May; Malvern Theatres, Tues 9 - Sat 13 June

Recently divorced mum Allie is trying to juggle childcare with the challenges of starting a new business. When she advertises for a lodger to help make ends meet, along comes the seemingly delightful Hedy. But all is not as it seems - and it isn't too long before their new friendship takes a decidedly sinister turn...



Adapted from the hit 1992 film of the same name starring Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh, this brand-new touring production brings together familiar television faces Kym Marsh and Lisa Faulkner. "The essence of the show is very much still the same [as the movie], but the story is slightly changed," says Kym, who plays Hedi. "As well as being more up to date, it's based in the UK rather than being in America. So there are differences, but the big, important, epic moments are still in there. And it's very much still a thriller with a real shock factor - we want to have people on the edge of their seats. I think audiences will very much love the story, whether they've seen the film or not."

Blood Brothers

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 20 - Sat 24 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 17 - Sat 21 November

You know what you're going to get with a Willy Russell production. From Educating Rita to Shirley Valentine, his work is always sharp, refreshing, poignant and funny. And Blood Brothers doesn't buck the trend.



It's effectively a class-driven Scouse melodrama, but to simply describe it as such is to vastly underestimate the emotional response it routinely produces within its audience. Running for more than 10,000 performances in London's West End - one of only five musicals ever to achieve that milestone - it tells the story of an unfortunate mother compelled to give away one of her twins. It also has adult actors playing children and boasts a sharp social awareness to counteract the sticky sentimentality. And if the measure of a musical's success is being able to hum the songs when you come out of the theatre - without having known them all that well before you went in - then this is unquestionably one of the best.

WNO Welsh National Opera

The Flying Dutchman
Thu 7 & Fri 8 May

Blaze of Glory!
Thu 7 & Fri 8 May

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Wed 23 Sep - Sat 3 Oct



Welsh National Opera

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 7 & Fri 8 May

Currently celebrating their 80th anniversary, Welsh National Opera stop off in Birmingham this month with a brand-new production - a contemporary reimagining of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* (Thursday the 7th) - and an old favourite - *Blaze Of Glory!*

The former, which was premiered in 1843 with the composer conducting the performance, is based on a centuries-old Dutch legend of a ghost ship and a cursed sailor. Its music, not surprisingly, is stormy and dramatic, evoking the power of the ocean...

Blaze Of Glory! (pictured), meanwhile, is set somewhat closer to home. Its story focuses on a group of Welsh miners as they embark on a musical journey to reform their male voice choir after a local mining disaster. Steeped in the Welsh choral tradition, the work combines traditional harmonies and the acapella sounds of the 1950s with operetta, gospel and big band sounds.

Operation Mincemeat

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, until Sat 2 May; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 11 - Sat 16 May

Hit musical *Operation Mincemeat* tells the strange-but-true story of a brilliant deception co-ordinated by British intelligence in the Second World War.

Visiting the Potteries as part of a national tour, the show features 50 characters but only five lead actors, who swap roles, genders and costumes before the audience's very eyes.

"It's five people on stage, creating hundreds of different characters and loads of different places," says Jamie-Rose Monk, who's one of the five. "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."



Around The World In 80 Days

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Sat 23 May - Sat 20 June

It's easy to forget that travelling across the globe used to be a very difficult and long-winded undertaking. Jules Verne's classic adventure story, *Around The World In 80 Days* - here helmed by New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins - offers a fun-filled reminder of a time when exotic climes really were 'a world away'.

Making a welcome return to the Newcastle-under-Lyme theatre's stage, this much-loved and family-friendly production recounts the story of English gentleman Phileas Fogg's attempt to circumnavigate the globe in the aforementioned 80 days on a wager of £20,000, aided and abetted in his endeavour by his trusty valet, Passepartout... Eight actors take on 109 characters, with six trains, five boats, two dances, one storm, a circus act and an elephant also featuring.



Glorious!

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May

By virtue of *Glorious!* having premiered some 21 years ago and been followed by a high-profile film starring Meryl Streep and Hugh

Grant, the story of Florence Foster Jenkins is pretty well known.

An inter-war American socialite and amateur coloratura soprano, Florence became famous for her technically incompetent recitals, her dreadful performances gaining her the unwanted title of the world's worst opera singer... Former *Coronation Street* favourite Wendi Peters here takes on the to-die-for role of Florence.



Bus Stop Goths

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Thurs 7 May

When Viv and Sid, two ethereal-plane angels tasked with watching over Middlesbrough, realise that the city's alt youth are having a grim time of it, they decide to take matters into their own hands...

A surreal modern folktale, *Bus Stop Goths* is the debut show from Queer, non-binary theatre maker Audrey Cook.

"One theme we cover in the show is a young person's fear around taking up space," Audrey told *narc magazine.com*. "Kids aren't daft; they don't want to be alienated. So if they don't learn to be a bit rebellious or a bit playful, they instead learn to shrink themselves and contort themselves to fit into boxes that don't offend or challenge."

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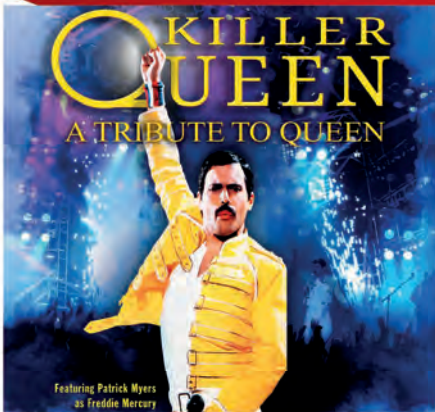
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Theatre previews from around the region



2:22 A Ghost Story

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 18 - Sat 23 May

Husband & wife Jenny and Sam are divided. Jenny believes their new home is haunted; Sam isn't having any of it. Something certainly feels strange and frightening. Determined to find out the truth once and for all, they decide to stay up until 2:22 - at which time, all will be revealed. Or not... 2:22 premiered in the West End back in 2021, not only becoming a major hit but also providing singers Lily Allen and Cheryl with an opportunity to tread the boards. This currently touring production stars James Bye (EastEnders) and Natalie Casey (Two Pints Of Lager And A Packet Of Crisps).

The Shawshank Redemption

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 26 - Sat 30 May

Given that film critics regard The Shawshank Redemption as one of the greatest movies of all time, it's hardly surprising to find



that its stage version is out on the road yet again and doing good business. Based on a 1982 Stephen King novella, the story revolves around the character of Andy Dufresne, a man serving a double life sentence at the notorious Shawshank facility. An unlikely friendship with prison fixer Red makes the experience a little more bearable. But when the warden decides to make Andy's life a living hell, the nothing-to-lose lifer hatches a daring and ingenious plan to escape... Joe McFadden, Ben Onwukwe and Bill Ward star.

Disenchanted!

Lichfield Garrick, until Sat 2 May

This new US-made musical comedy - debunking the myth of the 'damsel in distress' - is here making its professional UK theatre debut.



Gemma East, chief operating officer at the Garrick, has high hopes for the 'side-splitting and cheeky' mash-up of much-loved fairytales: "With its riotous musical numbers, laugh-out-loud one-liners and twist on

familiar characters, we're incredibly excited to see how our audiences respond to this smash-hit from across the pond."

Austentatious

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 30 May

Taking the subtitle 'an improvised Jane Austen novel', Austentatious visits the Midlands this month having garnered plenty of praise on its previous visits. Lighthearted and delightfully throwaway, the show sees the performers utilising audience suggestions to develop a play that not only pays homage to Austen but also generates plenty of laughter along the way. Performed in period costume with live musical accompaniment, the production is described by its publicity as 'a riotous, razor-sharp show where swooning is guaranteed'. Great fun's a certainty - and who doesn't love a bit of a swoon?



means to be funny," explains Paul Hendy, the one-time television presenter who's not only written The Last Laugh but also produced and directed it. "Anybody who likes comedy and has an interest in the history of comedy - or, to be honest, just wants a good laugh - will enjoy this show, because ultimately it explores what it means to be funny, even if you don't know these actual comedians."



The Beekeeper Of Aleppo

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May

Nesrin Alrefaai and Matthew Spangler's stage adaptation of Christy Lefttieri's bestselling novel reflects on the connections that exist between friends, families and strangers. The story follows the characters of beekeeper Nuri and artist Afra, a married couple enjoying a simple life in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo. But when war breaks out, the pair flee for their lives, embarking on a journey that sees them not only face the pain of their own unbearable loss but also the challenge of finding each other again.



The Last Laugh

Malvern Theatres, until Sat 2 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 13 - Sat 16 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 9 - Sat 12 September

"I've written a play that imagines Eric Morecambe, Tommy Cooper and Bob Monkhouse sitting in a dressing room discussing life, death, comedy, and what it

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The Resistible Rise Of Arturo Ui

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 30 May

Written in 1941 and set in 1930s Chicago, Bertolt Brecht's play - concerning itself with a mobster and small-time crook who will stop at nothing to control the local cauliflower racket - is a satire on Hitler's ascent to power and the rise of the Nazi Party and far right. "It's a gangster spectacle," says Mark Gatiss, who plays the title character, "a sort of cartoon of it all - and there's a lot to be enjoyed in that. Brecht loved gangster movies..., so it's quite playful and fantastical..."

"I think the great thing is that it's a wonderful way of, as Brecht would have said, showing the message through a very entertaining vehicle. You can instantly make a connection between a small-time gangster and a dictator. The really fascinating thing is Ui, like Hitler, was kind of a joke. He was just one of many agitators, but then found his moment and way in. The terrifying thing is how easily that can happen."

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Rep, Birmingham, until Sun 24 May

Accessible language, likeable characters, romantic liaisons, magical creatures and a series of comical caperings with an ass are combined to excellent effect in one of Shakespeare's most popular works...

Lysander and Demetrius both fancy Hermia, Helena's sitting on the shelf, Titania and Oberon are up to no good, and Puck's got his finger in more pies than Mr Kipling. Add into the mix a group of rude mechanicals, and the recipe for success is pretty much complete... Regional talent takes centre stage in this decidedly Brummie production. Adam Carver, best known as cabaret favourite Fatt Butcher, stars as the mischief-making Puck.

Sisters 360

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'.

Ode To Joyce

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 17 May

Cheryl Knight channels her inner Joyce Grenfell in this one-woman homage to one of the 20th century's greatest British female entertainers. First conceived in honour of Joyce's centenary year and playing to sell-out audiences at the Edinburgh Festival, the critically acclaimed revue show combines a selection of Grenfell's best-known songs and monologues with some of her more rare, delicate and poignant pieces.

Malory Towers

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tue 12 - Sat 16 May

All the 'highs' - jinx, drama and spirits - are very much present and correct in this once-again-touring stage incarnation of Enid Blyton's much-loved novels about the girls' boarding school of the title. Adapted & helmed by former Shakespeare's Globe artistic director Emma Rice, the show is being marketed as the original 'girl power'

story - an ideal night at the theatre for girls, boys and any grown-up children who still dream of midnight feasts and Cornish clifftops. The show has an age recommendation of eight-plus and 'contains themes that some people may find difficult'.

Oh Zeus!

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 26 & Wed 27 May

Comedy theatre company Le Navet Bete make a welcome return to the region with what they're promising will be a riotous and all-out-hilarious ride through Greek mythology. Featuring three actors playing no fewer than 40 characters, the show is built around a storyline that sees King of the Gods Zeus hatching a plan to thwart his daughter's plans to marry a mere mortal. "It's a non-stop evening of entertainment," proclaim the Exeter ensemble, in waxing lyrical about their latest show. "Expect sensational physical comedy, outrageous jokes, fast-paced chaos, and more togas than you can smash a plate at."





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
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Theatre for younger audiences



The Gruffalo

Malvern Theatres, Fri 15 - Sun 17 May; Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 21 - Sun 24 May; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 27 - Sat 30 May

With millions of copies of the book having been sold, it's fair to say that Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's award-winning Gruffalo has captured the hearts and minds of children everywhere.

Tall Stories' stage adaptation follows Mouse as he heads out on a journey through the deep dark wood, scaring away hungry animals with tales of the terrifying Gruffalo. Imagine his surprise, then, when he suddenly finds himself coming face-to-face with the very creature he's been talking

about!

Tall Stories' delicate yet playful approach to their material - and their ability to let whatever story they're telling speak for itself, without flashy gimmicks or over-the-top costumes - places them at the very forefront of family theatre.

An imaginative and engaging musical that comes complete with some good old-fashioned audience participation, The Gruffalo offers truly 'monstrous' fun for children aged three and older.

Horrible Histories

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 28 - Sat 30 May

If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then Terrible Tudors and Awful Egyptians are two shows well worth catching.

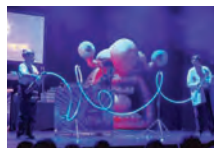
Audience members attending the former will find out all about the fate of Henry's headless wives and his punch-up with the Pope, while families checking out the latter will be asked whether they're ready to rumble with Ramesses and - somewhat more alarmingly - if they dare to enter through 'the gates of the afterlife'!... Both productions show on each of the three days - visit the Grand's website to check starting times.



The Utterly Revolting Science Show

Stourbridge Town Hall, Fri 29 May; Kidderminster Town Hall, Mon 26 October

Brace yourselves for the Rude Science team's hilarious, high-tech, highly explosive new journey through the human body, packed with 'burp biology, fart physics and revolting edible chemistry'.



At a very basic level, it's a rollercoaster ride through a series of disgusting experiments built to delight young audiences; but scratch beneath the surface and you'll discover a brilliantly constructed curriculum-driven adventure designed to gift Britain's kids with a lasting fascination for science.

The show is the brainchild of Stefan Gates, high-octane presenter of 20 TV series (five for CBBC), award-winning author of 13 books (including Rude Science) and internationally renowned producer of world-class science stage shows.

Ministry Of Science Live

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 25 May; Palace Theatre Redditch, Wed 27 May; Lichfield Garrick, Mon 26 October

A refreshingly anarchic approach to science communication is the name of the game when the Ministry of Science comes to town. As well as taking a look at the inventors and engineers who've shaped and inspired the modern world, the show's presenters will be conducting clever demonstrations aplenty - so brace yourself for the occasional loud bang!

Giant liquid hydrogen clouds, exploding oxygen and hydrogen balloons, fire tornados, hydrogen bottle rockets, ignited methane and even a self-built hovercraft all feature.

Dino Tales: A Roarsome Adventure

Walsall Arena, Wed 27 May

The producers of Dino Tales are promising that their show will have your kids jumping with Jurassic joy - which is surely a good thing as long as they've calmed back down again by the time you get them home!

Built around a storyline that finds a baby dinosaur in serious need of a rescue, the production brings sure-to-be-wide-eyed youngsters into the close proximity of 'an entire herd of pre-historic beasts', including Freya the dancing raptor, Dylan the cheeky dilophosaurus, Angie the ankylosaurus, Scar the fearsome, and Roxy the mighty T-Rex.



The Cat In The Hat

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 9 & Sun 10 May; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Wed 27 - Thurs 28 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 29 May; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 31 May; Stourbridge Town Hall, Sat 6 - Sun 7 June; Worcester Swan Theatre, Fri 26 June

Based on the much-loved book by Dr Seuss, this latest theatrical version of The Cat In The Hat has been designed to engage and (hopefully) delight youngsters aged three and older.

The Cat In The Hat is the funniest, most mischievous cat that Sally and her brother have ever met - and what's more, he's got a fantastic talent for turning the rainiest of afternoons into the most amazing of adventures...



2026 production image - credit Ros Kavanagh

GOING HER OWN WAY

Katriona O'Sullivan chats about her bestselling memoir, *Poor*, and its stage adaptation, which shows at the Coventry Belgrade Theatre this month...

Katriona O’Sullivan’s bestselling memoir - telling the story of how she overcame childhood trauma and adversity to become a celebrated university lecturer & author - is now a critically acclaimed play. Although delighted with the way the stage adaptation of Poor has turned out, the West Midlands-born writer will find the show far too painful to watch when it visits Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre early this month... as she explains to What’s On.

She might not thank me for saying it, but Katriona O’Sullivan is quite a remarkable woman. Born and raised in Hillfields - a deprived inner-city area of Coventry - her childhood was blighted by poverty, drugs, alcohol and sexual abuse, and later teenage pregnancy and homelessness. Her Irish parents both struggled with heroin addiction, and as a youngster she witnessed her father’s overdose and subsequent incarceration, experienced sexual violence, and often went hungry and unwashed.

That she survived at all is an achievement, but miraculously she went on to earn a PhD from Dublin’s Trinity College and is now an award-winning lecturer at Maynooth University in County Kildare.

She chronicled her extraordinary journey in the bestselling memoir *Poor: Grit, Courage, And The Life-Changing Value Of Self-Belief*. The book was adapted for the stage by Sonya Kelly, premiered at Dublin’s Gate Theatre to instant critical acclaim, and arrives at Coventry’s Belgrade Theatre this month.

Katriona is delighted to be bringing the show to the city of her birth, the only other venue she’s so far agreed for it to be performed. But she admits that she finds the play too difficult to watch (“horrible, honestly”), and that you’re more likely to find her in the foyer than the auditorium while it’s on.

“There’s never gonna be a time in my life where it’s gonna be okay to watch myself or read about myself being abused as a child, or think about my mum having to sell her body for drugs,” she says. “It’s painful, and it does come at a cost to me, I’m not going to lie. There are a couple of scenes that always get me, and really hurt my heart. But I also get to witness people learning from the story, being inspired and moved by it. Every night there’s a standing ovation, there’s tears and everybody’s crying. It’s kind of happy but sad as well.

“I just sit in the hallway and read, then sell my merch, get hugs and feel the love of the audience, which is amazing. I love meeting people and having conversations with them, but I won’t watch the show.”

Given the obvious emotional cost, what prompted her to write the book in the first place?

“I was asked to write a chapter for a book Trinity College produces every 20 years called *Trinity Tales*. The chapter was chosen by the Irish Times as their lead and it went viral.” Having initially rejected an offer to write a

full memoir, Katriona came round to the idea after deciding it could be a chance to help others: “One of the hardest things that ever happened to me was nothing to do with my childhood,” she says matter-of-factly. “I had to deal with the fact that when I went to Trinity College, I saw all the privilege that exists in universities and how little they do to help others. I didn’t want to be one of them people. I have a privilege and I should use it to try to make things fairer - that kind of pushed me to make the decision that I would share my life story.”

She claims she found the writing process relatively easy: “I never thought about the audience, and I kept saying to myself ‘I don’t have to release this if I don’t want to.’” Sharing details of her life came naturally, as she’s always been an outgoing person and an open book: “My brothers called me ‘mouth’ when I was aged three, so it’s not surprising that I’ve always wanted to be heard.

“I just thought about how to tell a good story and how to be respectful to my family, because there’s no villains. The villain is society and the lack of support my family got, and the fact that we allow families to flounder in all communities.”

Despite her best efforts to be respectful to family members, one of her siblings is so unhappy at the memoir’s publication that they never talk about it.

“He hasn’t dealt with things in the same way I have, so he prefers not to think about it. It’s hard. I have to acknowledge that I’ve made a decision to hurt my brother in the pursuit of something I think is going to help a lot of people, and that’s been a difficult thing to navigate. But I love my brother and it’s not his story. It’s my story.”

Katriona says the book’s success - it’s been a constant in the Irish top 10 since being published three years ago - has made the associated difficulties worthwhile. But the response of readers has been even more gratifying - from teachers who finally feel seen (she identifies a couple who went above and beyond to pull her “out of the trenches”) to impoverished women and girls inspired to go to college or pursue careers they’d previously thought out of bounds.

“I still get at least 10 messages a day from people who’ve been impacted by the book. I’ve had nothing but amazing responses to it. For the little girl who lives inside of me, the seven-year-old kid that was underserved and unhappy, it’s been a wonderfully loving

experience to share my story. I see the world differently as a result - I see a lot of goodness that I didn’t see before. There’s some really good people, and I think we need to remember that in the dark times that we’re in at the minute.”

That feelgood factor fed into allowing the book to be turned into a play - something she agreed to only as long as she remained in total control, fearing it could “turn into *Shameless* in a heartbeat” if not.

“My story is about the inequalities that exist in society, and my mum and dad are not the villains; they’re not *Shameless* characters. It was also about making sure that poor characters were shown in a positive light. Oftentimes we’re shown as these broken biscuits who are prostitutes or robbers, and I wanted to show that you can be poor but also be excellent and skilled and you can achieve.”

Katriona is thrilled with how the play has turned out. She’s also quick to acknowledge that although it can be a tough watch, there’s plenty of fun and joy - and MOR music - in it too.

“A lot of people read *Poor* and only see the trauma, but when Sonya read the book, she was like ‘I just see Fleetwood Mac; I see Rumours.’ She was one of the people who saw the music and life in it.

“When I lived in Hillfields, we didn’t just sit there as dour, sad, poor people like in *Oliver Twist*. There was joy and vibrancy in my community, and the play highlights some of the love and light that went along with my life. All the traumas are in it, obviously, but there’s also a light which comes through music and connection.”

She also reveals a childhood connection to the Belgrade Theatre which adds “an extra layer of amazingness”: “The only time I ever went to the theatre as a child was when I was in care in Coventry. The care kids used to get taken to the Belgrade to watch the panto. It was also the only time I ever got a Christmas present. So my only experience of going to theatre when I was in England was the Belgrade, and now my show is going to be on the same stage!”

.....

Poor shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Friday 1 to Saturday 9 May



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Comedy and light entertainment from around the region



ShxtsnGigs

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Fri 29 May

If you've never heard of James Duncan and Fuhad Dawodu, you can enlighten yourself by heading to YouTube and checking out any number of their hundreds and hundreds of ShxtsnGigs comedy podcasts.

Former Coventry University sports & exercise science students James and Fuhad have certainly come a long way in a comparatively short time, building up a massive online following with their video-first approach to finding the humour in all manner of trending topics.

Their visit to Birmingham comes on the back of picking up a Mobo award (in 2024), touring internationally, and selling out the O2 Arena in London.

Rosalie Minnitt: Clementine

The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 15 & Sat 16 May

Lady Clementine must bag a beau before she turns 27 or all is lost...

That's the premise of Rosalie Minnitt's splendidly demented comedy, a show set 'roughly in the past' which is described by its publicity as a story about sickly sisters, self-love and Sylvanian Families.

If you're a fan of Jane Austen and/or hit Netflix series Bridgerton, this impressively imaginative production is well worth a look.



Judi Love

Birmingham Hippodrome, Sun 3 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 23 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 24 May

Hackney-born comic Judi Love believes that laughter is healing. As such, she has every intention of applying a soothing salve to comedy lovers across the region when she brings her new stand-up offering to the West Midlands this month.

Taking the title All About The Love, the show sees Loose Women regular Judi sharing some home truths about the hustle of juggling parenting, work and everyday life.



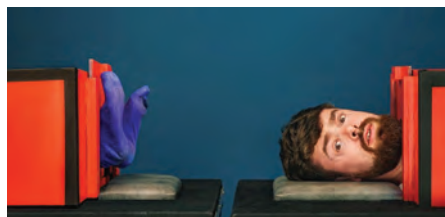
Tom Brace

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 29 May

Tom Brace is a man on a mission. He's aiming to enter the coveted Magic Hall of Fame by performing the world-first trick of sawing himself in half.

Tom's visit to Lichfield at the end of the month will see him inviting Midlanders to join him on a journey through the history of magic...

Presumably he'll be undertaking that particular part of the show while he's still in one piece...



Johns' Boys

Dudley Town Hall, Sat 16 May

An evening of soul-stirring harmonies awaits concert-goers when Welsh Male Voice Choir (and former Britain's Got Talent participants) Johns' Boys stop off in the Black Country in the middle of the month.

The only British choir ever to be crowned Choir of the World - and visiting Dudley as part of their 10th-anniversary celebrations - Johns' Boys will be presenting a diverse repertoire featuring classical, pop, and Welsh folk music.



Bollywood Time Machine

Wulfrun Hall at The Halls Wolverhampton, Sat 30 May

Bollywood fans can revel in an evening of blasts from the past when this high-energy nostalgia show visits Wolverhampton.

Featuring hits from the 1960s onwards, including a selection of contemporary numbers, the production also boasts some 'captivating' choreography from Bollywood dance group 4all2Envy.



Sue, Matt and Phil LIVE! The Reunion Tour

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 5 May; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 6 May

After many a year spent sharing a BBC studio while filming episodes of A Question Of Sport, one-time tennis star Sue Barker, ex-rugby favourite Matt Dawson and former cricketer Phil Tufnell have reunited for what will be their second live tour.

The much-loved trio's return comes complete with A-list celebrity guests, fan-favourite quiz rounds, brand-new games created specifically for the tour, and behind-the-scenes stories from their on-screen days and stellar sporting careers.



OPERA FOR ALL

Welsh National Opera return to the region to celebrate their 80th anniversary...



Welsh National Opera return to Birmingham Hippodrome this month with three very distinct performances: a reimagining of *The Flying Dutchman*, the return of heart-warming adventure *Blaze Of Glory!*, and *Shipwrecked!* - a perfect introduction to opera for younger audiences. What's On recently caught up with director Jack Furness and designer Elin Steele to find out more about what audiences can expect...

Welsh National Opera (WNO) this month premiere a new production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* - and its creative team are promising a show which will sweep audiences away.

First staged in 1843, the opera tells the story of the ghostly *Flying Dutchman*, who is cursed to sail the seas until he finds a woman who will be true to him. When the Dutchman meets Norwegian villager Senta, who has long dreamed of releasing the legendary wanderer from his curse, will he finally find love and freedom?

For director Jack Furness, it's the relationship between the Dutchman and Senta, their hopes and desires, which lies at the heart of Wagner's story.

"You see productions of *The Flying Dutchman* which are all about the ship, big set pieces and razzmatazz, but we felt that was the wrong approach to take with this piece," he explains. "It's a human drama. It's about some of the deepest aspects of our relationship with life and death and identity and love and recognition of another person. "It's a really poetic piece of work. It's mythic. We are dealing with mythic characters, which is almost belied by the everyday setting that some of it happens in. But those everyday questions are blown up and put onto a cosmic scale, so we wanted to do a production that embraced those poetic qualities and also embraced the mythic and the cosmic scale of those emotions."

At under three hours long, *The Flying Dutchman* is both one of Wagner's shortest and also most performed operas. Its dramatic score and colourful characters have ensured it remains a production in many company's repertoires. But, says Jack, it can be interpreted in different ways.

"You can see the Dutchman as a projection of Senta's destabilised psyche, or you can think he's a real ghost and this is a supernatural story, or you can think something in-between. There are multiple interpretations because these characters are mythic in that way.

"I feel so excited about this production because it allows for multiple interpretations. We are not trying to close it down and say *The Flying Dutchman* is about 'this and only this'. We want to explore the full range of this piece. We want these characters to be fully human, completely three-dimensional, and see what happens when we put them in a space together and their various needs and desires and dreams interact."

Designer Elin Steele has aimed to strip back the sets to ensure the audience is pulled into the drama.

"From the beginning we've been examining how we can stage this in a way that feels gripping and exciting and interesting for audiences," she says. "And so everything about what we're doing with it becomes about the human aspect rather than making the ghost part of it the focus.

"One of the key choices we made was to try and make our lens through Senta rather than through the Dutchman. This leans into that idea of it being through the human lens."

The team have given Senta more agency than in some productions, where she is portrayed as a naïve village girl.

"We're choosing to portray Senta as someone who is more mature and more autonomous," Elin explains. "She understands what she's getting into. The Dutchman may be charismatic, but he also offers her an escape from her everyday life, and I think that is as romantic a concept to her as falling desperately in love straight away."

Both Jack and Elin grew up in Wales and have taken inspiration from their home country for the production.

"I lived in Pembrokeshire for a year and have spent a lot of time there since I was three," says Jack. "And with Elin growing up on Anglesey, I think we both had a pretty quick connection with the community in this opera, and what the reality of life in a remote coastal community could be like in a non-stereotype way.

"Actually, there's a lot about the coastline of Wales which speaks quite clearly to this work. Wagner had originally set the story in Scotland, and just before the premiere he moved it to Norway, so the story does feel like it could happen in Wales."

And Elin says there's a visionary element to this: "There's something about the environment of these coastal towns that has this extreme romance to it. These are beautiful places in terms of the landscape and the horizons and the textures you get. WNO's scenic and props department, who are based at Cardiff Theatrical Services, have really done an incredible job to encompass the romance, the beauty and the cosmic element of these landscapes alongside the kind of harsh reality of living there."

For both Elin and Jack, one of the attractions of being involved in the production was the chance to work with Welsh National Opera. Elin moved to Cardiff to study Design for

Performance at Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and has since worked with a host of companies, including Theatr Cymru, Scottish Ballet, New English Ballet Theatre, Matthew Bourne's *New Adventures* and Cardiff's Sherman Theatre.

"WNO would tour to Llandudno when I was little," she recalls, "and that was really my first introduction to opera. It feels really exciting to be working in the Wales Millennium Centre and with everyone at the company. The expertise there is incredible. "Because I have worked more in the ballet world than the world of opera, I think I'm less driven by how things are 'normally' done. I'm used to being led by music, and Wagner's music is so sweeping it does take you there emotionally. In stripping the design back, I hope that audiences are genuinely invested and interested in the characters' journeys, and I hope people are moved by it."

Jack, who is artistic director of Shadwell Opera and has worked with companies including Scottish Opera, Royal Opera House, London Handel Festival and the Royal Academy of Music, first discovered his love for opera seeing WNO performances while growing up in Cardiff.

"It means everything to me to be working with WNO. Welsh National Opera has been a part of my musical life for a really long time. I saw my first operas from when I was about 13. I assisted at WNO in 2016 on *The Merchant Of Venice*, but this is my first time directing a WNO production."

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of Welsh National Opera, and, Jack says, the company has been a powerhouse of the arts throughout those decades: "The *Flying Dutchman* is the perfect work for this anniversary. It's a big chorus opera, and you've got this big symphony orchestra and the amazing scenic work of WNO's technical teams and all the amazing expertise which goes into this show. I really hope that it gives people in all of the cities which this show goes to an impression of the excellence of WNO and the importance of the company as a creative force and public institution."

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Welsh National Opera perform *The Flying Dutchman* at Birmingham Hippodrome on Thursday 7 May alongside *Blaze Of Glory!* (Friday the 8th) and family show *Play Opera LIVE - Shipwrecked!* on Saturday the 9th.

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Moniko Hirata-Johan Persson.
Illustration © Beth Ingleton.

Director Carlos Acosta

20th-Century Masterpieces

Three ballets from three choreographic giants

19 & 20 June

Frederick Ashton
Birthday Offering

Kurt Jooss

The Green Table

George Balanchine

Theme and Variations

20th-Century Masterpieces is supported by donors to the Caroline Miller Fund. *The Green Table* is supported by Stuart Sweeney and Fern & Clive Potter. *Birthday Offering* is supported by The Frederick Ashton Foundation and The Rick Mather David Scrase Foundation.

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ENGLAND**

Dance showing in the region



Strictly The Professionals Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 15 & Sat 16 May

Claudia Winkleman and Tess Daly may have departed, but in every other way it's very much a case of 'business as usual' for Strictly Come Dancing. And that includes the welcome return of this annual extravaganza, in which the hit BBC television series' professional dancers strut their always impressive stuff to a fabulous soundtrack. Previous incarnations of the production have gone down a real treat

with Strictly fans, and there's every reason to suppose the 2026 edition will follow suit.

The 10 participating dancers are: Julian Caillon, Vito Coppola, Neil Jones, Gorka Márquez, Luba Mushtuk, Lauren Oakley, Jowita Przystal, Alexis Warr, Kai Widdrington and Nancy Xu.

Breakin' Convention

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 20 May

Breakin' Convention has been celebrating the global hip-hop theatre movement for more than 20 years and is this month bringing the party to Coventry.

High-energy performances from celebrated poppers, lockers, b-boys and b-girls abound, while stand-out offerings include the Olivier Award-winning Traplord. Created by Beyoncé choreographer Ivan Michael Blackstock, the production fuses movement and storytelling to explore the subjects of masculinity and mental health, while also



challenging racial stereotypes of Black men... Other festival highlights include appearances by Femme Fatale - an international female trio known for their musicality, precision and technique - and members of the trailblazing ILL-Abilities, a Dutch/Brazilian crew of differently abled b-boys. Local talent from Loco Academy, Danceforce Studios and Dance Nuvo also contribute to proceedings.



Phoenix Dance: Interplay

Malvern Theatres, Tues 12 & Wed 13 May

Leeds-based Phoenix Dance Theatre is the longest-standing contemporary dance company outside London, annually reaching up to 20,000 people with its critically acclaimed touring shows. The latest of these, visiting the Midlands mid-month, is Interplay, a mixed-bill offering which explores 'themes of duality and the fusion of distinct artistic voices'.

Featuring duet and ensemble works - and offering a dynamic interplay between contrasting perspectives - the production aims to celebrate 'the beauty of shared vision and artistic exchange'.



The Devil Wears Prada 2

CERT 12a (120 mins)

Starring **Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, Stanley Tucci, Simone Ashley, Justin Theroux**
Directed by **David Frankel**

Twenty years after the first film, Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt and Stanley Tucci return to the fashionable streets of New York City and the sleek offices of Runway Magazine for this eagerly awaited sequel movie.

The film's storyline finds Streep's character, Miranda Priestly, confronting the challenge of navigating a new media landscape and Runway's position within it.

"Come to it looking for fun," says Streep, in talking about the long-awaited sequel. "You can look for the underpinnings of some very serious issues that we are confronting today, of course, but you can also just take from it what you want. Everybody in the family will have a different idea about it."

The returning cast are joined by, among other familiar faces, Kenneth Branagh, Justin Theroux and Lucy Liu.

Released Fri 1 May



Iron Maiden: Burning Ambition

CERT 15 (106 mins)

Starring **Steve Harris, Bruce Dickinson, Nicko McBrain, Adrian Smith, Dave Murray, Janick Gers**
Directed by **Malcolm Venville**

As iconic journeys in music history go, Iron Maiden's, as with many a heavy metal band, is strewn with drama and controversy. Spanning five decades-worth of ferocious musicmaking, and charting the group's rise from the pubs of East London to the world's biggest stadiums, *Burning Ambition* benefits from unprecedented access to the official archives and exclusive interviews with the band. The likes of actor Javier Bardem, Metallica's Lars Ulrich and Public Enemy's Chuck D also make contributions. And there's even some all-new animated sequences of Iron Maiden's legendary mascot, Eddie, to further recommend the film.

Released Thurs 7 May

Mortal Kombat II

CERT tbc (116 mins)

Starring **Karl Urban, Ludi Lin, Jessica McNamee, Joe Taslim, Hiroyuki Sanada, Adeline Rudolph**
Directed by **Simon McQuoid**

If the producers can get the *Mortal Kombat* films right, the ongoing box-office potential is huge. After all, the original action video game series on which the movies are based is the world's bestselling fighting-game franchise, so there's certainly no shortage of fans ready and eager to sample some serious cinematic action. This film's 2021 predecessor did okay, but the sequel probably needs to up the ante if the franchise is ever going to appeal to cinemagoers who aren't also devotees of the source material.

The latest high-stakes installment finds the fan favourite champions - now joined by Johnny Cage - pitted against one another in what's being publicised as 'the ultimate, no-holds barred, gory battle'.

Their challenge? To defeat Shao Kahn - the emperor of the lawless realm of Outworld - whose dark rule threatens the very existence of the Earthrealm and its defenders...

Released Fri 8 May



The Sheep Detectives

CERT PG (109 mins)

Starring **Hugh Jackman, Emma Thompson, Nicholas Galitzine** and with the voices of **Regina Hall, Bryan Cranstone, Brett Golstein**
Directed by **Kyle Balda**

The Sheep Detectives. The title says it all, leaving no room for doubt as to what you'll get if you decide Kyle Balda's family-friendly comedy is worth an evening of your time. George (Hugh Jackman) is a shepherd who reads detective novels to his beloved sheep every night, assuming they can't possibly understand. But when George's life is mysteriously brought to an end, the sheep realise it's time to engage in some serious crime-solving...

Jackman was drawn to the project by just how "nutty" he thought it was, describing it as "Knives Out meets Babe". Dame Emma Thompson joins in the fun as George's lawyer, Lydia Harbottle.

Released Fri 8 May

Star Wars: The Mandalorian And Grogu

CERT tbc (140 mins)

Starring **Pedro Pascal, Sigourney Weaver, Steve Blum, Hemky Madera** and with the voices of **Martin Scorsese** and **Jeremy Allen White** Directed by **Jon Favreau**

Included among the creations spawned by George Lucas' original Star Wars film is a television series called The Mandalorian, which has proved popular enough with the franchise's fans to earn itself not only three seasons but also this first cinematic outing.

The Mandalorian is a bounty hunter named Din Djarin, who is helped in his endeavours by a little green friend called Grogu. With the evil Empire having fallen, and Imperial warlords scattered throughout the galaxy, the fledgling New Republic is working to protect everything the Rebellion fought for - which is why they've enlisted the help of our two eponymous heroes... The film is the first Star Wars movie to hit cinemas screens since 2019 and marks the start of a new era, with franchise owners Disney pivoting away from a focus on Star Wars television shows and back towards cinematic releases.

Released Fri 22 May



Finding Emily

CERT tbc

Starring **Angourie Rice, Spike Fearn, Julia Rogers, Toby Rothwell, Minnie Driver, Yali Topol Margalith** Directed by **Alicia MacDonald**

When a hopelessly romantic musician is given the wrong number for a girl he believes could well be 'the one', he teams up with an ambitious psychology student to find her. Together, they spark no small amount of campus chaos, inadvertently testing their own hearts and aspirations along the way... The fact that Finding Emily has been likened to Bridget Jones's Diary and Notting Hill comes as no surprise. Not only does it sit in the same genre as those two classic movies - 'British romantic comedy' - it also comes from the very same stable; namely, Working Title Films.

Released Fri 22 May



Tuner

CERT 15 (109 mins)

Starring **Leo Woodall, Dustin Hoffman, Havana Rose Liu, Lior Raz, Tovah Feldshuh, Nissan Sakira** Directed by **Daniel Roher**

Tuner is a rare beast - a crime thriller that doubles as a romantic comedy. Reviews of the film have been mixed, highlighting the possibility that successfully combining the two genres has maybe proved a gig too far for Academy Award-winning documentary film director Daniel Roher, for whom this is a first foray into the realm of narrative fiction. The story revolves around the character of Niki White (Leo Woodall), a young man apprenticed to veteran piano technician Harry Horowitz (Dustin Hoffman). Together, the pair are the finest piano tuners in town. But when Niki stumbles across an attempted robbery, he accidentally discovers that his incredible piano-tuning skills also happen to make him remarkably adept at cracking safes...

Released Fri 29 May

Power Ballad

CERT 15 (98 mins)

Starring **Paul Rudd, Nick Jonas, Peter McDonald, Marcella Plunkett, Rory Keenan, Keith McErlean** Directed by **John Carney**

When past-his-prime wedding singer Rick (Paul Rudd) encounters fading boyband star Danny (Nick Jonas) during a gig, the two bond over music and a late-night jamming session. But when Danny turns one of Rick's songs into the hit that reignites his career, Rick sets out to reclaim the recognition he believes he deserves - even if it means risking everything he cares about...

A feelgood story about music, self-respect, friendship and the often heavy price of ambition, Power Ballad has been striking all the right chords with the critics since debuting at the Dublin International Film Festival a couple of months back. Paul Rudd in particular has been earning rave reviews.

Released Fri 29 May





POP PARTY

Warhol comes to Wolverhampton! A collection of works by the Pop Art icon will go on display in the city this month...

Famed for his bold colours, eye-catching portraits of celebrities, and repeated motifs - such as the renowned series depicting Campbell's soup cans - Andy Warhol needs almost no introduction. His work is being celebrated in a solo exhibition opening this month at Wolverhampton Art Gallery, presented in conjunction with the venue's own impressive collection of Pop Art. The exhibition, Andy Warhol: Art Star, throws a spotlight on the nature of celebrity and consumer culture... as the Art Gallery's Senior Curator, Sanna Moore, explained to What's on...

An exhibition of works by legendary Pop Artist Andy Warhol opens at Wolverhampton Art Gallery this month. The show has been created as part of Artist Rooms - a Tate and National Galleries of Scotland programme - which brings solo exhibitions by famous artists to galleries around the UK.

The resulting show, Andy Warhol: Art Star, explores celebrity, identity, mass production and mortality.

"Wolverhampton Art Gallery has one of the largest Pop Art collections in the UK, which includes two works by Warhol," explains the venue's Senior Curator, Sanna Moore. "So it seemed like a good moment to explore his work again. The project has been in development since 2024. As he's one of the most famous artists from the second half of the 20th century, the exhibition will appeal to a wide range of visitors - most people are aware of his iconic works, like the Campbell's soup can and the Marilyn Monroe portraits." Over 70 artworks will be on display. Decades after their creation, the exhibition maintains a striking modern relevance.

"It highlights the fleeting nature of celebrity and how fake and constructed 'celebrity personas' have become," says Sanna. "When Warhol uttered his most famous quote in 1967 - 'In the future, everyone will be world famous for 15 minutes' - he could never have envisaged how relevant that would be today in relation to the internet and social media, and how obsessed society has become with celebrity endorsements and reality TV stars." The exhibition contains images which will be instantly recognisable to most visitors, as well as works which are perhaps less well known - many featuring the famous faces Warhol is famed for bringing to the canvas.

"There are so many great works in the exhibition, it's difficult to have a favourite," says Sanna. "One of the most interesting works is Grace Being Painted By Keith, 1986, a series of six black & white photographs, stitched together with thread, which show Grace Jones (the model, singer-songwriter and actress) having her body painted by artist Keith Haring. The photoshoot, which lasted 18 hours, was organised by Warhol for artist Robert Mapplethorpe to photograph Jones for the cover of Interview magazine, a magazine Warhol established and produced monthly from 1969 onwards. The magazine

featured celebrities on the cover each month, and a series of the magazines will also feature in the exhibition - including the iconic Grace Jones cover."

Producing the exhibition has allowed Sanna to explore the works and appreciate the scale and variety of Warhol's output: "His work ethic and entrepreneurial approach was impressive. The sheer volume of work that he produced in his lifetime - which was relatively short, given he died aged 58 - is extraordinary: 9,000 paintings & sculptures, 12,000 drawings, and over 19,000 prints, many of which were outsourced, i.e. produced by those working for him. His collaborative approach to working across artforms is also quite remarkable. For example, in the 1960s [he moved] from producing underground films and managing the band The Velvet Underground, to producing Interview magazine from 1969, and acting as executive producer for his TV show, Andy Warhol's TV, in the 1980s."

As previously mentioned, Wolverhampton Art Gallery has two works by Warhol in its permanent Pop Art collection. One of them - Campbell's Soup, 1968 - will be featured in Art Star.

"I felt it was important to include the Soup Can in the exhibition. It's one of the iconic works that visitors will expect to see in a Warhol exhibition, and it's an iconic Pop artwork. The other Warhol in our collection - Jacqueline, 1964 - remains on display in the Pop Art Gallery. This work is a portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy, wife of President John F Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1963. The image of her was taken during the funeral procession and came to symbolise the national sense of loss and bereavement in the US at that time."

Whether gathering works which resonate with visitors, or planning the logistics of an installation, Sanna has much to consider as the art gallery's Senior Curator: "[There's] choosing work that is accessible to our audiences, creating themes and dialogues within the works selected, practical considerations like how the work should or could be hung. For example, there are several large-scale works that will only fit on particular walls. The gallery spaces are unconventional, in that they're not perfect white-box spaces. One gallery is triangular,

one is not quite rectangular, and the third space has some odd angles and alcoves. This makes pulling a show together challenging in terms of creating an exhibition which will showcase the artworks in their best light."

While Andy Warhol: Art Star is well worth a visit in its own right, the gallery will also host events inspired by the exhibition and Warhol himself. These include dance workshops, film screenings, and events which explore the artist's impact on and immersion in mid-20th-century gay culture.

"We have a series of events running throughout the summer. Several of these strands will take place throughout the whole duration of the exhibition, with the focus of activity in June to mark Pride Month. There will be a series of film screenings in collaboration with Lockworks Cinema, which will include films produced by Warhol or that feature him, a number of talks on Warhol in the gallery, a voguing and waacking workshop, a series of Friday Lates - on the last Friday of each month - and family-friendly summer workshops. They're all available to book via our website."

The rich events programme, which brings an additional dimension to the exhibition, is a feature of Wolverhampton Art Gallery's offering all year round.

"We have a changing programme of exhibitions and events that attract many different audiences, from schools to family-friendly events and workshops, weekly art sessions for young and older people, and 'in conversation with' talks with contemporary artists. We also regularly run projects outside the building, working in the community. The programme is continually evolving, so there's always something new to discover."

In the meantime, Andy Warhol: Art Star opens this month at the gallery - a chance to get up-close and personal with the work of one of the most renowned, celebrated and instantly recognisable artists of a generation.

.....

Andy Warhol: Art Star shows at Wolverhampton Art Gallery from Saturday 23 May until Sunday 4 October

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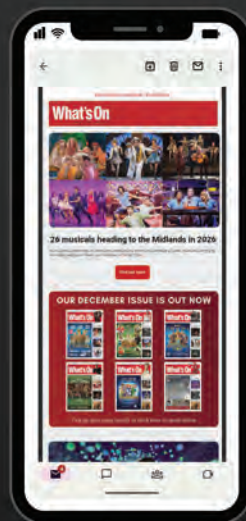
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What's On

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Visual Arts previews from around the region



Daiga Grantina - Lilacs

The Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Fri 1 May - Sun 28 June

Warwick Arts Centre's Mead Gallery is here hosting the first UK solo exhibition by Latvian artist Daiga Grantina. Drawing inspiration from bodies and landscapes, Daiga creates sculptures which explore how materials meet and react to each other in ways that make the viewer look again at their size, form and meaning. The interactions of the materials echo the ways that living systems and environments evolve - shifting, growing and unfolding across multiple dimensions.

For this month's exhibition, Grantina has responded to the Mead Gallery's architecture and natural light with new and existing works, to expand on ideas explored in What Eats Around Itself, her critically acclaimed solo exhibition at the New Museum in New York.

"I am excited to be working with the Mead Gallery team," says Daiga, "and to begin a dialogue with the gallery's generous volumes. I hope my exhibition will offer audiences a sense of light relief during darker times."

Stories That Made Us

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Mon 25 May

Stories That Made Us is an immersive exhibition which travels through the life of a single South Asian family in Coventry across a period of 40-plus years. Created by Hardish Virk - and his sister Manjinder - from Hardish's personal archives, the exhibition reveals much about their activist father and Punjabi

poet mother, not to mention Hardish himself, whose formative years were shaped by the Coventry of the 1980s. "Often the conversation, particularly around young people, is 'We don't know where we belong,'" says Hardish. "But also we've got people of my parents' generation who feel like their story started in the 1950s and 60s. What I was very keen to say is that our story goes back at least 425 years, and we've contributed to every facet of British life."



The Rossettis: Siblings And Spouses

Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, until Sun 8 November

An exhibition that's being hailed as a must-see for anybody with an interest in Victorian art and poetry, Siblings And Spouses explores the lives and legacy of the Rossetti family, who were central figures in the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Sitting at the heart of the show is a series of recently acquired and previously unseen works by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, included among which are early experiments in lithography, a 19th-century printmaking technique widely used in books and fine art. The exhibition also shines a spotlight on the often-overlooked women who were connected to the Pre-Raphaelite circle. Art by Elizabeth Siddal and Lucy Madox Brown - both artists in their own right and Rossettis by marriage - are displayed alongside key works by Christina Rossetti.

A newly reattributed work by Christina is also included in the exhibition.

Ten.8 afterimage

New Art Gallery, Walsall, Fri 1 May - Sun 13 September

The legacy and enduring impact of Ten.8 - a photography journal that emerged from the Midlands' radical cultural and political landscape in the late 1970s - is the subject of this fascinating exhibition.

Engaging with the continued relevance of the concerns that the journal addressed - including Thatcherite neoliberal reforms and struggles against colonialism and state violence - the exhibition brings photographic works produced in the 1980s and 90s into dialogue with more recent artworks.



Claire Hewitt: Everything In The Forest Is The Forest

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, until Mon 31 August

Acclaimed photographer Clare Hewitt's latest exhibition - a celebration of trees and their remarkable ability to nurture and communicate - is a direct response to a government report suggesting that loneliness and isolation are on the rise in rural areas of the country. Setting up a studio within a circle of 12 oak trees, Clare documented the forest and its seasonal changes, exploring nature through a range of sustainable photographic techniques.

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Visual Arts previews from around the region



The Countryside Through Mid-Century Art

Netherwood Estate, Herefordshire, Sat 16 - Tues 26 May & Fri 5 - Sun 14 June

The Countryside Through Mid-Century Art coincides with a rare opportunity to visit the three-acre Netherwood Manor Gardens, which are open for just a handful of weekends this year as part of the National Garden Scheme.

Growing out of a previously displayed collection of landscape paintings by World War Two war artist John Piper, the exhibition includes work by a number of his contemporaries, offering a compelling exploration of how the British landscape was represented across multiple media in the mid-20th century.

As well as original works by Piper - including a feature collection of fabrics - the show also includes artwork by, among others, Katharine Church, Elisabeth Frink, Rowland Suddaby and Robert Tavener.

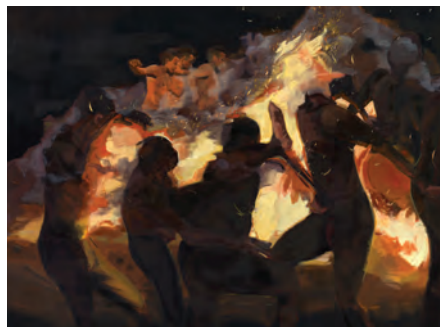
The exhibition is curated by Fifties Art & Design - specialists in affordable mid-century art and stockists of a range of original pictures, prints and posters from the period.

I Photograph Comedians!

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 31 May

If you love a laugh, then be sure to catch this Andy Hollingworth exhibition, which remains available to view until the end of the month.

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 display. Photographs of Ken Dodd, Sarah Millican, Victoria Wood, Rik Mayall and Rhod Gilbert all feature, as do pictures of such Midlands masters and mistresses of mirth as Jasper Carrott, Stewart Lee, Lenny Henry, Joe Lycett, Jo Enright and Shazia Mirza. The display also features numerous items connected to particular comedians, including a jacket worn by Lenny Henry during his 1984 tour and a signed pair of Rik Mayall's underpants.



Shaquéelle Whyte: Shattered Dreams

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Mon 31 August

Growing up in Wolverhampton, Royal College of Art graduate Shaquéelle Whyte has cited visits to the city's art gallery as being pivotal in the development of his creativity. Now - in his mid-20s - Shaquéelle has his very own exhibition at the venue!

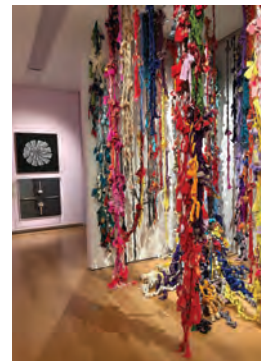
What's more, the gallery has recently acquired one of his paintings - the striking and nocturnal Blackbirds Singing In The Dead Of Night - for its permanent collection. The painting takes its place in the Shattered Dreams exhibition alongside five other similarly dynamic and large-scale works, all of which serve to showcase Shaquéelle's bold figurative style and vigorous mark-making.

Troublemakers And Prophets

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until 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 years prior to 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'.



ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

an electropop musical about queer invisibility in tennis
is set to visit two Midlands venues...

Birmingham-based composer and theatre maker Michael Wolters was working on a show for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in the city when he first discovered that lawn tennis was invented in Edgbaston. Hearing that the now-international game was devised by Victorians Harry Gem and Augurio Perera, who were close friends and may have been lovers, Michael knew he'd stumbled across a tale worth telling.

So, along with fellow artistic director Alexandra Taylor, Michael researched the story and created the musical Fairlight, which was premiered in Birmingham last autumn and is this year undertaking its first UK tour - beginning at the city's historic Edgbaston tennis courts.

Fairlight retells the story of the origins of lawn tennis through the lens of a queer love story. Coming complete with an electropop score, the show interweaves the past and present and includes interviews with current LGBTQ+ tennis professionals.

"I was amazed to learn that tennis was invented in Birmingham," Michael recalls, "and that the oldest tennis club in the world is in Birmingham - at Edgbaston. And then we started doing the research and found that the house where Harry and Augurio played, Fairlight, still exists and still has the same name."

Harry and Augurio were both married, and yet their friendship sparks speculation that they may have been lovers. Michael and Alex realised that the ambiguous nature of the men's relationship gave them space to explore queer invisibility in sport - and specifically within the world of professional tennis.

"You don't even think about whether tennis was invented by a straight man or a gay man or a straight couple or a gay couple - you don't think about those things, but you automatically assume a straight background. The surprise is when it's not. And it's really fun to think about the fact that tennis as we know it today could have been invented by two gay lovers. What difference does that make? Does it change anything? Does it change anything to the game? Do you look at it differently? In the show, rather than us saying something, we are opening a lot of questions."

For Alex, it's the not knowing which gives the story its resonance: "When Michael told me about Harry and Augurio, I started looking into the history, expecting it to very quickly go 'Okay, they weren't really seeing each other,' and what I found really interesting is that history relates no more than they were both married and one of them had kids. There is nothing in the history that suggests they were anything more than friends. "However, once you're looking at it through

that modern queer lens, there's nothing there that contradicts that reading, and a lot of things that kind of support it. We have no evidence either way, and historically people have assumed that people who appeared straight were straight, but once you start investigating the potential for it being something else, there's a whole other reading you can put on the facts."

Alex's research also revealed more about the lives of gay men in Victorian England.

"We include information about Victorian prosecutions of gay men in the show because very often the only evidence that gay men existed in Victorian times was the evidence of them being arrested and prosecuted. The ones who weren't caught didn't exist."

Once Michael and Alex had their story about gay invisibility in historical tennis, they then decided to explore the issue in terms of the sport today. The show features interviews with former professional tennis player and president of the US Tennis Association, Brian Vahaly, Pride In Tennis founder Ian Pearson-Brown, former doubles world number one Gigi Fernandez, five-time Paralympian Lucy Shuker and tennis journalist Nick McCarvel.

"The show also engages with the lack of out gay men in modern tennis," says Alex. "It's like, look, if you're having a problem with us thinking about people in the past possibly being gay, what about all the people in the present?"

The production also brings together past and present by combining the structure of an operetta libretto written by Harry Gem with new music composed by Michael and inspired by the sounds of the Fairlight CMI (computer musical instrument). The famous 1980s sampler was used by a host of musicians, including Peter Gabriel, Stevie Wonder, Mike Oldfield and Kate Bush.

"Having been brought up in the 80s, this music is very dear to me," says Michael. "And then there was this great coincidence of the house being called Fairlight. We couldn't use the music from the original operetta because we didn't have it, so we had to turn in a different direction and went with the idea of sampling and sample discs from the Fairlight.

"A lot of our sounds will be very recognisable. It's not just the samples from the demo discs as used by Kate Bush and the Pet Shop Boys and Peter Gabriel and so on; we also sampled a lot of tennis sounds. So there's a song that's full of grunting, and we have ball sounds and umpire announcements."

The show, which was devised with fellow composer Paul Norman, dramaturg Tanna Chamberlain and filmmaker Oli Clark, has been designed to take place on lawn tennis courts; the tour opens at Edgbaston Archery

& Lawn Tennis Society as part of Flatpack Festival.

The production was staged in Edgbaston last year. The team had hoped the musical would be played on the outdoor courts at the club, but bad weather forced them to stage it indoors instead. Now they're keeping their fingers crossed for mid-May.

"We all felt it was important to come back, because we haven't done the full show at the Edgbaston club, which is where it was meant to be," Alex explains. "We did a work-in-progress - a 20-minute version of the show - there in 2024, and we were meant to come back and do the full version in 2025, but the rain was terrible and we had to go indoors.

"There are so many reasons the venue is important for us. It's partly because it's the oldest tennis club in the world, partly because it's the club that Harry and Augurio played at, and partly because it's less than a mile from the house where they invented tennis. It's also because Oli is club secretary and plays competitively as part of the club."

Alex and Michael are looking forward to sharing Fairlight with new audiences.

"It's a show which isn't like a normal musical," Alex says. "It talks about tennis [but] not how you usually talk about tennis. It doesn't take place on a stage; it goes out on a tennis court, where we have to worry about the weather and sound. We've made our lives really difficult because of those factors, but that means the show has a questioning factor and it evokes reactions."

And Michael continues: "I always hope with everything that the audience will respond in a multitude of ways. I don't want to make something that everyone just cheers about. I would really like it if there was some awareness after this show. We can tell from experience now that people have got it - they say 'I didn't know that tennis was invented here, I didn't know that it was that terrible in the Victorian era, I didn't know this or that.' So that comes through, definitely. But also we want people to have a good time. That's why we chose the format of the musical, to contrast these harsh realities of the past and the present with some good tunes. It could have been a super-tragic opera, but I think the contrast here is interesting and will give audiences lots to think about."

Fairlight shows at Edgbaston Archery & Lawn Tennis Society on Wednesday 13 May and then at Leamington Tennis Club, Leamington Spa, on Saturday 11 July. For further information and to book tickets, visit fairlightmusical.co.uk



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Events previews from around the region



Makers Central NEC, Birmingham, Sat 16 - Sun 17 May

Makers Central is back at the NEC, bringing together creators, hobbyists and artists from all over the world.

Visitors young and old can get involved with a selection of interactive sessions, including drone building with Extreme Fliers and beginner-friendly electronics workshops with MadLab.

Everyone from experienced makers to families and first-time triers can have a go at making things with new technologies, along

the way gaining a better understanding of the science behind how things are put together.

Attendees can also see the stars of Robot Wars up close, as well as have a go at driving a robot for themselves in the Robot Warriors arena. The UK Droidbuilders will also be on hand, showcasing their expertise in building droids from unconventional materials and providing inspiration for aspiring makers. Kids under 12 go free.



Titanic Exhibition Birmingham NEC, Birmingham, until Tues 26 May

The renowned Titanic Exhibition remains available to view for much of the month at Birmingham's NEC.

Visitors can step back in time and follow Titanic's extraordinary journey, from its construction at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast, through its ill-fated maiden

voyage, to its rediscovery on the ocean floor and its legacy more than a century later. The exhibition showcases a collection of authentic Titanic artefacts, including personal items recovered from the sea in the aftermath of the disaster and objects discovered on the seabed decades later.

Railway 200 Exhibition Train

Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May

Curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum, the Inspiration exhibition train returns to Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster station for the half-term break.

The touring train debuted last year, marking the 200th anniversary of railways, and has since visited 60 locations across Britain, stopping off at mainline stations, heritage railways and rail freight sites.

Royal Carriages Family Trail

The Commandery, Worcester, Fri 22 - Sun 31 May

Celebrate the restoration of the crown this half-term holiday with a trail of colourful royal carriages at The Commandery. From dragons to swans, families can explore the building and find all of the decorated carriages.

Bank Holiday Monday (the 25th) sees the venue recognising Oak Apple Day - a traditional celebration marking King Charles II's return to the throne in 1660.

Over in the craft room, youngsters can make their own Oak Apple mobile to take home.

Fotofest

Various venues in Walsall, Sat 9 & Sun 10 May

Taking place across various venues, Fotofest features a full programme of exhibitions, workshops and demonstrations, presented alongside a visual expo that includes some of the biggest names in photography and imaging technology.

The weekend-long festival also features a diverse programme of talks and discussions exploring photography, creativity and storytelling.

Organisations including the Royal Photographic Society, Urban Hax and the UK Black Female Photographers Community will also be involved in the programme.

To find out more about what's happening, visit @FotoFestWalsall on Instagram.



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Events previews from around the region



Fossil Fun Weekend

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Sat 23 - Mon 25 May

Thinktank is hosting a half-term-holiday weekend of family fossil fun to celebrate the birthday of prehistoric pioneer Mary Anning. Mary, who was born on the 25th of May 1799, found the first-ever skeleton of an Ichthyosaur - a giant, fish-like Jurassic creature - when she was just 12 years old. A female scientist whose story is often

overlooked, Mary spent her life collecting, sharing and studying fossils... The museum will be celebrating her legacy with a programme of talks and activities, providing visiting families with the opportunity to make their own dinosaurs, dig for fossils in the Science Garden, and enjoy storytime sessions.



Heroes Of The Air RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford, Mon 25 - Fri 29 May

RAF Museum Midlands hosts a family-friendly celebration of courage and adventure this half-term holiday, celebrating 'the remarkable stories of those who took to the skies'. Among the attractions is a special trail allowing youngsters to engage with some of

the heroes of aviation from the past. Other highlights include fascinating exhibitions, the opportunity to uncover inspiring stories, and the chance to watch a powerful BBC documentary series featuring first-hand accounts from those who lived through the Second World War.

Great Birmingham Run

Birmingham City Centre, Sun 3 May

The Midlands' biggest mass-participation running event returns early this month as Birmingham welcomes thousands of runners back to its streets.

The hugely popular get-together provides participants with the opportunity to run either a 10k or half marathon. The designated route takes the runners past some of the city's best-loved locations, including the Jewellery Quarter, St Paul's Square, the Mailbox, Grand Central, St Martin's Church, Southside and Digbeth.

A Mini Run, designed specifically for younger participants, takes place at the Alexander Stadium in Perry Barr on Saturday the 2nd.



Stratford Literary Festival

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 May

The Stratford Literary Festival makes a welcome return early this month, complete with its usual mouthwatering line-up of bestselling authors and household names from stage & screen.

Featuring more than 80 events, the festival's programme includes a host of talks, workshops, and events for children. Contributors to the four-day programme include Ardal O'Hanlon, Prue Leith, Scrummy Mummies and Mark Gatiss.

Birmingham Pride

Birmingham Gay Village, Hurst Street, Birmingham, Sat 23 & Sun 24 May

Celebrating the Midlands' LGBTQIA+ community, Birmingham Pride will once again get the city partying this month. It's expected that more than 40,000 revellers will attend the event across the weekend, with an impressive 75,000-plus people either participating in or watching the annual Pride parade through the city's streets. Headline acts this year include Katy B, Sigala, Danny Beard and Nadine.

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Events previews from around the region



RHS Malvern Spring Festival

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 May

The RHS Malvern Spring Festival makes a welcome return to the town's Three Counties Showground early this month. One of the first major flower shows of the season, the festival's 2026 edition showcases some of the country's best-known television gardeners and horticulturalists. Contributors include Alan Titchmarsh, Monty Don and BBC Gardeners' World regulars Adam Frost, Frances Tophill and Sue Kent. Raymond Blanc is one of a number of

culinary connoisseurs taking part in the festival, while Dame Mary Berry will be talking about her new gardening book. The festival also features the crowning of the very first RHS award-winning show gardens of the year, the latest in horticultural trends, a host of fun family-friendly activities, and a number of brand-new or returning features, including a Blooming Borders category. This year's theme is Roots Of The Future: Honour The Past, Grow The Future.



POP-UP Family Festival Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 23 May

Little ones, teenagers, parents and grandparents are invited to join this 'joyful' family festival 'bursting with creativity, curiosity, and fun for all ages'. Families can stretch into the day with yoga sessions; get creative with an artist-led workshop; discover, touch and explore the

Sensory Sculpture Trail; and find a treasure hunt's creative clues. A programme of short films, a relaxed Star Wars screening, and performances of Sisters 360 and Zog (pictured) also feature in the festival's wide-ranging programme of entertainment.

1960s Evenings

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Fri 15 & Sat 16 May

Transport yourself back to the hip and transformational decade of the Swinging 60s at the Black Country Living Museum mid-month, courtesy of two evenings of psychedelic music and far-out fashions. Visitors can twist the night away, dine on a variety of food & drink, or simply soak up the nostalgic atmosphere.



Soul Revolution

Weston Park, Shropshire, Fri 22 - Tues 26 May

Soul Revolution returns to Weston Park this month, bringing together live music, thought-provoking talks and over 200 workshops, all designed to elevate the mind, body and spirit. Taking place in a safe and family-friendly environment, the festival boasts a diverse programme of events and activities, from sacred ceremonies to immersive healing practices.

Inside The T Rex

Village Hotel, Shirley Birmingham, Mon 25 - Sun 31 May

Families can 'step beneath the skin and bones' of one of the most formidable predators in history when world-first live dinosaur show Inside The T Rex pays a visit to Birmingham this month. The 90-minute interactive experience, designed for children aged six-plus and featuring a full-scale, scientifically recreated T-rex, uses expert-led demonstrations and interactive science experiments to explain to visitors how the Tyrannosaurus moved, hunted and functioned.



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listings guide
May 2026

thelist



Welsh National Opera: *Flying Dutchman* - Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 7 May

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

What's On

Fri 1 - Sun 10 May



Jamaica Love -
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
Sat 2 May

Mon 11 - Sun 17 May



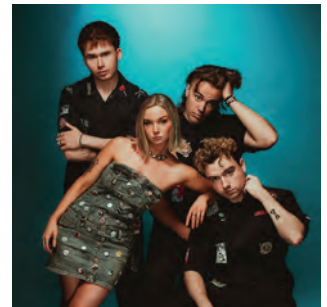
Wesley Joseph - O2 Institute,
Birmingham
Thurs 14 May

Mon 18 - Sun 24 May



Esther Manito - Comedy at The
Castle, Warwick Castle
Fri 22 - Sun 24 May

Mon 25 - Sun 31 May



Dead Pony - Mamma Roux's,
Birmingham
Sat 30 May

VISUAL ARTS ACROSS THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

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

BIRMINGHAM MEDIA ARCHIVE PROJECT: THE FIRST DECADE 1982-1992 Explore the city's overlooked media heritage through the work of pioneering organisations, until Sun 28 June

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

BRUEGEL TO REMBRANDT: DRAWING LIFE, SKETCHING WONDER Explore the wonders of Dutch and Flemish drawing with over 60 works from the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, many never before seen in the UK, until Sun 28 June

MODERN MASTERPIECES: PAINTINGS FROM THE BARBER INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS An intimate display of six exceptional paintings by major modern artists, including Vincent van Gogh, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Édouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard, until Sun 6 Sept

Coventry Music Museum

BEING HAZEL Exhibition celebrating Coventry-born legend Hazel O'Connor's life and career through memorabilia, displays and clips

The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

HELIOS BY LUKE JERRAM A stunning illuminated sculpture by acclaimed British artist Luke Jerram. An immersive and rare opportunity to gaze at our closest star, until Sun 1 Nov

SEEING THE SUN Inspired by artist Luke Jerram's illuminated sculpture, Helios, The Exchange presents a new exhibition - discover the Sun like never before through the lens of University of Birmingham research, until Sun 1 Nov

Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

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

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

ANGELA DE LA CRUZ: UPRIGHT Major exhibition of rarely seen works by the acclaimed contemporary artist, presented alongside a new commission developed in collaboration with Birmingham Royal Ballet, until Sun 6 Sept

BREAK THE MOULD The final exhibition in a trilogy exploring craft, art school pedagogies and contemporary art practice, until Sun 6 Sept

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

JANE WILLIAMS: MY FAVOURITE MUSIC Leamington Music Festival's artist-in-residence exhibits paintings inspired by works by Beethoven, Handel, Haydn and more..., Fri 1 - Sun 31 May, Royal Pump Rooms Conservatory, Leamington Spa

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

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

GENEVIEVE ROBERTSON: UNDER THE ORANGE STICKS OF THE SUN Showcase of work inspired by Genevieve's personal history in the Canadian forestry industry and her interest in ecological systems, until Sun 5 July

New Art Gallery, Walsall

JASKIRT DHALIWAL-BOORA: FRACTURED LANDSCAPES AND HOW WE HEAL Exhibition focusing on the role that nature and creativity can play in healing from trauma, particularly in the context of male violence and abuse against women and girls, until Sun 21 June

BILLY DOSANJH: PATHS YOU WALK Billy's artistic practice, uncovering silenced histories of migration, displacement and industrial exploitation, is rooted in his upbringing and the de-industrialised landscapes of the Black Country, until Sun 21 July

Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

A SIMPLE LINE: PRINTS AND ENGRAVINGS FROM THE MUSEUM

COLLECTION Featuring a number of prints and engravings which are not usually on display, until Sat 13 June

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

RBSA PORTRAIT PRIZE 2026 Open to established and emerging artists working in any media, including photography and digital art, Tues 5 May - Sat 13 June

RBSA SMALL WORKS EXHIBITION 2026 A unique show from the Society's membership, intended as a starting point for those visitors wishing to build an art collection, Tues 19 May - Sat 13 June

Rugby Art Gallery

100 YEARS OF RUGBY RADIO Exhibition marking the 100th anniversary of Rugby Radio Station, looking back at the station's history, charting its early transatlantic communications and its heyday in the 1950s, until Sat 3 Oct

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR The world's most prestigious wildlife photography exhibition, now in its 61st year, until Sat 20 June

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

JOY LABINJO: A PLACE OF OUR OWN Solo exhibition by the British Nigerian artist, reclaiming the nude and celebrating identity, until Mon 4 May

HANDLE WITH CARE Exhibition exploring the city's art collection, from its beginnings in 1887 to the present day, until Sun 16 Aug

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

DAVID BIRTWHISTLE: A RETROSPECTIVE Celebration of one of Worcester's most respected artists, until Sun 31 May

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

Gigs

MAJOR TOMS Fri 1 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE GO90S Fri 1 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

ANDY BENNETT Fri 1 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

THE CHARLATANS Fri 1 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND Fri 1 May, Tower of Song, Birmingham

BRIGITTE BERAHA LUCID DREAMERS Fri 1 May, 1000 Trades, B'ham

MORETALLICA Fri 1 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

KASADOR Fri 1 May, Dead Wax, Birmingham

DRAGGED INTO SUNLIGHT + VACUOUS + PLAGUE PIT Fri 1 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

NEVER EASY Fri 1 May, Mama Roux's, B'ham

THE DEAD COLLECTIVE Fri 1 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

TIM HEIGHTS' SKA ANTHEMS Fri 1 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

SKA TRAIN Fri 1 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

MARK GREEN AS ELVIS Fri 1 May, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

THE BOWIE EXP Fri 1 May, hmv Empire, Coventry

THE DRIFTERS Fri 1 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MOVING PICTURES - RUSH TRIBUTE Fri 1 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

VIRGIL & THE ACCELERATORS Fri 1 May, Marrs Bar, Worcester

THE STIFFMEISTERS Fri 1 May, Drummonds, Worcester

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Fri 1 May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

TOYAH Fri 1 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

METEORA - LINKIN PARK TRIBUTE Fri 1 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE GERRY CINNA-MAN EXPERIENCE Fri 1 May,

The Robin, Bilston
THIRSTY WORK Fri 1 May, Cafe Metro, Bilston

EMF + BIS Fri 1 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

SAM SWEENEY TRIO Fri 1 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

NORTHERN LIVE - DO I LOVE YOU Fri 1 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ELO ENCOUNTER Fri 1 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

HEY PIXIES! Fri 1 May, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

SHADER + SIDEEYE + THE GROVES Fri 1 May, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

FAINTEST IDEA + FIGHTING EVIL IS COOL + RHYTHM EATERS Fri 1 May, The Rigger, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

POIZON + ROXXIE RED Fri 1 May, The Station, Cannock

ROCK THE 80S Fri 1 May, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

UNDER THE COVERS Sat 2 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

XODUS - TRIBUTE TO BOB MARLEY Sat 2 May, The Night Owl, Birmingham

LUKE JONES + THE KASTERS + SLOW TALK + FRACTURES + UNDER THE BRIDGE Sat 2 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

BALU BRIGADA + WILL SWINTON Sat 2 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NINJA SEX PARTY + TWRP + JAZZ EMU Sat 2 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WEST COAST EAGLES Sat 2 May, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

BRAD HENSHAW Sat 2 May, Tower of Song, Birmingham

SLAUGHTERHOUSE FESTIVAL Sat 2 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

NOFX V RANC1D Sat 2 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

THE 900 Sat 2 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

GIVE ME THE NIGHT -

Friday 1 - Sunday 10 May

GEORGE BENSON TRIBUTE
Sat 2 May, Artrix,
Bromsgrove

**THE AMY WINEHOUSE
CELEBRATION** Sat 2 May,
The Assembly,
Leamington Spa

RACHEL CROFT BAND Sat
2 May, Temperance,
Leamington Spa

THE FATHER TEDS Sat 2
May, The Rhodhouse,
Sutton Coldfield

**ROTHSHE + DANNY
ANSELL MUSIC + LUCY
TURNBULL** Sat 2 May,
hmv Empire, Coventry

**ALCHEMY RELIVED - DIRE
STRAITS TRIBUTE** Sat 2
May, Arches Venue,
Coventry

THE BIG INDIE FEST Sat 2
May, hmv Empire,
Coventry

HAIRCUT 100 Sat 2 May,
Warwick Arts Centre,
Coventry

TREEBOY + ARC Sat 2
May, Just Dropped In,
Coventry

**CHOCOLATE STARFISH -
LIMP BIZKIT (+ BRAZEN)
TRIBUTE** Sat 2 May,
Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**SHEF LEPPARD +
MOTLEY SCREW** Sat 2
May, Marrs Bar,
Worcester

MADE IN TENNESSEE Sat
2 May, Swan Theatre,
Worcester

THE BOHEMIANS Sat 2
May, Palace Theatre,
Redditch

THE MANFREDS Sat 2
May, Stourbridge Town
Hall

UNDER THE COVERS Sat
2 May, Cafe Metro,
Bilston

JETHRO TULL Sat 2 May,
Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-
Trent

DRESSED TO KILL Sat 2
May, The Station,
Cannock

GIGABITE Sat 2 May, The
Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE 80S SHOW Sat 2
May, Theatre Severn,
Shrewsbury

NIZLOPI Sat 2 - Sun 3
May, The Tin At The
Coal Vaults, Coventry

THE BELL BAND Sun 3
May, Kitchen Garden,
Birmingham

**DEATH OF YOUTH +
MOUNTAIN PEAKS +**

EYEGLOSS + ANAEMIA
Sun 3 May, The
Sunflower Lounge,
Birmingham

**SEETHING AKIRA +
WATERLINES** Sun 3 May,
The Flapper, B'ham

**INFECTED DEAD +
PLAGUE FATHER +
WARDEN** Sun 3 May,
Subside Bar, B'ham

JETHRO TULL Sun 3
May, Symphony Hall,
Birmingham

THE MANGOES Sun 3
May, Temperance,
Leamington Spa

10CCLO Sun 3 May,
Sutton Coldfield Town
Hall

**FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO
QUEEN** Sun 3 May, The
River Rooms,3,
Stourbridge

AMNESIA Sun 3 May,
The Robin, Bilston

TOM SKEGGS Sun 3 May,
Cafe Metro, Bilston

CITIZENRY + MUTES Sun
3 May, Centrala, B'ham

THE LEISURE SOCIETY
Sun 3 - Mon 4 May,
Temperance,
Leamington Spa

**LORELLE MEETS THE
OBSOLETE** Mon 4 May,
Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**CASSIDY JANSON SINGS
CAROLE KING** Mon 4
May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

NE-YO + AKON Mon 4 -
Tues 5 May, Utilita
Arena Birmingham

JUTES Tues 5 May, O2
Institute, Birmingham

HYPHEN Tues 5 May,
Castle & Falcon, B'ham

INDUSTRY STANDARD
Tues 5 May, The
Victoria, Birmingham

**STYROFOAM WINOS +
CONNEXION MAN +
GREEN HANDS** Tues 5
May, Just Dropped In,
Coventry

**OYSTERBAND'S JOHN
JONES WITH RAY COOPER
AND AL SCOTT** Tues 5
May, Ludlow Assembly
Rooms, South Shrops

HATER + KITTY BELLA
Wed 6 May, Hare &
Hounds, B'ham

**ROSLOW ROAD +
GENEVIEVE RACETTE**
Wed 6 May, Kitchen
Garden, Birmingham

BILLY LOCKETT Wed 6
May, Castle & Falcon,

Birmingham

**JUNIPER + CLAIRE
BOSWELL** Wed 6 May,
Red Lion Folk Club,
Birmingham

KATE RUSBY Wed 6 May,
Birmingham Town Hall

LAURA SNOWDEN Wed 6
May, New Vic Theatre,
Newcastle-under-Lyme



**LEGENDS OF AMERICAN
COUNTRY** Wed 6 May,
Theatre Severn,
Shrewsbury

BLEECH 9:3 Thurs 7 May,
Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**MIRANDA SYKES + JIM
CAUSLEY** Thurs 7 May,
Kitchen Garden, B'ham

HEAVY WILD Thurs 7
May, The Sunflower
Lounge, Birmingham

CLEMENTINE DOUGLAS
Thurs 7 May, O2
Institute, Birmingham

**VIENNA + CHASING
DOLLS + JAZZCAT +
HOMEBREAD** Thurs 7
May, Centrala, B'ham

NATE BERGMAN Thurs 7
May, The Flapper,
Birmingham

PREYRS Thurs 7 May,
The Victoria, B'ham

COWBOY JUNKIES Thurs
7 May, Birmingham
Town Hall

PAUL CARRACK Thurs 7
May, Symphony Hall,
Birmingham

**CONAN GRAY + ESHA
TEWARI** Thurs 7 May, bp
pulse LIVE, B'ham

NADAV TABAK Thurs 7
May, Temperance,
Leamington Spa

STEELEYE SPAN Thurs 7
May, Warwick Arts
Centre, Coventry

ALFIE BOE Thurs 7 May,
Warwick Arts Centre,
Coventry

NASHVILLE LIVE Thurs 7
May, Walsall Arena &
Arts Centre

**AND FINALLY... PHIL
COLLINS** Thurs 7 May,
Stafford Gatehouse
Theatre

EASY CURE Fri 8 May,
Hare & Hounds,
Birmingham

GREAZY ALICE Fri 8 May,
Kitchen Garden, B'ham

TEENAGE JOANS Fri 8
May, The Sunflower
Lounge, Birmingham

THESE MUDDY BOOTS Fri
8 May, The Dark Horse,
Birmingham

TIDE LINES Fri 8 May, O2
Academy, Birmingham

**NIC CAGE AGAINST THE
MACHINE** Fri 8 May, The
Flapper, Birmingham

ALFIE BOE Fri 8 May,
Symphony Hall, B'ham

**AND FINALLY PHIL
COLLINS** Fri 8 May,
Artrix, Bromsgrove

JUDGE JULES + FRIENDS
Fri 8 May, The
Assembly, Leamington
Spa

THE ENEMY Fri 8 May,
hmv Empire, Coventry

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 8
May, Marrs Bar,
Worcester

**MAJESTY - A TRIBUTE TO
QUEEN** Fri 8 May,
Walsall Arena & Arts
Centre

**THE WORLD FAMOUS
ELVIS SHOW - STARRING
CHRIS CONNOR** Fri 8
May, The Robin, Bilston

HIGH SPY Fri 8 May, The
Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-
Trent

DAN WALSH Fri 8 May,
Fenton Town Hall,
Stoke-on-Trent

ALBERT LEE Fri 8 May,
New Vic Theatre,
Newcastle-under-Lyme

DODGY Fri 8 May,
Foxlowe Arts Centre,
Leek, Staffs

**SIMON AND GARFUNKEL
THROUGH THE YEARS** Fri
8 May, Stafford
Gatehouse Theatre

**MOTÖRKILL + ELECTRIC
CIRCUS** Fri 8 May, The
Station, Cannock

DON'T STOP QUEEN NOW
Fri 8 May, The
Buttermarket,
Shrewsbury

**SALT PEANUTS JAZZ
QUARTET** Fri 8 May,
Edge Arts Centre,
Much Wenlock, South
Shropshire

**KIT HAWES AND AARON
CATLOW** Fri 8 May,
Ludlow Assembly

Rooms, South Shrops

POLICE DOG HOGAN Sat 9
May, Kitchen Garden,
Birmingham

JACK CULLEN Sat 9 May,
The Sunflower Lounge,
Birmingham

**THE MERCIANS +
SUNDAYCLUB + THE
ANSELLS** Sat 9 May, O2
Institute, Birmingham

GABRIELLE APLIN Sat 9
May, O2 Institute,
Birmingham

DAFT FUNK + ANU Sat 9
May, O2 Academy,
Birmingham

CHARLOTTE GLASSON
Sat 9 May, 1000 Trades,
Birmingham

JO MARKLAND QUARTET
Sat 9 May, 1000 Trades,
Birmingham

NOASIS Sat 9 May,
Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**METAL TO THE MASSES
SEMI FINAL 2** Sat 9 May,
The Flapper, B'ham

KATHERINE PRIDDY Sat 9
May, Birmingham Town
Hall

**TAME IMPALA + RIP
MAGIC** Sat 9 May, Utilita
Arena Birmingham

HEERA Sat 9 May,
XOYO, Birmingham

POLICE DOG HOGAN Sat 9
May, Midlands Arts
Centre (MAC), B'ham

OASISH Sat 9 May,
Artrix, Bromsgrove

JACK BROADBENT Sat 9
May, Temperance,
Leamington Spa

SYSTEM EIGHTIES Sat 9
May, The Rhodhouse,
Sutton Coldfield

**DEREK WARFIELD & THE
YOUNG WOLFETONES** Sat
9 May, hmv Empire,
Coventry

**FLEETWOOD MAD +
EDUCATABLEMUSIC** Sat 9
May, Queens Hall,
Nuneaton

REPUNK'D Sat 9 May,
Marrs Bar, Worcester

**FOREVER ELTON AND
JOEL** Sat 9 May, Swan
Theatre, Worcester

CLIVE JOHN Sat 9 May,
Huntingdon Hall,
Worcester

**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER -
MOTOWN NIGHT** Sat 9
May, Walsall Arena &
Arts Centre

DIRE STREETS Sat 9
May, Brierley Hill Civic,

Dudley

**WHAT'S LOVE? - TRIBUTE
TO TINA TURNER** Sat 9
May, Dudley Town Hall

ROY ADAMS & FRIENDS
Sat 9 May, Cafe Metro,
Bilston

DAVID LIVE Sat 9 May,
Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FIRE DOORS Sat 9
May, The Artisan Tap,
Stoke-on-Trent

THE BLOCKHEADS Sat 9
May, New Vic Theatre,
Newcastle-under-Lyme

**MAN IN THE MIRROR - A
TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL
JACKSON** Sat 9 May,
Stafford Gatehouse
Theatre

**THANK ABBA FOR THE
MUSIC** Sat 9 May,
Theatre Severn,
Shrewsbury

**ALEX HITCHCOCK
QUARTET** Sat 9 May, The
Hive, Shrewsbury

FLEETING RUMOURS Sat
9 May, The
Buttermarket,
Shrewsbury

AUDIO THIEVES Sat 9
May, Albert's Shed,
Shrewsbury

**THE EVERLY PREGNANT
BROTHERS** Sun 10 May,
Hare & Hounds, B'ham

AU/RA Sun 10 May, O2
Institute, Birmingham

**REGGAE FEST
BIRMINGHAM** Sun 10
May, Tower of Song,
Birmingham

**NICOLAS MEIER WORLD
GROUP** Sun 10 May,
1000 Trades, B'ham

FRIENDS Sun 10 May,
1000 Trades, B'ham

**SPACE PISTOL + GHOZER
+ PRIMITIVE REASONING
+ MUFUNTA** Sun 10
May, Subside Bar,
Birmingham

**ALPHA MALE TEA PARTY
+ EVERY HELL + TO THE
WALL + AXIOM** Sun 10
May, The Rainbow,
Birmingham

THE PUPPINI SISTERS
Sun 10 May, The Glee
Club, Birmingham

THE SWAPS Sun 10 May,
Temperance,
Leamington Spa

**GYPSY PISTOLEROS +
JAMES KENNEDY AND
THE UNDERDOGS** Sun 10
May, Eleven, Stoke-on-
Trent

Classical Music

FIBONACCI STRING QUARTET Featuring Luna De Mol & Kryštof Kohut (violins), Elliot Kempton (viola) & Findlay Spence (cello). Programme includes works by Bartók & R Schumann, Fri 1 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: DEATH AND THE MAIDEN Programme includes works by Schubert & Le Page, Fri 1 May, Stratford Town Hall

RICHARD WALKER ORGAN RECITAL Fri 1 May, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

LUDOVICO EINAUDI: SOLO PIANO A special series of intimate solo evenings in Einaudi's favourite concert halls, Sat 2 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KALEIDOSCOPE CHAMBER COLLECTIVE Featuring Ben Goldscheider (horn), Elena Urioste (violin) & Tom Poster (piano). Programme includes works by E Smyth & Brahms, Sat 2 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

GUARNERI PIANO TRIO Featuring Čeněk Pavlík (violin), Marek Jerie (cello) & Ivan Klanský (piano). Programme includes works by Beethoven & Dvořák, Sat 2 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

JOSEPH JACOB & ADAM HERON (ORGAN) Programme includes works by Buxtehude, J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn & more..., Sat 2 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

MANCHESTER COLLECTIVE X THICK & TIGHT DANCE: PAPILLONS Featuring Laura van der Heijden (cello), CHAINES (electronics & visuals) & The Camberwell Incredibles (mixed media), Sun 3 May, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

WILLIAM HOWARD PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by R Schumann, Skempton, C Schumann & more..., Sun 3 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

SINFONIA OF BIRMINGHAM Featuring Michael Seal (conductor), Zoë Beyers (violin) & Peter Dixon (cello). Programme includes works by Dvořák, Brahms & Arnold, Sun 3 May, All Saints Church, Leamington Spa

NATHAN AMARAL (VIOLIN) & JONATHAN WARE (PIANO) Programme includes works by Miguez & Brahms, Mon 4 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

LEAMINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL: NICKY SPENCE (TENOR) & DYLAN PEREZ (PIANO) Programme includes works by Howells, Britten, Fauré & more..., Mon 4 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

ANDREY GUGNIN (PIANO) Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky & Stravinsky, Mon 4 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

GILL STYLES & RICHARD WALKER (PIANO DUET) Tues 5 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO: STRAVINSKY'S PETRUSHKA Featuring Jac van Steen (conductor) & Benjamin Grosvenor (piano). Programme includes works by Hindemith, Ravel, Honegger & Stravinsky, Wed 6 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Hakim, Ayres, Spicer & more..., Thurs 7 May, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

ALEX POSTLETHWAITE (VIOLIN) & JOHN MOORE (PIANO) Programme includes works by Elgar, Franck & Smetana, Thurs 7 May, The Gateway, Shrewsbury

IYAD SUGHAYER PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt & Khachaturian, Thurs 7 May, Stoke Rep Theatre

ANGELA SONES ORGAN RECITAL Fri 8 May, St Mary's Church, Warwick

CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET Featuring Matthew Denton & Michelle Fleming (violin), Eoin Schmidt-Martin (viola) & Emma Denton (cello). Programme includes works by Shostakovich, Shaw & R Schumann, Fri 8 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

BBC PHILHARMONIC: WHEN IN ROME... Featuring Daniel Bjarason (conductor), Zoë Beyers & Peter Dixon (soloists). Programme includes works by Berlioz, Mendelssohn & Brahms, Fri 8 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

CBSO NOTELETS: WIND IN THE WILLOWS Featuring Jane Wright (presenter). With live music, storytelling and plenty of chances to move, sing and play along, Fri 8 - Sat 9 May, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA Family concert culminating in Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals, Sat 9 May, St Laurence Church, Alvechurch

WORCESTERSHIRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: BEETHOVEN'S CHORAL SYMPHONY Featuring Keith Slade (conductor). Programme also includes works by Brahms & Parry, Sat 9 May, Worcester Cathedral

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CHORUS SPRING CONCERT Programme includes works by Vivaldi & Poulenc, Sat 9 May, Lichfield Cathedral

CERAMIC CITY CHOIR: BARD & BROADWAY Featuring Anthony Rose (conductor), Ian Riddle (piano), Hannah Ruth McDonald (soprano) & Mark Goodhew (double bass). Programme includes works by Shearing, Bernstein, Rodgers & Diemer, Sat 9 May, St Andrew's Church, Newcastle-under-Lyme

PICCADILLY SINFONIETTA: RACHMANINOV'S 2ND PIANO CONCERTO Featuring Warren Mailey-Smith

(piano). Programme also includes works by Beethoven & Grieg, Sat 9 May, St Philip's Cathedral, B'ham

Comedy

SOPHIE GARRAD Fri 1 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JESSICA FOSTEKU Fri 1 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

PHIL MEALEY Fri 1 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KANE BROWN Fri 1 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

FUN! WITH BARBARA NICE Fri 1 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

PETER KAY Fri 1 - Sat 2 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

DAVE FULTON, ANDREA HUBERT, JACK MCLEAN & STEVE WILLIAMS Fri 1 - Sat 2 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SUSIE MCCABE Sat 2 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PETE FIRMAN Sat 2 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

LUCY PORTER Sat 2 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KIELL SMITH-BYNOE Sat 2 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DANIEL O'REILLY Sat 2 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

TEZ ILYAS & TOMMY SANDHU Sun 3 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LAURA BELBIN Tues 5 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOSH WIDDICOMBE Tues 5 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

LENNY HENRY Tues 5 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NATALIE CUOMO Wed 6 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

IGNACIO LOPEZ, NICK PAGE, GBEMI OLADIPO & FREDDIE QUINNE Wed 6 May, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

LENNY HENRY Wed 6 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ANDY ROBINSON, IAN COPPINGER, HARRIET DYER & RYAN KENNY Thurs 7 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SIMON MUNNERY Thurs 7 May, Cherry Reds, Birmingham

EL BALDINIHO, DAVE CHAWNER, JAMIE DOUGLAS & DAN SMITH Thurs 7 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

MARK SIMMONS Thurs 7 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

JARLATH REGAN Fri 8 May, Birmingham Town Hall

JANINE HAROUNI & HEIDI REGAN Fri 8 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BRIAN CONLEY, BOB MILLS, IAN CRAWFORD & WAYNE BEESE Fri 8 May, Civic, Stourport

MARK SIMMONS Fri 8 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JEN BRISTER Fri 8 - Sat 9 May,

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JONNY AWSUM, TREVOR BICKLES, OMAR BADAWY & DAVE LONGLEY Sat 9 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

BILLY KIRKWOOD, SCOTT BENNETT, IAN COPPINGER & HARRIET DYER Sat 9 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVID ELMS Sat 9 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

IVO GRAHAM Sat 9 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

TOM DAVIS Sun 10 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

MARK THOMAS Sun 10 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

LENNY HENRY Sun 10 May, Dudley Town Hall

Theatre

WAITRESS Carrie Hope Fletcher, Les Dennis, Sandra Marvin and Evelyn Hoskins star in a warm-hearted tale of love and friendship, until Sat 2 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE LAST LAUGH Three legendary (and dearly departed) comedians - Tommy Cooper, Bob Monkhouse and Eric Morecambe - come together in a dressing room to discuss the secrets of life, death, comedy, and what it means to be funny..., until Sat 2 May, Malvern Theatres

DISENCHANTED! UK premiere of the hit off-Broadway musical, featuring a mash-up of favourite fairytales, until Sat 2 May, Lichfield Garrick

GLORIOUS! Amateur version of Peter Quilter's play, based on the true story of an American socialite who became infamous for her highly unskilled singing, until Sat 2 May, Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield

OPERATION MINCEMEAT Olivier Award-winning musical telling the 'hilarious and unbelievable' true story of the twisted secret mission that helped win World War Two, until Sat 2 May, The Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SISTER ACT Musical Theatre Stafford present an amateur version of the divine musical comedy, until Sat 2 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME Amateur version of Mark Haddon's critically acclaimed story, celebrating difference and the power of the human spirit, until Sat 2 May, The Crown Wharf Theatre, Stone

SHEILA'S ISLAND The Lichfield Players present an amateur version of Tim Firth's tragi-comedy concerning four middle-aged women stranded on an island whilst on a team-building exercise in the Lake District, until Sat 2 May, Lichfield Garrick

GOOD GOLLY MISS MOLLY Music-fuelled feelgood drama charting the history of a local community against a

backdrop of social turmoil, societal changes and tumultuous friendships, until Sat 2 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

REDACTED A 'high-octane, darkly comic thriller' about justice, power, and just how deep the truth can be buried, until Sat 2 May, The Rep, Birmingham

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Adam Carver stars as Puck in a new Brummie version of Shakespeare's much-loved comedy, until Sun 24 May, The Rep, Birmingham

DRIFTWOOD Martina Laird's deeply evocative story of self-determination and the search for family and belonging, until Sat 30 May, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

POOR Production based on Katriona Sullivan's bestselling memoir, charting her journey as she emerges from a childhood in Coventry and Birmingham marked by poverty, addiction and homelessness, Fri 1 - Sat 9 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

JAMAICA LOVE Award-winning musical that weaves together the rich tapestry of British and Jamaican history, Sat 2 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



AN IDEAL HUSBAND Aunty Jen Productions present Oscar Wilde's classic comedy, Tues 5 May, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

SINGLE WHITE FEMALE Kym Marsh and Lisa Faulkner star in the stage version of the hit 1992 movie, Tues 5 - Sat 9 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER Amateur version based on the famous 1977 film. Presented by West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS), Tues 5 - Sat 9 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG Amateur version presented by Brownhills Musical Theatre Company, Tues 5 - Sat 9 May, Lichfield Garrick

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Tinkers Farm Opera present an amateur version of the Disney musical, Tues 5 - Sat 9 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

MAKING A KILLING A dark, razor-sharp comedy about justice, corruption, and the cost of survival, Wed 6 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MURDER SHE DIDN'T WRITE Improv show in which the audience become

the author and the cast act out an Agatha Christie-inspired masterpiece live on stage, Wed 6 - Thurs 7 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE PRODUCERS The Top Theatre Company present an amateur version of the Mel Brooks musical, Wed 6 - Sat 9 May, Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

SHREK THE MUSICAL Amateur version presented by Coventry Youth Operetta Group (YOG), Wed 6 - Sat 9 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

LOVE LOVE LOVE Amateur version of Mike Bartlett's award-winning play, exploring the dreams of a generation, Wed 6 - Sat 16 May, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

WNO: FLYING DUTCHMAN Welsh National Opera present a reimagining of Wagner's exploration of loneliness, Thurs 7 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

MURDER AT THE ALBANY Psychological drama where comedy turns to tragedy, Thurs 7 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE Hotbuckle Theatre present a stage adaptation of Thomas Hardy's novel, a thought-provoking exploration of human desire and the forces that shape identity, Thurs 7 - Fri 8 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FLASHBANG Proforca Theatre Company's award-nominated production, focusing on five best mates and the ties that bind them, Thurs 7 - Sat 9 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

WNO: BLAZE OF GLORY! Welsh National Opera present a heart-warming adventure set in a 1950s Welsh Valleys community, Fri 8 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

FALLING An experience located on the borderlines of theatre, dance and mime - devised and performed by Open Theatre's ensemble company. Note that this production contains strong language and adult themes of loss, disruption, sexuality and desperation, Fri 8 - Sat 9 May, The Rep, Birmingham

CURTAIN UP Amateur version of Peter Quilter's fast-paced comedy concerning five women who inherit equal shares in a dilapidated theatre and plan to bring it back to life, Sat 9 - Sat 16 May, Oldbury Rep

Kids Theatre

THE ULTIMATE BUBBLE SHOW International bubbleologist Ray Bubbles creates a volcano bubble, a soap bubble carousel, a bubble ghost, and even a tornado inside a bubble! Sun 3 May, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

WNO: PLAY OPERA LIVE - SHIPWRECKED!

Welsh National Opera sail the high seas with an interactive family show, Sat 9 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE CAT IN THE HAT An engaging first theatre experience based on Dr Seuss' bestselling book, Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Dance

JOCKEY MORRIS May Day dance from a troupe that has been dancing its way around Birmingham since 1949, Mon 4 May, Outdoor Terrace, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

Light Entertainment

AARDMAN IN CONCERT A cinematic and musical celebration marking 50 years of Wallace & Gromit, Shaun the Sheep and friends..., Fri 1 May, Birmingham Town Hall

COPACABANA MAGIC - THE BARRY MANILOW SHOW Featuring acclaimed vocalist Martyn James and his band, Fri 1 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

NORTHERN LIVE Sounds from the underground movement that started on dance floors in the north. Performed by an 11-piece band, with four lead vocalists performing over 30 original hits, Fri 1 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECTACULAR TOUR Join original stars of the show - Barry Bostwick (Brad), Patricia Quinn (Magenta) & Nell Campbell (Columbia) - for a 'once-in-a-lifetime' screening event with a live shadow cast. A costume contest, a memorabilia display and film artefacts also feature, Fri 1 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE 80S SHOW Featuring lights, video & lasers, presented alongside hits from Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Duran Duran, Tears For Fears, Go West, Elton John and more..., Sat 2 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE WEST END TENORS Featuring leading men from London's West End, Sat 2 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

PETE FIRMAN: TRICKS & GIGGLES Brand-new show featuring Pete's trademark blend of magic & comedy. Expect 'impossible feats, sleight of hand and big laughs'..., Sat 2 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KIELL SMITH-BYNOE'S KOOL STORY BRO Smash-hit improv comedy show from the star of Ghosts, Taskmaster and Stath Lets Flats, Sat 2 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SING THE MUSICALS Interactive event where the greatest musicals of all

time are sung live on stage. A giant screen with singalong lyrics also features, to enable audiences to join in, Sat 2 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JUDI LOVE: ALL ABOUT THE LOVE A brand-new show packed with home truths about the hustle of juggling parenting, work and everyday life, Sun 3 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

JOHN BARROWMAN: MY LIFE IN MUSICALS Expect 'stories, laughter and unforgettable anthems, mixed with a few showstoppers', Sun 3 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SIMON REEVE: TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH Evening of 'stories, surprises, thrills and hearty laughs' with one of the world's most adventurous travellers, Sun 3 - Mon 4 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SUE, MATT AND PHIL LIVE! THE REUNION TOUR Join the much-loved trio and celebrity guests for an evening of quiz rounds and brand-new games, Tues 5 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

THE RECEIPTS PODCAST Join Audrey and Tolani for an evening of undiluted chat and special guests, Tues 5 May, Birmingham Town Hall

AN AUDIENCE WITH DEREK JACOBI IN CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD CLIFFORD Wed 6 May, The Old Rep, Birmingham

SUE, MATT AND PHIL LIVE! THE REUNION TOUR Join the much-loved trio and celebrity guests for an evening of quiz rounds and brand-new games, Wed 6 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BUS STOP GOTHs A surreal modern folktale which centres around alt youth and the sacred outdoor spaces in which they reside, Thurs 7 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

AN EVENING WITH ALFIE BOE Featuring fan-favourite classics and new material from Alfie's latest album, Thurs 7 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry & Fri 8 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BOYBAND IN THE BUFF Throwback concert featuring Gareth Gates and a cast of 'rippers and ridiculously talented performers', Thurs 7 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AN AUDIENCE WITH DEREK JACOBI IN CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD CLIFFORD Thurs 7 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

100 YEARS CELEBRATION OF LAUREL & HARDY Silent film score composer Neil Brand offers a unique insight into Stan & Ollie, Sat 9 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

SIMON REEVE: TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH Evening of 'stories, surprises, thrills and hearty laughs' with one of the world's most adventurous travellers, Sun 10 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



Matt Goss at RetroCon - NEC, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

HAMZA YASSIN: MY LIFE BEHIND THE LENS Join the wildlife cameraman & presenter as he shares behind-the-scenes tales from his epic filming expeditions across the globe, Fri 1 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

EVENING WITH PHIL MEALEY The award-winning writer, actor & singer celebrates his work and the people, places and moments that inspired him, Fri 1 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DR LOUISE NEWSON: BREAKING THE CYCLE Join the renowned women's hormone specialist for a show that unpacks the history and often-neglected science of hormones, Tues 5 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KILLER COUPLES Join Emma Kenny as she delves into the dark psychology of couples turned killers, Wed 6 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LILIANE LIJN: LIQUID REFLECTIONS Special talk exploring the artist's influential career and her landmark sculpture White Koan, a defining feature at the entrance of Warwick Arts Centre, Wed 6 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

DR LOUISE NEWSON: BREAKING THE CYCLE Join the renowned women's hormone specialist for a show that unpacks the history and often-neglected science of hormones, Wed 6 May, Swan Theatre, Worcester

DON LETTS Q&A + REBEL DREAD SCREENING Special evening hosted by Daniel Rachel, Thurs 7 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

GYLES BRANDRETH: CAN'T STOP TALKING! A 'rollercoaster ride of tales and revelations' from Giles' life in showbusiness and politics, Sun 10 May, The Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

Events

CHELtenham JAZZ FESTIVAL Featuring internationally acclaimed artists and breakthrough performers, until Mon 4 May, venues across Cheltenham

DANCE ME TO THE END (OF LOVE) - BRUMYODO Join artist Bianca Beneduzi for a creative and family-friendly workshop that blends dance improvisation and intuitive drawing, Sat 2 May, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS Plenty of activities to mark the beginning of summer, Sat 2 May, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

TAMWORTH FILM & COMIC CON A day of fandom, cosplay and creativity, Sat 2 May, Ankerside Shopping Centre, Tamworth

UNITE THE PEOPLE FESTIVAL LAUNCH The launch of Unite the People - a bold city-wide cultural movement celebrating Birmingham's diversity and standing for justice, peace and a future beyond racism, Sat 2 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

A NIGHT OF CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING Conah Walker headlines in his hometown of Wolverhampton in a Midlands derby with Birmingham's battle-hardened Sam Eggington, Sat 2 May, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

HERITAGE TOURS AT THE EXCHANGE Discover the rich history and fascinating stories behind its walls, Sat 2 May, The Exchange, 3 Centenary Square, Birmingham

YARNIES Guests can browse hand-dyed yarns, spinning fibres, beautiful tools & unique accessories, as well as watching demonstrations, Sat 2 May, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

FOUNDRY FESTIVAL A two-day celebration powered by The Potteries' thriving underground scene, Sat 2 - Sun 3 May, Stoke-on-Trent City Centre

VE WW2 WEEKEND Experience the

spirit of the 1940s through a range of exciting and immersive activities, Sat 2 - Sun 3 May, Middleton Hall, Gardens & Courtyard, Tamworth

EMBERS FIRE FESTIVAL With demonstrations from world-class pit masters and top BBQ vendors, Sat 2 - Sun 3 May, Dale End Park, Ironbridge

AJ BELL GREAT BIRMINGHAM RUN 10k and half marathon races, Sat 2 - Sun 3 May, Birmingham City Centre

RETROCON Lose yourself in a hall packed with retro games, live music - including Matt Goss (pictured left), and pop culture treasures, Sat 2 - Sun 3 May, NEC, Birmingham

MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND Around 30 of the UK's most popular displays and layouts will be on display at the Visitor Centre at Highley Station, Sat 2 - Sun 3 May, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

MEDIEVAL MAY DAY AT THE MANOR OF AVONCROFT Meet the villagers and learn about everyday medieval life as summer is celebrated with a market fair, authentic crafts, dancing and games, Sat 2 - Mon 4 May, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

GLADIATORS EXPERIENCE Gladiators fans will be able to put their speed, strength and skills to the ultimate test, Sat 2 May - Mon 31 Aug, NEC, Birmingham

STAFFORDSHIRE DAY Including street food traders, community stalls, displays and activities taking place throughout the day, Mon 4 May, Market Square, Stafford

FABULOUS 40S Wartime event with costumed characters, live music, vehicles and more, Mon 4 May, Haden Hill House Museum and Park, Cradley Heath

LAUNCH: THE LONGEST YARN See displays on the West Front and participate in family friendly activities to celebrate The Longest Yarn exhibition, Mon 4 May, Lichfield Cathedral

A MAY BANK HOLIDAY SPECIAL: WALK OF THE DANDELION Daniel the larger-than-life puppet will walk around the grounds of Compton Verney, encouraging the making, receiving and passing on of handmade dandelions, Mon 4 May, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

HALLS FINE ART VALUATION ADVISORY DAY Free antique and fine art valuations, Tues 5 May, Weston Park, Shropshire

GEMSTONE POP-UP SALE Buy from a curated selection of loose gemstones, Thurs 7 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) Birmingham

RHS MALVERN SPRING FESTIVAL A four-day seasonal showcase of new horticultural trends and innovations, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 May, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

LOST IN THE HILLS FESTIVAL 26 A weekend of art, music and nature, nestled deep within the hills of the Peak District National Park, Fri 8 - Sat 9 May, Watts Russell Arms, Hopedale, Staffordshire

THE BABY SHOW Discover everything you need for bump, baby and beyond, all under one roof, Fri 8 - Sun 10 May, NEC, Birmingham

LUDLOW SPRING FESTIVAL A celebration of food, drink and live entertainment, Fri 8 - Sun 10 May, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

FLATPACK FESTIVAL Bringing together a mix of screenings and performances, walks and installations, Fri 8 - Sat 16 May, various venues across Birmingham

SPRING MAKERS' FAIR Enjoy browsing a range of stalls offering a selection of unique gifts, Sat 9 May, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

DISCO BLISS DAY PARTY A daytime dance party with 70s and 80s music, Sat 9 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

AMERICAN SUPERSLAM WRESTLING Two hours of non-stop high-flying action, Sat 9 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

CANCER RESEARCH UK - PRETTY MUDDY Funding life-saving research, Sat 9 May, Weston Park, Shropshire

WORLD WAR TWO OPEN DAY Commemorating the time when Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings was a temporary barracks and training centre in World War Two, Sat 9 May, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

UK SLOT CAR FESTIVAL Showcasing a wide range of the major slot car manufacturers, Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

NATIONAL TRAIN DAY WEEKEND Discover the magic of railways through hands-on activities, creative crafts, and expert insights, Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

MODELS & MODEL ENGINEERING SHOW Bringing together the very best in engineering societies, exhibitors and traders, Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, Stafford Country Park, Tamworth

MEET THE BODGERS Learn about and watch demonstrations of green woodworking and heritage woodland crafts, Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

SPRING MAKERS MARKET Spend the day browsing a curated mix of independent traders, Sat 9 - Sun 10 May, FarGo Village, Coventry

YOUNG DRIVER CLASSIC CAR EXPERIENCES Driving experiences for kids, Sun 10 May, British Motor Museum, Gaydon

BROMSGROVE FUN RUN 2026 Raising funds for Blood Cancer UK, Sun 10 May, Bromsgrove Rugby Club

Gigs

TAJ FARRANT BAND Mon 11 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

DEARY Tues 12 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

DEAD DADS CLUB Tues 12 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ACM SOUNDS Tues 12 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

LEAH KATE Tues 12 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

MIDGE URE Tues 12 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ALBERT LEE AND HIS BAND Tues 12 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

PAUL YOUNG Tues 12 May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

CASSIDY JANSON SINGS CAROLE KING Tues 12 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NORTHERN RESONANCE Wed 13 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

MIDNIGHT TIL MORNING + RYAN MACK Wed 13 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PAUL WALKER & KAREN PFEIFFER + JACK BLACKMAN Wed 13 May, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

EMMYLOU HARRIS Wed 13 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LØLØ + ELLA RED Wed 13 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham



UPTON BLUES FESTIVAL TAKEOVER Wed 13 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

JOHN 5 Wed 13 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

SESSION A9 Wed 13 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DIYET AND THE LOVE SOLDIERS Wed 13 May, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North

Shropshire

PSYCHONAUT + COBRA THE IMPALER Thurs 14 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SEAMUS FOGARTY Thurs 14 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JESCA HOOP + HOT SPRINGS Thurs 14 May, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

AN EVENING OF... SINATRA Thurs 14 May, The Jam House, Birmingham

ELLE COVES Thurs 14 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

PINS Thurs 14 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

WESLEY JOSEPH Thurs 14 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham



LIGHTS Thurs 14 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

FALLING & LAUGHING + APPI + PINK OPAQUE Thurs 14 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

SETH LAKEMAN Thurs 14 May, Birmingham Town Hall

CELEBRATING MEAT LOAF FEATURING THE NEVERLAND EXPRESS Thurs 14 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

IAN BRUCE AND KEV GREEN Thurs 14 May, Catshill Social Club, Bromsgrove

ELTON'S SONG: BEYOND THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD Thurs 14 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS Thurs 14 May, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

BIG JOE LOUIS Thurs 14 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

ELVIS TRIBUTE ARTIST WORLD TOUR Thurs 14 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE OBGMS + WOOD AND NAILS + LAS VEDAS Thurs 14 May, Just Dropped In, Coventry

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THE OBGMS + WOOD AND NAILS + LAS VEDAS Thurs 14 May, Just Dropped In, Coventry

KIEFER SUTHERLAND + COLIN ANDREW Thurs 14 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

CLEARWATER CREEDENCE REVIVAL + TEN YEARS AFTER Thurs 14 May, Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

BODYWEB + SMOTHER + CAINHURST + INVASION + WITHERHORDE Thurs 14 May, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES Thurs 14 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DIYET AND THE LOVE SOLDIERS Thurs 14 May, Quatt Village Hall, Shropshire

CHARLOTTE YOUNG Fri 15 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BLONDISH Fri 15 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

DAVE FORMULA + NOKO Fri 15 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SMYTHS Fri 15 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

EXAMPLE Fri 15 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MOOSE JAW Fri 15 May, Jo Jo Jims, B'ham

DJABBIC 3 Fri 15 May, Tower of Song, B'ham

CARBON BASED LIFEFORMS Fri 15 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

THE REAL JOBS + WIIINCE + LUXURY NAN SMELL + ROOTED Fri 15 May, Centrala, B'ham

LOOSE ARTICLES Fri 15 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

ANTHONY HARTY Fri 15 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

TOM SMITH Fri 15 May, Birmingham Town Hall

JO CARLEYS "WRECK AND RUIN" + TERRAPLANES Fri 15 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

NUKE THE WHALES + BIG STRONG BOYS + TAYLOR-LOUISE + BLUE STRAWBERRIES Fri 15 May, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

MAX COOPER + DELIAPHONIC Fri 15 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NOTHING BUT A GOOD

NOTHING BUT A GOOD

TIME - ROCK ANTHEMS Fri 15 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

ROBIN NOLAN TRIO Fri 15 May, Bilston Town Hall

WILLY MASON Fri 15 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

METEORA + LIMP BISCUIT + EVANESCENT + PAPAS ROACHES Fri 15 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ROUGH KUTZ Fri 15 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ROBERT VINCENT Fri 15 May, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

MADE OF STONE ROSES Fri 15 May, Lichfield Guildhall

AIRTIGHT 80S Fri 15 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

EGO FRIENDLY Fri 15 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

MIRANDA SYKES & JIM CAUSLEY Fri 15 May, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

LADY NADE SINGS NINA SIMONE Fri 15 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

THE BLACK JEANS Fri 15 - Sat 16 May, The Jam House, Birmingham

WESTWORLD WEEKEND XXII Fri 15 - Sat 16 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

GENEVIEVE MILES Sat 16 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EAST STREET BAND Sat 16 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BO STALOCH + ABBY POWLEDGE + EVE CHRISTINA Sat 16 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SEAN REEVES Sat 16 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

HOSPITAL FOOD + WE HAVE NO MOUTH + YOUTH WITHIN Sat 16 May, The Dark Horse, Birmingham

CHANCE PEÑA Sat 16 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

POOLER + THE CELIA FINES + SUNSCAPE + SYCAMORE HILL + CICADA Sat 16 May, O2

Institute, Birmingham

KINGFISHER Sat 16 May, O2 Academy, B'ham

ASSURANCE Sat 16 May, Dead Wax, Birmingham

THE CLASSIC BLUES SHOW Sat 16 May, Bromsgrove Arts @ Fairfield Village Hall

CLASSIC ROCK REVIVAL Sat 16 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

R.E.M BY STIPE Sat 16 May, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

BETH ROWLEY Sat 16 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa



UNDER THE COVERS Sat 16 May, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

RECKLESS - BRYAN ADAMS, BON JOVI TRIBUTE Sat 16 May, Arches Venue, Coventry

PARADISE FOUND - LIVE MEAT LOAF ROCK SHOW Sat 16 May, Albany Theatre, Coventry

NICKELBACK UK Sat 16 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

THE ULTIMATE EAGLES Sat 16 May, Kidderminster Town Hall

MARK MORRIS Sat 16 May, West Malvern Social Club

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Sat 16 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES Sat 16 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THE DEKKERTONES + CITYLIGHTZ Sat 16 May, The Robin, Bilston

HOT 2 TROT Sat 16 May, Cafe Metro, Bilston

COLDPLACE Sat 16 May, Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

MACHINE HEAD Sat 16 May, Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

ANDY GOWER + KOALA + JOHNNY NICE PAINTER Sat 16 May, The

ANDY GOWER + KOALA + JOHNNY NICE PAINTER Sat 16 May, The

Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

JAMES MORRISON Sat 16 May, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

COLDPLAY IT AGAIN + STEREOCONICS Sat 16 May, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

ASHLEY CAMPBELL Sat 16 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU - ROBBIE WILLIAMS TRIBUTE Sat 16 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DYLAN HENNER + IBUKUN SUNDAY Sat 16 May, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

ERASURED + PET SHOP BOYS, ACTUALLY Sat 16 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

ANDY JAMES AS ELVIS Sun 17 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

JOHN ADAMS Sun 17 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

IMOGEN AND THE KNIFE Sun 17 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE URBAN VODOO MACHINE Sun 17 May, The Night Owl, B'ham

SIENNA SPIRO Sun 17 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DEATH WARMED UP + MYSTIEL + NO SETTING SUN Sun 17 May, Subside Bar, B'ham

TWOMANTING Sun 17 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

PÔT-PÔT + GLISTEN TRICK Sun 17 May, Just Dropped In, Coventry

STEVE CRADOCK Sun 17 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

ZIO Sun 17 May, The Robin, Bilston

THE FUREYS Sun 17 May, The Core Theatre, Solihull

CASSIDY PARIS Sun 17 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

DAN WALSH Sun 17 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

ROXY MAGIC Sun 17 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

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Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT

Programme includes works by Gigout, Messiaen, Perry & more..., Mon 11 May, Birmingham Town Hall

CBSO SYMPHONIC SESSIONS: FESTIVAL EDITION

Programme includes works by Haydn, Bartók, Clyne & more..., Wed 13 May, Herbert's Yard, B'ham

BETTY MAKHARINSKY (SOPRANO) & PAVEL TIMOFEYEVSKY (PIANO)

Programme includes works by Poulenc, Britten & Mussorgsky, Thurs 14 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: FROM THE HEART OF THE DARK FOREST

Programme includes works by Ravel, Brahms, Bartók & more..., Thurs 14 May, St Nicholas Church, Warwick

WHITTINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL 2026 A

'vibrant and ambitious' programme of concerts with classical music at its core, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 May, St John the Baptist Church, Whittington

GEMA LU CAI PIANO RECITAL

Fri 15 May, St Mary's Church, Warwick

TOTAL VOKAL

Fri 15 May, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

LEAMINGTON SINFONIA: MAHLER 8

Featuring Joe Davies (conductor) & Edward Boothroyd (leader), Sat 16 May, Coventry Cathedral

THE MUSIC OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Featuring Mystery Ensemble, Sat 16 May, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

LUDLOW ORCHESTRA SPRING CONCERT

Featuring Jonathan Lyness (conductor) & Claire Tocknell (leader). Programme includes works by Schubert & Mahler, Sat 16 May, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

ECHO RISING STARS 2025/26: TRIO

CONCEPT Featuring Edoardo Grieco (violin), Francesco Massimino (cello), and Lorenzo Nguyen (piano). Programme includes works by Dvořák, Elgar, Viëtor & more..., Sun 17 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WARSAW PHILHARMONIC

Featuring Krzysztof Urbański (conductor) & Alexandra Dariescu (piano). Programme includes works by Lutosławski, Chopin, Bacewicz & Beethoven, Sun 17 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NORTH WALES OPERA: VERDI'S

RIGOLETTO Featuring Anne Williams-King (director), Andrew Charity (musical director), Ensemble SY1 & Alex Postlethwaite (ensemble leader), Sun 17 May, Shrewsbury Abbey

LICHFIELD SINFONIA

Featuring Sara Birchall (conductor), Luke Cutler (oboe) & Emily Bowen (leader). Programme includes works by Nielsen, Strauss & Sibelius, Sun 17 May, Lichfield Guildhall

Comedy

JONNY COLE Wed 13 May, Lichfield Garrick

LEO KEARSE Wed 13 May, Brierley Hill Civic

DANIEL KITSON Wed 13 - Thurs 14 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

KANE BROWN & JOE BINGHAM Thurs 14 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY ROBINSON, LIAM WITHNAIL, KATE BARRON & SAMIRA BANKS Thurs 14 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LEO KEARSE Thurs 14 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



JOHN KEARNS Thurs 14 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

IAN STONE Thurs 14 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

JONNY COLE Thurs 14 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

JASON PATTERSON, MAFF BROWN, LIAM WITHNAIL, KATE BARRON & CHRISTIAN JEGARD Fri 15 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FATIHA EL-GHORRI Fri 15 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MARK WATSON Fri 15 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

MIKE WOZNAK Fri 15 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE COMEDY STORE ON THE ROAD Fri 15 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

VLAD ILICH, HARRY JENKINS, KATE LUCAS & PAUL REVILL Sat 16 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

JASON PATTERSON, MAFF BROWN, LIAM WITHNAIL & KATE BARRON Sat 16 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

WILL OWEN Sat 16 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

AL MURRAY Sat 16 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

LUCY BEAUMONT Sat 16 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

DALISO CHAPONDA Sat 16 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KANE BROWN Sat 16 May, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

SEANN WALSH Sat 16 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CLINTON BAPTISTE Sat 16 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MARK WATSON Sat 16 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

LUNCHTIME FAMILY COMEDY SHOW Sun 17 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROUGH WORKS: NEW MATERIAL NIGHT

Sun 17 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

NABIL ABDULRASHID, MUHSIN YESILADA, SHAZIA MIRZA & AATIF NAWAZ

Sun 17 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CLINTON BAPTISTE

Sun 17 May, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

Theatre

LA TRAVIATA - THE FAREWELL TOUR

Ellen Kent Opera present Verdi's tragic tale, Mon 11 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

OPERATION MINCEMEAT

Olivier Award-winning musical telling the 'hilarious and unbelievable' true story of the twisted secret mission that helped win World War Two, Mon 11 - Sat 16 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT

Here To There Productions present Graham Greene's comic adventure, Mon 11 - Sat 16 May, Malvern Theatres

CARMEN - THE FAREWELL TOUR

Ellen Kent Opera present Bizet's tale of passion and sexual jealousy, Tues 12 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



MALORY TOWERS

Emma Rice's stage adaptation of the original 'girl power' story. A tale of high jinks, high drama and high spirits - all set to music, Tues 12 - Sat 16 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

MAMMA MIA!

Smash-hit musical telling a story of love, friendship and identity through the timeless songs of ABBA, Tues 12 - Sat 30 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

MONEY FOR NOTHING & UNTITLED

Double bill of new works performed as part of Origins Festival. Grace Barrington's Money For Nothing is based in a working men's club in Yardley, struggling to stay afloat during austerity. Meanwhile, Amerah Saleh's Untitled gives space to the complexities of grief, Wed 13 May, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

MADAMA BUTTERFLY - THE FAREWELL TOUR

Ellen Kent Opera present Puccini's heartbreaking story of a young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant - with dramatic results, Wed 13 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE LAST LAUGH

Three legendary (and dearly departed) comedians - Tommy Cooper, Bob Monkhouse and Eric Morecambe - come together in a

double bill of new works performed as part of Origins Festival. Nathan Sebastian Lafayette's As Poetic As It Sounds is a dance-theatre piece exploring what it means to be an artist. Louis Wharton's Hurts So Good plays on themes of queer storytelling with a bold and inventive process, Thurs 14 May, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE TEMPEST

Kenneth Branagh stars as Prospero in Shakespeare's final play, Wed 13 May - Sat 20 June, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

AS POETIC AS IT SOUNDS & HURTS SO GOOD

Double bill of new works performed as part of Origins Festival. Nathan Sebastian Lafayette's As Poetic As It Sounds is a dance-theatre piece exploring what it means to be an artist. Louis Wharton's Hurts So Good plays on themes of queer storytelling with a bold and inventive process, Thurs 14 May, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

MURDER TRIAL TONIGHT 4: DEATH OF A LANDLORD

The audience become the jury in a courtroom thriller based on the true story of Victor Sloane, a wealthy and ruthless landlord found murdered in his office..., Thurs 14 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

TWO Tread The Boards

Theatre Company present Jim Cartwright's poignant play, set in a working-class northern pub and taking place over the course of one evening, Thurs 14 - Sun 24 May, The Attic Theatre, Cox's Yard, Stratford-upon-Avon

FALLING

An experience located on the borderlines of theatre, dance and mime - devised and performed by Open Theatre's ensemble company. Note that this production contains strong language and adult themes of loss, disruption, sexuality and desperation, Thurs 14 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

PRETEND LIKE IT'S CALM & THE BODY I SEE IS ALSO MINE

Double bill of new works performed as part of Origins Festival. Zakariye's Pretend Like It's Calm is a one-man poetic exploration of grief, family and unlikely friendships. Tina Hofman's The Body I See Is Also Mine is a journey through memory via new writing, movement and imagery, Fri 15 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

TEAM VIKING

Storytelling, music and comedy combine in a comic ode to death, friendship and the beautiful absurdity of life, Fri 15 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

EARTH SECRETS & MID

Double bill of new works performed as part of Origins Festival. Elizabeth O'Connor's Earth Secrets focuses on two neighbouring families and their dispute over a bordering fence, a rose bush and a lost dog. Meanwhile, Jaz Morrison's MID shines the spotlight on themes of social space, community, culture-building and storytelling, Sat 16 May, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE CRAWL Physical theatre show that takes a dive into the world of absurd

competition via performance, cinematic storytelling and audience interaction, Sat 16 May, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

ODE TO JOYCE One-woman show in which Cheryl Knight portrays Joyce Grenfell - one of the greatest female entertainers of the 20th century - using songs and monologues, Sun 17 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Kids Theatre

A SQUASH AND A SQUEEZE Musical adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's bestselling book, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 May, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE MUSICAL Amateur version presented by Thespian Arts, Fri 15 - Sun 17 May, Rugeley Rose Theatre

Dance

PHOENIX DANCE: INTERPLAY A powerful mixed bill showcasing work by internationally renowned choreographers, Tues 12 - Wed 13 May, Malvern Theatres

STRICTLY COME DANCING: THE PROFESSIONALS High energy production featuring 10 dancers from the hit tv series as well as a live band and vocalists, Fri 15 - Sat 16 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LES BALLETS TROCKADERO DE MONTE CARLO Immaculate technique, daring physicality and impeccable comic timing is guaranteed when all-male comedy ballet company The Trocks take to the stage, Fri 15 - Sat 16 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Light Entertainment

THAT'LL BE THE DAY: 40TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW Blend of rock & roll, pop and comedy, featuring timeless hits from the 1950s through to the 1980s, Mon 11 - Tues 12 May, Lichfield Garrick

UNCOVERED - FORBIDDEN REALM OF CONSPIRACIES 'Bold, immersive theatre experience' that pulls audiences deep into the world of conspiracy theories, hidden narratives and forbidden questions...., Tues 12 May, Swan Theatre, Worcester

ALASTAIR MCGOWAN Music, poetry, impressions & chat, Tues 12 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

BOX OF FROGS 'Birmingham's premiere improv group' present an evening of high-octane improvised comedy nonsense based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 13 May,

1000 Trades, Birmingham

KENDAL MOUNTAIN TOUR 2026 LIVE TOUR Experience the best of the world's stunning landscapes through a curated selection of Kendal Mountain Festival award-winning short adventure films, Wed 13 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE D-DAY DARLINGS: VICTORIOUS Celebration of 'resilience, love and legacy' featuring timeless classics from Vera Lynn, The Andrew Sisters and more...., Wed 13 May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS VS HANS ZIMMER Presented by the Great British Film Orchestra, Wed 13 May, Lichfield Cathedral

BOWIE BY CANDLELIGHT Fri 15 May, Worcester Cathedral

THE D-DAY DARLINGS: VICTORIOUS Celebration of 'resilience, love and legacy' featuring timeless classics from Vera Lynn, The Andrew Sisters and more...., Fri 15 May, Halesowen Town Hall

BOX OF FROGS 'Birmingham's premiere improv group' present an evening of high-octane improvised comedy nonsense based entirely on audience suggestions, Fri 15 May, Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

ROSALIE MINNITT: CLEMENTINE Character comedy show described as 'a story about sickly sisters, self-love and Sylvanian Families', Fri 15 - Sat 16 May, The Rep, Birmingham

MAGIC OF MUSICALS Featuring stars of the West End and the 10-piece CN Live Orchestra, Sat 16 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

JOHNS' BOYS: 10TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Concert performed by the only British choir ever to be crowned Choir of the World, Sat 16 May, Dudley Town Hall

PINK FLOYD BY CANDLELIGHT Sat 16 May, Worcester Cathedral

PHANTOMS OF THE POPERA - STARRING G4 Show described as 'the ultimate celebration of musical theatre', Sun 17 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SUKHVINDER SINGH PINKY 'Rare and captivating performance from one of the finest exponents of traditional Punjabi percussion art', Sun 17 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE WEST END TENORS Celebrating 'the greatest triumphs of musical theatre and film', Sun 17 May, Lichfield Garrick

TAKE FLIGHT Multi-sensory interactive theatre show for very young audiences, Sun 17 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

SAY SHAVA SHAVA Live music & dance experience paying tribute to the legendary Bollywood film Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham as it marks its 25th anniversary, Sun 17 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS The story of

Irish legends The Dubliners.

Described as 'the ultimate feelgood show', Sun 17 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Talks & Spoken Word

HAMZA YASSIN: MY LIFE BEHIND THE LENS Join the wildlife cameraman & presenter as he shares behind-the-scenes tales from his epic filming expeditions across the globe, Wed 13 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JOHN ROBB 'PUNK ROCK RUINED MY LIFE' Join John as he talks about his life and the rise and fall of the punk generation. Martin Bramah is the special guest, Thurs 14 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

HAMZA YASSIN: MY LIFE BEHIND THE LENS Join the wildlife cameraman & presenter as he shares behind-the-scenes tales from his epic filming expeditions across the globe, Fri 15 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



SIMON YATES: PLEASURE AND PAIN The Touching The Void mountaineer shares stories from his adventures in South America, Central Asia and the Himalayas, Sun 17 May, The Civic, Stourport

Events

SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE OPEN DAY Hear first-hand about life studying at the Shakespeare Institute, Mon 11 May, Mason Croft (Shakespeare Institute), Stratford-upon-Avon

BITE-SIZE TALK - TEXTILES UNFOLDED Join the costume curator to learn about the importance of Worcestershire's costume collection, Tues 12 May, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

VALUATION DAY WITH BBC'S KATE BLISS The independent jewellery and fine art valuer returns, Tues 12 May, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

THINKTANK HOME EDUCATION DAY A day dedicated to home educated children and their families, Wed 13 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

2026 BETMGM PREMIER LEAGUE DARTS With Luke Littler, Luke Humphries, Gian van Veen, Michael van Gerwen, Jonny Clayton, Stephen Bunting,

Josh Rock and Gerwyn Price, Thurs 14 May, Utilita Arena Birmingham

QUILTS UK Over 200 quilts on display, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 May, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

SPRING DIESEL FESTIVAL Featuring both guest and home-fleet locomotives operating a busy timetable between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 May, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

THE MURDER OF ANNA SHEARS A murder mystery night, Fri 15 May, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

GRIEF AND CLAY WORKSHOP With artist Jemma Mellor and support from Northfield volunteers, Fri 15 May, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

1960S EVENING Transport yourself back to the vibrant sounds of the 1960s, Fri 15 - Sat 16 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

LAND ROVER MONTHLY LIVE Trade stands, club and vehicle displays, a live events arena and more, Sat 16 - Sun 17 May, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

GIRAFFE JAMBOREE A brand-new show, trails, competitions and the chance to win prizes, Sat 16 - Sun 17 May, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

MAKERS CENTRAL Celebrating creativity, craftsmanship, and hands-on innovation, Sat 16 - Sun 17 May, NEC, Birmingham

MEDIAEVAL MARKET AND LIVING HISTORY CAMP Over 120 re-enactors will welcome visitors into medieval life, Sat 16 - Sun 17 May, Evesham Market Place & All Saints Church and St. Lawrence's Church Grounds

25TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND Two unique days of vibrant performances, reflective moments and powerful storytelling, Sat 16 - Sun 17 May, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

WHITCHURCH FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL Free family event celebrating local food and drink, Sat 16 May, Jubilee Park, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

STORM THE CASTLE The duathlon returns, Sun 17 May, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

SCOOTERFEST '26 A social for fellow 'scooterists' and friends with a rally, market and parts fair, Sun 17 May, The Market Place & Silk Street Car Park, Leek, Staffordshire

FORD MODEL T DAY A display of vintage Ford Model T vehicles at Spring Village Station, Sun 17 May, Telford Steam Railway, Shropshire

BIKE 4 LIFE One of the UK's most popular and biggest ride outs, attracting more than 6,000 bikers and pillions, Sun 17 May, Weston Park, Shropshire



Kraftwerk - Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

Gigs

GLOIN Mon 18 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

RICO ACE Mon 18 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

BÉGAYER Mon 18 May, Centrala, Birmingham

MAX COOPER Mon 18 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOHN ADAMS Mon 18 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

SUKHVINDER SINGH PINKY Mon 18 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SUBMOTION ORCHESTRA Tues 19 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JERRON PAXTON Tues 19 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

FLORENCE ROAD Tues 19 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALPHAWHORES Tues 19 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

CHRISTOPHER CROSS Tues 19 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

ZAYN Tues 19 May, Utilita Arena B'ham

HOWLING GIANT + ALUNAH + TELLEMAHOOKAH Tues 19 May, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

THE HILLBILLY MOON EXPLOSION + COUNTRY TIES Tues 19 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

LUCY SPRAGGAN Tues 19 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

GIRL IN THE YEAR ABOVE Wed 20 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THOMAS DOLBY +

MARTIN MCALOON Wed 20 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BOB FOX + JOHN & CAROLE HOARE Wed 20 May, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

NASHVILLE SOUNDS Wed 20 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SARAH BLASKO Wed 20 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

SHEILA FAWKES CAFÉ ORCHESTRA Wed 20 May, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

THE DUNWELLS Wed 20 May, West Malvern Social Club

GLENN TILBROOK Wed 20 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JENNY COLQUITT Thurs 21 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ALAN DANIEL TOBIN Thurs 21 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

KELE LE ROC & TERRI WALKER Thurs 21 May, The Jam House, B'ham

THE CASES + FREIGHT + THE ARISTON Thurs 21 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE RECKLESS BREED Thurs 21 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE EX Thurs 21 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

COMMON GOLDFISH Thurs 21 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

CELEBRATING CELINE - A NEW DAY Thurs 21 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WILLIE AND THE BANDITS (FT STEVIE WATTS) Thurs 21 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

LUTHER UK Thurs 21 May, Warwick Arts

Centre, Coventry
JARBOE FEAT. THOR HARRIS & JOY VON SPAIN Thurs 21 May, Just Dropped In, Coventry

TOYAH Thurs 21 May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

KRAFTWERK Thurs 21 May, Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

APRIL MOON + DAVID BOARDMAN & HELEN WALFORD Thurs 21 May, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

WOODEN DOG Fri 22 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE GOOD WATER + LOBBY + NOT SOUP Fri 22 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

RINGLETS + GEORGE DILLON Fri 22 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DINO BAPTISTE Fri 22 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

999 Fri 22 May, The Dark Horse, B'ham

LABYRINTHINE OCEANS Fri 22 May, The Night Owl, Birmingham

BLU EYES + EVERYTHING WE DO Fri 22 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TREVOR BABAJACK STEGER Fri 22 May, Jo Jo Jims, Birmingham

-ZIQ + ID:MORA + MEEMO Fri 22 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

A LOSS FOR WORDS + BEACH FRONT + DOWNCAST + LUNAR HIJACK Fri 22 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

FELICETTE + TRUST CLUB + SINEWS Fri 22 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

PRETTY GREEN + THE

PORCELAIN MODS Fri 22 May, hmv Empire, Coventry

THE SAMPLES + SCREAMING DEAD + VOMIT + GEOFFREY + OII!COTT Fri 22 May, Marris Bar, Worcester

TOYAH Fri 22 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

QUILL Fri 22 May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

TOOTS & THE MAYTALS FEATURING LEBA HIBBERT Fri 22 May, Kidderminster Town Hall

P!NK LIVE FT. VICKY JACKSON Fri 22 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE GRUNGE ADDICTION Fri 22 May, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

DEFINITELY GREENDAY + THE BETTER DAYS Fri 22 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SEDGLEY MORRIS Fri 22 May, Cafe Metro, Bilston

BLUE Fri 22 May, Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

OASISH Fri 22 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

CELEBRATING CELINE Fri 22 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ROBIN NOLAN Fri 22 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NORTHERN LIVE - DO I LOVE YOU Fri 22 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

TEMTRIS + DESIRE LINES Fri 22 May, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE GROOVE ASSEMBLY Fri 22 - Sat 23 May, The Jam House, B'ham

LAURENCE JONES + AMY EFTEKHARI Fri 22 - Sat 23 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

H&H HOUSE BAND PERFORM 'THE QUEEN IS DEAD' BY THE SMITHS Sat 23 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PHIL ODGERS AND PAUL SIMMONDS Sat 23 May, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

RUBY ROBERTS Sat 23 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

FAYE SMITH Sat 23 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BANCO DE GAIA + SCANNER + MARCONI UNION Sat 23 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

DUSK BROTHERS Sat 23 May, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

ALBION Sat 23 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

CHARLIE PARR Sat 23 May, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

CARL AYLOTT + NICKY AGER + PAUL QUINN Sat 23 May, hmv Empire, Coventry

SKATRAIN Sat 23 May, hmv Empire, Coventry

POPESTARS + ROBBED ZOMBIE Sat 23 May, Arches Venue, Coventry

TANNAHILL WEAVERS Sat 23 May, Number 8, Pershore

SPOUKY KIDS & KORN AGAIN Sat 23 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

GUNS OR ROSES Sat 23 May, Marris Bar, Worcester

NICK HARPER Sat 23 May, West Malvern Social Club

NAKED SUNDAY + BEN AND STUART GREEN + SIMON LONDON Sat 23 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CHEZ KANE Sat 23 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS Sat 23 May, Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

AMY'S WINEHOUSE & THE EMPTY CELLARS Sat 23 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

BIG WOLF BAND Sat 23 May, The Boat Shack, Bromsgrove

SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX Sat 23 May, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

A VISION OF ELVIS Sat 23 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SPEAKING IN TONGUES - TALKING HEADS TRIBUTE Sat 23 May, The Station, Cannock

FITZ N STARTZ Sat 23 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

A TRIBUTE TO STING & THE POLICE Sat 23 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE BOO RADLEYS Sun 24 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE DEAD MARSHES Sun 24 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHRIS BRAIN Sun 24 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

TEMPTED 2 TOUCH Sun 24 May, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE MIKE DAVIDS BAND Sun 24 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

GODSKITCHEN Sun 24 May, Digbeth Triangle & O2 Institute, B'ham

SOUL & LOVERS ROCK LEGACY Sun 24 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HAIKU SALUT + THE SILVER FIELD Sun 24 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

PLINI + SUNGAZER Sun 24 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

COLDPLAY IT AGAIN + OASIS HERE NOW + STEREOCONICS Sun 24 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COLIN BLUNSTONE Sun 24 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NIGHT SWIMMING Sun 24 May, Just Dropped In, Coventry

THE BLUETONES + SURA LAYNES Sun 24 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

LOGICALTRAMP Sun 24 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

THE BOB DYLAN STORY Sun 24 May, Swan Theatre, Worcester

KAISER MONKEY KILLERS Sun 24 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

LIFE Sun 24 May, Cafe Metro, Bilston

THE BUSHBURYS + THE EMPTY CAN Sun 24 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

RAY QUINN Sun 24 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

QUILL Sun 24 May, Lichfield Garrick

RICH PARSONS Sun 24 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

Classical Music

MARTYN RAWLES ORGAN RECITAL Tues 19 May, Lichfield Cathedral

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: RED SKY AT SUNRISE: LAURIE LEE IN WORDS & MUSIC Featuring Anton Lesser & Charlie Hamblett (actors), Tues 19 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CBSO RUSH HOUR CONCERT Featuring Amy Thomas (presenter). Programme includes works by Strauss, Wed 20 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUDLOW PIANO FESTIVAL Featuring old friends, lots of big names and five days of non-stop, fabulous pianism, Wed 20 - Sun 24 May, various venues around Ludlow, South Shropshire

CBSO: STRAUSS & WAGNER Featuring Fabien Gabel (conductor) & Nikola Hillebrand (soprano), Thurs 21 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ELGAR FESTIVAL: RELAXED CONCERT An hour-long concert full of beautiful music as part of Dementia Action Week, Thurs 21 May, Pershore Abbey

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: ATLANTIC CONNECTIONS Featuring Helen Edgar (cello), Joanna Patton (clarinet) & John Thwaites (piano). Programme includes works by Muczynski, Boulanger & GVA Walker, Fri 22 May, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

ISAAC BOULTER PIANO RECITAL Fri 22 May, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

SOPHIE HENDERSON (SOPRANO) & ASHLEY WAGNER (PIANO) Fri 22 May, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

EROICA Featuring Peter Marks (conductor) & Sally Alexander (cello). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns & Mozart, Sat 23 May, St Nicolas Church, Kings Norton, Birmingham

ELGAR FESTIVAL 2026 A celebration of Worcester's most famous son in his hometown and surrounding areas, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, various venues around Worcestershire

Comedy

JOE KENT-WALTERS Tues 19 - Wed 20 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT BRAGG, TOUSSAINT DOUGLASS & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN Wed 20 May, Morris Hall, Shrewsbury

MILTON JONES, TONY LAW, KAZEEM JAMAL & KEVIN DANIEL Wed 20 May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

DANIEL KITSON Wed 20 - Thurs 21 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

PIERRE NOVELLIE Thurs 21 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY ROBINSON, ALANA JACKSON & BRUCE DEVLIN Thurs 21 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

WOMEN'S COMEDY SHOWCASE Thurs 21 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

KAREN BAYLEY, TOM LITTLE, CERYS NELMES & KEV MUD Thurs 21 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

JONNY COLE Thurs 21 May, Kidderminster Town Hall

SCOTT BENNETT Fri 22 May, Birmingham Town Hall

NICK MOHAMMED Fri 22 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JOANNE MCNALLY, FIN TAYLOR, RACHEL FAIRBURN, JOSH JONES & FREDDIE QUINNE Fri 22 May, Warwick Castle

KAREN BAYLEY, STEVE DAY, KENT CAMERON & JON PEARSON Fri 22 May, Bedworth Civic Hall

ELLIOT STEEL, LEWIS GARNHAM, ALANA JACKSON & BRUCE DEVLIN Fri 22 - Sat 23 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

EDDY BRIMSON, BEN TRELOAR, AARON WOOD & ADAM BEARDSMORE Sat 23 May, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

JEFF GREEN Sat 23 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL KANE, ED BYRNE, ESTHER MANITO (PICTURED), THOMAS GREEN & FREDDIE QUINNE Sat 23 May, Warwick Castle



JONNY COLE Sat 23 May, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

CHRIS MCC AUSLAND, SCOTT BENNETT, MIKE RICE, HATTY PRESTON & FREDDIE QUINNE Sun 24 May, Warwick Castle

LOU CONRAN, DAVID EAGLE, ELERI MORAHAN & DAVE CHAWNER Sun 24 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

DOOMGATE Dark comedy performed by a local theatre class run by Halftail Productions, Mon 18 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE Amateur version of Tennessee Williams' timeless masterpiece, Mon 18 - Sat 23 May, Talisman Theatre & Arts Centre, Kenilworth

2:22 A GHOST STORY Award-winning supernatural thriller starring James Bye, Natalie Casey, Grant Kilburn and Shvorne Marks, Mon 18 - Sat 23 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's legendary play tells the tale of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on opposite sides of the tracks, only to meet again with fateful



Glorious! - The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

consequences, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May, Lichfield Garrick

THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO Stage adaptation of Christy Lefteri's bestselling novel, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COME FROM AWAY Amateur version of the smash-hit musical based on the real-life story of the 7,000 air passengers who were grounded in Canada in the wake of 9/11, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May, The Swan Theatre, Worcester

GLORIOUS! Wendi Peters stars in Peter Quilter's play, based on the true story of an American socialite who became infamous for her highly unskilled singing, Tues 19 - Sat 23 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

FOOTLOOSE Five Towns Theatre present an amateur version of the 1988 musical that's based on the 1984 film of the same name, Wed 20 - Sat 23 May, Stoke Repertory Theatre

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION Amateur version of the Agatha Christie thriller, Wed 20 - Sat 30 May, Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

MACBETH ALONE A 'thrilling and visceral' reimagining of Shakespeare's bloodiest tragedy, Thurs 21 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE NARCISSIST Psychological thriller based on true events, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 May, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

CRAZY FOR YOU Masqueraders Theatrical Society present an amateur version of George Gershwin's classic musical, Thurs 21 - Sat 23 May, Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton

TREASURE ISLAND Family-friendly version of Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling adventure, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS The Jules Verne classic gets the New Vic treatment as eight actors take on 109 characters, Sat 23 May - Sat 20 June, The New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Kids Theatre

THE BALD PIGEON-BOY The story of a sad little girl who meets two magical creatures whose mission is to bring joy to children. Suitable for audiences aged five-plus and performed in Farsi (with an English summary) by the Iranian Theatre of Birmingham, Tues 19 - Wed 20 May, The Rep, B'ham

THE GRUFFALO Tall Stories' musical adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's book, Wed 20 - Sun 24 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

ZOG Staging of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's feelgood story for younger audiences, Fri 22 - Sun 24 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MY FIRST CONCERT High-energy musical experience for children aged between two and seven. The programme features Baby Shark, Pinkfong & The Zoomies, Sat 23 May, Malvern Theatres

JUSTIN LIVE - JUSTIN TIME TO ROCK High-energy, feelgood family show featuring music, dancing and plenty of giggles, Sun 24 May, The Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



Dance

BREAKIN' CONVENTION A groundbreaking festival of hip-hop dance theatre from around the world, Wed 20 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

Light Entertainment

PSYCHIC SALLY An evening of mediumship with 'the nation's favourite psychic', Wed 20 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

UNCOVERED - FORBIDDEN REALM OF CONSPIRACIES 'Bold, immersive theatre experience' that pulls audiences deep into the world of conspiracy theories, hidden narratives and forbidden questions..., Wed 20 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

PALESTINE: PEACE DE RESISTANCE Sami Abu-Wardeh's critically acclaimed show, in which he digs deep into his ties to resistance and Palestinian identity, Thurs 21 May, The Rep, Birmingham



DAVID THE MEDIUM Join the Australian psychic medium when he stops off in Birmingham with his Coming Home: Reunion show, Thurs 21 May, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH JIMMY TARBUCK The acclaimed raconteur reflects on his life in showbusiness, Thurs 21 May, Dudley Town Hall

UNCOVERED - FORBIDDEN REALM OF CONSPIRACIES 'Bold, immersive theatre experience' that pulls audiences deep into the world of conspiracy theories, hidden narratives and forbidden questions..., Fri 22 May, Dudley Town Hall

A STAR WARS IMPROV SHOW: THE ONE-MAN MADE-UP MOVIE Improviser Jon Hipkiss presents 'the ultimate celebration of comedy and fandom', creating an entirely new Star Wars film based on audience suggestions, Fri 22 May, The Hive, Shrewsbury

JOE TRACINI - 10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT ME Join the actor, writer & presenter for an evening of storytelling and humour..., Fri 22 - Sat 23 May, The Rep, Birmingham

HUDSON & HUDSON MAGICIANS: MARRIED AT FIRST SLEIGHT Feelgood show from a real-life couple who mix

marriage, magic and mind-reading, Sat 23 May, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

LOOKING FOR ME FRIEND - THE MUSIC OF VICTORIA WOOD Acclaimed show celebrating the music and lyrics of the late comedy icon, Sat 23 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

PIAF Musical homage and theatrical tribute to one of France's most endearing icons, Sat 23 May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

JUDI LOVE: ALL ABOUT THE LOVE Brand-new show packed with home truths about the hustle of juggling parenting, work and everyday life, Sat 23 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

A STAR WARS IMPROV SHOW: THE ONE-MAN MADE-UP MOVIE Improviser Jon Hipkiss presents 'the ultimate celebration of comedy and fandom', creating an entirely new Star Wars film based on audience suggestions, Sat 23 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

JUDI LOVE: ALL ABOUT THE LOVE Brand-new show packed with home truths about the hustle of juggling parenting, work and everyday life, Sun 24 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

K.POP FANTASY High-energy theatrical celebration of the global phenomenon, Sun 24 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

Talks & Spoken Word

ELIZABETH I Historian interpreter Lesley Smith presents a dramatic costumed performance that takes audiences back to the time of Drake, Raleigh and Shakespeare, Mon 18 May, Rother Street Arts, Stratford-upon-Avon

DAMIAN HALL: FOREVER RUNNING Spend an evening with the ultrarunner, coach, author, climate activist and tea addict, Tues 19 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ELLA AL SHAMAHI: BECOMING HUMAN Join the palaeoanthropologist, TV presenter, explorer & stand-up artist as she presents a talk on 'our remarkable origin story', Thurs 21 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

PIECE OF WORK - POETRY AT BMAG Featuring acclaimed, world-renowned poets, as well as an open mic, Thurs 21 May, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

SHANE EMBURY IN CONVERSATION: LIFE? AND NAPALM DEATH Join the longest-serving member of Napalm Death as he reflects on 40 years of noise terrorism, Thurs 21 May, Wolverhampton Arts Centre

Events

VICTORIAN DRAMA MUSIC & AFTERNOON TEA Step back into the elegance of the Victorian era beneath the historic beams of Guesten Hall, Wed 19 May, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

THE GREAT BRITISH FARM FEST Combining the traditional joy of a large country fair with the excitement and energy of a modern music festival, Fri 22 - Sun 24 May, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

SOUL REVOLUTION FESTIVAL Bringing together over 200 transformative workshops, live music, and thought-provoking talks, Fri 22 - Sun 24 May, Weston Park, Shropshire



FAMILY TRAIL: ROYAL CARRIAGES Celebrate the restoration of the crown this May half-term holiday with a trail of colourful royal carriages, Fri 22 - Sun 31 May, The Commandery, Worcester

GATEHOUSE THEATRE TOUR A backstage tour with expert guides, Sat 23 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

POP-UP FAMILY FEST Bursting with creativity, curiosity, and fun for all ages, Sat 23 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BONGO'S BINGO The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 23 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

CINEMA UNDER THE STARS: AMMONITE A cinema-style screening of Ammonite, celebrating Mary Anning's birthday and pride in STEM, Sat 23 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

NIGHT TIME AT THE ZOO An evening of live music, food, and animals, Sat 23 May, Exotic Zoo, Telford

SPOTLIGHT INDIE LIVE One-day celebration of indie fantasy, science fiction, horror and speculative fiction, art and storytelling, Sat 23 May, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

THE "COME AND HAVE A NOSE" TOUR Visit parts of the hall not usually open to the public, Sat 23 May, Himley Hall, Dudley

BACKSTAGE TOUR Explore The Old Rep, a beautiful Grade II listed theatre bursting with stories from over a century of theatre magic, Sat 23 May, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

BEACH ON FESTIVAL SQUARE Grab a deckchair and your bucket and spade and enjoy some beach fun away from the sea, Sat 23 - Sun 24

May, Festival Square, Oswestry, North Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE Annual celebration of the LGBTQA+ community starring Katy B, Sigala, Nadine Cole, Danny Beard and many more... Sat 23 - Sun 24 May, Birmingham City Centre

FOSSIL FUN WEEKEND Celebrating Mary Anning, the fossil-hunting pioneer, Sat 23 - Sun 24 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

MAY HALF TERM FUN Explore the new themed family discovery trail, 'Roll up your sleeves' to meet historic characters, Sat 23 - Sat 30 May, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

MEERKAT MAY-HEM Meerkat and otter talks and feeding sessions, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, Exotic Zoo, Telford, Shropshire

TROUBLE MAKERS: EXPERIMENTING WITH COLLAGE Visit the Trouble Makers Studio where you will find a range of collage materials, fabrics, magazines and glue guns, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

GIRAFFE JAMBOREE A brand-new show, trails, competitions and the chance to win prizes, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley

MYSTERY MISSION Follow the trail, track down the clues and crack the codes to uncover the secret message, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire

RAILWAY 200 EXHIBITION TRAIN Promoting the past, present and future of the railway, Sat 23 - Sun 31 May, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster



PEPPA PIG'S SPACE ADVENTURE Little explorers are encouraged to play, discover, and join in the fun, Sat 23 May - Sun 8 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

BRIDGNORTH CARNIVAL With a fun fair, singers, stalls and Bridgnorth dog show, Sun 24 May, Severn Park, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

TEDDY BEARS PICNIC Travel between the three historic stations onboard a steam train to track down all the bears, Sun 24 - Mon 25 May, Telford Steam Railway, Shropshire

FAMILY EXPLORER TOUR Designed to bring the history of Weston to life for families and young people, Sun 24 - Tues 26 May, Weston Park, Shropshire

Gigs

JOHN VINCENT III Mon 25 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

IMOGEN CLARK + ANDREW LEAHEY Mon 25 May, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

REINHARDT BUHR Mon 25 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHERRYHOLT Mon 25 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SARAH KINSLEY Mon 25 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JULIE'S HAIRCUT + BROWN SPIRITS Mon 25 May, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

THE MILK MEN Mon 25 May, The Lamp Tavern, Dudley

TREACHEROUS CRETINS Tues 26 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HUTCH Tues 26 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SEEDHE MAUT Tues 26 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BEARS IN TREES + DUTCH CRIMINAL RECORD Tues 26 May, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX Tues 26 May, Symphony Hall, B'ham

DOJA CAT Tues 26 May, Utilita Arena B'ham

TOM HINGLEY Wed 27 May, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE 113 Wed 27 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

BROADSIDE Wed 27 May, The Asylum, Birmingham

DUKE SPECIAL Wed 27 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

LIGHTNING THREADS + BONE BROKE KINGS Wed 27 May, The Artisan Tap, Stoke-on-Trent

SKIPINNISH Thurs 28 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BENJAMIN STEER Thurs 28 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

XO Thurs 28 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

TRANSMISSION Thurs 28

May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

JJ BULL Thurs 28 May, Dead Wax, Birmingham

RATCHET DOLLS + HUMANTIDE + MISTRUSTED Thurs 28 May, Subside Bar, Birmingham

PLEASUREINC. Thurs 28 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

OVER THE MOON Thurs 28 May, Catshill Social Club, Bromsgrove

TOBIAS BEN JACOB & CHRIS CLEVERLEY Thurs 28 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

THE WASHBOARD UNION Thurs 28 May, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

TOMORROW'S NEW QUARTET Thurs 28 May, Marris Bar, Worcester

DEBORAH BONHAM BAND Thurs 28 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

HEAVEN 17 Thurs 28 May, The Robin, Bilston

JEFF GOLDBLUM & THE MILDRED SNITZER ORCHESTRA Thurs 28 May, Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

KITTY CRAFT Thurs 28 May, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

TALISK Thurs 28 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE OUTCHARMS Fri 29 May, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ANDY BENNETT Fri 29 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

PEARL SCAM + HEY PIXIES Fri 29 May, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JEP-RD Fri 29 May, Tower of Song, B'ham

PASSIVE FIX Fri 29 May, Dead Wax, Birmingham

NONTAINES S.C Fri 29 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

DARIUS ZALTASH Fri 29 May, The Victoria, Birmingham

THE GLEN CAMPBELL STORY Fri 29 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

BOOTLEG BLONDIE Fri 29 May, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

HANNAH ALDRIDGE AND LACHLAN BRYAN Fri 29

May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

THE ELO SHOW Fri 29 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RICKIE LEE JONES Fri 29 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MORETALICA Fri 29 May, Marris Bar, Worcester

MOMENTS OF PLEASURE - KATE BUSH TRIBUTE Fri 29 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

DANADRA Fri 29 May, The Red Lion, Evesham

FONTAINES Y.C. VS ANTIC MONKEYS Fri 29 May, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

GORDON HENDRICKS AS ELVIS Fri 29 May, Civic, Stourport

DOGDY BOILERS + BROKEN WIRES + BIGGER THAN SEATTLE Fri 29 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

JAMES MORRISON Fri 29 May, Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Fri 29 May, Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE Fri 29 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LADY SINGS THE BLUES - MUSIC OF BILLIE HOLIDAY Fri 29 May, Lichfield Guildhall

SLYDER Fri 29 May, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE ROCK ANTHEMS SHOW Fri 29 May, Rugeley Rose Theatre

BLACKMORE'S BLOOD - TRIBUTE TO RICHIE BLACKMORE Fri 29 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE ENDINGS Fri 29 May, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SMOKE LIKE A FISH + BRILLCOCK COLLECTIVE + SICK BOYS CLUB Fri 29 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

URBAN INTRO Fri 29 - Sat 30 May, The Jam House, Birmingham

ELEPHANT SESSIONS Sat 30 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ARKAYLA Sat 30 May, The Sunflower Lounge,



Talisk - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Birmingham

THE CADENZAS Sat 30 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

VENT 414 Sat 30 May, O2 Institute, B'ham

SOFIA ISELLA + SEB LOWE Sat 30 May, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CANAAN COX Sat 30 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

FLIPTRIX Sat 30 May, Dead Wax, Birmingham

SEATTLE THRIFT STORE Sat 30 May, The Flapper, Birmingham

DEAD PONY Sat 30 May, Mama Roux's, Birmingham



HEATHER PEACE Sat 30 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL MILLS - SIMPLY DYLAN, DONOVAN, AND ME Sat 30 May, Bromsgrove Arts @ Fairfield Village Hall

BURN - DEEP PURPLE TRIBUTE Sat 30 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW Sat 30 May, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

MCHALES PERMANENT BREW Sat 30 May, Temperance, Leamington Spa

ALL 4 INDIE + BRITPOP UNITED Sat 30 May, The Rhodouse, Sutton

Coldfield

EMO FEST Sat 30 May, hmv Empire, Coventry

MARTA DEL GRANDI Sat 30 May, Just Dropped In, Coventry

THE SKALECTRICS Sat 30 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

BEN PORTSMOUTH: THIS IS ELVIS Sat 30 May, Malvern Theatres

HOLDING BACK THE YEARS - SIMPLY RED TRIBUTE Sat 30 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

OLIVIA RODRIGO V SABRINA CARPENTER Sat 30 May, Dudley Town Hall

THE BROTHERS EMERY Sat 30 May, Cafe Metro, Bilston

PAUL YOUNG Sat 30 May, Civic, Stourport

KATIESFEST WITH NQDY + BIRDBROTHER + BRIAN STONE Sat 30 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

GEOFF TATE'S OPERATION: MINDCRIME Sat 30 May, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

BOLLYWOOD TIME MACHINE Sat 30 May, Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

MOSHTALGIA Sat 30 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE RUTS DC Sat 30 May, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

THUNDER HAMMER Sat 30 May, The Rigger, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

SYNTH Sat 30 May, The Station, Cannock

THE BIG INDIE TRIBUTE FESTIVAL Sat 30 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

UPBEAT BEATLES Sat 30 May, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

ELKAPATH + NEON ORACLE + INSINCERE Sat 30 May, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

C.W. STONEKING Sun 31 May, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TAXI FOR JESUS Sun 31 May, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

THE VERY THINGS Sun 31 May, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

CATH ROBERTS + OLIE BRICE + ALEX WARD + MIKE GENNARO + JOHN EDWARDS Sun 31 May, Centrala, Birmingham

CELL GAMES + CRYPTID Sun 31 May, Subside Bar, Birmingham

THE SOUTH SUN Sun 31 May, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

KATIESFEST WITH JESS SILK + SHOTGUN MARMALADE + RYAN Sun 31 May, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

QUO CONNECTION Sun 31 May, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Sun 31 May, Lichfield Garrick

THE GIACOMO SMITH QUARTET Sun 31 May, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

CHRIS STAPLETON UK Sun 31 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

I FAGIOLINI 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Programme includes works by Victoria, Weelkes, Monteverde, & A Williams, Tues 26 May, Pershore Abbey

MADELINE BROWN PIANO RECITAL

Tues 26 May, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO: PHILIP GLASS' DOUBLE TIMPANI CONCERTO

Featuring Alpeh Chauhan (conductor), Matthew Hardy & Toby Kearney (timpani). Programme also includes works by Simon & Rachmaninoff, Thurs 28 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ESO STRING ORCHESTRA CONCERT

Featuring Nicholas Daniel (oboe). Programme includes works by Elgar, Schoenberg, Sibelius & Musgrave, Thurs 28 May, Great Malvern Priory

MY FIRST CONCERT: JAZZ AROUND THE WORLD

Featuring Alicia Gardner Trejo (saxophone), Thurs 28 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CBSO: MOVIES AND VIDEO GAMES IN CONCERT

Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor), Fri 29 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RBC OUT AND ABOUT

Featuring Corey Kohut & George Sharman (trumpets), Daniel Black & Matthew Franklin (saxophones), Leighton King (trombone), Inioluwa Kuti (tuba) & Thomas Kelly (drum kit), Fri 29 May, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

CHU-YU YANG (VIOLIN) & ERIC MCELROY (PIANO)

Fri 29 May, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

THE MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS VS HANS ZIMMER

Featuring The Great British Film Orchestra, Sat 30 May, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL CHORUS: SPRING INTO SUMMER

Featuring Liam Condon (conductor) & Adam Heron (organ). Programme includes works by Handel, Fauré, Stanford & more...., Sat 30 May, St Nicholas Church, Kenilworth

CBSO SINGALONG: BRAHMS' GERMAN REQUIEM

Featuring Simon Halsey CBE (conductor), Hilary Cronin (soprano), Jure Počkaj (baritone) & the CBSO Chorus, Sun 31 May, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS

Tues 26 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MOLLY MCGUINNESS

Wed 27 May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DEIRDRE O'KANE & KUAN-WEN HUANG

Thurs 28 May, The Glee Club, B'ham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY

ROBINSON, SOL BERNSTEIN, ALLYSON JUNE SMITH & CHARLIE LEWIS Thurs 28

May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MICK MILLER Thurs 28 May, Dudley Town Hall

JONNY COLE Thurs 28 - Fri 29 May,

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

CHRISTOPHER MACARTHUR-BOYD Fri 29

May, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SUZI RUFFELL Fri 29 May, Stafford

Gatehouse Theatre



SUSAN CALMAN Fri 29 May, Theatre

Severn, Shrewsbury

JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Fri 29 May, Abbey

Theatre, Nuneaton

RUSSELL KANE Fri 29 May, Benn Hall,

Rugby

EVA BINDEMAN, ADAM BLOOM, SOL

BERNSTEIN & ALLYSON JUNE SMITH Fri

29 - Sat 30 May, The Glee Club,

Birmingham

DARIUS DAVIES, DANE BUCKLEY, JASON

NEALE & COMIC TBC Sat 30 May,

Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

PRINCE ABDI, EDEN VOSS, ALISTAIR

BARRIE & DANI JOHNS Sat 30 May,

Macready Theatre, Rugby

HAL CRUTTENDEN Sat 30 May,

Kidderminster Town Hall

Theatre

OH ZEUS! 'Kings of comedy' Le Navet

Bete present 'a riotous, all-out hilarious ride through Greek mythology', Tues 26 - Wed 27 May, Lichfield Garrick

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION Joe

McFadden, Ben Onwukwe & Bill

Ward star in the stage adaptation of

Stephen King's novella, examining

themes of friendship and hope

behind the bars of a maximum

security prison, Tues 26 - Sat 30 May,

The Alexandra, Birmingham

SINGLE WHITE FEMALE Kym Marsh and

Lisa Faulkner star in the stage version

of the hit 1992 movie, Tues 26 - Sat

30 May, The Regent Theatre, Stoke-

on-Trent

THE INVISIBLE MAN A 'fast-paced and

riotous' stage adaptation of HG

Wells' classic story, Wed 27 May,

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

IF I DIDN'T LAUGH I'D CRY - THE FRANK

CARSON STORY Mike McCabe's one-

man show, based on the life of one of

the UK & Ireland's best-loved comics,

Wed 27 May, The Old Joint Stock

Theatre, Birmingham

WHY I STUCK A FLARE UP MY A* FOR**

ENGLAND Alex Hill's acclaimed one-

man show, exploring what it means to

be a die-hard football fan, Wed 27

May, Macready Theatre, Rugby

DECKCHAIRS Swan Theatre Amateur

Company present Jean McConnell's

five twist-in-the-tail playlets for two

women, Wed 27 - Sat 30 May, The

Swan Theatre, Worcester

THE WIZARD OF OZ - ADULT PANTOMIME

X-rated version of Frank L Baum's

famous story, Fri 29 May, The Swan

Theatre, Worcester

DIAL 1 FOR UK Mohit Mathur's

'hilarious and poignant' one-man

exploration of the UK care sector,

Thurs 28 May, Lichfield Garrick

ADULT PANTO (UNSCRIPTED) Featuring

outrageous characters and filthy

humour, Sat 30 May, The Old Joint

Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON Adapted

from the HG Wells classic, Jonathan

Goodwin's one-man show is

described as a 'high spirited and

rollicking scientific romance', Sat 30

May, Theatre On The Steps,

Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

THE INVISIBLE MAN A 'fast-paced and

riotous' stage adaptation of HG

Wells' classic story, Sat 30 May,

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PRIDE & PREJUDICE... BUT FUNNY Take

a romp through all the Bennets,

Bingleys, bachelors and balls in a

'hilarious' retelling of Jane Austen's

most-loved story, Sat 30 May,

Lichfield Garrick

BOG WITCH Bryony Kimmings'

critically acclaimed show tells how

she uprooted herself and her son to

live in a tumbledown cottage in the

wilderness, Sat 30 May, Warwick Arts

Centre, Coventry

AUSTENTATIOUS: AN IMPROVISED JANE

AUSTEN NOVEL Acclaimed show in

which a new Jane Austen novel -

inspired entirely by a title from the

audience - is performed live on stage,

Sat 30 May, Warwick Arts Centre,

Coventry

Kids Theatre

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE LIVE Explosive

science show for younger audiences.

Expect 20ft liquid nitrogen clouds,

exploding oxygen & hydrogen

balloons, fire tornados, hydrogen

bottle rockets, ignited methane and

even a self-built hovercraft, Mon 25

May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JUSTIN LIVE - JUSTIN TIME TO ROCK

High-energy, feelgood family show

featuring music, dancing and plenty

of giggles, Mon 25 May,

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

FIREMAN SAM LIVE: THE LOST PIRATE

TREASURE Swashbuckling adventure

for all the family, Mon 25 May,

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

STUPIDEST SUPER STUPID SHOW

Family-friendly comedy featuring

jokes, poos on pogo sticks, and

truth-telling cheese, Mon 25 May,

Lichfield Garrick

DINOSAUR ADVENTURE LIVE: DANGER

ON T-REX MOUNTAIN Interactive stage

show in which a group of intrepid

rangers embark on a quest to recover

a data crystal and save the

dinosaurs, Tues 26 May, Royal Spa

Centre, Leamington Spa

UNICORN LIVE! Children's show

featuring favourite pop and musical

theatre songs, dazzling costumes

and a real unicorn named Sparkle,

Wed 27 May, The Old Rep, B'ham

DINOTALES: A ROARSOME DINOSAUR

ADVENTURE Family-friendly adventure

featuring a 'captivating' story and an

entire herd of pre-historic beasts,

Wed 27 May, Walsall Arena & Arts

Centre

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE LIVE Explosive

science show for younger audiences.

Expect 20ft liquid nitrogen clouds,

exploding oxygen & hydrogen

balloons, fire tornados, hydrogen

bottle rockets, ignited methane and

even a self-built hovercraft, Wed 27

May, Palace Theatre, Redditch

YOU CHOOSE Interactive musical show

for all the family based on Pippa

Goodhart & Nick Sharratt's book of

the same name, Wed 27 May, The

Swan Theatre, Worcester

THE CAT IN THE HAT Engaging first

theatre experience based on Dr

Seuss' bestselling book, Wed 27 -

Thurs 28 May, Royal Spa Centre,

Leamington Spa

THE GRUFFALO Tall Stories' musical

adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel

Scheffler's much-loved children's

book, Wed 27 - Sat 30 May, The

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ICE AGE ADVENTURE LIVE Family-

focused show in which fearless

explorers trek through snow-packed

valleys and encounter pre-historic

animals along the way, Thurs 28 May,

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA Stage

adaptation of Judith Kerr's terrific tale

about a tea-guzzling tiger, Thurs 28 -

Fri 29 May, Lichfield Garrick



HORRIBLE HISTORIES 3D - TERRIBLE

TUDORS & AWFUL EGYPTIANS Family-

focused show in which historical

figures and events come alive on

stage, Thurs 28 - Sat 30 May,

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE UTTERLY REVOLTING SCIENCE SHOW

This 'highly explosive' science stunt

show takes audiences on a journey through the human body via 'burp biology, fart physics and revolting edible chemistry', Fri 29 May, Stourbridge Town Hall

THE CAT IN THE HAT Engaging first theatre experience based on Dr Seuss' bestselling book, Fri 29 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE ULTIMATE BUBBLE SHOW International bubbleologist Ray Bubbles creates a volcano bubble, a soap bubble carousel, a bubble ghost, and even a tornado inside a bubble! Fri 29 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

SO UNFAIR Interactive science demo with a twist, featuring engineers from across the UK zooming in to help save the day. Suitable for children aged between seven and 10, Sat 30 May, SpArC, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

THE CAT IN THE HAT Engaging first theatre experience based on Dr Seuss' bestselling book, Sun 31 May, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

ICHI A family show that takes the notion of a one-man band to new limits. A unique show that promises to be fun, danceable and exciting, Sun 31 May, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

FUN FOR LITTLE ONES - A TRIBUTE TO MS. RACHEL 'Singing, dancing, giggles and non-stop fun' combine in an interactive show for youngsters, Sun 31 May, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

Dance

JAZZ CO. DREAMS A new body of work crafted by leading choreographers using a variety of dance styles, Tues 26 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Light Entertainment

AN EVENING WITH JIMMY TARBUCK The acclaimed raconteur reflects on his life in showbusiness, Tues 26 May, Malvern Theatres

WONDERS OF OUR UNIVERSE Theatre show in which astrophysicist Ian Hall takes audiences on a journey 'from the explosive birth of the cosmos to humanity's first steps beyond Earth', Tues 26 May, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WEST END MAGIC Family-friendly show presenting a mix of magic, comedy and variety acts. British Champion of Magic, Oliver Tabor, features, Wed 27 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

K.POP FOREVER All-action, high-energy tribute concert, Wed 27 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

NO PHOTOS Humour, rhyme and

storytelling combine in a spoken-word show exploring social anxiety, self-image and visibility..., Thurs 28 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE D-DAY DARLINGS: VICTORIOUS Celebration of 'resilience, love and legacy' featuring timeless classics from Vera Lynn, The Andrew Sisters and more..., Thurs 28 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE ITALIAN BROS - LIVE INTERACTIVE SHOW 'High-energy, laugh-out-loud interactive experience packed with music, chaos and audience participation', Thurs 28 May, Kidderminster Town Hall

MAN! I FEEL LIKE BINGO WITH SHAUNIA WAYNE Tracey Collins (Shell Suit Cher, Elvis Lesley and Audrey Heartburn) unveils her latest musical comedy character, Fri 29 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS VS HANS ZIMMER The Great British Film Orchestra pay tribute to two musical legends who between them are responsible for some of the greatest film scores ever written, Fri 29 May, Dudley Town Hall

BOLLYWOOD TIME MACHINE Evening filled with 'laughter, dance and timeless melodies', Sat 30 May, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

SUSIE DENT: WORD PERFECT Join Britain's best-loved wordsmith as she explores the joys of the English language, Sat 30 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SHOOT FROM THE HIP Award-winning improvised comedy featuring 'chaotic games, epic scenes and unheinged performances', Sat 30 May, Birmingham Town Hall



JOHN BARROWMAN: MY LIFE IN MUSICALS Expect 'stories, laughter and unforgettable anthems, mixed with a few showstoppers', Sat 30 May, Lichfield Garrick

AN EVENING WITH SIR DAVID JASON An evening of 'hilarious anecdotes and personal reflections' with the Only Fools And Horses, Sun 31 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

JOHN BARROWMAN: MY LIFE IN MUSICALS Expect 'stories, laughter and unforgettable anthems, mixed with a few showstoppers', Sun 31 May, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

UNCOVERED - FORBIDDEN REALM OF CONSPIRACIES 'Bold, immersive theatre experience' that pulls audiences deep into the world of

conspiracy theories, hidden narratives and forbidden questions..., Sun 31 May, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Talks & Spoken Word

AN AUDIENCE WITH NIGEL PLANER - YOUNG ONCE A 'warm, sharply funny live show of storytelling' with the Young Ones actor, Wed 27 May, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

Events

OAK APPLE DAY Step back in time to 1660 and celebrate the restoration of the crown on Bank Holiday Monday, Mon 25 May, The Commandery, Worcester

MEGASLAM WRESTLING Team Megaslam do battle with Team Nasty in action packed matches, Mon 25 May, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

TUDOR MAY CELEBRATIONS Celebrate Mayday and Whitsun Tudor style, Mon 25 - Thurs 28 May, Ford Green Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MAY HALF TERM ACTIVITIES Featuring arts and crafts, outdoor trails and storytelling, Mon 25 - Fri 29 May, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

HEROES OF THE AIR A family-friendly celebration of courage, adventure and the remarkable stories of those who took to the skies, Mon 25 - Fri 29 May, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

INSIDE THE T REX A groundbreaking world-first live dinosaur production, Mon 25 - Sun 31 May, Village Hotel, Shirley, Birmingham

DINO LAB! Step into the Science Garden and travel back millions of years via fun activities, Mon 25 - Fri 29 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

FABULOUS FOSSILS WORKSHOP Make a fizzy exploding dinosaur fossil and learn how real fossils are formed, Tues 26 - Thurs 28 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

KINETON RAF STEM: PAINTING WITH SPHERO ROBOTS Learn to direct and instruct the Spheros from tablets provided, using them to move through paint and create an experimental painting, Wed 27 May, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY SHOW Celebrating agriculture, competition, entertainment, food, shopping and so much more, Wed 27 - Thurs 28 May, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford

JURASSIC GLADSTONE Get ready to travel back in time with a walking,

growing T-Rex, Thurs 28 May, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

DINOSTORY TIME Dinosaur themed storytelling in the Thinktank Theatre, Thurs 28 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

JQ LATES: EXPLORE SMITH & PEPPER Explore the history of the Jewellery Quarter after hours, Thurs 28 May, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

WILDLIFE AT SAREHOLE MILL Families are invited to explore the outdoors, learn about nature, and take part in hands-on activities, Fri 29 May, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

NEIGHBOURS DAY AT BLAKESLEY HALL A chance to explore the beautiful Blakesley Hall with free admission for members of the local community, Fri 29 May, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

MIDLANDS AIR FESTIVAL Filling the skies with classic jet fighters, vintage aircraft, hot air balloons, helicopters, high energy aerobatics, and more, Fri 29 - Sun 31 May, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

UK GAMES EXPO The UK's largest tabletop game convention, Fri 29 - Sun 31 May, NEC, Birmingham

BEER FESTIVAL, TRACTION ENGINE RALLY AND STEAM TRAINS Road meets rail, with traction engines, steam rollers and of course the steam hauled trains, Sat 30 May, Foxfield Railway, Staffordshire

JEWELLERY QUARTER HERITAGE WALK A lively guided walk looking at the people, places and themes that have helped to shape this singular working district, Sat 30 May, St Pauls Church, Birmingham

CINEMA UNDER THE STARS: ICE AGE A cinema-style screening of Ice Age, Sat 30 May, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

BACKSTAGE TOUR Explore backstage and meet the expert technical and creative teams, Sat 30 May, Lichfield Garrick Theatre

BUILD IT LIVE From inspiration to reality, the UK's leading self-build experts come together under one roof, Sat 30 - Sun 31 May, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

THE NATIONAL KIT CAR SHOW Meet the UK manufacturers behind the cars and explore displays from the industry's leading names, Sat 30 - Sun 31 May, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

FAMILY EXPLORER TOUR Designed to bring the history of Weston to life for families and young people, Sun 31 May, Weston Park, Shropshire

QUILTER CHEVIOT BRITISH OPEN SQUASH 2026 One of the most prestigious and historic tournaments in professional squash, Sun 31 May - Sun 7 June, The Rep, Birmingham

Enter now at whatsonlive.co.uk to be in with a chance of bagging one of these fabulous prizes!



Win! A family ticket to see A Midsummer Night's Dream

Shakespeare veterans and newbies alike will enjoy The Rep's new production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. An enchanting new take on the Bard's classic comedy, the action is set in the heart of Birmingham and is bursting at the seams with 'Brummieness'! We have a family ticket (four tickets) to give away to see the show at The Rep on Wednesday 20 May...

Competition closes Monday 11 May



Win! A pair of tickets to see Stephen King's The Shawshank Redemption

Based on a Stephen King novella, The Shawshank Redemption tells a dramatic story of friendship and hope in the claustrophobic environment of a maximum-security facility. The show visits The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 26 to Saturday 30 May. We are offering one lucky reader the chance to win two tickets to the performance on Tuesday the 26th...

Competition closes Monday 18 May



Win! Two tickets to see '80s Classical

Step back into the decade of big hits, big hair and even bigger anthems as Nik Kershaw, Johnny Hates Jazz and Jaki Graham take to the stage with the Orchestra of Opera North for '80s Classical. The show comes to Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Thursday 11 June - and we have two tickets to give away...

Competition closes Friday 29 May




Win! A pair of tickets to see Omar

Celebrating 40 years in showbiz, British soul legend Omar is stopping off at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Thursday 18 June as part of his much-anticipated Brighter The Days tour. What's On is offering one lucky reader the chance to win two tickets to the show...

Competition closes Monday 8 June.

For your chance to WIN! with What's On, visit:
whatsonlive.co.uk

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THE MUSICAL

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Surinderella
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THE PURRFECT FAMILY TREAT!

The Tiger Who Came to Tea

LIVE ON STAGE!

A musical play adapted & directed by DAVID WOOD based on the book by JUDITH KERR

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★★★★★ The Times
★★★★★ Sunday Telegraph
★★★★★ Daily Telegraph

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